



BIG CHIEF CHORUS

SMOKE SIGNALS



Pontiac/Waterford Chapter
Meetings on Tuesdays: 7:30 to 10 PM

Bulletin #24, April 15, 2003

PIONEER DISTRICT SPRING CONVENTION

We have received our slot, 15th, in the program that begins at 12:00 pm on Saturday April 26 at Eastern High School, 220 N. Pennsylvania Avenue, Lansing, Michigan. Huron Valley, as host chorus, has chosen the final slot, just after us. A total of 16 quartets, 16 choruses and 3 college quartets will be on the competition stage. Quartets competing for Montreal include lots of familiar names, such as: POWER PLAY, SINGING WITH DAD, FOUR MAN FISHIN' TACKLE CHOIR, AND PARTY OF FOUR (which, by the way, will play the roles of the barbershop-singing school board in Wyandotte Community Theatre's production of "The Music Man" on May 9&10 and May 16&17). Quartet prelims are Friday at 7 pm, and Quartet Finals and College Quartets are Saturday at 7:30 pm. The Pioneer district is going to have a "Big Screen" at the convention this year, patterned after international.

This is our 60th anniversary, and we are going to celebrate it with a **60th Birthday hospitality room** at the convention.

47th Annual Woodshed Contest

The Pontiac Waterford Chapter 47th Annual Woodshed Contest was held Friday, March 28, at Pontiac Country Club. 184 "Best" part badges have been awarded in the past 46 years, and many of them were in evidence Friday night. This

year's judging quartet was Macomb Chapter's SINGING WITH DAD whose "dad" was this year's Honorary "Big Chief", Dave Anderson. Eight area chapters were represented, but none better than Flint, which was awarded the Bennington Trophy, based on their having 21% of their 41 members present. (A chapter gets a full point if the member sings, a half point if he is merely present.) The 49 barbershoppers present mixed and matched to form 18 quartets, all assembled according to the usual rules that no more than two members can be from the same chapter, and no more than one member from the same registered quartet, though multiple quartetting was legal and common. Winning quartet was ATTRIBUTES with Mike Frye, Pontiac/Waterford, as tenor, Tom Collins, Grosse Pointe, lead, Chris Miller Pontiac/Waterford, Bari, and Dave Lindstram, Flint, on bass, singing "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles". Chris and Mike were also members of the winning ringer quartet WINDY CITY FOUR, along with Dick Johnson and Roger Holm singing "I Want To Be In Chicago Town."

Thanks to Len Barnes and Dick Johnson for hosting. To Pete Mazzara for taking care of the quartet registering all by himself. To Bill Dabbs, Chuck Murray, Dan Valko, and Howard Lynn at the sign-in desk. To Chris Miller for his humorous introduction of Dave Anderson. To Mike Frye, Len Barnes, Roger Holm and Dick Johnson for setting up and taking down the woodshed. And for all the chapter members who attended. Grosse Pointe's SILVER DOMES gave a welcomed performance. It was a great time for all and we will do it again next year on the last Friday of March.

I would add my own special thanks to Jeff Spires who helped put my quartet together. He introduced your editor to bass Bob La Duke (a new woodshedder from Rochester) and then found a lead and tenor for us (Lead Bob Bammert and Tenor Hal Hohner from Flint). Personally, I think that the hour spent figuring out and memorizing a barbershop version of some melody is wonderful. But listening to the results is not. Even quartets whose combined years of experience exceed fifty struggle to sing fifty (our commonly agreed standard for public performance). And one of our chapter members mentioned to me that there is evidence of an old-boys' mentality, that the old-timers seeking another badge are not so eager to sing with new-timers.

Of course, barbershopping originated in woodshedding and is maintained by such events as our own, and by such organizations as (AHSOW) Ancient and Harmonious Society of Woodshedders, of whom we have four members, Bill Dabbs, Chris Miller, Bill Pascher, and John Smith. By the way, don't forget Smitty's AHSOW Woodshedding Room at the Pioneer District competition in Lansing where a lot of serious woodshedding will get done.

Dave Anderson thanked us with this tongue-in-cheek letter:

Hey Gang. The Pontiac-Waterford Chapter held their annual Woodshed Contest last Friday Night and it was another fun night of Barbershopping! I want to personally thank the chapter for roasting and toasting me as an honorary Big Chief. I was mighty proud of that beautiful award, so I placed it on the mantle when I got home. Awaking at daybreak with the now Indian blood cursing through my veins, I decided to go out and hunt for some fresh venison. I put on my trusty loincloth, grabbed my long bow and headed out the door with a knife in my belt and the hunter's keen gaze in my eyes. It took me about five minutes to realize that it was really cold outside...those brave Indians must have worn something under those loincloths! With teeth chattering I headed back into the house and sat down with a hot cup of coffee and a bowl of Frosty Flakes; so much for the great hunter bit. 'Twas then that I reflected on what a great institution this Woodshed Contest really is. Everyone sings, all get to try their musical creativity, and you even had a chance to bribe the judges. Thanks again for a great, fun night.
Honorary Big Chief, Dave A.

Higgins Lake Singing Retreat

We assembled, 42 strong, March 21-23, on the north shore of Higgins Lake at the Ralph A. MacMullan Center. Our coach, Dr. Jeff Taylor, was wonderful. None of us had met him in advance, but he came recommended, as having coached the Toronto Northern Lights chorus, and being a certified SPEBSQSA Music Judge, and we quickly realized we'd made a good choice.
Thanks to Jeff Doig for hauling the risers all the way from Pontiac, to Howard Lynn and Jeff Spires for supplying the bar and snack table, to Dick Johnson and Jeff Doig for prizes, to Ross Ensign, John Cowlshaw and Bruce Collins for warm-ups, to Bruce Brede for Saturday morning's walk, to Jim Owens for photos, and mostly to Pete Mazzara for arranging the whole thing.

Here are the reported experiences of some participants:

John Cowlshaw: It's colder up here, three hours north of Pontiac/Waterford!

We shared the central building with American Sign Language teachers and students and a group of firemen being trained in Fire Inspection.

None of the attendees will forget the powerful experience of singers sounding different based on their spatial grouping. (Though many would have preferred that the time on the risers be minimized.)

“Work the abdomen, Free the throat, Fill the head.”

With every breath, LIFT the body (an alternative to – With every breath, RE-SET the body.)

Sing “word-sounds,” not “words.”

Jeff Taylor spoke of the tremendous history and potential of our chapter. We have the ability; what we need now is better discipline. There is an institutional self-perception that needs to be raised.

We don't sing freely because we lack trust in our voice, we fear it may crack, so we tighten against that possibility.
The roots of Barbershop go back to Blacks hearing Schubert and Brahms in Paris 150 years ago.

Mike Frye: What did I expect from this? What we received from Jeff Taylor was exactly what I had expected to receive and much more. He is such a brilliant man and so personable. He makes you want to do better just by his approach and gentleness and forward manner. He can rip you apart and never raise his voice doing that.

What did I get? I gained a lot of knowledge about the approach to a song, understanding the words and their meaning and what the composer (writer) was or is trying to convey.

How will I use (not use) in the future and how? Be more assertive in my approach to section co-leading. Make the people do it right and not go on until it is right. Use all of the knowledge I have, which is very limited, to try and make us all better singers and presenters.

Thank you Dr. Jeff Taylor for the knowledge you shared with us.

Tom Ford: The first true woodshedding I have ever done was at the retreat and it gave a better "feel" for true barbershopping. I am excited about the upcoming contest and believe the work done at the retreat was a great help. Some of the true potential of the group was surfaced. Let's keep the things we learned in mind and use them in Lansing.

Ross Ensign: First, I'd sure like to thank Pete, Chris, and all the board members that were involved in making this weekend happen. What a great experience to see the individual chorus members meld into a cohesive family unit, building trust among each other and getting totally loose...what fun and rewards! I do feel bad for the fellas that couldn't make it to this great learning experience. The chorus certainly has taken a giant leap forward in our preparation and confidence levels for our contest and we need to help the fellas that missed this tremendous event get up to speed quickly.

We really saw & understood what a difference in the dynamics **a single person makes** to the total presentation quality of the chorus!

As for our teacher and mentor for the weekend.... Jeff Taylor...What a Guy! In my 20 years of chorus experience, mostly in the Mid'lantic District, I've had the opportunity to receive coaching from some of the best the Society has to offer, including many of our best blue ribbon quartets, usually several times a year. And I can without hesitation say that the experience that Jeff Taylor brings to a chorus and individual member is second to none. Not only did Jeff display a magnificent level of musical knowledge and history, but he applies his craft upon us with the greatest amount of human sensitivity and positive attitude building skills of anyone I've encountered. Not to mention his personal singing skills! Jeff, thanks for the chorus help and a special

thanks for the quartet advice.

A word to the board...Fellas ...Book'm quick for next year...perhaps a few weeks sooner than this year. Maybe a bit closer if possible...although the accommodations were great and the grub even better. Thanks to all for this level of coaching...can't but help to create improvement in the Pontiac Big Chief Chorus!!

Gayle Mohler: My comments about the retreat would be that I joined thinking that I was 100% bass. To my chagrin I realized I was really only about 20% of my potential. After the retreat and what I learned, I feel that I'm at about 30% now. I am working at this like I have never worked at anything before. With all the assistance, encouragement and praise I receive I know that I can and will improve rapidly and steadily. This organization is filled with the greatest bunch of guys I have ever met. I can't remember ever having anybody complement me just for having the nerve to try something even though what was tried was totally screwed up. Thank you all for allowing me to join such a wonderful organization. Singing is life and I regret not coming back sooner. (Ed: Gayle was temporarily in BBS many years ago.)

Doc Mann: I want to personally thank U 2 guys (Pete and Jeff Doig) for a fun filled, educational and successful weekend, not only musically but in the warmth, friendship and fellowship that was felt among those who attended... this has done a great deal to enhance our goals as a chapter. Ur efforts and the efforts of others who contributed were greatly appreciated.

Jeff Doig: The fact is yes I did get several things out of the retreat. To get thirty guys together in one place for an extended period of time is amazing. Everyone worked very hard and I enjoyed seeing and hearing the immediate improvement in the chorus. The atmosphere was infectious and exciting. I gauge that by the fact that I personally get inspired. In fact I get so wound up that it takes a couple of hours to unwind so I can get to sleep.

As for the Dr. Jeff Taylor experience. And I mean that in the most respectful way. Out of all the coaches we have had since I have been with this chorus, I think Jeff has made the biggest impression. He took what we had, in the way of music and sound, asked Chris what he was trying to accomplish and then coached us with that goal in mind. To watch him sit down at the piano and in less than fifteen minutes write the seventh chord filler was impressive to say the least.

Dr. Jeff Taylor has a way of explaining technical information in terms that people like me can understand. And the breathing and support exercises were helpful. All in all we got a look at what this chorus with practice can sound like.

Some things we heard defy logic. Like moving three guys around and getting a different sound every time. Dr. Jeff said he couldn't explain it either.

Zaven Melkonian: Trying to review the "Spring Training" weekend would be like trying to describe a circular staircase without using your hands! Suffice to say that the camaraderie (best described by the mass exodus during the "Kitty Kitty" encore by THE ROMEOS) was a positive experience. But for my money, the coaching by Dr. Jeff Taylor was, in and of itself, was worth the price of admission. What a remarkable guy. And what a fantastic ear. Imagine being able to hear the resonance in a voice, assign it a number and then place it on the risers to achieve the best blend in every section.

Bruce Collins: I had an awesome time up there; couldn't have had a better time if I tried

Dick Johnson: "What did I expect from this?" Reinforcement of Chris's direction plus added suggestions to help sell to the judges and listeners. "What did I get?" I got as I expected and felt better about what we were trying to accomplish. "What will I use?" I choose to use all that I can remember and carry it through to my quartet singing on a continuing basis.

Chris Miller: (To Jeff) Hi Jeff, I trust you made it home safely and in time for Sunday dinner (we all needed to eat more after last weekend). Just a note to thank you for your time and effort. I have heard nothing but positive feedback. I am pleased that our first retreat went so well. Good fun, good fellowship and good coaching. I am anxious to sing our revised parodies in contest. They should be crowd pleasers, but only if we sing well.... and we'll keep working on that. Again, many thanx, thank your wife and kids too and give our regards to your chorus. Sing-cerely, Chris & the BCC.

And finally, from Jeff: Hey Chris, Thanks for your note. Sorry for the delayed response. I was coaching in upstate New York this weekend. I had a great time with the Big Chef <g> chorus. I thought your weekend was exceedingly well planned and it looked to me like the guys had a blast. I trust that we did some things in chorus rehearsal that will help you and your team lead the guys to ever better musical performances. Please give the men my warmest greetings! Jeff

AROUND THE PATCH MEMBERSHIP (63)

Renewals: Roger Holm (16), Tom Blackstone (16), Mel Parrish (18)

Birthdays: April: Jeff Spires (16th), Doug Corliss (17th), Yong McDowell (18th), Wayne Cheyne (25th)

May: Gene Downie (4th), Bill Dabbs (17th)

Barbershoppers of the Month – March – Wayne Cheyne; thanks for the Valentines! April – Len Barnes; thanks for the co-chairing Woodshed!

Bill Pascher is going to the International in Montreal and looking for a roommate.

Greg Moss and his wife Bev were among 120 singers doing Brahms Requiem at Metropolitan United Methodist Church on April 13, 2003

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE did a freebie-hour at a glamorous wine & cheese fundraiser for the beautiful Ortonville Public Library, Saturday night, March 29. It is singing tonight at a Crossroads for Youth fundraiser at the Castello di Bologna in Canterbury Village.

From Prez Pete:

Singing in the BCC is like throwing a football. To make it go far, fast, and reach its target with accuracy and precision, you must throw a spiral. The football has both terminal velocity (from place to place), and (angular velocity) the spinning. Its distance depends on the strength of the thrower's arm and the tightness of the spiral.

Our chorus also has terminal velocity, as we move from singers to good singers. We must also exert a lot of energy (angular velocity, spinning) to improve ourselves, as we move forward with accuracy and precision. We are fortunate to have a quarterback (director) who has a strong arm and a will to succeed.

The Singing Retreat provided us with even more energy in the way of a fine coach in Dr. Jeff Taylor, and the fellowship we experienced.

Like the spinning football, the BCC is headed on the right path, with precision, accuracy, and the fellowship of a wonderful bunch of men.

Thanks to Zaven and Pastor Dave for letting us use the Clarkston First Methodist Church when Waterford lost power last week.

BCC Goal Update:

Goals Accomplished: a singing retreat; developing an additional Associate director; providing outside coaching; expanding the use of sectionals; increased membership to 65; and having members attend coaching sessions.

Goals in progress: Fall Competition; fall show; establishing a Chorus Ensemble; sending at least 4 men to Harmony College; sending at least 8 men to Harmony Roundup; and YMIH chairs have contacted more than 6 area Music Educators and have a plan.

Personal Goals: How are you doing? It's time for you to check your personal goals. Especially those who chose: using tape recorders; sing in a quartet; be here at 7:00pm; learn the words faster; and get 'on-line.'

MEET BOB MARSHALL

Bob Marshall was born and raised in the Detroit area, graduating from Centerline High School in 1947 and the University of Michigan (with a chemistry major) in 1951. He went to work for Chrysler (in powdered metals) and except for three years in Connecticut, he spent his work-life with Chrysler, either in the local area or in Van Wert Ohio. During high school he played trombone in the band and sang in the chorus and Presbyterian church choir.

He met his wife Eileen square dancing and they married and have four kids, a son in Texas, one daughter in California, and two other daughters in the area.

When Bob retired from Chrysler in 1991, he determined to make more of his retirement than traveling and painting the house. They had moved to their present Silver Lake home several years earlier, so he went to the Waterford CAI on Williams Lake Rd where he starting doing all kinds of sports – shuffleboard, volleyball, softball, table tennis. He does not consider himself a sportsman but he wanted to stay in shape. Eventually he has competed successfully in the local senior Olympics.

The musical part of his retirement began when Bob's neighbor invited him to sing Karaoke at Daiquiri Dick's. With great timing, Bill Pascher left an ad on the CAI bulletin board, which started Bob's 13-yr involvement in Barbershop. When the Pontiac chapter was nearly dead, he joined the Rochester branch, and maintained a dual membership until recently. He also started attending the Rochester Senior Center and participates in their semiannual shows. The director even initiated his learning tap dance. Back at the Waterford Senior Center, he picked up the old trombone and now practices daily as part of the 25-member New Horizons Band, one of sixty such senior bands nationally.

In the meantime, Eileen had retired from high school English-teaching in Detroit and had become active in the Sweet Adelines. Barbershop, tap, trombone, shows, athletics – clearly, Bob and Eileen have found the magic of retirement!

TREATING YOUR VOICE WELL, Part IV

Pete Mazzara points out that the University of Michigan's Dept of Otolaryngology has a nearby Vocal Health Center in Livonia. See their web site at <http://www.med.umich.edu/oto/vocalhealthcenter/>. Here are their SUGGESTIONS FOR MAINTAINING A HEALTHY VOICE: (from Leslie W. Guinn)

1. Stay well hydrated (6-8 glass non-caffeinated beverages daily).
2. Practice abdominal breathing. Lying on your back ...

3. ...or ...Sit in a straight chair. Lie over your thighs with arms hanging down and breathe deeply.
4. Try saying these words to help focus attention on the feeling of airflow moving from your abdominal breathing muscles to the front of the mouth: Human, Humid, Huge, Humor, Humorous, Humidifier.
5. Exercise your voice daily. With a slightly breathy voice, warm up early in the day using tongue or lip trills over long glides. Beginning with a tongue or lip trill move into an "ah" or "uh". Glide from a low note to a high note using words such as knoll, nil, and null at a moderate volume. Sustain a single note in your comfortable range using the word "knoll". As you become warmed up increase the volume slightly as long as it is comfortable.
6. Using a variety of pitches, speak words out loud which begin with "y", such as yarn, yummy, yale, yawn, yon, yule, yak etc. The use of "y" preceding each vowel is a good way to avoid adding heaviness to a sound and also serves to initiate easy jaw movement.
7. Read out loud to yourself or others using a wide range pitches.
8. Try any of the above vocal exercises while moving the head side to side at about 60 beats a minute. Any tension at the back of the neck?

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Internet coaching available for quartets You can get *free* Internet coaching for your quartet. Visit the **Riptide** web page at <http://www.riptidequartet.com/> to get complete instructions. Riptide leads the Quartet promotion efforts as part of the Society Music and Performance Committee. (If any quartets try this out, let your editor know the result.)



Minutes, Executive Board Meetings, by Jeff Doig

(Items not mentioned elsewhere)

March 13, 2003

Treasurer, Dick Johnson, Reported a balance of \$13,729.55.

Chapter Development: Doc has ordered the ID ribbons. Will check on getting more Business cards. The "I Like To Sing" buttons are to be worn as a recruitment tool (thanks to Pete Mazzara, Gene Downie, and Mike Keith). Doc also presented a new form for shirts and uniforms that requires his signature.

YMIH report By Jeff Spires and Chuck Murray.

Singing Valentines: We netted \$1,672,00. Some ideas for next year

Grants: Dick Johnson gave his Grant report.

Ensemble Criteria: Auditions will be required for fall contest.

Fall Show: We have Power Play penciled in for the show and Bruce Brede has secured the Liberty Grill for the after glow.

ELSE: The video of the show is being shown on a local cable channel. We feel that there should be a policy for such chorus materials. Gene D. will work on it.

April 10, 2003

Treasurer's report: balance of \$12,178.

Director's comments: The contest will include Bill Pascher's BCC Indian Chant this year. We are looking for candidates for Harmony College. We have Jeff Spires and Bruce Collins so far, with the possibility of a scholarship for Bruce. The **Singing Retreat** cost the chapter \$3,886 ... a big success.

Annual Picnic (Aug 19th)- Both Gayle M. and Doug C. have offered their homes; a larger venue might be more appropriate.

Show Tapes- Jeff D. reported that he has supplied the cable company with the sound track of the show and they will re-edit the master tape. Cost to redub our tapes is still undetermined.

BCC 60th Celebration- The Celebration itself needs planning. But Pete supplied a report from Art C. on dinner venues (attached to the minutes) .The board decided on the Hospitality room and the menu.

Fall Show 2003- Gene reported that we need some improvements over last years show. Lou Mahacek is working on the BCC Band.

BCC in Public Policy- Gene submitted the policy; approved.

One Day Planning Session- Chuck submitted a revised proposal.

Coaching Assessment- The board discussed coaching for the chorus.

Harmony Roundup (16-17) - Jeff D. will speak to the chorus on Harmony Roundup. Chorus will pick up 50% of the cost

BCC Storage Unit- Dick has rented a storage unit for the chorus. Final

Donation to Crary - \$300

Chapter Jackets- Gene is looking into the cost of jackets and new shirts.

Calendar

Apr 11

65th SPEBSQSA Birthday, Founded 1938

Apr 15	Rehearsal, & family night
Apr 16	World Voice Day
Apr 17	60 th Big Chief Chorus Birthday, Founded 1943
Apr 22	Rehearsal, Central Methodist Church (M59)
Apr 24	Dress Rehearsal, Central Method Church
Apr 25	House of Delegates, 2 pm, Hol.Inn W, Lansing
April 25-27	District Convention – Lansing
Apr 29	Rehearsal
May 6	Rehearsal
May 8	Exec. Bd. Mtg, 7:30
May 10	“Live Radio” Macomb show
May 13	Rehearsal
May 16-18	Harmony Round-up, Mich. St. Univ.
Jun 28	Great Lakes Chorus (Sweet Adelines) Show
Jun 29 – July 6	International Convention, Montreal

Chapter Executive Board

Officers

Chorus Director: Chris Miller ((248-960-5101)
 President: Pete Mazzara (313-563-4026)
 Immediate Past President: Gene Downie
 VP, Chapter Development: Doc Mann
 VP, Music and Performance: John Smith
 Secretary: Jeff Doig
 Treasurer: Dick Johnson
 Members at Large: Chuck Murray, Zaven Melkonian

Chairmen

Associate Directors: Dick Johnson, Bruce Collins
 Bulletin Editor: John Cowlshaw
 Chorus Manager: Art Carinci
 Grants: Dick Johnson
 Historian: (open) Cowlshaw’s bulletins for now
 Music Librarian: Bill Holmes
 Picnic: Gayle Mohler
 Pole Cats: Zaven Melkonian
 Quartet Activity: Bruce Brede
 Service (Charity): open
 Singing Valentines: Wayne Cheyne/Gene Downie
 Sunshine (Chaplain): Bill Dabbs
 Tagmeister: Mike Frye
 Uniform Manager: Ron Clarke
 Woodshedding: Len Barnes