Spring Training Singing Retreat

We gathered, 37 strong, on the shores of Higgins Lake, for the second straight year, for fun, fellowship, and good singing. Don Bazely of Sault Ste. Marie was our coach this year.

Ross Ensign introduced the Stage Presence Moves for the contest songs. Mike Frye created a new tag with the help of Lead Jim Troeger, Bari John Cowlishaw, and Bass Zaven Melkonian. For those of you who haven’t heard it (I'm just kidding, nobody hasn’t heard it by now), it’s called “The Autumn Leaves Drift by my Window.”

Saturday night, we had our show, with the Blues led by Len Barnes, the Greens led by Bruce Brede, the Blacks led by Jeff Doig, and the Yellows led by Bill Nevaux dueling it out.

Don taught us the Barbershop Cone. The cone reminds us that higher pitches require less volume and more head tone. He also passed out sheets with Lou Benedict’s dictum: “Stage Presence is simply this: Look at the audience. Tell them the story. Show them you believe it. Make them believe it. Be emotionally involved. Get the audience emotionally involved. Now that’s Stage Presence.”

We stayed in Lake Erie, Huron, and Ontario cabins, and once again serenaded the hearing-impaired folks. Hard to believe that there was still half a foot of snow on the ground.

Mark Buchinger, Manager of the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center has already penciled us in for next year on Apr 1,2,3, 2005.

Don Bazely wrote Pete:

“I have to say that seldom, if ever, have I enjoyed a coaching assignment so much as I did this past weekend at Roscommon. The chorus members were attentive and showed their eagerness to learn (or re-learn) the finer points of barbershop singing. I do hope I was able to motivate the troops to try harder and sing better. I do regret that I was unable to pass on all the material I had planned but time just didn't allow. A great deal of credit must go to you and your board for the leadership displayed in getting so many of your guys to the retreat. Finally, I must say I was overwhelmed by the generosity shown me by the board. Thank you, and I'll certainly be rooting for Pontiac at Gaylord.”

Don has since written to say he has been asked to M.C. the chorus contest, so he will be unable to come visit the BCC chorus in our warm-up room.

“Regardless, I will be rooting for you guys. STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE, NOT PERFECTION.”

From the Prez.

Thank you, thank you, thank you! To all the BCC members who attended and helped make this year's Singing Retreat a huge success. (Of course as I attempt to do this, I know I may forget someone, and for that I apologize.)

Coach - Don Bazely
Director - Jim Troeger
Assoc. Directors - Dick Johnson & Bruce Collins
Section Leaders - M. Keith, Z. Melkonian, L. Barnes, D. Johnson
Tag Master - Mike Frye
Music Team - Roger Holm & the 7 Giants
Choreography - Ross Ensign & Jim Troeger
Risers - Walt DeNio, Art Ripley, & Roger Holm
Bar - Howard Lynn
Snacks & Sodas - Jack Teuber & Bill Dabbs
Prizes - Bill Holmes & Ted Prueter
Warm-ups - John Cowlishaw, Bruce C., Mike F., Dick, Ross, et. al.
Walking Leader - Bruce Brede
Group Photo - Jim Owens & Mike Frye
Competition MC & Chorus Manager - Art Carinci
Membership Skit - Jim Owens & Art Ripley
Nutrition - Greg Moss
Fall Show - Jeff Doig
Woodshedding - Len Barnes
Special Lead Voice - Ron Clarke
Group Captains - Len Barnes, Bruce Brede, Jeff Doig, & Bill Nevaux
Set Up & Clean Up - Graham Frye
BCC how has a **Class B uniform**: Blue blazer, gray slacks, and special tie.

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**MEMBERSHIP** (at 56)

**New Member**: Graham Frye (and winner of the “member who travels farthest”…from Harrison, MI)

**Renewals**: Bruce Collins (2), Gayle Mohler (2), Doug Corliss (3), Dennis Robinson (4), Art Carinci (5), Bob Legato (5), Jim Owens (5), Jeff Spires (5), Walt Bachmann (6), Chris Elmore (6), Gene Downie (7), Tom Tailford (10), Bert Cederleaf (14), Roger Holm (17), Mel Parrish (19).

**Birthdays**: April – Gayle Mohler (2nd), Jeff Spires (16th), Doug Corliss (17th), Yong McDowell (18th), Wayne Cheyne (25th)

**BSOM – March** – Mike Frye, for all of his work for the chorus, and now for his tag.

**Illnesses**: Bill Pascher had several mini-strokes and is now living at “Sunrise of Clarkston.” Gene Downie has taken a leave of absence as he cares for his wife. John Cowlishaw had knee surgery. Bill Nevaux had hand surgery.

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**AROUND THE PATCH**

Our 48th Annual Woodshed Contest was held Friday evening, April 2, at Pontiac Country Club. Fifty-three guys were present, though there’d have been more if the second Flint contingent had arrived. Anyway, 13 quartets were formed. The BCC sang its two contest numbers to generous applause. Len Barnes MC’d the event. The main rules are that quartets are limited to two members of the same chapter or registered quartet. IMAGINATION (Blackstone, Ensign, Cowlishaw, young Jonathan from Rochester) violated that, entered as the only ringer quartet and won that category. Hah! But the big winner was SinTones with Mike Frye (T), Joe Serwach (L), Russ Seeley (Br), Roger Holm (Bs). Second year in a row for Mike Frye. **BILLS’ BOYS** sounded great, but why shouldn’t they; they chose “Aura Lee.” Hah! Rochester won the Bennington contest for best proportional attendance and participation.

**Pioneer District**, Gaylord, MI

At this time, 18 quartets have registered, another 5 college quartets, and 17 choruses plus non-competing Macomb. The draw for order is next Saturday. We’re staying at Treetops. We will compete with our two songs, “Back in the Old Routine” and “Old St. Louis,” not only against the other choruses, but against our own expectations. Last year we scored 764 pts (63.7%), but got a big boost from the last-minute comedy alterations. This year, plateau competition will also be important. Detroit-Oakland, Huron Valley, and Macomb are in our district’s 1st plateau. We are in the 2nd plateau, along with the other choruses scoring in the 700’s – Battle Creek, Grand Rapids, Gratiot County, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Michiana, Motor City Metro, and Traverse City. How many can we beat? (And can we sing sweet?) Our District President, Bruce A. Smith, suggests that the plateau-winning chapters have their hospitality room catered by the other chapters. He also reminds us that Lynne Peirce will lead the Joe Barbershop Chorus in singing: “Sittin’ On Top of the World” and “One More Song”. For the complete schedule, maps et al, go to http://www.harmonize.com/Pioneer/nextconvention/convention_info.htm.

On March 17th, St. Patrick’s Day, the BCC sang out at Canterbury on the Lake.

Bill Pascher is finally slowed down in his attendance at BCC nights - this man who has been at the heart of the long history of the Pontiac Waterford chapter. As Pete Mazzara wrote recently, “He sang in his church choir, but was kicked out because he harmonized too much. Later Bill became a Barbershopper. He helped found the Pontiac/Waterford Chapter in April 17, 1943. He sang all four parts, directed, constructed sets for shows, and continues to sing at the ripe old age of 89. At age 88 he played the Wizard. Bill’s vitality and longevity are due in large part to his singing hobby and the friends he has made and encouraged along the way. The moral: Forget work... Sing Barbershop. You’ll live longer and be better off in the end.”

We have nine members intending to go to Harmony Roundup in E. Lansing this year. As you recall, last year’s event had to be called off when pre-registrations were depressed. We wont let that happen again, and will be rewarded by teachers such as Ken Buckner (Citations, Barons), double-gold winner Jay Hawkins (Interstate Rivals, Marquis), and featuring 1990 champs Acoustix. You can come for the weekend, or just commute on Saturday.

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And this from Art Carinci:

Hey Petie, Buon giorno!

I just want to thank you and whoever helped you for this wonderful experience this past weekend. Being a first time “little scout”, along with Ron & Jim, I was very pleased to be there. Since time is limited for most people and we have to choose wisely how we spend that precious commodity, I must say my time was wisely spent on the weekend. Don Bazely was a great teacher who has a lot of wealth of information in the barbershop style and he shared it with us in such a kindly manner and sprinkled with humor. I’m looking forward to his coming to the competition and sharing more with us. The bonding and the camaraderie were priceless. And isn't this a beautiful place in which to have such a retreat. Thanks again Pete – I knew it was a lot of work organizing this and then pulling it off in such a flawless manner. The reason it went so smoothly is because you took care of all the little details. Kudos to you!

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B Natural’s last song with Smitty as tenor was “San Francisco Bay.” B-Natural has pondered somewhat about trying to continue. But, continue they will, and therefore are in search of a Tenor. Interested tenors, be in contact.

Harmony Knights performed for the Family Festival on Feb. 7th, which was televised on Channel 10.

Greg Moss writes warmly about our coaching session with Dr. Gil Jackson. For those who would like to follow up on it, go to http://www.jacksonchorale.org, where you can download songs by the chorale. Their spring concert is May 8 in Rochester, and they will be doing lots of spirituals. One of Greg’s favorites is "River in Judea"

The Board has agreed that if chapter quartets get a gig through chapter references, they should remit a percentage of their fee to the chapter, perhaps 20-25%.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Cancellation of Jug Night
Jim Kunz announces that “the Detroit-Oakland Chapter will not be sponsoring its annual Return of the Jug Night this year. This event, which has historically been held in early June, capped off an 8-month journey of the jugs around the district, providing an opportunity for inter-chapter get-togethers and fund raising to help support our quartets as they travel to the International Competition and represent the district.” They had hoped to institute a new practice, of a pre-planned, publicized series of inter-chapter meetings, but couldn’t pull together all the pre-planning needed to schedule those inter-chapter meetings this year. Instead they will make their contribution at Windsor's Send-Off show, which will be held at the Hellenic Banquet Center in Windsor on Friday, June 11th.

The Livingston Lamplighters Chorus in Brighton is looking for a new director, having lost the services of Ms. Judie Sharpe.

Dave Anderson, VP of Young Men in Harmony writes of the fourth “Harmony Happening,” which occurred this year in conjunction with the Lansing Chapter’s show March 13. “Fifty-one young men from high schools all over Michigan had the time of their lives. This group was probably the best singing group that we've had so far. I still can't believe that they started on these two songs on Friday Night and had them show ready, with choreography, by Saturday Night. It started with the expert voice placements by Jim DeBusman from Kenosha, and then Jamie Carey took over with his magic keyboard and started teaching the songs. Ken and Vicki Gibson were both in on teaching the sections and keeping them focused and then on Saturday, the choreography was added. These boys really worked hard to accomplish this task and so did the staff, but the results at the show were worth all of the effort. The Lansing Chapter Show was really well organized and it flowed form one good act to the next. The Harmony Happening Chorus was honored to be a part of such a fine show, and a full house at the Wharton Center. POWER PLAY came in early on Saturday to spend some time with the young singers and it was a special thrill for them to get serenade up close by our international champions. The question and answer period was very interesting and the maturity of the questions asked was astounding.”

AROUND THE WORLD

VM: Lookin’ for a good barbershop show to take your spouse/significant other/civil partner/ or just plain date to? VOCAL MAJORITY will be performing their Spring Show April 16, 17, 18, singing such hits as “Who'll Take My Place (When I'm Gone),” “Puttin' On the Ritz,” and “Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho.” You also get to hear MaxQ as their special guest quartet. Tickets are $10 - $41, (transportation to the Charles W. Eisemann Center for the Performing Arts in Richardson, TX, not included.)

INTERNATIONAL, LOUISVILLE, KY
The first four district competitions (MAD, SWD, FWD, & EVG) have yielded these qualifiers for International quartet competition: Max Q – 89.5, Gotcha! – 89.1, Metropolis – 86.9, Wheelhouse – 84.9, SatEveningPost & Flipside – 84.2. (Just for comparison, recall that Power Play sang 90.5 last year to win it.)

MEET JIM TROEGER

Our new director has been involved with music since his childhood days in Frankenmuth, Michigan. Jim’s grandmother, aunts, uncles, and cousins were musical. They played in polka bands, and his grandmother taught five-year-old Jim to play the accordion. In high school, Jim specialized in tuba, but he also played “every brass instrument except the slide trombone.”

When Jim graduated from Frankenmuth High School in 1987, music looked like his future, and he began a double major in music and education at Saginaw Valley State University. However, after a year, and influenced by his job as an auto mechanic, he changed fields and received his B.S. in Automotive Technology from Sienna Heights University. For a year he even owned his own automotive repair shop. Around 1995, he joined ITT Automotive, and two years ago joined SY Systems Technologies, a firm in Dearborn that supplies Ford. He is a Process Engineer and will soon work in Advanced Quality Planning.
Jim moved to metro Detroit in 1988, following his mom (a certified master floral designer) and dad (a career Air Force man who is now the supervisor of the 927th’s Aeronautical Reserve Technicians at Selfridge). At that time, despite his musical upbringing, Jim had never heard of barbershop. A neighbor, Bob Biallas, (whose rebuilding of a 1963 Plymouth Fury III convertible attracted Jim’s help) invited him to the Rochester chapter. Jim was blown away. Seven months later, he formed his first quartet, ULTERIOR MOTIVES, singing bass. In another two months, they were in the 1989 Pioneer District spring convention quartet contest, coached by Denny Gore. Jim was really impressed that Mark Slamka came by to give them a pep talk to still their pre-performance jitters. Denny and Mark’s membership in the Macomb County Chorus led Jim to assume a dual membership. In 1991 he sang with the Macomb chorus on the international stage in Louisville, “the thrill of my life.” In 1996 or 7, Jim’s second registered quartet, ENDEAVOR, won the Amateur Quartet championship at district convention.

In the early 1990’s, under Al Fisk’s directorship, the Rochester chapter was putting 57-58 guys on stage. Shortly thereafter, Al burned out, and Jim wooed the Rochester directorship unsuccessfully.

Fast forward to a couple years ago. Chris Miller had been bugging Jim to come to the Big Chief Chorus and possibly work into an assistant directorship position. Jim visited several times. Yet his life was busy, and time passed. Last fall, he saw our directorship-search posted, but it wasn’t until Jeff Spires and Chuck Murray pressed him at a Rochester afterglow that he thought about it seriously and applied.

Jim’s wife is Jennifer, and they live in Rochester with their two children, Abigail (6) and Alyssa (4).

Besides barbershop, Jim’s hobbies include computers, homemade beer and wine-making, and his 85-gallon salt-water “reef tank.”

P.S. Jim was bulletin editor in Rochester for a couple years, so he’ll appreciate my need for “material.”

**The bung-bung system.** Good stories get passed around. This one comes from the Grosse Pointe *Pitch-Pipe*, Bob Rancilio, editor, who picked it up from the Macon, GA *Sharptalk*, Fred Hinesley, editor, who picked it up from notes provided by Dr. David Wright to his barbershop harmony history class at Harmony College, August, 1998. It’s reminiscent of *The Music Man*.

“Our founding father, O. C. Cash, was born in 1892 and raised in a part of Oklahoma described as a rather wild area. His father was a leading citizen in the community and was president of the school board. One day two hoboes who had been kicked off a train by a railroad detective wandered into the general store and overheard Mr. Cash remark that the community needed a schoolmaster.

“One of them, a man named Jim Wiley, said, “I can teach.” Mr. Cash, who was understandably skeptical, asked him if the world was flat or round. The hobo replied, “I can teach it either way.”  “You’ve got a job,” said Mr. Cash.
“Wiley became the local school master and also organized a night school in which he taught mathematics one evening and music another. Young O.C. Cash attended the music classes and later recalled the Wiley taught his pupils to harmonize by arpeggiating chords of familiar chords on the syllable “bung.” Wiley called this the bung-bung system, and it made a permanent impression on Cash.

“One day some law enforcement officers appeared at the school and told all of the children to go home. Mr. Wiley, they explained had to go away for a while. He never returned. Forty years later, after Cash had become a lawyer, he decided to try to find out what had happened to this man. He discovered that Jim Wiley had died in an Illinois penitentiary, after being convicted of forgery. Cash always believed that he was framed.”

**Three BOOKs ON BARBERSHOP**

1. *Four Parts, No Waiting*, by Averill Gage.
   Averill is an ethnomusicologist who wrote this book about barbershop. This review is by John McComb, Bryn Mawr, Pa. Mainliners.

   “I just finished reading the book and I highly recommend it for any barbershopper or anyone interested in barbershop quartets. The history it describes is somewhat different from what I had previously heard, but it certainly seems logical and the author provides plenty of detail, including the names and members of early quartets and examples of printed music to illustrate the points he makes. He discusses the history of close harmony singing from about 1830 on, including influences, performance venues, recordings and sheet music publishing. He spends a great deal of time on the barbershop revival movement including the social influences and effects. He discusses the histories of the various modern barbershop societies, the growth of choruses, international conventions and even the Harmonet. He even includes a CD of barbershop recordings, including a recreation of a song from around 1840, a wax cylinder recording from 1894, a large number of barbershop standards recorded between 1901 and 1927, several SPEBSQSA champion quartets and a Sweet Adeline quartet and chorus. I found a few minor errors, but overall, it seems very accurate and well researched, with lots of credit given to well known barbershoppers and the Society.”

Mark DeWitt (Bay Area Metro Chapter) adds: I found it fascinating how the book basically says that barbershop was created from a real “melting pot” of musical and cultural influences. I've used the sound bite that Louis Armstrong was a barbershopper to shake up people's notions of barbershop. We've sold some copies through Mainely A Cappella, but I'm not sure we've sold any to KIBers since the book supports the notion of an evolution of barbershop sound.

2. For $14.95 you can get Fred Gielow’s classic book, *Laughter, Love and a Barbershop Song*, in a new, soft-cover edition. Being distributed by Jim Coates (www.coatesbshop.com) and touted by him with these words:
   “You’ll laugh, you’ll cry, you’ll nod knowingly as you read these wonderful stories from many of the icons of the barbershopping hobby. From the gentle poignancy of Lou Perry and Earl Moon reduced to tears at a song at Harmony College, to the hilarious antics of Freddie King and his cohorts in a “Toy Car” on the highway (and don’t miss the very tongue-in-cheek Foreword by Walter Latzko), you won’t be able to put this book down.

“You’ll be caught up in stories about the SIDEWINDERS, SUNOWNERS, and SUNTONES, the BOSTON COMMON, BLUEGRASS STUDENT UNION, and BUFFALO BILLS, and the OK FOUR, ORIOLE FOUR, and even the OSMOND BROTHERS, among many others. You’ll read contributions from Sam Aramian, Buzz Haeger, Carl Hancuff, Kenny Hatton, Forry Haynes, Val Hicks, Freddie King, Lou Laurel, Jim Massey, Doran McTaggart, Marty Mendro, Lou Perry, Vern Reed, Lou Sisk, Fred and Lloyd Steinkamp, Jiggs Ward, and too many more to mention. In all, there are over 250 barbershoppers mentioned by name, along with over 45 chapters and more than 100 quartets.

“Aside from being a collection of delightful stories, this book chronicles what it means to be a singer and a barbershopper – the first time you ring a chord with three others, being a member of a chorus or a quartet, performing for your friends and family in shows and contests, touching someone’s life with your song – in short, why it is that we barbershoppers do what we do.

“From tales of travel woes to pranks on other performers, from mishaps with props to crawling goosebump moments, from nursing homes to Broadway performances, everyone who’s ever been a barbershopper (or in any kind of performing group, for that matter) will see yourself in one (or more!) of these many delightful stories of living a life in song!”

3. And finally, Dick Reinholt (rreinholt@comcast.net) has been putting Bob McDermott’s book, *The History of the Pioneer District* on the web. It’s about done, but he’d still like more photographs of our past Quartets, choruses, and individuals. Check it out at:

**Calendar**

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<tr>
<td>Apr 2 Fr</td>
<td>48th Annual Woodshed Contest</td>
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<td>Apr 6, Tu</td>
<td>BCC Rehearsal, Crary, Al Fisk coaching</td>
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<td>Apr 7, We</td>
<td>Exec Bd Meeting, DeNio’s</td>
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<td>Apr 11, Su</td>
<td>66th anniversary of SPEBSQSA</td>
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<td>Apr 13, Tu</td>
<td>BCC Rehearsal, Central United Meth. Church</td>
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Apr 17, Sa  |  xxxxAnniversary, Pont/Waterford Chpt
Apr 20, Tu  |  BCC Rehearsal, Crary
Apr 22, Th  |  BCC Rehearsal, Central United Meth. Church
          |  Linda Liddicoatt, coaching
Apr 23-25, F-Su | District Spring Convention, Gaylord
Apr 26, M,7:30 | Road Show. Don S. Hubert VFW hall, 27345 Schoolcraft,
                |  Redford
May 14-16, F-Su | Harmony Round Up, @ MSU
Jun 11, Fr  |  Windsor Sendoff
June 27-July 4 | International Convention, Louisville, KY
Aug 1-8  |  Harmony College, Missouri Western State Coll, St. Joseph, Mo

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP (2004)
Director: Jim Troeger
(248-853-4360)
Assc. Directors: Dick Johnson, Bruce Collins
President: Pete Mazzara
(313-563-4026)
Past President: Gene Downie
VP: Chapter Dev: Jim Owens
VP: Music and Performance: Roger Holm
VP: Marketing & PR: Walt DeNio
Secretary: Bill Holmes
Treasurer: Dick Johnson
Members at Large: Jack Teuber, Zaven Melkonian
Chorus Manager: Art Carinci
Music Team: Roger Holm, Johnson, Collins, Doig, Ensign, Melkonian, Prueter
Bulletin Editor: John Cowlishaw
Music Librarian: Ted Prueter
Singing Valentines: Wayne Cheyne
Sunshine (Chaplain): Bill Dabbs
YMIL: Jack Teuber
House of Delegates: Bill Pascher
State grants: Gene Downie
2004 Show Chairman: Gene Downie/Len Barnes
    Show Script: Jeff Doig
    Cast Party: Bruce Brede
Quartet Activity: Bruce Brede
Pole Cats: Zaven Melkonian
Woodshedding: Len Barnes
Rehearsal Coordinator: Mike Frye
Picnic: Tom Ford, Walt Bachmann
Website: Yong McDowell