ARDON THE PATCH

BCC held its first “Christmas in July” on the 20th. A number of guests participated as we worked on new Christmas songs.

Thanks again to Roger Holm for distributing each week’s practice plan in advance.

Be sure you have a copy of Director Jim Troeger’s song list, July 13, 2004, with forty songs, and our expected progress in learning them.

Jim also introduced a “survivor-type” competition into our practice July 27th. Four tribal teams were created, Ojibway, Sioux, Chippewa, Cherokee, and first night’s winner, the Chippewa men.

Our 2004 summer picnic is Friday, Aug 20 at Tom and Beth Ford’s house, 8856 Bridge Lake Rd, Clarkston, 248-625-5819.

QUARTET NEWS

B Natural has two gigs coming up August 7th, one at the Corvette show at the Waterford police station, and another at a 50th wedding anniversary at White Lake Oaks. They’re also scheduled to sing Sept 16 at Ted Prueter’s MARSP event at the VFW hall.

Gayle Mohler reports that Impresario (Howington, Arnold, Collins, Mohler) sang for the City of Southfield concert in the parks a couple of weeks ago. They opened for The Red Garter Band and then sang at intermission. They were very warmly accepted by all. July 24 they did a benefit for M.S. at Central United Methodist church. They received many kudos, and some very good compliments from a couple of barbershoppers that were there. “Our quartet is growing and maturing by leaps and bounds and our sound is really amazing, but then maybe I’m partial to us.”

Newly named Jackpot (Ford, Nevaux, Cowlishaw, Melkonian) had a chance to present its new number, “Hush,” to the chorus a couple of times this past month. Jackpot is now preparing for a gig, Aug 27th at the White Horse.

Four Wheel Drive (Monroe, Plosky, Cowlishaw, Melkonian) is back in business and preparing for Bush League, September 25th. Their first return engagement, at a Huron Valley benefit Show on June 27th, was their first gig in 7 ½ months.

MEMBERSHIP (at 56)

Renewals: Ross Ensign (22), Don Sheridan (43)
Birthdays: August: Mike Keith (5th), Tom Ford (10th), Bill Auquier (24th), Jeff Doig (29th), Tom Tailford (29th)
BSOM – July – Neil Braun for his continued interest, cooperation and support and for his efforts in assisting Bill Pascher.
Illnesses – Pete Mazzara (knee), Zaven Melkonian (shingles), Bill Pascher (several falls)

AROUND THE DISTRICT

There were 27 new members who qualified for The Ancient Harmonious Society of Woodshedders (AHSOW) at the Louisville Convention. Those from Pioneer district included Rob Grimmell (Windsor & Macomb), Randy Meldrum (Saginaw Bay), and Matt Tipton (Macomb). Rob and Matt’s entries mean that all four members of Border Crossing are now qualified. Our friend Chuck Barrett also qualified. These gentlemen qualified on all three harmony parts + “woodshed” melody.

Big changes at Macomb. Carl Dahlke shocked the chorus July 15 by resigning as the musical director after three years. Not to worry. The new director will be Jack Slamka. Jack is a charter member of Macomb and served as director on two previous occasions, both times leading the chapter to District Championships and international competition qualification. Jack took a leave from the chorus in 1999 to pursue a gold medal of his own.

Jack & Kitty Slamka held their Fifth annual Harmony Hideaway Happening Saturday July 24th, at their home/farm in Riley Twp. The festivities included a Kids talent show, Horseshoes, food (Dogs, Brats, Sloppy Joes and
other good stuff), Beer, Pop & Bottled Water (provided). The show included singing by a number of quartets, including Four Voices, Infinity, and Lynne Peirce’s quartet in a comedy number dressed as nuns.

(From Al Fisk) We'll have five different contests at Pioneer District Fall Convention in Kazoo: Senior International Prelims Quartet Contest (Friday night only), Novice Quartet Contest (Friday night and Saturday night, if necessary), District Quartet Championship Contest (eight make the cut from Friday to Saturday night), and the International Prelims Chorus Contest and Most Improved Chorus Award (Saturday afternoon).

AROUND THE WORLD

PROBE Photographers David Wagner and Grady Kerr took 2679 photos during the convention. They are all online and available at the PROBE site.

John Grant from Great Britain posted this note about the International Eisteddfod:

A Barbershop Chorus has won the "Choir of the World" at the International Eisteddfod (eye-stethe-vod) held annually in Wales at Llangollen (don't ask!) The winning chorus was Cambridge Chord Company, which has probably introduced competition Barbershop to a more diverse range of musicians during this event, than any other ensemble. The chorus’s web site says: “The Cambridge Chord Company is the foremost men's chorus of its kind in Europe. We aim to promote the enjoyment of close-harmony singing through a spirit of friendship, musical excellence, comedy, and love of a good song. With our roots in the traditional four-part harmonies of the barbershop style, developed further by the arrangements of our internationally renowned musical director Paul Davies, we have built our repertoire to include a variety of musical genres. We have performed and competed in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Eire, the USA and Canada. We have sung in auditoriums and bars, football stadiums and fish-markets and even a swimming pool. Our aim is to entertain our audiences through the unique power of the human voice in a manner they have never experienced before.”

Some facts about Eisteddfod: Over 3 million people have visited the Eisteddfod since its inception in 1947, around 80,000 visitors a year. There have been over 400,000 competitors take part during this time. Luciano Pavarotti and Placido Domingo have both sung there. Over the 6 days of competition over 6,500 competitors take part. Five members of the Royal family have visited the Eisteddfod including Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles and Lady Diana, Princess Anne and Princess Margaret. Check out: http://www.international-eisteddfod.co.uk/

Joseph Schlesinger of the New Tradition Chorus writes of the “injustice of our Society's having snubbed the Mills Brothers for honorary membership.

“OK, perhaps the Osmonds deserved their honoraries for making their first splash on the national entertainment scene by being a barbershop quartet, but throughout their career, the Mills Brothers did more for growth of barbershop harmony than any other non-SPEB quartet. In the 1940s they released two albums of barbershop songs--maybe not contest suitable, as there was some instrumental accompaniment, as well as the Mills' incomparable vocalizing of musical instrumentation--but still, from the arid period of the mid-1930s till the late 1940s, they were one of the greatest champions of our musical style, in addition to the other close harmony they performed.”

MEET MEL PARRISH

Mel was born in Hazel Park in 1918. His dad was a school custodian and his mom a housewife, and they had seven kids including a son who was a police
beating his captain in Hawaii. He enjoys working in his yard in Lake Orion, news media. An informal link to the press that engendered many barbershop stories in the local award, the plaque honoring him for his “distinguished service in promoting the bicentennial committee. He won a humanitarian award from Pontiac on several occasions. And in 1991, Governor Engler presented him with the minute man award, the plaque honoring him for his “distinguished service in promoting the community and state of Michigan.” The contacts that Mel made allowed an informal link to the press that engendered many barbershop stories in the local news media.

Music is Mel’s main hobby. He tried golf years ago, but gave it up after beating his captain in Hawaii. He enjoys working in his yard in Lake Orion, where he has a pool for turtles with a paddlewheel, and where he can view the local birds.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(From Chuck (the tenor) Barrett)

Hi John (and Corinne)

I enjoyed reading yet another excellent edition of Smoke Signals. I wish we had a bulletin for our chorus, Capitol Chordsmen, in Madison, WI but our small size, about half that of the BCC, has its limits.

It was great to see you, John, and Zaven at the convention in Louisville. My wife, Lin, was very pleased as well. Maybe this will result in a visit to your Fall chorus show. By the way, after we visited outside the AHSOW room that day in Louisville, I was inspired to go in and qualify for the last two harmony parts as a member (since 1984) of this fine singing group of woodshredders.

Please note that the quartet in which I presently sing tenor is named, Tag-a-long. The quartet, Generation Gap, (mentioned in the last Smoke Signals) is the one with which I sang in Cincinnati prior to transferring my membership to the BCC. Generation Gap is still active in Cincinnati (members from the Delta Kings Chorus) and we were able to sing together at the convention in Louisville. What a reunion!

Keep up the good work at the BCC. I’m happy to see that the membership is still over 50 and that Bill Pascher is still an active barbershopper. Lin and I are considering attending the International Society’s winter convention in Jacksonville, Florida in January 2005. Any chance that members of the BCC will be there? If we go I may be spotted wearing my Detroit Pistons ball cap.

Best regards to all.

(From Chris Elmore)

Dear Big Chief Friends,

I have taken a new job in Tennessee and will not be able to sing with you. It has truly been a pleasure meeting all of you. The Big Chief Chorus has always been a lot of fun. I am sorry that my job kept me from being able to participate on a more consistent basis. Good luck to everyone.

MINUTES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS (excerpts)

July 16, 2004, (Bill Holmes, Secretary)

Treasurer, Dick Johnson, submitted a detailed report. The balance is $4,023.34.

The Music Committee Chair, Roger Holm, presented his report noting that the very useful music schedule submitted by Jim Troeger will be followed as a guide. Roger said that nine songs will be on the “CD” which is being prepared. The BCC will invite Canterbury residents to a mini-show during rehearsal later in August. At this time the chapter can present a gift to be used for the residents in...
and clicking the link to "Strategic
on that path, though one of those necessary changes — a reduction in staff — was
bright and prosperous future. Several changes have occurred recently to help us
In June I wrote to say that we must change if we are to grow and flourish in a
Gentlemen:
Our Society President, Rob Hopkins, has asked us to distribute the following
message from Kenosha:

TRIVIA TIME. Benjy Trollop of New Zealand won one of the PROBE awards
this year for creating an extensive Trivia File covering all aspects of the history
of international competition, including everyone who has appeared on
the international stage, every quartet, every chorus, scores and more from 1939 to
present day. That list shows that Pioneer District is the 4th highest district in the
Society (behind FWD, JAD, and ILL) in winning quartet medals with 28.
(1) How many quartets are given medals each year?
(2) Name the three Pioneer District Quartet gold-medal winners prior to
Power Play? (Answers at end of bulletin)

STATE OF THE SOCIETY

Our Society President, Rob Hopkins, has asked us to distribute the following
message from Kenosha:

Gentlemen:

In June I wrote to say that we must change if we are to grow and flourish in a
bright and prosperous future. Several changes have occurred recently to help us
on that path, though one of those necessary changes — a reduction in staff — was
exceedingly difficult and painful. Nevertheless, with the help of our members, we
will move ahead and create a brighter future.

At its June 29th meeting, the Society Board reaffirmed the action taken in July
2002 whereby the Board adopted the practice of regularly representing the Society as the "Barbershop Harmony Society" while maintaining the Society’s legal name as SPEBSQSA, Inc. A professional marketing survey of members and prospective members ages 18-54 revealed that both prospective members and our own members preferred “Barbershop Harmony Society” to “Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America.” The Board encourages chapters, effective immediately, to use “Barbershop Harmony Society” in all communication and promotions activities.

The Society Board did not adopt a new logo, but one will be prepared for consideration in the near future. The slogan “Keep the Whole World Singing” will be maintained, given that it has the overwhelming support of both members and prospects in the professional marketing research that was conducted.

A recent and very difficult change was necessary to address our chronic budget problems. We have done what we could to reduce costs and maximize assets over the past few years without reducing staff size significantly. It became clear that we could not continue to ignore the facts: we have been running deficits, and the largest portion of our costs is a result of personnel. The Society Board asked our new CEO, Don Harris, to streamline our current operations in order for the Society to regain a solid financial footing. Sadly, we cannot afford as large a staff today as we have had in the past, and a significant reduction in force on July 15 meant that we had to say goodbye to some very dedicated employees. This was an absolute economic necessity. No further layoffs are anticipated at this time.

Our Society staff is dedicated to serving you and meeting your needs. (For the)
new staff organization, go to www.spebsqsa.org/contacts. Our CEO Don Harris
will soon be hiring staff to fill the few open positions, and those appointments
will be announced in LiveWire and in The Harmonizer.

As part of our plan to help the Society prosper in the future, the Society Board
endorsed the marketing plan submitted by Clarke Communication Group as a
guide for Society marketing efforts. I invite you to read the plan by going online
to http://www.spebsqsa.org/id_062759 and clicking the link to "Strategic
Marketing Plan– June 28, 2004.pdf." As a part of our ongoing marketing effort,
the Board has asked the Society Laws and Regulations Committee to prepare, for
action at the next Board meeting, amendments to existing Standard Chapter
Bylaws to make the Marketing and Public Relations Officer a mandatory position
in chapters in excess of 25 members and a recommended position in all other
chapters. We simply need to stop being "the best-kept secret!"
Your Society staff and your Society leadership are committed to helping all our members make their barbershop harmony experience become even more rewarding and enjoyable in the years to come. You can help accomplish that goal by sharing your love of barbershop singing with those you meet, and encouraging other male singers to join a Society that will positively change their lives! Thank you for everything you do to make our Society great and for the encouragement and support you give me and the rest of the Board of Directors and staff. Let’s keep the whole world singing!

Sincerely,
Rob Hopkins, 2004 Society President

The cuts have included: Ev Nau and Dick Bek (Membership), Lorin May (Harmonizer), Reed Sampson (Public Relations), Geri Sorenson (Part-time computer tech), Russ Foris (Media and Archives), Nancy Foris and Tom Barr (Old Songs Library), Chris Carlson (Database and Web design) and Dorothy Reuter (Archivist/Museum curator).

Since the changes are guided by the Society Marketing Plan, it is well worth taking the time to read. It is available as a pdf file at http://www.spebsqsa.org/id_062759. One of its points is that the Society is currently experiencing a net decline of about 500 members per year. Although 3500 new members join each year, another 4000 are leaving. The Plan was developed by Clarke Communication Group, whose chairman and CEO is Terry Clarke, bass of the 1980 international champion Boston Common quartet and a 52-year member of the Society.

According to a documentary of Elvis that showed on the History Channel, there are an estimated 35,000 Elvis impersonators today. In other words, there are more Elvis impersonators than there are Barbershoppers!!

Barbershop e-groups include Pionet for Pioneer communications, and Harmonet for worldwide Barbershop and Sweet Adelines communications. The Harmonet entries can total 30 or 40 a day. For a briefer version, try the Yahoo group Harmonet Lite, “which is a highly filtered subset of this group (and some others). It normally has just 2-5 messages a day. The folks who moderate it cull the best info, and on worthy topics they even paste threads together into a single longer message, which makes it even easier to find the parts we want. Tom Arneberg started it. For more details go to: http://arneberg.com/harmonet/lite

Then use these links:
- Post message to Harmonet Lite: HarmonetLite@yahoogroups.com
- Post message to main Harmonet: bbshop@yahoogroups.com
- Subscribe: HarmonetLite-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
- Unsubscribe: HarmonetLite-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

As part of its gold-medal performance at Louisville, Gotcha! sang “Mr Jefferson, Lord, Play that Barbershop Chord,” the earliest song to refer to “barbershop.” You can hear the original 1910 recording at http://www.archeophone.com/Resources/Recordings/302.html

From Gotcha!’s baritone, Alan Gordon: “If you happen to get the chance to see A&E’s Biography on the Osmonds, the beginning dozen minutes is all about their barbershop background. And it includes interviews with the late, great, Dr. Val Hicks.” Alan also put on Harmonet an extremely warm, gracious, and detailed thank you to everyone that helped them to the top.

Answers to Trivia questions: (1) Medals are given to the top five quartets (Gold, Silver, Bronze, 4th place, 5th place). (2) Harmony Halls (1944), AutoTowners (1966), and Gentlemen’s Agreement (1971) have won Gold from Pioneer.
CHAPTER LEADERSHIP (2004)
Director: Jim Troeger (248-853-4360)
Asst. 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
Uniforms Manager: Ron Clarke
Tape/CD Librarian: Ross Ensign
YMIH: Jack Teuber

Calendar
Aug 1-8   Harmony College, MO Western State College, St. Joseph, MO
Aug 3, T   BCC Practice
Aug 10, T  BCC Practice
Aug 12, Th Exec Bd Meeting, Bill Holmes
Aug 17, T  BCC Practice
Aug 20, F  Picnic, Tom Ford’s house
Aug 20-21  Buckeye Invitational
Aug 24, T  BCC Practice, Al Fisk coaching
Aug 31, T  BCC Practice, Sing for Canterbury residents
Sep 7, T   BCC Practice
Sep 25, Sa Bush League
Oct 15-17  Pioneer Convention, Kalamazoo
Oct 19, T  BCC Election of officers
Nov 6, Sa  Full show