



BIG CHIEF CHORUS
SMOKE
SIGNALS



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

Bulletin #22, February 11, 2003

“The loss of the **Shuttle Columbia** has touched each of us profoundly. We know that there are Society members who have had very close ties to the country's space program and NASA. Racine, home of Astronaut Laurel Clark, is a mere 13 miles from the headquarters city of Kenosha. We also learned of a barbershop connection with Mission Commander Colonel Rick Husband. Though he was not a Society member, Husband sang in a barbershop quartet in high school. All of his biographical material makes reference to his love of singing and that he was an active member of his church choir. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of the astronauts' families especially, and to those within the barbershop family who have been personally touched by this tragic loss.” (From Kenosha)

Member Wally **Plosky** just happened to be visiting Kennedy Space Center at the time and wrote: “Just shortly before 11:00 this morning, the American flag at Kennedy Space Center was somberly lowered to half staff. A lump swelled in my throat, my eyes teared, and the weight of today's tragedy oppressively bore down on me and the other visitors, most of whom only learned of the tragedy after arriving at the Space Center to witness Columbia's hopefully safe return. Gone were the frivolity, background chatter, and tourist indifference. When you

looked up into someone else's eyes, often their lips pursed, their eyes squinted and you could hear them try to suppress a sob.

“My mind was filled with a song I had been listening to on a learning tape on the drive to Cape Canaveral “With a Song in My Heart,” arranged by Jim Clancy, and sung so beautifully on the tape by Jay Peterson and Night Shift. When I found out later that Columbia's Commander Rick Husband loved music and was purported to be a baritone and a barbershop quartet singer, I couldn't help but wonder at the coincidence. I know now that I'll never listen or sing that song without thinking of Commander Husband and his brave crew of men and women who truly had a song in their heart for peace and the betterment of mankind.

“Guys, life's too short.... take the time to say hi to the guys sitting or standing around you.... give 'em a hug.... and always remember to keep a song in your heart for yourself, for them, your loved ones, and those courageous men and women who so selflessly gave and continue to give to make ours a better world.”

AROUND THE PATCH

We honored our charter member, Bill Pascher, at our final meeting of 2002. A Founder's Award was created in his honor, of which he is the first recipient. This April 17th, the chorus and Bill will be celebrating our 60th anniversary. Furthermore, as Kenosha points out, this April is also the 65th anniversary of the founding of SPEBSQSA.

An ensemble from the chorus sang at Uncle Sam Night, hosted by the Windsor chapter, Friday, Jan. 17th.

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE has been busy lately. On Jan. 24, they sang at the Pontiac Masonic Hall, for their installation of officers. On Jan. 27, a 3-hr gig at Mac Phee's as background for an Ortonville Chamber of Commerce mixer went especially well. (“Wallpaper,” we call it, “imitating a pianist in the background,” Chuck Murray calls it.) And on Feb. 5, they sang four songs on Dr. Franklin's WPON radio show, using the occasion to talk up the Valentines program.

Videotapes of our Fall show, *Return to Oz*, were distributed last week. If you didn't get yours, arrange to get your \$7.50 to Dick Johnson.

Our big plan for the spring is a Singing Retreat, March 21-23, at the MacMullan Conference Center on Higgins Lake. Dr. Jeff Taylor, Choral Music Director at the Unionville School of Arts, Toronto, Canada, will be our trainer.

Chris and Nancy's dog, Isis, won championship status at the Novi Expo Dog Show.

MEMBERSHIP

Birthdays:

Feb – Bill Pascher 10th, Pete Mazzara 23rd

Mar – Ted Prueter 9th, Don Sheridan 12th, Walt Bachmann 16th.

Barbershopper of the Month – January – **Walt DeNio**. Prez Pete wrote: Last night we gave Walt DeNio BSOM for January. We have been wanting to give him this award for the past four years but he has been on the Executive Board, and thereby ineligible for BSOM. Walt is an intelligent, creative, dedicated, hard working, and motivated Barbershopper. He has been one of our top Show AD salesmen and BCC

promoters for years. Last year he was able to get an \$1800 donation to our chapter so we could buy new risers. This year he decided not to run for a fifth term as VP for Membership, allowing us to finally give him an award. Before the dust even cleared, Walt agreed to serve as the newly established BCC Marketing/PR Chairperson. We are confident that he will do another excellent job. Hopefully all members will give Walt all the assistance they can. We proudly present Walt the BSOM for January.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

The 1980 International Champion quartet "THE BOSTON COMMON" will headline the Lansing Chapter's show at the Wharton Center for Performing Arts, on the campus of Michigan State University, Saturday, March 8, 2003 at 7:30 p.m.

Chris Miller writes: I received my *Harmonizer* this weekend to discover that once again, the Pioneer District is well represented. There, on the front cover, singing for the grads at Harmony College, is our own BORDER CROSSING quartet. I only recognized them because Roy, Dan, Matt and Robb are showing their best side (:>) Way to go guys!

THE BARONS won the 2003 International **Seniors Quartet** Contest held at the Albuquerque Midwinter Convention. The foursome from the Cardinal District, who had placed second in last year's contest, was a clear winner in the field of 25 quartets. Pioneer District's ANTIQUES ROADSHOW placed 11th.

From Prez Pete:

At our last rehearsal, we inducted Dan Atkinson (baritone) into The Barbershop Harmony Society and Big Chief Chorus. Welcome Dan, we enjoy having you in our chapter, and appreciate your fellowship and good singing. Welcome to our four newly inducted members: Bruce Collins (bari), Gayle Mohler (bass), Fred DeVries (bass), and Greg Moss (bass).

Reminder to BCC, Linda will be back to coach us on March 4th. Be there from 6:30 - 7:30pm for some extra work.

What a wonderful turn out for our Feb. 4th rehearsal, 50 men. We not only received some great coaching from Linda and Chris, but we surpassed our goal of 30 men attending the March 21-23, Singing Retreat up north. 35 men have paid, plus two more are for sure, and three more are maybes. We are excited about this next step to personal and chorus singing improvement. More info to follow. We need everyone attending the Retreat to volunteer to do little tasks which will enhance the experience, like: snacks/sodas; risers; bar; vocal warm-ups; physical warm-ups; walking; tags; woodshedding; prizes; video; photos; games; etc. Don't be shy; let us know what you are willing to do. If you can't decide, we will help you.

Dick Johnson is chairing our Search Committee for a new rehearsal venue. We love Crary MS, but we are growing and need a permanent home. If you have any suggestions, please let Dick know.

30 members said they planned to attend Pizza Night on Tuesday, Feb. 25th, since Crary M.S. will be closed. The BCC will buy the pizza at 7:00pm, at the 'Over Tyme Grill & Tap Room', 4724 Dixie Hwy., Waterford. Drinks, salads, etc. are on you, the pizzas are on us.

This is our 60th year and the Society's 65th year, so it is time that the BCC have a Historian. We badly need someone to volunteer to be our chapter Historian. They would compile and maintain our history and memorabilia.

Sing Out requests should go through our Chorus Manager, Art Carinci.

A special Happy Birthday to our charter member Bill Pascher, Feb. 10th. Bill, you are an inspiration to us all.

A reminder:

7:00pm Chapter Meeting for warm-ups, sectional, quarteting etc.

7:30pm Chorus Rehearsal

Business Meeting - before or after our break

Executive Board Meeting - 2nd Thursday of the month

Meet Bill Holmes

Bill was born in the eastern Pennsylvania mining country around Allentown, but due to his mother's illness, moved to his grandmother's home in 4th grade in Lincoln Park, MI, where he later graduated from high school.

Bill's eye was on the ministry, so he attended Eastern Baptist College in Philadelphia for four years, and then its associated Theological Seminary for 3 years, graduating with a Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1955. As a sophomore, he had married his high school sweetheart, Barbara, and started a family of three boys and a girl.

Bill's first ministry was across the river at the Magnolia NJ Baptist Church. After two years, he moved to a second pastorate in Buffalo NY, and then in 1959 to North Farmington, MI, where he was pastor for six years.

The American Baptist church is moderately liberal, but as Bill read and studied, his convictions became more liberal, until he felt he could not in good conscience continue to lead the church congregation. He wrote a letter of resignation in May 1965, but the congregation pleaded with him not to quit. However, later that year, he felt it was the best thing.

So he became an investigator for the new Michigan Department of Civil Rights, and worked there until his retirement in 1995. At first, the department investigated violations based on race, religion, ancestry, and national origin, but later it also included age, sex, handicap, marital status, and arrest record. Bill rose to Supervisor, then Assistant Director and then Director of the enforcement bureau.

Bill had sung in high school glee clubs, and wife Barb was musical, so it was natural in those first churches for Bill to direct the choir and Barb to play the organ. This continued on into the North Farmington pastorate, and even for quite a few years after his resignation as pastor. But as their church affiliation dwindled, Bill was receptive to new singing opportunities, and when he saw a Christmas sign four years ago, Bill joined.

He quickly became active, serving as secretary for 2 or 3 years, and now as librarian. He is very proud of the bass section, always generous in his praise of section-leader Roger and the other basses. His quartet experience was in the ChiefTones, with Gene Downey, Lead, Walt DeNio, Baritone, and Don Denoyer and Chuck Barrett singing tenor. The quartet has not been active since Chuck's departure.

Bill has always been an avid reader, and his reading has helped to shape the liberalization of his philosophy. Now he considers himself an objectivist as formulated by Ayn Rand. As his philosophy became more liberal, his originally Democratic politics became more conservative, and he enjoys the Rosh Limbaugh show. When he's not reading, he enjoys home improvement projects in the White Lake home that he and Barb moved to in 1992.

He is fortunate that Barb likes barbershop too. They attended the International in Nashville last year, where they bought the Vocal Majority Millennium edition of 8 CD's for \$75.

In closing he asked that I emphasize how much he appreciates the impact Chris has had on the chorus, "He's the key to our success!" And how much he has learned about singing since joining chorus (and wishes he had known as a choir director).

TREATING YOUR VOICE WELL

How many more years do you want to sing? Until you're 45? Should be no problem. Til you're 65? 80? Last month, I described Ingo R. Titze's work as the director of the National Center for Voice and Speech at the University of Iowa. This month, I am quoting from Dave Calland's column in the Nov/Dec *Harmonizer*, "Give your aging voice a clean bill of health."

"The good news for older singers is that studies show that the male voice, like fine wine, can get better with age. It keeps maturing until around 45, and with proper care can remain stable until at least age 65 – and sometimes to age 80 and beyond. The not-so-good news is that your voice definitely changes as you grow older. For example, the following ravages on the aging voice will make it weaker and less flexible:

- By age 65, the cartilages of the larynx ossify, or turn to less flexible bone, which makes your voice less bendable as well.
- The cartilages responsible for vocal fold movement become less mobile.
- There is often a thinning of the fibers in the vocal folds.
- There is often atrophy of the vocalis muscle, which controls the flip between head and chest voice.
- Changes to the neurological control of the laryngeal muscles can cause bowing (a state where the vocal folds do not come together completely). That gap during vocal production will decrease the control and quality of the voice, making it sound breathy, rough, hoarse, and softer.
- The pitch of the voice tends to rise... (Sorry basses.)

So here are Calland's suggestions for the care and treatment of aging voices:

- Always use proper vocal technique.
- [If you are too tired to use good vocal technique], take a break from singing.
- If you have already abused your voice, a speech pathologist or voice instructor may be able to help.
- Be aware of changes in voice quality or endurance; they may indicate serious disease.
- Don't smoke
- Drink lots of water
- Receive occasional checkups for nodes, polyps, tumors, or cysts on the folds.

- Moderate intake of citrus, tomato, coffee, onions, chocolate, peppermint, garlic, alcohol, and foods high in fat.
- Do not overeat or go to bed within 2-3 hrs of a meal. This practice, along with weight gain, smoking, and alcohol, has been linked to a variety of focal conditions caused by reflux disorders.

Healthy habits can add years of wonderful singing and enjoyment to our hobby!

Vocal Production - Breathing

By Chuck Murray

Don't you just love those coaching sessions we have with Linda? She has graciously taken time to help us all learn some basics of good vocal production. Guess what? What she has been working with us on is not only basic, but is some pretty important stuff for producing a good "unit sound" from the chorus. What we really need to do is apply what we have learned to *all* the songs we sing from week to week.

She has introduced some new concepts which have made us re-think how we are breathing, forming vowels like each other, and putting life into our singing. Correct breathing appears to be a common area we all could improve in. We need to realize that correct breathing utilizes the diaphragm muscles, and not lifting our shoulders to make room for the fresh, incoming air in our lungs. By dropping our diaphragms lower, we increase our lung capacity, and we can get in more air quickly. These muscles help "lifting" at the end of phrases as we tighten them to push upwards on our lungs.

One important thing to remember is that we need to know our music well enough to determine in advance just how much fresh air we will need to complete the next phrase, before we need to take in more air. Fred Kienitz, a quartet coach from Flint said, "Take in just the air you will need to complete the next phrase, and extinguish all your air before taking the next breath." Doing this insures a fresh supply of oxygen-laden air for the next phrase, and purges stale air from the lungs.

There are some exercises we all can do to help strengthen our diaphragmatic breathing. One, which I observed POWER PLAY doing in one of their practices, is to cycle a series of quick breaths using just their diaphragms. They did this while holding their mouths to form a "shish" sound through their teeth. They did this for a few minutes. If you will do this for a while, you can feel your diaphragmatic muscles start to get tired. Like the high school track star, you have to "run into the pain", or there is no gain! I.e. Go longer each time you do this exercise, and you will eventually increase your overall breathing capability.

Another simple exercise is to hold your index finger in front of your mouth, and "blow out an imaginary candle" with a series of "short puffs". Do this repeatedly, cycling the diaphragm muscles as you puff.

Still another simple warm-up exercise is to use the phonics, "Yo Ho, Ho, Ho, Ho", singing the "Yo Ho" first, followed closely by three fast "Ho, Ho, Ho's". This helps with diaphragmatic support.

A common exercise we all have used is called "bubbling". This helps us understand the importance of producing a "continuous flow of air" to get a good "unit sound". This takes some "loose lips" and a good tank of air with breath support. After you have done it, and you start to sing, the overall chorus sound quality goes up several notches. POWER PLAY also uses bubbling just before they perform, since it relaxes the soft pallet and expands the vocal cavity.

Here's to singing quality barbershop!

Minutes, Board Meeting, by Jeff Doig

The Treasurer, Dick Johnson, Reported a balance of \$13,355.55 and presented his report.

Motions by Irwin M. to accept the following as new members: Greg Moss, Gayle Mohler, Bruce Collins, Fred Devries.

Doc is working on a membership plan to include a packet with Chapter brochure, Calendar, and Chapter flow chart. Also Like to Sing badges, and ID ribbons for section leaders and officers.

YMIH:

Chuck M. presented some of the ways that he and Jeff Spires plan to reach young men in the community. They include contacting local music teachers, letters, and personal contact.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

Dick Johnson is working on the criteria for the ensemble. These criteria will determine what singers will compete in the fall contest.

Chris, because of time restrictions, reminded us that the chapter meeting, (sectionals, discussions, directions to sing outs etc.) is from 7:00 to 7:30. Chorus rehearsal is from 7:30 to 10.00. With our business meeting at or just after break. Chris also is exploring some additional directing duties with two possible new assistant directors.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pete informed us that the Calendars and Flow charts are done and will be distributed.

So far there are about 30 gigs for valentines.

Dick J. and Jeff S. will attend the Grant writing seminar on Saturday in Dearborn. There are about 30 guys signed up for the pizza night on the 25th of Feb.

There are 35 guys signed up for the retreat. And we need volunteers. There are several small jobs. Jeff D. and Dick J. will be in charge of prizes. There will be a handout soon. Chris would like us to look into getting a mentor to teach and help keep us motivated. There was some talk about a packet for the retreat. Woodshed will be at the Pontiac Country Club on the 28th of March. Pete presented our BCC Leadership/Recognition program for review.

NEW BUSINESS:

Pete presented and we are in the process of updating the BCC Vision, Mission & Goals statements for 2003.

Bill Pascher’s birthday. Bill will be 88 on the 10th of Feb. The board would like to have a birthday cake with candles for him on the 11th at rehearsal. Chuck has volunteered to get the cake.

We are looking for a chorus member to serve as the chapter historian. This year being the 60th anniversary of the chapter the board would like to start documenting the chapter’s history. We feel that now is the best time to gather all the bits and pieces of our history together in one place.

Chuck discussed an empowerment plan for the chapter. We will discuss this more at the next meeting.

We established that our singout criteria should be, FOR CHARITY, SELF PROMOTION, or MONEY.

BSOM: Gene Downie

ALL ELSE: Doc expressed his displeasure with the show tape.

The Pontiac/Waterford Chapter Big Chief Chorus 2003 – Our 60th Year

Our Vision...

The Pontiac/Waterford Chapter, of The Barbershop Harmony Society, is an ever-growing organization of men of good will who love to sing. Our Vision is to promote the quality of our chorus and quartet singing, and preserve the barbershop style.

Our Mission...

It is the mission of the Pontiac/Waterford Chapter:

- *To provide members the resources and support, through fellowship and fun, to improve their musical experience in the barbershop style.*
- *To provide quality musical entertainment in our community including an annual show, community performances, charitable activities, competitions, and barbershop music education.*
- *To actively recruit new members in order to perpetuate the craft, our chapter, and the Society.*

Chorus Goals 2003...

1. Improve Chorus Singing by:

- Scoring 750 points in Fall Competition – Chris Miller
- Holding a Singing Retreat with a minimum 80% attendance – Pete Mazzara
- Establishing a Chorus Ensemble with performance criteria - Dick Johnson
- Expand & Develop Associate Directors – Chris Miller
- Provide Outside Coaching - Executive Board
- Expand Use of Sectionals – Section Leaders

2. Increase Membership to 65 members – BCC Members
3. Have a Fall Show 2003 – Gene Downie
4. Improve Individual Singing Skills by:
 - Self Empowerment and Ownership for learning Music – BCC Members
 - Attendance at Coaching Sessions – BCC Members
 - Sending at least 4 members to Harmony College – Exec. Board
 - Sending at least 8 members to Harmony Roundup – Exec. Board
5. Young Men In Harmony - Jeff Spires & Chuck Murray
 - Establish a relationship & support with 6 area Music Educators.

Personal Goals to Help Us Meet Our Chorus Goals...

Choose at least four Personal Goals to help our Chorus achieve its Goals for 2003. We will periodically ask you to rate your progress.

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| 1. Use a pitch pipe. | 11. Improve posture & facial expression. |
| 2. Use a tape recorder. | 12. Mentally/Physically ready on Tuesday. |
| 3. Sing in a quartet. | 13. Attend <u>other</u> Chorus’s functions. |
| 4. Learn Polecats. | 14. Volunteer to chair committees. |
| 5. Attend Singing Retreat. | 15. Attend Harmony College / Roundup. |
| 6. Teach all 4 parts to one Tag. | 16. Read ‘Smoke Signals’ cover to cover. |
| 7. Improve breath control. | 17. Take part in Young Men in Harmony. |
| 8. Attend warm-up sessions @ 7:00pm. | 18. Bring one NEW person to rehearsal. |
| 9. Learn words to songs faster. | 19. Sing pretty. |
| 10. Do regular vocal exercises. | 20. Get “on-line” with email. |

Date: _____

Calendar

Feb 11	Rehearsal
Feb 13,14	Valentine's Day singouts
Feb 14,15	D.O.C. show
Feb 18	Rehearsal
Feb 22	Chorus Coaching Clinic, Lansing
Feb 25	Pizza Night @ The Over Tyme Grill, No Rehearsal
Mar 4	Rehearsal, Linda coach
Mar 11	Rehearsal
Mar 13	Exec. Bd. Mtg, 7:30, Jeff Doig's
Mar 18	Rehearsal
Mar 21-3	Singing Retreat, Higgins Lk
Mar 28	Woodshed contest, PTK Country Club
Apr 1	Rehearsal, Linda coach
Apr 11	SPEBSQSA Birthday, Founded 1938
Apr 15	Rehearsal, Linda coach & family night
Apr 17	Big Chief Chorus Birthday, Founded 1943
April 25-27	District Convention – Lansing
May 16-17	Harmony Round-up, Mich. St. Univ.
Jun 29 – July 6	International Convention, Montreal

Chapter Executive Board

Officers

Chorus Director: Chris Miller ((248-960-5101)
President: Pete Mazzara (313-563-4026)
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

Quartet Activity: Len Barnes
Service (Charity): Bruce Brede
Singing Valentine: Bob Marshall
Chorus Manager: Art Carinci
Music Librarian: Bill Holmes
Uniform Manager: Bill Auquier
Sunshine (Chaplain): Bill Dabbs
Bulletin Editor: John Cowlshaw