

Vol. 10, No. 1 (#109)

May 1, 2010

Pioneer District Spring Convention

Whee! **706 points (58.8 %); 8th place out of 15.** This year, we really gunned for the competition, so it is justifiably rewarding to earn the score that we did. All of our hard work paid off. Wearing our tuxes, red vests and black bow ties, we sang with confidence and without any major mistakes.

The **judging** was fine. Our presentation scores were higher than our music and singing scores, especially our presentation score for “Midnight Rose.” In the most startling comment, singing judge Russ Young said there were moments when we were singing in the 70’s, but we didn’t maintain it. There were some problems with balance, with Tenors being a little too strong, and even eight Bari’s were a bit much for a chorus of 38. There could have been more forward motion; think phrases, telling a story, not singing words. Practicing some director-less singing could help. On “Heart of My Heart,” there was some out-of-tune singing, and we needed more vocal energy. The Presentation judges said the dynamics were pretty good; we had a great dynamic plan, and some nice softs. But we needed to show more empathy. “And how do you show that? With your faces.” The Music judge caught on to our plan for “as the clock struck twelve” and loved it. But the chordal moves on the word “rose” weren’t together. The tag was really nice. On “Heart of My Heart,” we needed more forward motion, and also a contrast in repeated

phrases. Nevertheless, as Tom points out, we were 5th highest in Presentation scores.

As we watched our DVD, it was pointed out that the **microphones** were close to the chorus; they would be better-placed out in the auditorium, to pick up the ambient audio. Nevertheless, the judges were in front of the speakers and responding to the un-micced sound of the chorus.

What was NOT mentioned was just as important. No talk of attacks and releases. No talk of questionable interp. No talk of a weak start. (Taking a tune-up chord sure seems to have helped.)

The scores tended to group district choruses into **four groups**. Grand Rapids, Lansing, and D.O.C. were clearly the cream of our district. A second group included Kalamazoo, Hillsdale, Windsor, Battle Creek, and Pontiac-Waterford. Grosse Pointe, Muskegon, Traverse City, Huron Valley, and Flint made up a third group. And Gratiot County and Rochester were significantly weaker. Plateaus are a different breed of cat; with a score above 700 we moved up from 3rd plateau to 2nd plateau.

Comparing spring, 2010 scores with spring, 2009 scores, we were by far the most improved chorus – up from 667.

As a sign of **how relaxed we were** this year, several groups of quartetters crystallized within the warm-up room while we waited to be called for pictures.

Acoustics were better here than at Traverse City (and the spotlights were off to the side), but it was still helpful to do a sound check on the stage at 9 am.

Pontiac-Waterford had **the most men on stage – 38.** Next closest was Flint with 31, and they were augmented by men from Saginaw Valley. Altogether, 401 men sang in the chorus competition. Quite a few of us sang in the hundred-man Joe Barbershop chorus under Rob Pettigrew, a wonderful experience.

Harmony Brigade made its presence known at the convention. It’s a great addition to conventions to have a new set of ten songs, beyond the usual dozen pole cats, for inter-squad harmonizing.

Bill Auquier represented us at the House of Delegates meeting Friday. Bill spoke for several minutes in reply to President Brian Dunckel’s question, “What does the Pontiac-Waterford chapter do, that it has been the only Pioneer chapter to have increased its membership since 2007?” Bulletin awards were

given out, with our SMOKE SIGNALS winning first place, and Paul Howe's weekly WOODSHEDDER (Lansing) garnering second place. SMOKE SIGNALS goes on to International competition. There were no entries in the Public Relations contest.

In the **quartet competition**, THE PARTY out-dueled FOUR MAN FISHING TACKLE CHOIR and the RIGHT ON Q to be chosen to represent us in Philadelphia this July. YOUNG GUNS (with two of Craig Pollard's sons) will represent us in the collegiate contest, a contest that saw SIX entrants; how about that for a Youth movement? CARTE BLANCHE won the Seniors Contest. But the highest-scoring quartets were from Ohio, out of district, not competing, but singing for points to gain entry to the international contest. A MIGHTY WIND, from the Dixie District, scored 82%, and a new young quartet from Ohio, PRESTIGE, mesmerized the audience with their harmonic blend and youthful potential. There are several YouTube entries for PRESTIGE; the most recent appears to be a sampler at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cj6-TFEgL9w> They were also the teaching quartet at Rockin' Barbershop last summer.

Hosting this convention were the QCA, Quartet Champions Association.

CHORDIOLOGY got a special award for their contribution to quartet singing in the Pioneer District.

Scores are available at:

<http://www.pioneerdistrict.org/contestsummary/contmenu.htm>

Stan Lawrence and John Cowlshaw have posted **photos of the convention** on line on Snapfish which you can access directly from their emails. Michael Baribeau will undoubtedly post a couple hundred soon, also.



Stan Lawrence's photos from Snapfish

AROUND THE PATCH

The Big Chief Chorus preparations for Spring Contest included a Saturday get-together at the **Lafayette Grande** building in downtown Pontiac. Ron Clarke arranged the day, which included a light



breakfast, a lunch of roll-ups and salads, and an open bar at the conclusion of our workout. The room had good acoustics and lots of mirrors. Cowlshaw's FLIP videocam recordings, posted on YouTube drew 155 hits in ten days. It's still available at Lafayette <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gVsbJIK-xw>

Here are details on our **upcoming May singouts**.

May 6, Th, @7:00 p.m. Orion Veterans' Memorial, National Day of Prayer Warm-up 6:15 p.m. at Wojo's Garden Shop, 545 S. Lapeer Rd., Lake Orion. Class "B" uniform (blue blazer, chorus badge, red pocket puff, grey pants, white dress shirt, chorus tie, black shoes, belt and socks)

May 7, F, @ 5:30 p.m. Ronald McDonald's Fund Raiser Warm-up 5:15 p.m. 6491 E. Highland Rd., White Lake Twp. (M-59 @ Bogie Lake Rd.) Yellow Shirts, Black Pants, Black Shoes

May 13, Th @ 1:00 pm. Oakland County Retirees Lunch White Lake Oaks, Williams Lk Rd @ Pontiac Lk Rd Warm Up @ 12:30, Yellow Shirts, Black Pants, Black Shoes

The Executive Board has published a **Policies and Procedures Manual** for the chorus. Pick up your copy.

Our **new summer outfit** will be a BCC-yellow, Egyptian-cotton short-sleeved shirt. Cost is \$10, courtesy of subsidization by Jack and the Board. Thanks, Ron Clarke. Get your name and size to Ron.

Bob Marshall will be performing in *Carousel*, at the Warren Community Center Theatre, May 5,6,7,8. For details, click on:

www.heartofthehillplayers.org

The Adams High School Choral Music department is offering **hanging baskets for sale**. See Tom.

Performances thru April – 69 gigs to 3305 people (including an estimated 900 in Kalamazoo)

QUARTETS

SPARE PARTS had its first paying gig, April 21, at **St. Andrew's Catholic Church** in Rochester. There were 48 present at their Seniors' luncheon, and they loved the 35-minute show put on by Tom, Jeff, John, and Charlie. The guys included two Brigade songs.

A pickup quintet of Ray Sturdy, Chuck Murray, Jeffrey Kafer, and Wayne and Michael Oberstadt sang at **Milford High School**, April 13. The five exchanged songs with the dozen or so members of teacher Maryanne Lambrecht's a cappella ensemble, "Men of the Chorus," of which Michael is a member.

MEMBERSHIP (at 66)

New members: Michael Oberstadt, Duane Roy, and Jeffrey Kafer (13).

Welcome, Michael, Duane, and Jeffrey!

Renewals: Jim McDonald (2), Fred Pioch (3), Tom Blue (4), Dar Johnson (5), Dave Shantz (6), Bob Legato (11), Walt Bachman (12), Bill Holmes (12), Jeff Doig (18), Paul Smith (19), Tom Blackstone (24),

Pending: Bob Kleeman

Man of Note: Wayne Oberstadt (for Michael)

May Birthdays: Gene Downie (4th), Bill Dabbs (17th), Michael Oberstadt (31st)

Medical: Doc Mann was hospitalized for dehydration and subsequent medication balance issues. Tom Jackson ruptured his left Achilles tendon and is hospitalized in Alpena.

In Memoriam: Don DeNoyer, May 21, 2002 (SMOKE SIGNALS #14)

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Pioneer District on Facebook

Joe Serwach has started a Facebook page for the Pioneer District. "We're now up to 180 people on the Pioneer Facebook page, meaning we've gotten bigger than the Rocky Mountain District's Facebook page in less than 48 hours. Please pass this note to all your barbershop friends. Some great photos have already been posted." Check it out at www.facebook.com/pioneerdistrict If you want to be a member, click on "like." There's also a link to Pioneer's Facebook page on Pioneer's main page. <http://www.pioneerdistrict.org/> It's at the bottom of the 4th column.

Harmony Explosion Camp is planned for high school students at Central Michigan University on August 10-12. Recall that last year it was Rockin' Barbershop at Interlochen.

Competition news from Sweet Adelines

OVERTURE is the new Region 2 Quartet champion (including Bruce LaMarte's wife Dodie). Our show guests, IN VOICE were 2nd. FRIENDSHIP RINGS was 3rd (Pete Burns' sister and Robb Smith's wife). Spirit of Detroit Chorus is the Region chorus champion and International Rep. for Region 2 with a score of 79.5 %.

Five nearby chapters have announced their spring shows:

Holland Windmill Chorus, May 1

If you are on your way to Holland for the Tulip Festival as you read this, note that the Holland Windmill Chorus will kick off this week-long carnival on Saturday, May 1, with "Holland Sings!", combining chorus performance with West Michigan quartets and GLHB Brigadiers. Christ Memorial Reformed Church.

Flint, May 8

The Flint Arrowhead Barbershop Chorus will be presenting its annual show on May 8, at the First Congregational Church, 6494 Belsay Rd, Grand Blanc, MI. The name of the show is "We're All Irish, Too" and features many of our all time favorite Irish tunes. This is a dinner show and the doors will open at 5:00 PM. Guest quartets include "Right on Q", "Overture" (a Sweet Adeline quartet) and "A Perfect Fit". This show is written and produced by Dave Lonsbury and will be great entertainment for the whole family. Call Dave Smith, (810) 629-6901, for tickets or order on-line at www.flintarrowhead.org. Tickets are \$25 and seating is first come first served. A cash bar will also be available.

Motor City Singers, May 22

The Motor City Singers are a group of competing barbershop quartet singers. They are presenting their debut show on Saturday, May 22 @ 6:59 pm. Along with the sounds of the Motor City Singers, there will also be a cavalcade of quartets including some of Michigan's bests: CHORDIOLOGY, FOUNTAIN STREET FOUR, META-4, MOXXY, RIGHT ON Q, SINGING WITH DAD, and RESISTING-A-REST. The site is Connection Church @ 3855 South Sheldon Road in Canton, Michigan. Tickets are now available for \$15 from any member of the above quartets. Or you may purchase on line at www.motorcitysingers.com Afterglow tickets will be available at the show.

South Bend-Mishawaka, June 12

The South Bend-Mishawaka chapter will be presenting their annual show, "Barbershop Meets Doo-Wop" on Saturday, June 12, 2010. The show starts at 7:00 at Clay High School, 19131 Darden Rd., South Bend, IN. "The show will feature the Valleyaires chorus, chapter quartets and our special guests ACOUSTIX. Tickets are \$15 in advance (\$12 seniors and students) or \$17 at the door (flat price.) South Bend is just a short drive from many of the chapters in the Pioneer District, and we look forward to having you as our guests! If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at kcoley1@sbcglobal.net. Don't miss this chance to see the ACOUSTIX anniversary show!"

Macomb County Guardians of Harmony, Jun 19

"The Guardians of Harmony will be presenting their show on Saturday, June 19, at 7:00 PM at Clintondale High School in Clinton Township, near 15 Mile Road and Gratiot. The featured quartet will be NITRO from the Toronto area, 2008 Ontario District champions. This young, energetic, and entertaining quartet is worth the price of admission alone. The Guardians will be featured in a section of the show called "The Greatest Generation", and you will have to figure out from the songs which one it is. Also on the show are chapter quartets, RIGHT ON Q and SINGING WITH DAD. Following the show will be an Afterglow, to be held at the VFW, Bruce Post, on Jefferson, just above 11 Mile Road."

AROUND THE WORLD

Who would have Dominated if Champs could Re-compete? (From <http://www.barbershophq.com/?p=1362>)

What if the champs could compete in the years after they won? How many championships would the Buffalo Bills(1950) have won had they continued to compete? Based on their singing level through the 1950s, would they have continued to win all the way until the Suntones (1961), or would The Confederates(1955) have stolen a few? Would Dealer's Choice(1973) been a true novice champ if the quartets ahead of them had still been competing? How many championships would Bluegrass Student Union(1978) had under their belts? Would they have beat Boston Common(1974-1980) in 1980?

And can anyone imagine what contests would have looked like in the early 1990s with Acoustix (1990), Keepsake (1992) and The Gas House Gang (1993) gunning at each other year after year?

Who would have won the most medals if champs could keep competing? Which era would have been the most competitive? This post is just for fun. [Take the poll and leave your comments!](#)

Midwest Vocal Express

Tom Blackstone got his barbershop start in 1989 as a charter member of the Midwest Vocal Express in Greendale, WI. You can see how they have evolved in International competition at <http://www.mve.org/> Almost at the bottom are links to two YouTube videos, "Midwest Vocal Express 20 years pt 1 and pt 2."

How SPEBSQSA got started

In case you've never heard the story, Grady Kerr has recaptured it, with additional details at:

<http://www.barbershop.org/news-a-events-main/299-72-years-ago-it-all-started-with-26-men-on-a-roof.html>

Credit Card Fraud

"The Society has received reports of credit card fraud from a small number of our members. We have already coordinated efforts with the authorities and with the credit card companies to address security concerns, and are continuing steps to ensure the ongoing safety and privacy of all personal and financial Membership information.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Society CFO Heather Verble directly at ext. 4133. (Monday, April 26, 12:11pm CST)

MEET RAY STURDY

Ray was born and raised in northwest Detroit. His dad was an engineer who designed railroad cars and diesel engines. His mom worked for an insurance company. His formal musical training included a little trumpet in grade school, which taught him to read music and led to bugle boy duties in his local boy scout troop. In high school, he sang in the choral music classes, albeit that most of the members were there as kids in trouble to be boot-camped by the very large and notorious Mr. Luscomb.

Ray graduated from Henry Ford High School and entered the University of Michigan in 1962 to gain his degree in electrical engineering. He was hired by Detroit Edison where he spent ten years doing structural engineering work in their high voltage transmission projects group. During that period he enrolled in night classes at Wayne State, and received a law degree in 1974. Detroit Edison was just retooling their legal department, and Ray was able to jump right in, working on local, state,



and federal regulatory matters. At first it meant commuting frequently to Lansing and later involved commuting between Detroit and Washington, D.C., helping lawmakers in their analysis and development of energy legislation in the wake of OPEC and ENRON-related issues.

He met his wife Judy in high school. They have lived in Plymouth for 34 years where they raised five kids, Jill (a journalist and media specialist), Laura (a California dental assistant “to the stars”), twins Patrick (attorney) and Michael (a college professor teaching Chaucer in Yokohama), and John (a commercial photographer in Chicago). They both claim they always stayed together because nobody would take the kids. Now, they get to watch them raise their nine grandchildren. Judy has worked as a party and wedding planner.

A fellow Edison employee who sang in the Sun Parlour Chorus started inviting Ray and Judy to the Windsor barbershop shows in the early 1970's. The emcee was always a smiling young, mustachioed high school principal by the name of Doran McTaggart. But it wasn't until 1988 that two neighbors “hauled me over to the local chapter around the corner (Wayne) where Freddy McFadyen gave me a voice placement test and declared me a baritone.”

Several years into that experience three of the Wayne veterans pulled him into a quartet called TODAY'S LINEUP which sang together for six years. “We had a ball. We sang at fairs, luncheon club programs, and malls at Christmas time.” Medical issues for two of the members ended the quartet's life after six years, and a major job change then forced Ray to drop out of barbershop singing altogether.

He retired from his 41-year career at Detroit Edison four years ago, bought a house on the Lake Huron shore south of Alpena and was considering a move there “when I thought I might give barbershopping another try.” At D.O.C. he caught the bug again and started singing with them two years ago. Last November, Zaven mentioned BCC was having a guest night, so he thought he'd find out how long it took to drive from Plymouth to Pontiac. He has enjoyed Tuesdays in Pontiac ever since.

Today, Ray's only time constraints are barbershop chapter meetings and a little bit of government work he does twice a month. And, of course, learning the contest and show repertoire for two chapters, ten new Harmony Brigade songs, and nine new songs for Harmony University, which he will attend for the first time this summer.

Recognizing our repertoire

Here are ten final songs from our repertoire. Match them with the descriptors below. (Answers at end of this bulletin)

21. It is well with my soul
22. Kiss the Girl
23. Let the rest of the world go by

24. Lida Rose
25. McNamara's Band
26. Midnight Rose.
27. Ridin' Down the Canyon
28. This is my Country
29. Under the Boardwalk
30. Precious Lord

Descriptors:

- ___ Written by Thomas Dorsey, the “father of black gospel music” after the death of his wife in childbirth, and memorably recorded by Mahalia Jackson.
- ___ A calypso song from “The Little Mermaid”
- ___ Bing Crosby's 1945 tongue-in-cheek song is often sung on St. Patrick's Day.
- ___ A 1940 patriotic song by Don Raye and Al Jacobs, and popularized by Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians
- ___ Composed by Horatio Spafford after the loss of his business in the great Chicago Fire and the loss of his family at sea. Used in a medley honoring the victims of United Airlines Flight 93.
- ___ A hit pop song written by Kenny Young and Arthur Resnick and recorded by The Drifters in 1964.
- ___ When this song was played over the Lodge's nightly radio program, it was the signal for a rustler raid in the Roy Rogers 1942 movie of the same name.
- ___ Written by J. Keirn Brennan, a charter member of ASCAP, and used in the score of at least seven different Hollywood films.
- ___ The all-time most requested barbershop song.
- ___ A 1923 fox-trot ballad by Sidney Mitchell and Lew Pollack.

Big Chief Jeopardy, #39. (Did you get these?)

1. **Answer:** He helped pass a county millage that led to the “Oaks” County Park system and the second wave pool in America. **Question:** Who is Tom Jackson?
2. **Answer:** Their Christmas concert included POWER PLAY and the whole Northern Lights chorus which bussed in from Toronto. **Question:** Who are the Macomb County Guardians of Harmony?

Big Chief Jeopardy, #40. (Try these.)

1. **Answer:** They began as a pickup quartet (Bill Nevaux, John Cowlshaw, Zaven Melkonian, and Tom Ford) during the 2003 Christmas season, and sang together for three years.

2. **Answer:** This quartet's evolution began in 1985 as FAMILY FORUM.

(Clues to the **Questions** in Issues # 72 and 82.)

Odds and Ends

Greg Moss bought a pitchpipe on E-bay that was manufactured sometime around 1880. Moving the needle through the various keys (or any pitch in-between) slides a cylinder in the tube that generates a surprisingly accurate pitch when blown like a whistle.



There is a wonderful collection of **barbershop tags** at: <http://www.barbershoptags.com/dbpage.php?pg=home> , both scores and audiovisual. (Thanks, Mike Frye.)

Austin Quinn had a helpful metaphor for taking a breath during a phrase. It's like stepping off of, and back on to, a moving treadmill.

The RUBES cartoon site has been offering several barbershop-related cartoons. Try out: <http://comics.com/rubes/2010-04-20/>

Trying to think up a **new quartet name**? If all else fails, try <http://www.bandnamemaker.com/>

Our ex-bass, **Dave Willett, will be walking 60-miles** over three days, starting August 13 in the Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure in support of his recovering wife, Carla. Net proceeds from the Komen 3-Day for the Cure are invested in breast cancer research and community programs. "Komen for the Cure® works hard to build a future without breast cancer, and I plan on raising \$2300.00 to help bring us closer to that goal."

Lend Me a Tenor

Maybe we have what Broadway is looking for. "Lend Me a Tenor" opened Sunday night at the Music Box Theater, and we have a goodly supply. It's a "dizzying plot about an ailing Italian tenor, his jealous wife, a sexy soprano, a scheming impresario and his mousy factotum with dreams of opera stardom. "Lend Me a Tenor" was a big hit in its first Broadway run two decades ago, playing for more than a year and winning a Tony for the great Philip Bosco in the role of the impresario." (NYTimes)

Letters:

(From George Doyle, Pioneer District Director of Membership)

Hello Jack, just a note to let you know that your chapter was the subject of several conversations at convention last weekend. Many people including Paul Wietlisbach, Director of Education at BHS headquarters, noted significant growth in your membership. In fact, the Pontiac-Waterford chapter is the only chapter in Pioneer District that has shown growth since 2007! We cornered Bill Holmes and Bill Auquier and both said getting out in the community, being known, and offering personal invitations to join seem to be key. Whatever it is you're doing, keep up the good work! Please let your entire membership know that the Pontiac-Waterford chapter is being used in Pioneer District as an example to prove that retention and growth are possible. Congrats to you and your board and your entire membership.

(From Don Roemer, who visited our chapter from the Ambassadors of Harmony chorus last month)

Hi John,

Thanks for the copy of your newsletter. You actually had me going for a few moments with the Jim Clancy thing!

I really enjoyed my visit to your practice a couple weeks ago. The singing was fun, both at practice and at the restaurant (the chicken and beer wasn't bad either!). May be back again in June, and certainly for the Dream Cruise.

And if you're ever in the St. Louis area on a Thursday, please come to an AOH practice (Monday & Thursday in June). Speaking of Clancy, we had a great coaching session with Greg Clancy last week, and he'll be back a couple more times before Philly.

You write a great newsletter.....please keep me on the list. And much success to the chorus next weekend at contest.

Chordially,
Don Roemer

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On-line at <http://www.bigchiefchorus.org/>

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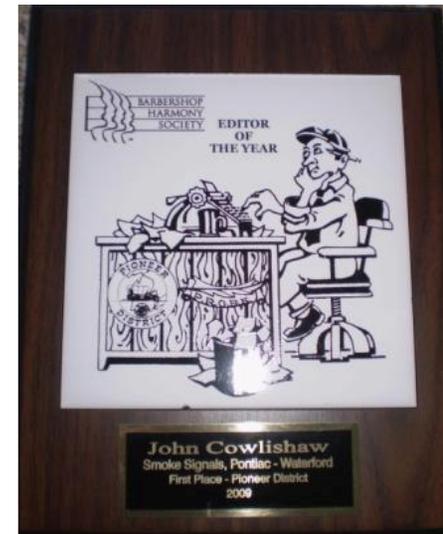
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Thanks for all the Chieftain support

(Answers to repertoire-matching: 30-22-25-28-21-29-27-23-24-26)

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Director: Thomas Blue (248-814-9627)

Assistant Directors: Fred McFadyen, Dick Johnson, & Bill Holmes

President: Jack Teuber (248-334-3686)

Past President: Doc Mann (248-628-0189)

VP: Chapter Dev: Bill Holmes

VP: Music and Performance: Roger Holm

VP: Marketing & PR: by committee of Melkonian et al

Secretary: Bill Auquier

Treasurer: Dick Johnson

Members at Large – Wayne Cheyne, Ron Clarke, Erik Domke, Fred Pioch

Chorus Manager: Bob Greenwood

Music Team: Holm, Blue, Johnson, Doig, Ensign, McFadyen, Murray,
Prueter, Moss, Cowlshaw, and Brede

CALENDAR (Times are Performance Times, Warmups 45' earlier,

May 4, T, 7pm	Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks
May 6, Th, 7pm	National Day of Prayer, Veterans' Memorial, Lk Orion
May 7, F, 5:30 pm	Ronald McDonald, Bogie Lk @ M-59
May 11, T, 7pm	Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks, Afterglo – Heroes
May 13, Th, 1 pm	Oakland County Retirees luncheon, White Lake Oaks
May 18, T, 7pm	Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks
May 25, T, 7pm	Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks, Afterglo – Heroes
May 31, M, 10-11am	BCC Float, Lake Orion Memorial Day parade
Jun 1, T, 7pm	Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks
Jun 4,5	1 st Great Lakes Harmony Brigade, Okemos Conf. Cntr
Jun 11	Windsor sendoff
Jun 15, T, 5:30 pm	Frankenmuth Bratfest, 5:30 bus, returning 11pm
Jun 26, Sa, 3 pm	Waterford Log Cabin Days @ Fish Hatchery Park
Jun 29, 6:30	Lockwood of Fenton, 16300 Silver Parkway, Fenton
Jul 12	DOC picnic
Aug 1-8	Harmony University, St. Joseph, MO
Aug 3	Election night gig
Aug 10-12	Harmony Explosion Camp, Central Mich Univ. For high-schoolers
Aug 20-21	Bush League, Gaylord, MI
Sep 24-26	Singing Retreat, MacMullan Center, Higgins Lake,
Nov 6, Sa, 7pm	BCC 66 th annual show, <i>Get Your Kicks on Rte 66</i> ,
Nov 10, Tu	2010 Christmas chorus forms