AROUND THE PATCH

Frankenmuth trip

The annual Flint Chapter Picnic is June 21. Previously held at the Dead Creek Saloon in Frankenmuth, it’s now held on the shores of the mighty Frankenmuth River.

The Pontiac Big Chief Chorus Bus leaves from Waterford Oaks Activity Building at 5:30 p.m. and returns about 11 p.m. The bus fare is $5 plus a generous tip for the driver. Our Fall 2011 show is “Phantom of the Barbershop.” Both of our guest quartets, FOREFRONT and OVERTURE, are recent Gold Medalists. Music chairman Roger Holm reports: Five (5) new songs are on order for the show: "It’s A Good Day", "Cabaret", "Over The Rainbow", "Take Me Out To The Ballgame", and "With A Song In My Heart"!

Note Jack Teuber’s new e-mail address. It is jmcteuber@att.net.

Quartets

On a beautiful Saturday, May 7, LIMITED EDITION did a volunteer gig for the 2011 Relay for Life at Milford High School. As teams walked the tracks, the quartet sang fifteen songs during the hour that they had the mike. The relay lasted from 8 a.m. to 8 a.m. and raised money for the American Cancer Society.

BCC 2011 Performance Total: thru May: 59 gigs to 2898 people.

MEMBERSHIP (at 65)

Renewals: Bill Auquier (11), Jack Teuber (11), Tom Jackson (12), Bob Wallace (20), John Northey (22), Bill Dabbs (40)

Overdue: Jeffrey Kafer, Robert Kleeman, Jim Macdonald, Joe Poole, Paul Smith

June Birthdays: Bob Legato (13th), Fred Pioch (18th), Bruce Brede (22nd), Jim Troeger (23rd), Al Monroe (24th), Joe Poole (30th)

AROUND THE DISTRICT

GLHB

Our Pontiac-Waterford Brigade entrants are going thru the final stages of preparation for singing the eleven songs chosen for this year’s Great Lakes Harmony Brigade in Okemos, June 3 and 4. On that Saturday evening, you can hear the 100+ quartetters singing as a chorus at Okemos Middle School. The 7:30 show will also include RIGHT ON Q and THE PATCH CHORDS. Tickets may be ordered on-line at: http://www.harmonybrigade.org/glhb/ but you can just arrive and expect show-time access.

Flash Mob at Novi’s 12 Oaks Mall.

Did it happen, Memorial Day at 1:30? We’ll have a full report in the July issue.

Windsor Send-Off

Doran McTaggart writes:

“The Send-Off Show is the premiere event in the Pioneer District that raises funds for our International Competitors. Hundreds of Barbershoppers and their friends will be at the Macedonian Centre in Windsor on Friday, June 10, 2011. The address is 5225 Howard Ave., LaSalle, Ontario, N9H 6Z6.

“The cash bar opens at 6:30 pm: the pasta dinner is served at 7:15 pm; and the Show follows. Our Senior Reps CARTE BLANCHE, our College Reps EBB N’ FLOW, our International Reps FOUR MAN FISHIN’ TACKLE CHOIR, and our Chorus reps THE MOUNTAINTOWN SINGERS will all perform. WOW!!! A dinner and a million dollars of talent, all for a $20 ticket.”

Bill Auquier and Jack Teuber have tickets.

2nd Annual Waterford’s Got Talent

When? Saturday, September 24 at 7:00 p.m. in the Waterford Mott High School Auditorium. Last year’s event was a sold-out success with over 800
audience members. Over $3,000 in cash prizes will be awarded and Fox 2 and WNIC’s Jay Towers has signed on to return as Master of Ceremonies. The event benefits the Waterford Coalition for Youth, which works to reduce substance abuse and high risk behaviors in our community’s youth.

Auditions – Saturday, June 11, 9:00 a.m. at the high school.
Dress Rehearsal – Friday, September 23, 6-9 p.m.
Show – Saturday, September 24, 7:00 p.m. (4-minute maximum)
Questions? Heather Halls, 248-618-7424

Jim Gougeon passed away, May 23, at the age of 81. “Jim was a member of the Grosse Pointe and Macomb County Chapters of the Barbershop Harmony Society, singing in both quartets and choruses for 39 years, and was a former Pioneer District President and International Board Member. His son Jeff was the tenor of Fermata Nowhere.

“Visitation and Memorial ‘Resurrection’ Mass will be Saturday, June 4, 2011, starting at 9:30 a.m., at St. Louis Catholic Church in Clinton Twp, MI (www.stlouischurch.com). Jim’s crematory remains will join those of his late wife Zoe in a military internment ceremony at 10:30 a.m., on Monday, June 6, at the Great Lakes National Veterans Cemetery in Holly, MI.”

Bush League – Aug 19-20
Check out details at http://harmoniemeisters.org/

MountainTown Harmony Explosion

Webcast, July 7-9: (All times Central Daylight Time)
AIC Show - Thursday, July 7, 7:30-10:00 p.m. - $30
Chorus Finals - Friday, July 8, 10-2, 4-8:30 - $45
Quartet Finals - Saturday, July 9, 7:30-9:30 - $45
http://www.barbershop.org/kc-webcast-information.html

MCS Open Rehearsals
My goodness, what a beehive of emails around the Motor City Singers’ invitation to other barbershop members to join them once a month at their rehearsals. There has been expressed skepticism of their announced altruistic motives. Here are reports from our own guys:

Last night a number of us attended the monthly Motor City Singers get together.
The meeting consisted of probably 40 to 50 guys. I estimate that probably 30 guests came, from as far away as Mt. Pleasant and Kalamazoo. There were three or four chorus directors present. Half of the Monroe North chapter was there along with their director - an obvious sign of that chorus’s attitude towards raising their own performance bar and promoting quarteting.

Overall we learned a lot. We started out going thru some new and interesting exercises to relax and discussed a four-step checklist to better singing.

1. Position – not the traditional lean forward on balls of feet. More relaxed and confident; like telling the audience to “come to me,” I’m competent, confident and here for your pleasure.
2. Visualize the line of sound.
3. Visualize half circles of the sound bouncing off the line. Carry to the end of phrases. Light touch bounces off that line.
4. Cursives at the end of each phrase or line.

Five Pontiac/Waterford guys were present - Charlie, Chuckles, Bob Wallace, Jeff Spires and myself. We can explain more when we get together. The idea is for the participants to go back and provide input to their respective chorus to improve singing.

Later we broke up into units of four or more and went off to select and practice a polecat of our choosing. We than came back and sang our song, keeping in mind the four-step checklist. Each group discussed what they learned in the exercise and constructive comments came from the group.

We closed by singing as a chorus. Sound was great as we had a wall of sound - the same sound experience we get when the Brigade sings as a chorus.

AROUND THE WORLD

2011 Kansas City International Convention
Quartets there included MOXXY, RIGHT ON Q, SINGING WITH DAD, CHORDIOLOGY, and maybe another. Mark Slamka (Bari) came up from Dothan, AL to do a swan song with RIGHT ON Q.

The mission is to educate members and help them build qualities towards better singing. This includes facilitating the establishment of quartets among members. Although they didn’t go into details, there supposedly will be an auditioning step involved in the process. Members will get a song along with Learning Tracks that the chorus wants to learn. In all likelihood, each member will be expected to be “off the music” for the next meeting. If they don’t maintain a high standard as such I don’t see how it will continue, as guys surely won’t be driving from long distances to sing with others who aren’t serious about the process and don’t show promise for quarteting.

Overall a great session with great guys all serious about the hobby.

Tom Blackstone

Guys:

First of all, I want to say that I had a great time. Singing with that caliber of singers is always fun. We also received probably 1½ hours of excellent coaching. All the while, Paul Ellinger and the other leaders kept stressリング “What are you going to take back to your choruses?”

I feel that going there as a quartet would be a huge plus, a chance to receive good free coaching.

Anyway, I am looking forward to going back June 17.

Charlie Perry

Il Volo

Several people have been circulating links to the Italian `male trio, Il Volo, at http://www.interscope.com/artist/player/default.aspx?meid=6314&aid=1200

Route 66

“Route 66” won Best Original Arrangement at the 27th Annual Harmony Sweepstakes A Cappella Festival, the premier American showcase for vocal harmony music, held May 14 at the Marin Center in San Rafael, CA.

Not “our” arrangement, but Deke Sharon’s arrangement, he the vocal producer of NBC’s The Sing Off; and “one of the leaders of the contemporary a cappella community and a pioneer of the contemporary a cappella style, commonly referred to as the father of contemporary a cappella.”

I wrote Mr. Sharon, “Why did you choose to arrange that song?”

“Howdy. I chose it because it was a natural - the group Groove 66 at Disney’s California Adventure should of course sing Route 66! There’s a clip in the audio demo at www.vybration.net”

How to Be a Better Tenor.

Livewire is republishing the “Harmony How-To” articles on how to be a better quartet singer. The first in the series was written by Don Kahl, tenor of the 1986 International Champion.

Reading Music

We sometimes forget the training that lies behind “reading music.” Here is the way Cynthia Ozick describes it in her novel Foreign Bodies:

“A language that kept her out, if it was a language at all. Music the universal language, vibrations that speak – what a lie…. What was she to make of these scatterings of blotches moving up and down the staff lines like bugs on an escalator…. Five stripes: a five-lane highway, small black cars speeding. But silent; silent.”

The Internal Smile (or Sneer?)

Bill Biffle directed Joe Barbershop Chorus this spring. He referred to the Harmonizer articles on Bel Canto singing by Debra Lynn. He encapsulated it by asking us to lift the muscles between the upper lip and the nose. Debra Lynne defines it this way: “The internal musculature of your mouth is your acoustical amphitheater…. When you yawn, you can feel your cheeks and the soft palate at the back of your throat rise up. Now [do this] without yawning while keeping your lower jaw in its relaxed natural position…..This energized upper jaw and palate orientation…is your new default singing position…. Each time you breathe through your mouth, think “ah” as you fully stretch the muscles back in your throat and lift the soft palate into high position …the internal ear-to-ear Cheshire Cat grin.”

(To me, this feels like sneering, but including an eyebrow lift takes the meanness out of it.)

For more of Debra Lynn, check out: debralynnmusic.com and http://www.youtube.com/user/debralynnvocalcoach

If you have Skype you can get a 1 Hour Private Voice Session with Debra Lynn for $75, identifying your individual needs for aligning the voice and creating more effective results in your singing.

Comparing Men’s and Women’s Barbershop Scoring

Ann McAlexander’s response to a BBS question about comparisons drew much praise from those who read her words:

I’m not a judge, but I come from a family whose members belong to both BHS and SAI (and also HI for many years) and who love to dissect, analyze, and discuss scoresheets. So we’ve run the numbers and have had this discussion a few times before.
The conclusion we've derived is, if you look at the percentages, comparable performances are typically pretty close, like within a percentage point or two.

From our observation, the BHS percentages are the ones that often run a percentage point or so higher. So a 76 percent in the BHS (the cutoff for a quartet automatically qualifying for international) is very comparable to a 75 percent in SAI (a 600 score, kind of an unofficial tipping point for SAI wild card quartets that typically qualify).

Since the basis for qualifying is a little different in the two organizations it's hard to draw an absolute conclusion, but this seems to have been a pretty good rule of thumb over the years.

Having sat through many of these contests in all three organizations, I'd say that while it's not completely comparable to listen to men's and women's barbershop just because the timbre of voices and consequently some of the chord voicings are different, the ones who make it to international tend to be doing many of the same things right overall.

Editorial
Let's not let summer doldrums affect our attendance at chorus rehearsals.

Alternate Lyrics for Aura Lee
When you take your temperature
Take it Aura Lee
I can tell you any how
It beats Recta Lee
by Shelley Herman, With apologies to Alan Sherman

All articles and photos are by the Editor unless stated otherwise.

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP
Director: Thomas Blue (248-814-9627)
Assistant Directors: F. McFadyen, D. Johnson, B. Holmes, & M. Frye
President: Jack Teuber (248-334-3686)
Past President: Doc Mann (248-628-0189)
VP: Chapter Dev: Eric Domke
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Music Team: Holm, Blue, Johnson, Doig, Ensign, McFadyen, Murray, Prueter, Moss, Cowlishaw, and Stephenson
Bulletin Editor: John Cowlishaw, (248-891-4498)

CALENDAR (Times are Performance Times, Warmups 45’ earlier, SSYSBPS = Short-Sleeved Yellow Shirts and Black Pants and Sox

May 31, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks
Jun 3, 4 2nd Annual Great Lakes Harmony Brigade
Jun 4, Sa,7pm Brigade concert, Okemos
Jun 7, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks
Jun 10, F, 6:30 pm Windsor Send-off, Macedonian Centre, Windsor
Jun 14, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks
Jun 16, Th, 2:30 American House Stone School, 3741 S. Adams, Roch
Jun 17, F, 7pm Motor City Singers’ open rehearsal
Jun 21 T, 5:30 Departure for Frankenmuth Bratfest
Jun 25, Sa, 3pm Log Cabin Days, Fish Hatchery Park, Waterford. Warmup at Pierce Middle School at 2:00; SSYSBPS
Jun 28, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks
Jul 3-10 BHS International, Kansas City
Jul 5, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks
Jul 28-30 Barbershop Harmony Explosion Camp for Kids
Jul 30 Barbershop Harmony Explosion Show
Jul 31-Aug 6 Harmony University, St Joseph, MO
Aug 19, 20 Bush League, Gaylord, with CHORDIOLOGY
Oct 14-16 Pioneer District Convention
Nov 5 67th BCC Show