Vol. 11, No. 3 (#123)  July 1, 2011

From Director Tom:

Men and Friends of the BCC,

Thank you to everyone who sang with us at the Bratfest and thank you for singing in tune! Thanks to all for your participation this past Saturday at the Log Cabin Days and for your extra time and effort to get risers set up and the sound system ready. Thank you to all of the quartets for your addition to the chorus program. It would be great this summer if a couple more quartets were formed and rehearsing, even if it was just to sing polecats.

Vocal Wisdom from Lamperti’s The Soul of a Singer:

The soul of a singer demands technique of both voice and breath before it will emerge as tone. Intense vibration and adequate energy must be ever available.

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Overtones are its colors;
Rhythm is its heart-beat;
Resonance its body;
Vowels the forms it assumes;
Consonants are its hands;
Emotion is its lifeblood;
Imagination its ears and eyes;
Thought its feet;
Desire its wings;
Melody is its language;

The soul of the singer is the subconscious self. It can use the body and mind only after these are disciplined by the conscious self.

From the Prez:

CHIEFTANS,

How about those quartets from a quartet chapter? Thanks to all who participated on Saturday, June 25. Thank you Jeff Doig and Howard Lynn for setting up the Sound System. Thanks to Lance Shew, Bob Greenwood and crew for taking care of the risers.

July 12 and 30 will provide more opportunities for quartets to perform.

Jack

From Music Chairman, Roger Holm:

Jeff now has the learning tracks to "Over the Rainbow" posted on our web-site, and should have some CDs available on Tuesday for those who can't access the web postings! That's our 4th new song for this Fall's show, to go with "Cabaret", "It's A Good Day", and "Take Me Out To The Ballgame"!

Good sing-out today guys at the Log Cabin Days! The audience really seemed to like what we did, and we heard many compliments! They definitely want us back again next year!

A good time was had by all last week at the Bratfest too! Thank you Flint Chapter!

AROUND THE PATCH

The Executive Board met on Wednesday, June 8 to finalize plans for our 67th Show.

Milford High School Visit

On Tuesday night, June 14, we welcomed Ms. Maryanne Lambrecht and eight of her Milford High School boys to the chorus meeting. Many of their parents were there also to experience what this barbershop singing is all about. The boys joined in enthusiastically to sing a tag with Mike Frye and "Coney Island" with Freddie McFadyen. Then Tom Blue led us thru a rehearsal of “Take Me Out to the Ball Game.” Several of the boys impressed us with their ability and would certainly be welcome to join us at any time. Stephen D. sat in the Bari section, and, when I complemented him on his singing, he replied that he had been practicing it all weekend.

American House, June 16, 2011

The BCC returned to American House, at Stone House, Thursday, June 16, 2011. Twenty-one Chieftains were directed by Tom Blue in a 30-minute show that was enjoyed by the seventy residents and staff. The show featured the Pole Cats that Tom has worked us thru in the last several weeks plus
“Abide With Me,” “Aura Lee,” “God Bless America,” “Irish Parting Prayer” and “Keep the Whole World Singing.” Featured quartets were SUNNYSIDE and MFCM (McFadyen, Frye, Cowlishaw, and Melkonian). Chorus members joined in the root beer floats.

On June 21, the chorus bussed to Frankenmuth’s Heritage Park for the annual Flint Chapter Bratfest. Tom Blue led the chorus in Heart of my Heart and In my Room. Pickup quartets included Blackstone, Cowlishaw, Doig, Jamison, Sturdy, and Wallace (did I miss anyone?) but the performances were cut short by the threat of severe weather.

On June 25, the chorus sang at Waterford’s Log Cabin Days at Fish Hatchery Park. Tom Blue directed the chorus thru a set of polecats, and other repertoire songs. Quartets included 4GVN, A Cappella Fellas, Harmony Brigade, and Natural E. (Photos below by Lynne Metzger)

Bob and Eileen Marshall host the Sylvan Lake Fireworks
The fireworks are on Sunday, July 3. We’re all invited to Bob and Eileen Marshall’s house, annual event, at 969 James K Blvd, Pontiac, 48341. Bring you own chair and snacks. Fireworks are at 10:00 p.m., preceded by social hour and entertainment.

Zaven M. has offered to host the BHS Quartet Finals webcast party this year, Saturday night, July 9. (It will be our 5th year in a row.)

Mike Keith’s new e-address is: Keith, Mike mijakeith@gmail.com

Quartets
Limited Edition had an active month. On June 11, they auditioned at Waterford Mott for the 2nd Annual Waterford’s Got Talent. Making the cut, they will perform for pride and money on the big show, September 24, 7pm, at Waterford Mott. If the winners are determined at all by audience applause, a large turnout from BCC would be appreciated.

On June 23, the quartet performed during a “live taping” for a Cable Television show. The show, Oakland Connection, is broadcast each Tuesday night at 8:00-8:30 pm on CMNtv. “Community Media Network is Southeast Michigan’s premier Public Access Television station.” The taping occurred at Royal Kubo Restaurant, a new Filipino restaurant in downtown Clawson. The foursome sang “Come Fly with Me,” “Nellie,” and “Can You Feel,” and answered questions about barbershop from the MC, Mr. Tim Burns. Also on the show were a girls’ percussive a cappella heptet, named SWEET APPLE ALL-STAR CHORUS.

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Photo by Todd Cowlishaw

The show will be broadcast on four consecutive Tuesday nights tentatively scheduled to begin on July 19, at 8pm, on Channel 18, available in the east half of Oakland County from Rochester to Royal Oak, but even without channel access you will soon be able to see the show at http://blip.tv/oakland-connection
4GVN sang on June 5 at Greg Moss’s church, First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak. There was an after-church ice cream social, and the lady chairing the event had been at Greg’s house on New Year’s Day and heard the group singing. So they got recruited! That audience was about 80 people.

4GVN performed at Brightmoor Christian Church, Novi, June 26. We had a great time today at Brightmoor! After singing with the choir for two services, Bob Greenwood, Greg Moss, Ray Sturdy, and I converged upon the congregation, as they made their way outside for the picnic.

There were about 1200 people in attendance. As we made our way around the food tent, we sang “America the Beautiful,” “God Bless America,” and “The Star Spangled Banner.”

We were able to help several unsuspecting gentlemen serenade their brides with a loving rendition of “Heart of my Heart”! As we made our way around the tables, we were hearing voices coming from people asking us if we would come sing for them!

Out of the blue, three seventh grade girls asked us if we could sing “Can You Feel the Love Tonight,” from The Lion King! We thought, “Hmm… , we might be able to do that!” Before we finished, there were about 30 young people, boys and girls, standing there listening to us! We were quite surprised by their very enthusiastic applause!

The Pastor’s wife was listening on as well, and when we finished, she asked us if Pastor Jamie had heard us yet. We told her that we were trying to find him. Well… she went around the corner, and caught him, as he was heading towards his office, and asked him if he had heard the quartet yet! So she grabbed him by the arm and brought him down the hall where we were. We sang “It is Well with my Soul” for him and his wife. He really enjoyed it, and asked us if we might want to sing up on the platform during service sometime!

Everyone was very appreciative and made us feel very welcome.

As we were heading to our cars, we were approached by a young man and his family. They were from Romania. He told us that he sang in a choir in Romania. After singing for him and his family, we told him that we were from the Pontiac/Waterford Chapter B.H.S. We gave him one of the chorus invitation cards and hopefully we may see him at rehearsal sometime soon!

Photos will be published later, at the church’s web site

www.brightmoorcc.org
Wayne

BCC 2011 Performance Total: thru June: 64 gigs to 4468 people.

MEMBERSHIP (at 64)
Renewals: Pete Mazzara (12), Freddie McFadyen (45)
Overdue: Jeffrey Kafer, Jim Macdonald, Charlie Perry, Joe Poole, Paul Smith
Goodbye: Robert Kleeman
July Birthdays: Tom Jackson (1), Chuck Murray (1), Dave Shantz (7), Doug Metzger (14), Bill Maxfield (29), Dar Johnson (31)
Deaths: Bruce Brede’s brother passed away in June.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

GLHB, 2011

The 2nd Great Lakes Harmony Brigade is over. We gathered at the Okemos Conference Center Friday afternoon for two days of quartetting on the ten songs we had prepared – “When It Comes to Loving the Girls,” “Take Me Home, Country Roads,” “Satin Doll,” “Just in Time,” “Heart of a Clown,” “Fit as a Fiddle,” “Orange Colored Sky,” “I Wanna Be Around,” and “Goodbye World, Goodbye.”

I explained the rules last year. This year the competitors were a little less (91 quartetters – 20 Tenors, 18 Leads, 26 Baritones, and 27 Basses), the songs a little more challenging, and the preparation a little poorer (9 of the 29 competing quartets opted out of their randomly assigned song to sing an easier song – “Orange Colored Sky” was particularly avoided).

Pontiac-Waterford was well-represented with eight entrants (Perry, Wallace, Cowlishaw, Spires, Sturdy, Murray, Blackstone, and Doig (who didn’t sing because of vocal problems, but became the resident photographer.) We all did well. It’s a crap-shoot as to whether one advances from the first round Friday evening (10 quartets out of 29) to the finals Saturday night. But Tom, Charlie, and John had good luck with their randomly drawn partners and did advance. Though none of the three made the top three awards, Charlie sang with delight and was solid with his bass; Tom laid in his sweet diddly at the end of “Satin Doll”; and John sang with remarkable calmness and verbal accuracy.

Although the emphasis is on quartetting, on Saturday night we put on a show as a chorus. This is the best chorus I’ve ever sung with. If you want to
Several Chieftains were present. This report, from Paul Ellinger:

If you were there you know that Windsor put on and hosted an absolutely fantastic night for the Send Off Show. It was in a new venue and I have to admit that I felt under-dressed. It was both a comfortable and classy venue. Everyone there got to sing on the stage, but of course the real stars were all of our representatives. Each of the “Team Pioneer” performers were at their best and the crowd was excited with expectations of what may be possible in Kansas City.

The new arrangement of CARTE BLANCHE sounded smoother than ever before while adding their special blend of humor which played right into heart (Scott Casey organized this first regional Barbershop Flash Mob.  Here’s Chuck Murray’s report.)

YES! It did happen, John!

This was certainly not a barbershop event at all! It was merely a "happening!" Several wives and girlfriends also attended. There were about 25-30 singers who just popped out of the woodwork at 1 PM, and went through a warmup on “God Bless America.”

Strictly "coincidentally," several chapters were represented. Pontiac-Waterford had two members show up. The Wayne Chapter dominated attendance, and one member of the Lansing Chapter was there. There were also three Brigadiers, who just happened to be by the Food Court and joined in the singing.

The warmup area was outside the Mall, outside the Food Court, in a wide-open loading dock area. We had practiced “God Bless America” once, when we noticed two security officers walking out of the Mall to the north of us. They came directly at us, across the dock area, and asked, “Who’s in charge?” to which Scott Casey responded, “We’re ALL in charge!”

Security seemed flustered and asked the group of men to “move around the corner” from the dock area, which we promptly did.

Then another security officer in an SUV drove up, and asked, “What are you doing?”

Scott Casey responded, "We're singing “God Bless America,”" and the guard said, “Good for you! You're not singing any religious songs, are you?”

He added, “You can sing outside the Mall.”

Uh huh! By this time, most of the group had already walked into the Mall via the Food Court entrance, and had taken seats in various locations throughout the Food Court, not resembling any particular group.

Then next we knew, someone had blown a pitch pipe, and we all got up, and moved together, and right in the middle of the Food Court, we all sang, “God Bless America.” When we finished, we were greeted by applause from the other Mall customers in the Food Court.

The “Gestapo and Paddy Wagon” were no-shows, so the pipe blew again, and we all sang “The National Anthem.”

This was one way to ensure a standing ovation by the audience!

Many of us were technically “customers” of merchants in the Mall, having made purchases, so what more could they do or say?

Now all we participants can listen to Tiger broadcasts again, or whatever, instead of the learning tracks, when we drive around town.

Flash Mob at the 12 Oaks Mall Food Court on Memorial Day.

(Scott Casey organized this first regional Barbershop Flash Mob.  Here’s Chuck Murray’s report.)

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Windsor Send-Off – June 10

Several Chieftains were present. This report, from Paul Ellinger:

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The new arrangement of CARTE BLANCHE sounded smoother than ever before while adding their special blend of humor which played right into heart of what the crowd was looking for --- entertainment. EBB N FLOW wowed the crowd with their young voices, great arrangements and explosive tags. These men are going to be fun to watch on the international stage! FOUR MAN FISHIN’ TACKLE was on fire singing a stacked show of their best stuff.

They are going to tear the big stage up with their great singing, clever parodies and excellent delivery. The audience better hold on to their hats, ‘cause 4MFTC is rollin’ into town! And the MOUNTAIN TOWN SINGERS were at the top of their game singing what I believe to be Doc Gillingham's best arrangements yet. The stage presence was engaging, entertaining and just absolutely fun to watch. I predict MOUNTAIN TOWN will give their best performance yet!

Yep, Team Pioneer looks primed and ready to hit the World stage!

MCS Open Rehearsals - June 17

The second Motor City Singers open rehearsal was held June 17 at Henry Ford Community College.

One of the elements that could be brought back to the chorus is the 4x4x4x4 method for learning music. The goal of this method is to enhance the learning process. Using a learning CD, one listens four times to the song without singing a note, just following along on the score. Next, one hums or loo’s the notes four times, without paying any attention to the words. Thirdly, one mouths the word, silently, without singing. Finally one sings one’s part four times.

Quartet Boot Camp – July 23

Quartet Boot Camp is a one-day quartet intensively FUN boot camp for any and all quartets. Is the contest stage in your future? Are you going to Bush League? Do you want to do more paying quartet jobs? Are you in a quartet? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then there is something for YOU and YOUR quartet at Quartet Boot Camp!

Quartet Boot Camp is taking place on Saturday, July 23 at the Holiday Inn, in Okemos (the same place where Leadership Academy takes place). Thanks to the underwriting of this project by your Pioneer District board and
your Quartet Champions Association the fee per quartet is at the low, low price of $10/man --- and this will include lunch for everyone! Singing in a quartet, great coaching, lots of fun and two meals for $10/man ---- Try and beat that!

Email Paul@Chordiology.com immediately (supposedly by June 20)

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

HARMONY EXPLOSION CAMP – July 28-30
This year’s Harmony Explosion Camp for youth takes place at Central Michigan University on July 28 thru 30, with an evening Show on Saturday the 30th. The Big Chief Chorus is providing scholarships for three Rochester Adams girls. Maybe they will find a fourth at the camp for great quartetting. Funding for the scholarships came from a Kohl’s grant.

Thanks to Mike Frye and Jim Owens for their work in acquiring this grant. Thanks to Kristen DiPonio at the White Lake Kohl's store for her assistance with the grant.

We wish the girls a great barbershop experience at the camp.

Jack

(The Camp will conclude with a Show, July 30, at CMU, that features the camp participants, and EBB N FLOW, PRESTIGE, and SHADES OF JADE, Region 5 SAI champs.)

The members of the Heart of the Hills Chorus were saddened by the death of Harry White at age 77 on June 15th. Harry has been a member of the Society since 1999 and a member of the Rochester Chapter since 2009. He literally has been singing all his life in choirs, musical groups, theater groups, quartets and choruses.

AROUND THE WORLD

2011 Kansas City International Convention

Webcast, July 7-9: (All times Eastern Daylight Time)
AIC Show - Thursday, July 7, 8:30 EDT. - $30
Chorus Finals - Friday, July 8, 11-3, 5-9:30 - $45
Quartet Finals - Saturday, July 9, 7:00 pm - $45
http://www.barbershop.org/kc-webcast-information.html

Who will be Gold?
From the editor of www.bsmdb.com/ (Barbershop Music Database)
Hello fellow Harmonetters
Do you think YOU know who’s going to win international this year? Looks like ‘OLD SCHOOL’ has it in the bag....hmmm.... or do they? A lot of you thought that last year and ‘STORM FRONT’ took the gold.

How about the Chorus Contest? According to the district scores, ‘The Northern Lights’ is ahead. But ‘The Masters of Harmony’ have been in second going into International more than once, will they win their 8th Gold or will we have another upset like ‘The Vocal Majority.’ What do you think?

Vox Populi survey
Montana Jack Fitzpatrick ran an informal survey on bbshop@yahoogroups.com that was interesting.

From Montana Jack:
The first question was: “Regarding any or all aspects of barbershopping as a hobby, what makes or causes you to be happy.

ANS: Overwhelmingly in one form or another, the one aspect that makes everyone (of our respondents) happy was SINGING. Not one person said that they enjoyed listening. Everyone found pure enjoyment in singing. There were several other little things that were mentioned—all involving singing. Some folks were happiest when performing for someone. However, no one mentioned competition as making them happy. Many folks mentioned that they were happiest when signing or learning to sing better. After all SINGING is what it is all about.

The second question was: “Regarding any or all aspects of barbershopping as a hobby, what makes or causes you to be angry.

ANS: all over the chart. Leading the way as the number one reason that people get angry about the hobby is OTHER MEMBERS of their own chapter who are: apathetic or indifferent about learning music, learning and using good singing techniques and who refuse to do their best.

America Sings
A lot of barbershop groups – quartets and choruses – are performing on America Sings, Wednesdays at 9 and 10 pm ET, for a $10,000 prize. http://www.watchgmctv.com/sing The problem is that most of us don’t get the Gospel Music Channel. Furthermore, the videos of some of our best performers were apparently shown in abbreviated form (Storm Front without their punch lines?!) You can still vote for a barbershop group on the web site, but it seems kind of unfair, if you haven’t seen the show.

Acoustix sings at NBA Finals - Dallas Mavericks vs Miami Heat.
Rosalind Frizzell, the Boston Shrimp, wrote:
What a thrilling sound and what a wonderful foursome...tonight's National Anthem as sung by the International Champion Quartet Acoustix. Did you hear that applause? It was spectacular.

Thank you to Greg Clancy - Tenor, Jeff Oxley - Lead, Joel Rutherford - Bass and Jason January - Baritone for a tremendous performance to an amazing audience at the American Airlines Center.

Whoooo Hoooo!

If you missed it, here is a video clip: http://vimeo.com/24908609 The arrangement is Jim Clancy’s.

Todd Wilson wrote: “ACOUSTIX generally has about 50-60 visitors a day to their website, www.acoustix.com After last night's anthem, web traffic spiked to 700+

Larry Deters Announced as Society Interim Organizational Manager
Society President Alan Lamson has announced the appointment of Larry Deters as the Interim Organizational Manager of the Barbershop Harmony Society. Beginning Monday, June 20, Larry will work in tandem with Ed Watson until Friday, July 15, Ed’s final day as Society Executive Director/CEO. (Ed announced his resignation on March 28, 2011.) As Interim Organizational Manager, Larry will direct all the day-to-day activities of Society staff and will assist in the transition to a permanent CEO/Executive Director, who will likely begin work before the end of 2011.

The Chris Miller Honorary Quartet
(Contributed by Chuck Murray)
Chuck Murray learned of the concept of “Honorary Quartets” from Bruce Marchant of the Toronto Northern Lights (TNL). TNL has one very special, honorary quartet called “For the Love of Pete” to honor their deceased former member, “Pete Hamlin”.

Toronto’s concept was rooted in their interest in fostering quality singing. TNL uses their honorary quartet to involve more members in competing in District competitions. They try to pair two experienced competitors with two newer members. The term of service for their honorary quartet is a full year! TNL’s honorary quartet is working well, and they are involving every member in quartet singing, and in competing as well.

Chuck has always been interested in promoting quartet singing within the chapter. He thought a BCC version of an Honorary Quartet could honor former Director, Chris Miller. Chris Miller was known for fostering quartet singing within the chapter. After discussions with our Director, and our VP of Music and Performance, everyone concurred that involving more members in quartets within the BCC should help improve our singing, and could provide a deeper pool of talent to support shows, and step-out quartets for various chapter performances.

The Chris Miller Honorary Quartet (CMHQ) is to be comprised of all active BCC chapter singing members. One of the goals of this quartet is to involve new chapter members very early in their barbershop life in the thrill of actually singing in a barbershop quartet! Newer members of the chorus are given first priorities for membership in this quartet. (This is exactly what Chris Miller would have done… get the new guys singing in quartets, singing the PoleCats and other songs, and ringing hair-raising chords ASAP!) This helps with getting to know newer members, also.

We also try to involve some of the more experienced members and to work around Snowbirds’ schedules.

Emphasis is placed on learning and singing The Old Songs, the PoleCats, traditional Valentine Songs, and Keep The Whole World Singing.” One can use the experience for PoleCat certification and a PoleCat award pin. Quartets are also encouraged to sing BCC Show Songs, and other songs they may learn on their own.

A matrix was created with all the active BCC members’ names listed, versus calendar dates. The intention is for every member of the chorus to eventually cycle through membership in this honorary quartet. A member may elect not to be involved. Turnover time is every quarter, three months, faster than TNL’s model.

The CMHQ may be invited to sing at any chapter rehearsal during “quartet time”. This quartet can also qualify to sing on BCC Chapter Shows, and during BCC public sing-outs and performances. Ask the Director and Music Team for an audition. A CMHQ quartet may also qualify to do Singing Valentines as a quartet in February.

All members of the BCC may help CMHQ members improve by voluntarily critiquing, offering positive suggestions for improvement, etc. We can help each other! “What happens at BCC rehearsal stays at BCC rehearsal!”

Already, one CMHQ has indicated they would not mind continuing to sing together as a quartet!
The inaugural CMHQ members included Gil Schreiner, Lance Shew, Walt Denio, and Jack Teuber. The current CMHQ includes Bob Stephenson, John Northey, Eric Domke, and Jack Teuber (alternating with Mike Frye). Bob has nicknamed the quartet, "Miller's Wheel".

The Grosse Pointe chapter has contacted me for more information, and help, in forming a similar honorary quartet in their chapter, especially relevant since Chris Miller was a dual member with Grosse Pointe.

Remember, our purposes include involving more members in the joy of quartet singing, learning a new, quality singing skill set, improving the overall quality of our chorus singing, and having a heck of a lot of fun doing so!

Meet Bob Stephenson

(I'm keeping the folksy Q&A style of Bob’s written responses to my interview questions.)

Where born and raised - Born and raised in Detroit, west side, near Schaefer and Grand River; had two sisters.

School - Went to Detroit public schools, then on to college.

Work - Have had a varied career, primarily in photography, including medical photography in both emergency and operating rooms, advertising photography, running a pressroom and prepress operation, converting magazines from mechanical paste-up to digital, working as a landscape designer, selling industrial material, and selling advertising. Five years ago I formed my own company, Paper Thoughts, and I contract out my services to a local bail bond company, where I split my time between Oakland County jail and Wayne County jail.

Family - Grandparents were both cops in Highland Park. My dad was a consulting engineer in Detroit and a war veteran. And my mom let me be a kid. I have a wife and three daughters.

Hobbies - The usual, golf a little, fish a little, read a lot, write a little, active in church, help the less fortunate.

Music in youth - Glee club and male chorus in high school, church choir from early on.

Most important musical influences - Dad taught me rhythm, discipline, and love of sound. He led a swing band and played trumpet. Mom taught me that you didn’t need to be a great singer to enjoy singing.

How into BBS - Marv Wilson kept letting me know how much barbershopping meant to him, and thought it should mean something to me, too. So one evening four years ago I took him up on it.

Quartet experience - Seventh grade I sang “Hello, my Darlin’” in a quartet for a show. That’s all.

Community involvement - I fill in here and there, where I see a need.

Something no one knows about you - That would take a whole other interview. Let’s see. I’ve had several scrapes with death.

The most popular barbershop songs

What sheet music is most frequently requested from the Barbershop Harmony Society? Here’s the top ten:

1. Hello Mary Lou
2. Cabaret
3. Under the boardwalk
4. Sittin on top of the world
5. Lion sleeps tonight
6. In My Room
7. You Raise Me Up
8. Old Cape Cod
9. Hush
10. That’s Life

Breathing: A dialogue

I prepared an article on the evolution of my understanding of the breathing process in singing and asked for Tom Blue’s feedback:

JC: Loud talking. In the beginning, I knew that singing required breathing in and out and that the outward breath had to be forced to get any volume.

TB: The Italians call it “singing as you speak” but, as mid-westerners, we really must first learn to speak as the Italians do. So for us, singing and speaking cannot be the same.

JC: From the Diaphragm. When I first joined barbershop there was all this talk about breathing from the diaphragm.

TB: This is often referenced in the German approach to singing and is not bel canto.

JC: I was told to check myself out by lying on my back and breathing, making sure my belly rose and fell, not my chest. I found this very confusing - especially because I knew enough anatomy to know that the active contraction of the dome-shaped diaphragm muscle draws it down, causing inspiration, not expiration. In order to exhale, one had to relax the diaphragm, not contract it. But I didn’t mind, because no one really knew what diaphragmatic breathing was anyway, nor can we feel contraction of
the diaphragm in the same way that we can flex, say, our biceps. And, besides, I really COULD breath from my chest on my back.

TB: The breath really must be a combination of all of the muscles involved in singing and not just the diaphragmatic muscle. It is a full body experience. I always find that when talking about breathing, you must talk about all muscles because by talking certain ones, the muscles become tense and the singing is forced and the tone shallow.

JC: **Belly breathing – Chimp hooting and Toothpaste tubes.** In my next stage, I learned to keep my shoulders down and breathe into my belly, almost de-emphasizing chest breathing at all. Then to sing, I’d contract my belly muscles so as to lift the abdomen and drive the air out thru the breathing tubes and the vocal apparatus. I wrote bulletin articles on Chimp hooting and on Toothpaste tubes.

TB: I would use chimp-hooting as an exercise to make singers aware of the diaphragmatic muscles. The toothpaste tubes image for me would be too narrow an image. I think I have mentioned the “accordion effect,” a filling of the bellows from head to toe.

JC: Toothpaste tubes was intended as a joke. “There is this gender thing about toothpaste tubes. Women squeeze them from the top. Men squeeze them from the bottom. When we sing, let’s sing like men! We have to squeeze the air out from the bottom of our “air-tube,” from our bellies, and not from up top in the throat and chest.”

TB: It is true that men and women feel breath differently, especially the back muscles. Women will feel a greater expansion of the back muscles than men, and men will feel those muscles more toward the abdomen.

JC: Hmm, I didn’t know that we breathe differently, just that we squeeze toothpaste tubes differently.

JC: **Finer control of belly breathing; expanding my belt.** But how to press the air out. Press up, right? Matt Tipton, in a quartet coaching session six years ago said, “No; press down with your abdominal muscles.” Anatomically I’m not sure what this difference represents. But it feels different. I think Matt (or someone else) said that pressing up involves large muscle groups, and pressing down involves smaller muscles groups with greater vocal control.

It also helped to learn of breathing into the back and sides as well as front, though the easiest way to remember that was to try to “expand my belt.” (“Busting my belt” caused too much muscular pumping from above.)

TB: If you breathe in through the straw, or breathe in through your nose only or if you exhale all of your air then plug your nose and then release your nose, the “natural breath” or the “neurological breath” occurs and you should feel the natural expansion of the muscles.

JC: **Pulling taffy.** Then in 2009, I had an extended respiratory illness, and coming out of it - at the beginning of VINTAGE - I became very discouraged that my voice was cracking, my passagio was terrible, and I almost gave up quartet singing. Then I discovered a way of exhaling that felt like pulling taffy, to use Tom Blue’s phrase.

TB: (I actually used this metaphor more for phrasing, singing one note into another.)

JC: Like I was exhaling but yet resisting exhaling. And these two processes were counter-posed and balanced like a teeter-totter that could yield more outflow, more volume, by favoring one process, or less outflow, less volume, by favoring the other.

TB: Working through the passagio is accomplished through knowing how much of the “head tone” to engage and the continuous flow of breath. Always warm up the voice from the upper range down.

JC: **Baggpipes (or the accordion).** Last year, I dreamed up the bagpipe analogy. “I was thinking about the bagpipe as an analogy for vocal production. The bagpiper has his bagful of air always ready, loaded with air, before he plays any notes. In a similar way, the barbershopper has a load of air, which is ready when the next phrase begins. Here was how I thought of it. Take a breath, contract those belly muscles as if to sing, but wait.

TB: By saying this phrase, I would be concerned about singers creating tension.

JC: (Although, I meant this as an exercise to identify the restraining mechanism, not to sing this way.)

JC: What is keeping the air from escaping? Is it your mouth? Open your mouth, so it won’t be your mouth blocking the flow. Then, open your throat, your glottis, not letting any sound out. To be sure your glottis is open, take tiny in-breaths and out-breaths. To be sure your glottis is open, and your throat is open, so the whole breath control has to be in your abdominal breathing muscles. But ready to spring into action vocally. The belly tension keeps the bagpipe full and ready. When the belly bagpipe is near empty, let the inhalation muscles draw more air into your lungs.

JC: **Actively resisting exhalation.** This all came together last summer when Alan Gordon, the Bari of Gotcha! and my Bari Instructor at Harmony University said repeatedly, “Breath support is the active resistance of exhalation.”

JC: **Dog-Panting.**

TB: (Again, an awareness of the diaphragmatic muscles)

JC: If you want to experience active resistance to exhalation, try this. Inhale fairly deeply and then pant like a dog. You can’t pant unless your mouth is open, and your throat is open, so the whole breath control has to be in your abdominal breathing muscles.

JC: **Without undue tension.** Now I have to learn how to do it without undue tension. As Bill Biffle says in his columns, “As you exhale, keeping the chest elevated...
TB: …as if being pulled by a marionette string but without the shoulder movement…
JC: …and the vocal tract open, support the tone with the lower muscles of the abdomen (the ones you expanded) but without undue tension.”

JC: **Vocalization riding on top of the air-stream**
TB: This is an image that I use frequently; the singing must be “on the breath.”
JC: And also that the stream of air should start before the phonation and continue briefly beyond it, in order to avoid glottal attacks.
TB: Let me add some things from the Italian vocal teacher Lamperti from a book called *Vocal Wisdom*.
- The precept “breathe low” means – control the breathing low in the body.
- Feeling “hollow” in the head, neck and chest – down to the waist – compels deep control of complete breathing.
- It is a mistake to breathe in just one part of the body.
- Abdominal breathing alone brings high focused voice. But it remains throaty, small.
- Diaphragmatic breath alone secures good diction. But resonance of head and chest will be lacking.
- Intercostal breathing alone enlarges the low resonance. But diction will be faulty.
- Clavicular breathing alone brings low resonance only. It destroys diction.
- When the top and bottom of the lungs are equally full of compressed air, the voice will focus in the head, and awake all the resonance in the head, mouth and chest. Diction then is master over all.
- If singing does not feel like releasing energy to sustain the voice, some important muscle is being held rigid.

JC: I can add from the Barbershop world that Alan Gordon also emphasized the total breath, filling the lungs from top to bottom, rather than focusing just on the belly breath.

**How to burn Learning Track CDs from** [www.BigChiefChorus.org](http://www.BigChiefChorus.org)

Go to [http://bigchiefchorus.org/](http://bigchiefchorus.org/)
Under “Favorite Links” scroll to Members’ Page
Enter your user name and password
Click on your voice part
Click on mp3 of the song you want to burn a copy of
When the music starts playing, right click on the screen, scroll to “save as”
and give its name and save it on your desktop, not as “download.”
Insert a CD in your disc drive
Drag the icon on your desktop to the CD and “burn.”

**Editorial**

My European-born wife, Corinne, has quite a few antiques from Germany. A few months ago we took some to an appraisal show held in the community room of the Troy United Methodist Church. I attended this church in the early 1970s and even held a leadership role, and it was with a mixture of nostalgia and discomfiture that I wandered thru the rooms again.

A charismatic woman, a church staff member, listened to my story and gently began to offer the possibility of my return, of how they were a full-service church, etc. As I felt the gentle pressure, I stood my ground, explained my satisfaction with my life-view and courteously bade goodbye.

Today I was thinking about my leadership role in the Big Chief Chorus. When guests arrive, I hope they will find it a musical home. When I look over the list of 44 departed members published two months ago, I wince and wonder why they left. We too are a full-service organization, providing camaraderie, offering goals, singing music for weddings, funerals, and parties.

Looking in the mirror … as outsider … as insider.
Just saying…

**Letters**

I wrote Maryanne Lambrecht, complimenting her on her student group, The Perfect Pitch (You can view them at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N509SPYZCM8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N509SPYZCM8))

To which she responded:
Thanks...they do a great job! They are pretty busy during the school year...but now that we have made the connection, I will encourage the men to make some Tuesday night visits.

From Paul Ellinger:

In the absence of the Troubadour, I love reading several of the chapters newsletters and Pontiac Waterford's Smoke Signals is one of those newsletters. It is not a periodical that is specific to only the Big Chief Chapter members. Smoke Signals continues to be informative, relevant and to the point. No wonder it continues to win awards.

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
VP: Music and Performance: Roger Holm
VP: Marketing & PR: Open
Secretary: Bill Auquier  
Treasurer: Dick Johnson  
Members at Large - Walt Bachmann, Terry Jamison, Doug Metzger, Fred Pioch  
Chorus Manager: Open  
Section Leaders: McFadyen, Stephenson, Cowlishaw, Moss  
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)

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jun 28, T</td>
<td>7pm</td>
<td>Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks</td>
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<td>Jul 3, Su</td>
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<td>Sylvan Lk Fireworks, at Marshalls’</td>
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<td>Jul 3-10</td>
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<td>BHS International, Kansas City</td>
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<td>Jul 5, T</td>
<td>7pm</td>
<td>Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks</td>
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<td>Jul 9</td>
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<td>Quartet Finals</td>
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<td>Jul 12, T</td>
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<td>Lockwood of Waterford, 1407 Skipper Dr, Waterford</td>
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<td>8pm</td>
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<td>Quartet Boot Camp, Okemos, MI</td>
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<td>Jul 28-30</td>
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<td>Barbershop Harmony Explosion Camp for Kids</td>
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<td>Jul 30</td>
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<td>Barbershop Harmony Explosion Show</td>
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<td>Harmony University, St Joseph, MO</td>
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<td>Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks</td>
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<td>Aug 19, 20</td>
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<td>Bush League, Gaylord, with CHORDIOLOGY</td>
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<td>Oct 9, Su</td>
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<td>Oct 14-16</td>
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<td>Pioneer District Convention</td>
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<td>Nov 5</td>
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<td>67th BCC Show</td>
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<td>Log Cabin Days</td>
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