Christmas Chorus

After a month of Christmas Chorus preparation, the Big Chief Chorus hit the road, beginning its Christmas sing-outs on Tuesday, December 3, at the Waterford Township Christmas Tree Lighting.

It began badly, when Walt DeNio took a step into empty space and fell to pavement, five feet below. (His injuries were remarkably small, thirteen staples in the back of his head, and spent only one night in St Joe’s Hospital. Thanks to Bob Marshall, Bill Dabbs, Dave Myre, Barb Workman, Tom Blue, Jack Teuber, and John Cowlishaw, for assisting that night and the ensuing days.)

After collecting our thoughts and our hearts, we continued by singing a few songs, the crowd a bit thinner this year because of intermittent drizzle. Waterford Township officials joined us on the stage for the concluding “We Wish You a Merry Christmas.”

Then on to Lockwood of Waterford, where Tom led us thru a program for the residents and staff. Always an enthusiastic audience. 4GVN, Bidin’ Our Time and Limited Edition also sang, with John Northey stepping in to sing “The Christmas Song.” (Charlie Perry’s brother-in-law had died this past week.)

On Thursday, December 5, the chorus had two sing-outs. At White Lake Oaks, Freddie led the chorus of 37 thru an abbreviated program, interspersed with quartet offerings by BOT and LE. The event grows larger every year, this year topping 245, really too large to be able to hear us in the far corners.
On to Independence Village of White Lake, where a somewhat smaller crowd enjoyed the show.

In the evening, BOT and LE continued their Christmas singing. Bidin’ Our Time sang at Heroes to 200 or more people (hard to estimate with the coming and going).

“Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived at about 6:00 pm and were welcomed by many in attendance. We sang several Christmas Songs in the early evening and added some of our repertoire as the evening progressed. We saw many faces that had been there in past years and many new ones. We met a couple that knew Len Barnes. He likes to sing and is a possible visitor after the holidays. We were very well received and we represented the chapter very well. We also handed out many Valentines cards and some look promising.” Mike Frye

After lunch at Willson’s Bar and Grille, where the afternoon collection of diners and staff cheered enthusiastically, Limited Edition went on to Milford for the Milford Christmas welcome. Walking down the street, brightly lit, and with the accompanying “clip-clop” of the horse-drawn carriages, LE entered about a dozen establishments, asking to sing a song or two, and always being welcomed and cheered. The quartet also had the chance to hear the Milford High School Center Stage Ensemble and the Lakeland High School chorus, personally greeting Maryanne Lambrecht and the Lakeland director and the students with whom we had shared the Milford Bus Tour last spring.

Quartets at Easter Seal fundraiser at Bowman’s Chevrolet

Bowman’s Chevrolet has been one of our biggest supporters, so when they asked us to participate in an Easter Seal Fundraiser for Cancer Friday, December 6, 2013, BOT and LE joined in. Somewhere around 200 patrons paid $35 a ticket and participated in a raffle to raise money for cancer research at Bowman’s at Dixie and M-15. The repair shop had been cleaned and filled with raffle items and hors d’oeuvres from local restaurants. The entry way was filled musically by the sounds of Bidin’ Our Time and Limited Edition, and keyboard artist Peggy Bartz (who is the director of a men’s chorus in Clawson that is 81 years old, and used to be called the Chevrolet Chorus, but now, ironically, she says, is
called the Gentlemen Songsters. They are affiliated with the Great Lakes Male Chorus Association.  [http://www.thegentlemensongsters.com/]

BCC at Commerce Kroger.
A dozen Chiefs (Frye, Holm, Johnson, McFadyen, Doig, Blackstone, Perry, Cowlishaw, Greenwood, Oberstadt, Domke, and Northey) gathered Saturday, December 7, at the new Kroger store in Commerce Township for a performance arranged by Mike Frye with manager Natalie Ribino.

Standing by the entry, the men sang a set of a dozen Christmas songs, interspersed with selections by LIMITED EDITION and BIDIN’ OUR TIME. Then on to the in-house bank, and then the checkout stations.

The venue has the dimensions of an airplane hangar so it resembled singing outdoors. Those within 50 feet of us enjoyed the music. Mothers put their children within range; elders smiled appreciatively, staff grinning and high-fiving as they passed.

After an hour and a half, we ended by wishing “Have Yourself a Merry Christmas” to the staff.

On Tuesday, December 10, 32 BBshoppers sang to audiences in the 30s and 40s. (The audience number, not their ages.) “A very responsive audience at both locations. There is a Barbershopper (Doc’s friend) from upstate New York that resides at Stone School. There was also one of Tom Blue’s former students in the audience with her grandmother.” Jack Teuber

Thursday, December 12, about 25 Chiefs and a half dozen Christmas guests put on its 32-minute Christmas show in the beautiful chapel of Canterbury on the Lake.

The audience of about a hundred included residents and their families, in a dinner arrangement around fourteen tables.

The chorus sang very well, and the audience was pleased. LIMITED EDITION sang “The Christmas Song” and “Sold,” the story of how Santa met his wife. In Dick Johnson’s absence, John Cowlishaw joined BIDIN’ OUR TIME to sing “X-mas Chipsticks.” Cookies and punch were served afterward.
The whole Canterbury video is on YouTube at:
http://youtu.be/9UQVeJKhvys

16th Annual Bus Tour Saturday, December 14, the day of the Winter Weather Advisory.

Getting to and from the Oakland County bus was the hard part. The bus handled the weather fine.

The five stops included: Elmhaven Residence, VG’s of Pontiac, Oxford Independence Village, The Pines of Clarkston, and VG’s of Waterford. Pinetree Place of Clarkston was deleted due to the slow driving. Employee Ruth was excited to join us once again at VG’s Pontiac, and Sandy Walker added her beautiful soprano voice. The Pines of Clarkston is in the old Thomasville Furniture Store, remodeled quite ornately.

Thanks to Bruce Brede for making the tour possible.

On December 17, Freddie led the chorus thru the Christmas set at Lakeland Place. The audience of 48 was wonderful as always. Two augmented (to use a musical term) trios also performed — LIMITED EDITION with Freddie subbing at Tenor, and Bidin’ OUR TIME, with Cowlishaw subbing at Bari.

Most of the chorus then proceeded to Heroes where patrons were serenaded. A table of about 16 diners had come specifically to hear the Big Chief Chorus.

At press time, two gigs remain – on Thursday – at the Inn at Cass Lake and at the four residences at Lourdes, followed by cider and cookies at Fox Manor, during which guests will be recognized.
Our Christmas Chorus guests:
Welcome to Jeff Caminsky, Jeff Day, Jim Lawson, Rocky Sanchez, Don Stone, and Clifford Wade, and Welcome Back to: Tom Burder, Art Carinci, Bob Hunt, Dick Knapp, and Gary Owens.

AROUND THE PATCH

From VP Roger Holm: “After this week, we can all relax for 2 ½ weeks, as our first regular chapter meeting/rehearsal for 2014 will be Tuesday, January 7th!”

By now, all Big Chiefs know that our Chorus was featured in the November-December Harmonizer, page 19, and also a pic on page 13. Thanks to Tom Blue for suggesting that we respond to the request for stories about reaching out to Youth. Editor Lorin May excerpted from the material contributed by John Cowlishaw.

“Hermine Mazzara has returned home from cancer surgery. There will be a recovery period followed by further treatment. Hermine prefers not to be in contact at the present time. Please keep Hermine in your thoughts and prayers.”
Jack

Walt DeNio had his staples removed on Thursday (Dec 12) and continues to make good progress. He is slowly healing.

Ted Prueter had a mini-stroke Tuesday evening, December 3, and was taken to St. Joe’s Hospital the next day. “Just an update on dad, he has a lot of issues other than the cellulitis that he told everyone. He actually did have a small stroke and the doctors found that he had had a large stroke recently. But due to other medical conditions, they could not perform the CTA or MRI on him to determine the full extent of the damage. He is currently in the Sanctuary of White Lake by the JC Penny's and would love it for anyone to come visit him. He is due to be released on the 23rd pending his progress. The doctor feels it may be a couple weeks longer than that however, but we will remain hopeful.”
From Ted’s Family

Roger Holm enjoyed hearing MEASURE FOR MEASURE at Central United Methodist Church of Detroit on December 7. Tom Blue and Jeff Caminsky were among the singers in the chorus, of which, Tom is also the Assistant Conductor. The Langsford Men’s Chorus also sang.

Greg Moss sang with the Jackson Chorale for their Christmas Concert, December 14. It was at Waterford Central United Methodist Church, under Dr. Gilbert Jackson’s conducting. http://www.jacksonchorale.org
It always ends “with the best “Joy to the World” arrangement that you can experience: brass, timpani, organ, and everything the 40 singers can put out.”

Fred Pioch walked in the Thanksgiving Day Parade as a Band Marshall for the Waterford Kettering High School Marching Band. If you spotted Chuck Gaidica of Channel 4 Weather, that was the portion of the parade where Fred was.

It has been good to have Art Carinci back with us. He’ll be headed back to Las Vegas for the next three months, but intends to rejoin us at the end of March.

Gene Downey has a new email address - genede3@gmail.com

A Melkonian Family story
Many of us know the story of Zaven’s family history, that during the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks on the Armenian minority in Turkey in 1915, Zaven’s parents each lost their first spouses and other family members, and rarely spoke of it again.

Many of us have also sung with Zaven’s brother, Dodge. Dodge took a tumble a few months ago, while on a cruise ship near Turkey. The orthopedic surgeon who “fixed” the broken femur was an Armenian. The travel agent was a Turk, who came to Dodge and Jill's aid from the very beginning, and whose blood type was an exact match for the transfusion which Dodge needed. Prior to giving the blood, he grabbed Dodge's hand and said, “My older generation did terrible things to your older generation. Maybe this will make up for some of that.”

Zaven says, “In my Christian walk I have learned to forgive the current Turkish generation and government, who had nothing to do with the Genocide, just as I had nothing to do with slavery in this country.

“Even today there are "Armenian-Americans" of my generation, and younger, who still demand their "pound of flesh" from a Turkish generation who were not even born, during those dark days. To quote a song title from a few years ago, “What the World Needs Now Is Love.” I hope the movie, “Love Is a Verb,” (the first feature-length documentary about Turkish Muslim Leader, Fethullah Gulen and the movement he inspired) will have a positive impact on the growing Anti-Muslim movement, not only in this country, but around the world as well.”

Our Disabled Chiefs
Walt DeNio – recovering from his fall
Ted Prueter – recovering from strokes
Ray Sturdy – knee replacement
Bill Auquier – recovering from stroke
Bob Wallace – surgery on left heel
Dick Johnson – cardiac, respiratory issues
Bob Legato – improving from his stint surgery, also being treated for prostate cancer
Al Monroe – recovering from some surgery
Dan Valko - recovering from surgery in early June for a “triple A,” aortic abdominal aneurysm. He expects to be back soon.
Art Carinci – cataract surgery
Charlie Perry – banged up his toe
Zaven Melkonian – injured shoulder from a fall

Quartets
(Included under Christmas performances)

BCC 2013 Performances thru December: 141 gigs to 14,570 people.

MEMBERSHIP (at 51)
Renewals: Jim McMain (3), Charlie Perry (5), Bruce Brede (16)
Overdue: Walt Bachmann
Due in December: Walt DeNio, Mike Keith, Bill Nevaux, Ted Prueter,
Due in January: Bob Stephenson
January Birthdays: Len Barnes (Jan 3), Tom Blue (Jan 7), Bob Marshall (Jan 10), Ray Sturdy (Jan 18)
In Memoriam:
Jan 30, 2004, John Smith #34
Jan 30, 2012, Dave Monroe #131

AROUND THE DISTRICT

The Detroit Free Press had a story on the “Best Choirs in Detroit.” You can check http://tinyurl.com/k3efzex to see if she included the Big Chief Chorus. (But don’t get your hopes up.)

Pioneer District Youth Chorus – The Voice
(From Aaron Pollard, December 13)

We have a place for the youth chorus in East Lansing, right off of the highway! Along with the address, I will post a flyer that you can print off to spread the word, an attendance (not a commitment sheet) just to have a rough estimate on the number interested and a couple other things! This will be posted this coming week so keep spreading the word! We have a month till The Voice is born! BARBERSHOP...comment on this if you are as pumped as I am!!
https://www.facebook.com/groups/1425072894387733/

AROUND THE WORLD

Of particular interest in the November/December Harmonizer.

- CEO Marty Monson’s article on “looking out the window, not in the mirror,” and with No Strings Attached.
- First-Page music previews are first step of a massive music upgrade. You can view the first page of every arrangement before you buy. Try it out on John and Tom’s arrangement of “Route 66,” at http://www.harmonymarketplace.com/204106
- How to be an effective quartet or chorus spokesman
- ACDA’s Scott Dorsey on “Real Men (help others) Sing” with Jeff Doig’s photo of Ebb N’ Flow and Milford boys.
- “Members of Big Chiefs Chorus help young singers inspire even younger singers.”
- A new tag from Joe Liles

THE SHELLY & SHELLEY HERMAN CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Posted Dec 17, 2013 on the Harmonet

Not being Christian, one would think that we, as Jews, would just join in the yearly festivities, enjoy the season and leave it at that.

But to us Christmas has a much deeper message. It's the MUSIC!

Every year we look forward to the traditional carols we learned as children, and, perhaps new ones that have joined the repertoire in our lifetime.

We always enjoyed participating in Christmas music in high school, college, and in our barbershop groups. There was always a special joy to the performances. And, it was the only time of the year when we could sing exults.

We love the old movies like White Christmas where a Christian man and a Jewish man celebrate the most popular Christmas song of the 20th century, which just happened to be written by a Jewish immigrant.

All year long, because of our sound engineering business, we are involved with live performances of church choirs, barbershop choruses, bell choirs, Dixieland bands and other performing groups, it's what we like to do best. However during the Christmas season the performers become enchanted with an inner joy and enthusiasm that is not there the rest of the year. Perhaps it's the familiarity of the music, the decorations, the season or the religiosity, but the feeling is palpable.

It is the time of year when TV is alive with music without a single fuzz box and hardly an electric guitar. When classically trained singers reign supreme and
full orchestras with all sizes of strings, horns, woodwinds and percussion can be enjoyed for a whole hour without some program director worrying about reaching a specific audience.

To us the music of Christmas is a children's chorus singing Silent Night, a barbershop chorus with a four-part arrangement of Jingle Bells, Mannheim Steamroller playing Deck The Halls, a church choir declaring: Hark, The Herald Angels Sing or, especially for us because we are such fans, The Mormon Tabernacle Choir, sopranos at full scream, a full symphony orchestra, and that incredible pipe organ, all together proclaiming: Adeste Fidelis.

So a Joyful, Beautiful, Melodious, Merry Christmas to all.

Shelley and Rochelle (Shelly) Herman (Burbank, CA)

Voices of Gotham - "New York Medley" - 2013 BHS International

The Voices of Gotham have posted their Toronto rendition of "New York, New York," "East Side, West Side," "Sidewalks of New York," "Lullaby of Broadway," and "Give My Regards to Broadway,” not only fun to hear – especially to those who have never been to an International and experienced the high level of singing there – but also because it has a number of New York songs, that might be considered for our Fall Show.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HN-i3hRUMfk&feature=youtu.be

A Holiday Greeting form the Barbershop Harmony Society

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izb8IxybU2s&feature=em-uploademail

MEDIA

The Sing-Off

http://www.nbc.com/sing-off/

The Sing-Off has returned for its 4th season with a set of seven episodes. “The Sing-Off” has no lip-synching, backup bands or safety net. The groups are singing with dreams of walking away with the ultimate prize – a recording contract and $100,000.”

JEWEL has joined the judges table this season alongside Ben Folds (BEN FOLDS FIVE) and Shawn Stockman (BOYS II MEN). Nick Lachey still hosts. The 4th episode was aired Monday evening, Dec 16 to 7.8 million viewers. Episode 5 is tonight, December 18, 8 pm, with performances themed as “Movie Night.”

The six remaining groups (of ten that began) are:

acOUSTiKATS
The Filharmonic
Home Free
Ten
Vocal Rush
VoicePlay

The finale is set for telecast on Monday, December 23 (9-11pm).

Detroit Children’s Choir Asks ‘Where Is The Love’

http://tinyurl.com/moy44o5

(From CBSDetroit, December 18)

The choir at the Detroit Academy of Arts and Sciences has created a music video they hope will go viral.

The video focuses exclusively on Detroit, its ongoing revitalization and showcases people who are working tirelessly to reshape the Motor City.

Producer Malesa Owens McGhee said the video has already gained so much attention, the choir has been invited to sing at Disney World in Florida next May.

Pentatonix does Little Drummer Boy

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJ_MGWio-vc

(How did that get 15 million hits since November 25??)

If you hit “Show More” you’ll see they have 53 gigs in the next five months. Wow, they’re busier than the BCC!

1893 a cappella recording discovered

(From Harmonet)

A 120-year-old wax-covered cylinder containing the earliest known recording of a black vocal group in the U.S. was sold at auction this month.

Discovered in a private collection in Portland, the 1893 recording of "Mama's Black Baby Boy” by the New York-based Unique Quartet was one of only two copies known to exist and sold for $1,100. The other resides in the Library of Congress.

A second Unique Quartet song, "Who Broke the Lock (on the Henhouse Door)?" from 1896 sold at the same auction for $1,900. The same buyer purchased both recordings.

The cylinder recordings were played on an early-style phonograph that had the appearance of a Victrola-style player. But the music was etched in wax on cylinders instead of in the grooves of vinyl records, which were popular throughout the 20th century.

The wax was so fragile that auctioneers didn't dare try to play them. But you can hear it thru a digitization project of the Black Music Restoration Project, at

http://youtu.be/ztu_J50W3Cw

Three years later, "Who Broke The Lock" was recorded

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwXwktCD0Co

kr103 has discovered and posted another song, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” by the Unique Quartet, recorded in 1921 on an Edison master.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2DhTQa1_Qw
kr103 writes, “This is a record of real historical importance, as here you can listen to the first black quartet that ever made a recording. Their phonographic career started as early as 1890. MrXNews says, “The Unique Quartette was started in the 1880s by Joseph Moore, and this session might include Moore, Frank DeLyons (bass), but some members passed away before 1920, and almost no sources list these as being Unique Quartette records. Congrats on this rare discovery! pjedinn writes, “This is without doubt the best performance this song ever got.”

CoCoLatte48 adds, “This is a coded song of the Underground Railroad. Plantation slaves sang it announcing a group of slaves gathering that night to be led by a “conductor” on the “railroad” heading “home” meaning safe haven - north to freedom. The chariot represents the horse drawn wagons that were used as normal transportation at that time. Some wagons had false bottoms where the slaves hid. Band of angels = other conductors on route who gave runaways food and rest before going to next station on the way north.

More Unique Q:
“Shout all over God's heaven” and “Standin' in the need of prayer” from 1921 are also available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6Z0SsLMUxo

The Cup Song
Jim Owens sends along this version of “The Cup Song” from the movie, Pitch Perfect.
http://www.break.com/video/the-cup-song-quartet-2490558

Visions of Excellence: A Dialogue with the Finest Directors from the BHS, edited by Joe Cerutti
Reviewed in the November 2013 Choral Journal, published by the American Choral Directors Association
The review includes this quote: "What does barbershop chorus singing offer that you can't get in any other choral or quartet medium?" The answers by the interviewees fell generally into three categories: vertical tuning of chords, ensemble cohesiveness, and life-long avocational singing opportunities. Who in the profession can't identify with that?
(From Livewire)

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Director: Thomas Blue (248-814-9627)
Assistant Directors: F. McFadyen, D. Johnson, M. Frye, & B. Holmes
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: Charlie Perry
Treasurer: Dick Johnson
Members at Large - Fred Pioch, Ray Sturdy, Jim McMain, Bob Greenwood
Chorus Manager: Open
Captain Sunshine: Bill Maxfield
Section Leaders: McFadyen, Stephenson, Cowlishaw, Moss
Music Team: Holm, Blue, Cowlishaw, Doig, Frye, Johnson, McFadyen, Moss, Murray, Prueter, and Stephenson
Bulletin Editor: John Cowlishaw, (248-891-4498)

CALENDAR, (With Performance Times; Warm-ups 30’ - 45’ earlier)

Jan 7, T, 7:00 BCC Practice, WOAC
Jan 11, 2014 Pioneer Leadership Academy, CMU
Jan 14, T, 7:00 BCC Practice, WOAC
Jan 19, 2-6pm Pioneer District Youth Chorus, Lansing area
Jan 21, T, 7:00 BCC Practice, WOAC
Jan 28, T, 7:00 BCC Practice, WOAC
Jan 28 - Feb 2 International Midwinter Convention - Long Beach CA
Feb 4, T, 7:00 BCC Practice, WOAC
Feb 11, T, 7:00 BCC Practice, WOAC
Feb 14,15, F,Sa Singing Valentines Delivered
Feb 22, Detroit-Oakland Chapter Shows (2 pm & 7:30pm)
Mar 8, Sa Lansing Annual Show, with Storm Front
Apr 25-27 Spring District Convention in Grand Rapids, host: Grand Rapids