Spring Convention

The Big Chief Chorus attended the Pioneer District Spring Convention in Grand Rapids April 25-27. The host hotel was the Crowne Plaza, a convenient and friendly choice. The performance venue was the DeVos Center for Arts and Worship on the campus of the Grand Rapids Christian High School. The auditorium is large and beautiful, though it is six miles away on busy 28th Street, and its absence of chapter warm-up rooms was noted.

However, the chorus assembled at 9 a.m. Saturday morning in the Grand Centennial Ballroom at the hotel, then drove to the auditorium. We felt good about our performance and awaited the results.

Pontiac-Waterford remained in Plateau 2 with a score of 707, but was disappointed that this was a reduction from the last two years (721 and 722). We placed 10th out of 14 choruses.

Most of the drop was in the Presentation category. Specifically, we scored about 60 on “Chasing Rainbows” and 58 on “Beginning to See,” for an average of 58.9, with the following breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MUS</th>
<th>PRS</th>
<th>SNG</th>
<th>AVG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chasing Rainbows</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>59.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to See</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>58.9</td>
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The pairs of judges were in marked agreement, especially on MUS and SNG. In presentation, Hunter had us at 54.5 and Leeder at 59.

Everyone seemed to agree that this year’s judges were particularly helpful. Emphasis was on practical guidance to sing better rather than critical verbiage about what went wrong. Some comments:

Singing: Alan Gordon: (Leads) Breathing. Running out of breath is partly limited-intake, partly mental.

Presentation: Joe Hunter: Half of the singers seemed uninvolved. That’s more impactful to the score than adding little items like Tom’s turning to the audience.

Music: Jan-Ake Westin: Tom’s efforts reduce the chorus’s efforts.

From your editor’s standpoint the advice on director-chorus interaction, given so many times before (“Tom has to work too hard.”) finally hit home. The harder Tom tries to pull the performance out of us, the less we take responsibility for the performance. It’s as if we treat Tom as a mirror of our intensity – which of course he is not.

Our two quartets with chapter representation were CODA HONOR and SOUND IDEA! They did us proud. SOUND IDEA! sang “If I Love Again” and “Kentucky Babe,” for a score of 60.3%, and they were the mic-testers Saturday night. CODA HONOR placed 4th overall with a score of 64.8%. They sang “When She Loved Me” and “Good Luck Charm” Friday night, and “If We Can’t Be The Same Old Sweethearts” and “Cop on the Beat” Saturday night.

District winners were:

- Quartet Champion and Representative to next summer’s International convention – MAJESTYX (75.7%)
- Chorus Champion – Grand Rapids Great Lakes Chorus (73.8%)
- Rochester Guardians of Harmony was second (67.2%)
- Senior Quartet Champion – BUCKET LIST (65.8%)
- Collegiate Quartet Champion – G-FOURS (74.3%)
At 4:30, the Chiefs and guests gathered at Carrabba’s Italian Grill. The food was good, the waitresses were exceptional, and we got out before the incoming crush, in time for the evening show.

After the show, some of us visited the Salons on the main floor of the hotel, hosted by Grand Rapids, Grosse Pointe, D.O.C., MountainTown, Lansing, and Kalamazoo.

Several of us also joined either of two Tag sessions run by William Stutts, who had a list of 100 tags to teach.

Pioneers liked BHS CEO Marty Monson, and Tom Blue got the chance to establish a personal relationship with him.

The Pioneer scores are on the web site.
http://www.pioneerdistrict.org/contsummary/contmenu.htm

FROM PREZ JACK

Congratulations to CODA HONOR (nice placement) and SOUND IDEA! (60.3 --very good score for first competition).

I will be leaving for the next 16 days for Kyoto, Japan. I received an epidermal steroid injection for Lumbars 3, 4, and 5 to make for a comfortable trip. I will be seeing surgeons on May 20 and 22 to get two opinions on surgery. At this point I'm looking at back surgery in early July.

Dar Johnson was hospital-bound in St Joe’s and the UofM hospitals from March 11 to April 3. In that time “I’ve probably had 100 tests… I probably won't be in for a few weeks. I am so looking forward to getting back singing. Please extend my sincere thanks and very best to the chorus.”

Jeff Doig, Ray Sturdy, Wayne Oberstadt and Charlie Perry mentored at Milford High School Thursday morning, April 17. Maryann Lambrecht had called Charlie to invite participation in a scheduled workshop.

AROUND THE PATCH

“Our Canterbury sing-out (March 17) went pretty good, despite having only 29 guys. The only quartet we had was Freddie, Jeff, Charlie, and Ray singing ‘Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.’ It went well!”

FROM MUSIC VP ROGER HOLM:

OK - contest is over! We didn't score quite as well as we thought we might, but judging by the audience reaction and compliments, we sang pretty good! Just didn't score well on "presentation" - our usual stumbling block! But the judges' critiques were constructive and helpful, and so it's on to next year!

Now it's on to learning our new Broadway songs (three have been handed out), and preparing for our November show!!

Our next big sing-out (as far as we know!) will be Saturday, June 28 at the Waterford Log Cabin Days!

42nd Street

Bob and Eileen Marshall have featured roles in The Heart of the Hills Players spring musical, “42nd Street.” Bob sings and tap dances; Eileen is in charge of costumes.

Musical hits from this award-winning Broadway show include “We're In the Money”, “Lullaby of Broadway”, “Shuffle Off to Buffalo” and “Forty-Second Street”.

Performances will be held at the Warren Community Center, 5460 Arden, Warren, June 4 and 5 at 2:00 p.m., and June 6 and 7 at 7:00 p.m.

Bob has advance tickets at a reduced price of $10.
Chuck Murray has accepted a position with the Rochester Chapter as VP Marketing and PR? “As Gleason used to say, "And away we go!”

Please correct Wayne Oberstadt’s entry in the new directory, from 248-269… to 248-296… Also delete the land-line number, which no longer exists.

Digital Recorder, from Greg Moss
People continue to ask me about the little digital recorder, and Amazon sent me an email blast this morning that shows it on sale. It’s $80 (the best price I know of) with free shipping AND a $20 rebate that takes your cost to only $60. The same deal is available through B&H.

Two guest quartets have been chosen for our Fall Show.
Rusty Pipes was our Seniors Quartet Gold Medalist, at Midwinter Convention in Tucson in 2012. They are from (JAD).
Allure is Dodie LaMarte’s new quartet.

Great April issue of Smoke Signals. Only Chuckles and I know how hard it is to put something like this together.

QUARTETS
LIMITED EDITION, with Ray Sturdy at Baritone, sang at Farmington Eastern Star on March 25. “The gig went really well. We sang to about 50 people and they seemed to enjoy the Doo Wop a little more than the rest. A woman pointing a cell phone at us sent the video to Al Fisk, who proudly said he had coached us.”

LIMITED EDITION, with Freddie McFadyen at Tenor, sang at Wixom Elementary School on April 24. The occasion was the shaving off of Principal Alec Bender’s moustache, as he promised if his 550 students reached the goal of 240,000 minutes of reading during the month of March.

Four Wheel Drive had done the same gig in April, 2008, and Mr. Bender had not shaved off his moustache since that time.
How many decibels can 550 children reach? Quite a few. The quartet was treated like rock stars as they sang “It’s a Good Day,” “My Wild Irish Rose,” “Heart of my Heart,” “Saints Go Marching,” (special lots of roaring since they have been learning that song), and “Can You Feel the Love Tonight.”

MEMBERSHIP: (at 51)
Renewals: Fred Pioch (7), Dar Johnson (9), Dave Myre (9), Greg Moss (12), Bill Auquier (14), Walt Bachmann (14), John Cowlishaw (15), Bob Legator (15), Jim Owens (15), Jeff Spiers (15), Jeff Doig (22), Bob Wallace (22), Mike Frye (27), Roger Holm (27), Tom Blackstone (28), Howard Lynn (38)
Due in May: None
Overdue: Metzger, Nevaux, Prueter, Valko
May Birthdays: Gene Downie (4th), Bill Dabbs (17th)
Medical: Dar Johnson – recovering at home
Zaven Melkonian – Zav’s chest cold may delay lumbar surgery on Tuesday, Apr 29.
Jack Teuber – lumbosacral disk problems
Barbershop of the Month: Gene Downie

In Memoriam:
Mar 5, 2013, Austin Quinn, #98
May 18, 2002, Don DeNoyer, #14

AROUND THE DISTRICT
Gary Simon, 71, of Garden City died on April 16. Gary sang Baritone in Wayne Oberstadt’s past quartet, EUPHORIA. “A kind, gentle spirit.” Gary had been a senior draftsman-detailer with GM and Cadillac for nearly 40 years, and a
longtime Kiwanian, as well as a member of the Wayne chapter. He also founded Fish Dial-A Ride of Western Wayne County.

**Spring District Convention**

The Spring Convention in Grand Rapids had its own Facebook page, at https://www.facebook.com/events/659854784056350/?source=1

Is this a new thing? There one could find the tags to songs that several of the competing quartets sang, including **OLDE THYME HARMONY QUARTET**, **MAJESTYX**, and **RIGHT ON Q**.

Several district quartets were in the Grand Rapids media in promotion of our convention.

**MAJESTYX** (with subs Tom Ennis, Paul Slack) was interviewed for 12’ on WGVU
http://www.wgvu.org/wgvunews/audio/fplayer1.cfm?stid=26093&id=tms

**OLD RULES** (Denny Grabill, Doug Weaver, RT Williams, and Al Smith) entertained everyone at the MLive Hub

James O’Dell has published a pretty promo for this weekend’s convention at:

**Paul Teska’s “Harmony for Life” Now on YouTube**

Shawn York, Tenor of **OC TIMES** was so impressed with Paul’s vision that he came from California on his own nickel to spend the day with Paul and produce a film for Harmony Foundation “that touches on life, legacy, mortality, and the enduring gift of music.”

The result is a 8’ video that is going viral. http://youtu.be/bViVLGudjAY
(The charming young dancing girl in the video is Jason Hall’s granddaughter. Jason sings with Livingston Lamplighters.)

Warning: once you start the video, you wont be able to put it aside – it will grab you!

**MEDIA**

The Barbershop Harmony Society has put together a wonderful public service promo to show how “modern” barbershop is. Take a look and maybe make use of it next time someone pokes fun at our hobby.


**The Two-Year-old Diaper Dans, the Cultural Offspring of the Dapper Dans**

Check them out at: http://youtu.be/ok3e7tKOJZo

**GQ**

There’s a new young female quartet out there that deserves some serious listening to. **GQ** (stands for Girls’ Quartet) started singing together in July of 2011.

For their first competition, the group entered the 2012 Mid-Atlantic Harmony Sweepstakes in Alexandria, VA, taking home First Place along with Best Original Arrangement and Audience Favorite.

Then, in March the group attended Singstrong’s ACA-Idol competition in Reston, VA, taking home both Audience Favorite and First Prize. Judges included Danielle Withers from Vocal Group “Afro Blue,” Kim Hudson of “Maxx Factor,” and Dave Brown, co-host of podcast “Mouth-Off.”

In May, GQ headed to San Francisco and took home Second Place in the Harmony Sweepstakes’ National finals, as well as Best Original Arrangement for their version of Mumford and Son’s “Timshel,” arranged by Katie Gillis and Katie Macdonald. All of this within their first year as a group.

Most recently, the group flew to Denver CO the beginning of November and won the Sweet Adelines International’s “Rising Star” Competition. Look out for more exciting things from this up-and-coming group!

This video will excite any young woman (and maybe some young men too!) http://blog.petflow.com/if-you-think-barbershop-quadets-are-just-for-old-men-you-need-to-see-these-girls-dominate/

Their home page is at http://www.girlsquartet.com/about/
Their Facebook page is at https://www.facebook.com/GQsingers
Their first album is at: https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/gq/id717752001
Billy Joel joined Jimmy Fallon on the Tonight show to form a two-man Doo-Wop group using an iPad App (called Looper, I think) to create a multi-track recordings, at least of a limited type, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cU-eAzNp5Hw

Has Women’s menstrual cycle have shaped the evolution of music?
“A new study, published April 22 in the Proceedings of the Royal Society B, proposes that the menstrual cycle may play a role in humans’ musical abilities. It sounds bizarre, but the idea is that women’s preferences for men’s physical and intellectual abilities are more pronounced during the fertile part of the cycle. So a preference for more sophisticated musicianship during the fertile time of month, around ovulation, might have given men with more musical talent an advantage in mating. Over time the species would have become more musical, so the thinking goes.

Darwin once argued that the human music might, like birdsong, serve mainly a courtship role. The idea has languished as another untestable tale of the evolutionary past. But now biologist Benjamin Charlton revives the idea with this new study of how women’s preferences for men’s musical abilities change according to the menstrual cycle.

Reference: https://www.sciencenews.org/blog/gory-details/could-menstrual-cycle-have-shaped-evolution-music

Two Musical Events of Interest Just Announced by the DSO.
Ben Folds (the best of the Sing-Off judges) and the DSO on Wednesday, October 15.
Andrea Bocelli and the DSO Sunday, December 14.

Check out this guitarist playing “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.”
http://www.wimp.com/guitaristrainbow/

A trip down memory lane
…for anyone who has been around Detroit for a few years.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdCUICuzTzc&feature=share

BARBERSHOP CRAFT Secrets of Singing - Posture
“The distinguishing characteristic of singing posture is that you want to actively cultivate a disconnect between the relaxation of your upper body and the tension in your core muscle groups.” As Luciano Pavarotti said, “Well, I don’t mean to be crude but you have to use the muscles you use when you go to the bathroom!”

A Snowbird’s Song
Corinne and I spent seven weeks in Peoria, AZ, a suburb north of Phoenix. We rented a home in Westbrook Village, an “adult community” of 4,000 homes and townhouses (called “casitas”). Many days we hiked in the mountains surrounding Lake Pleasant. We took a balloon ride across the Sonoran desert, visited the Desert Botanical Garden (with a Chihuly glass-art exhibit), watched the dances of Native Americans and lovely samba women in “Scottsdale Sunday,” and visited Sedona.

Musically I visited the two closest barbershop choruses – Spirit of Phoenix (which sings about 85%) and DesertAires (which sing about 55%), bracketing Pontiac-Waterford. Both choruses were warmly welcoming. Mike Moyer and John Bloomquist from Michigan now sing there.

The Spirit of Phoenix chorus was preparing their show package and International Convention package, which includes a clever medley of Arizona songs, re-worded songs, (like my Oakland Co. medley), including “Oklahoma,” and “California, Here I Come,” into each of which, Arizona neatly substitutes. (Try it.)

I also had lunch with Lenny Barnes and attended his New Horizons band concert in Sun Village.
But it is a long drive, 2000 miles each way in 30 hours. Enough time to compose a variation on “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary”
It’s a long way to Arizona. It’s a long way to go.
But the sun and warmth attract us, to escape that Midwest snow.
So long, Commerce Township; hello, Phoenix fair.
It’s a long, long way to Arizona, but we’re glad we’re there.”

Comment, by Greg Moss
James O’Dell’s promo (see pg 4 above) is very well done; so now it needs to attach to some public-oriented information.

It’s a shame that if the public wanted to attend, it’s very difficult for a non-Barbershopper to figure out what they might attend, where, when, and how much. Or, at least I couldn’t find it. E.g., I tried a couple of weeks ago to find when the quartet competition was on Friday – no luck. Or, if my sister and her husband, who live in Grand Rapids, wanted to come to the chorus competition, when is it? Not until the drawing came out could I find that information, and then it’s mixed in with a ton of performer detail. All of my searches put me into the Pioneer District page, which is a clutter of information.

LETTERS
(From Ray Sturdy)
CODA HONOR would like to heartily thank all the Big Chiefs for their encouragement and great support. We really appreciate the opportunity to represent the chapter and we couldn’t have done nearly as well as we did without the help you’ve given us.
(From Mike Doyle)

Please excuse the disappearing act. I really enjoyed my time with the Big Chiefs. My firm intention is to rejoin the regular practices in the spring, plenty of time to gear up for the show in the fall, if I bear down and really lock in on the bass parts, which is precisely what I want to do. My singing benefited much from standing next to Roger. Too much business travel this winter (I am in Virginia right now, for instance) for me to make the winter practices. See you in the spring for sure.

Mike

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Director: Thomas Blue (248-814-9627)
Assistant Directors: F. McFadyen, 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: Open
Members at Large - Fred Pioch, Ray Sturdy, Jeff Doig, Walt DeNio
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)
Apr 29, T, 7:00 BCC Practice, WOAC
May 1, Th Milford Spring Show (with Limited Edition)
May 6, T, 7:00 BCC Practice, WOAC. Milford High School guests.
May 13, T, 7:00 BCC Practice, WOAC
May 20, T, 7:00 BCC Practice, WOAC
May 27, T, 7:00 BCC Practice, WOAC
May 31, eve Great Lakes Harmony Brigade Show/Quartet Finals, Okemos
Jun 3, T, 7:00 BCC Practice, WOAC
June 13 Windsor Chapter’s District Send-Off Show
Jun 28, Sa, 3pm Log Cabin Days
Jun 29 - July6* BHS’ International Convention in Las Vegas, NV
Jul 10 – 12 Harmony Explosion, Mt. Pleasant
Jul 19 Quartet Champion Association “Quartet Boot Camp”
Jul 27 – Aug 3 Harmony University, Nashville, TN
August 15 BCC Sings at Tigers-Cleveland game

Aug 22, 23 Bush League Quartet Competition, Gaylord
Oct. 4 Rochester GoH Show “SHOW BIZ!” 7:30 PM
Oct 17 – 19 Fall District Convention, Muskegon
Nov 1 Big Chief Chorus Show

“Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent.” Victor Hugo