2015 Christmas Chorus
Week 1

The Big Chief Chorus opened its 2015 Christmas season with two performances Tuesday night, December 1.

At the Waterford Tree Lighting ceremony, the weather was unusually warm (42°F), which was good, because the ~30 members of the chorus had to stand on the stage for 15 minutes during Waterford Toni’s introductory remarks. Nevertheless there was time to sing four songs under the direction of Fred McFadyen, before Santa arrived. The audience of about 100 people expressed their appreciation. Something new - a reindeer was on site.

On to Lockwood of Waterford, where a full 40’ program included three quartets and a relaxed, very high quality performance by the chorus. Have we ever sung better? We sang so well that Freddie decided to repeat the “Angels” chorus a third time! 4 UR PLEASURE, BIDIN’ OUR TIME, and LIMITED FREDITION added to the chorus repertoire, before an audience of about 30. It was also the first performance of our three-language “Silent Night.” (Thanks, Walter and Art).
About 24 Big Chiefs showed up at Lourdes Senior Community, Thursday, Dec 3, to sing at four facilities, as arranged by Walt DeNio. Freddie led the singing. At the newly expanded Nursing Center, the group sang in the several hallways to about 60 residents. On to the Clausen unit, where the twenty residents might be a little confused about life in general, but were happy to hear Christmas songs. At Mendelson, we waited until sixty residents arrived at their dinner tables, and then we sang a larger selection of songs. Finally, at Fox Manor, the forty independently living residents applauded an extended program of chorus songs and the quartetting by 4 UR PLEASURE (“White Christmas” - Jeff Doig subbing at Lead) and BIDIN’ OUR TIME (“Santa Clause is Coming to Town” - John Cowlishaw subbing at Baritone).

Week 2
A robust group of Chieftains (~35) sang at Lakeland Place and Heroes Tuesday night, December 8. The Lakeland residents always welcome us with lively faces and appreciation. Tom Blue led the chorus thru a set of twelve songs. It was another tri-lingual “Silent Night.” 4 Ur Pleasure sang “I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas.” The (full-bodied) Limited Edition sang “God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen” and “The Christmas Song.” Bidin’ Our Time sang “Santa Claus is Comin’ to Town” and “Christmas Chipsticks.”

Then on to Heroes, eating, drinking, and singing to the patrons who had come to mix with Santa and Mrs. Claus, though word was that many of the children were tearful about getting too close to Santa.
On Thursday, December 10, 35 members of the Big Chief Christmas Chorus entertained a capacity audience (124) at Canterbury-on-the-Lake. The Chorus sang as the Canterbury residents and their guests were finishing their annual Christmas Dinner. The acoustics of the Canterbury Chapel complemented the full sound of the Chorus. The Chorus was led by Director Tom Blue. The evening included two quartets, 4 UR Pleasure and Bidin’ Our Time. As usual at Canterbury, we had a good time!

(Jack Teuber and Roger Holm)

“You gentlemen were wonderful last night at Canterbury on the Lake! I thoroughly enjoyed your performance! Merry Christmas!

(Jessica Wheatley, on Facebook)

Week 3

Busy Week Three opened Tuesday night, Dec 15, with two performances at American House - Rochester. Twenty-three Chiefs sang to twenty residents at Stone Senior Living and to sixteen residents at The Village Senior Living.

With Freddie McFadyen delayed in snarled I-75 traffic, Mike Frye led off the directing at Stone, and John Cowlishaw emceed both venues. Art Carinci was present to offer Silent Night to those of the French persuasion. 4 UR Pleasure, Bidin’ Our Time, and Limited Fredition added dulcet quartet tones.

(With Rochester Guardians due to sing here on Thursday, it might be time to re-ask why we drive all the way to Rochester for these smallishly attended venues.)

On Thursday, the chorus returned to Inn at Cass Lake where the exuberant Julie and about 42 residents welcomed 33 chieftains. Tom
directed the chorus. **4 UR PLEASURE, LIMITED FREDITION** (with John Northey at bass) and **Bidin’ Our Time** sang their quartet numbers. Walt and Art added their international flavor to Silent Night.

“On the third week of Christmas, my true love gave to me ... a busload of Chieftains, singing merrily.” The Big Chief Chorus took its annual Christmas tour on Saturday, Dec 19, as 27 Chiefs and four guests boarded the decorated bus at 11:30 for seven stops. (Joining in progress were Tom Blackstone, Bruce Brede, Eric Domke, and Howard Lynn.)

At Elmhaven Manor, 27 residents listened to the Tom Blue-led chorus.

On **Friday**, 22 Chieftains entertained at the Christmas Luncheon at the Auburn Hills Senior Center. Three quartets and the Chorus were welcomed by the ninety-six attendees. The seniors were very enthusiastic with their reception to the forty minute presentation. The program was concluded by a standing ovation from the audience. Thanks to Fred McFadyen who continues to lead the Chorus at these gatherings.

(Jack Teuber)

“At Ryan’s Market, (formerly VG’s), about 36 staff and shoppers enjoyed the chorus, but the transition from VG’s to Ryan’s has apparently lost some shoppers (and the bottle-return lady who traditionally sang with us).
At Pine Tree Manor, the audience (50) was robust and family-filled.

At Waterford Walmart, 125 staff and shoppers passed by and smiled, thumbs up.

The next stop at Union Lake was especially well-received by 61 shoppers and staff in the produce section. Cameras were brought out. There was time for a nutritional fill-up also.

At Brookdale Senior Residence of Novi, the chorus had the opportunity to sing with Howard Lynn who attends his wife. About 70 residents enjoyed the music, as the early diners stayed on and the late diners were arriving. The chorus received a very good welcome.

The final stop of the day was at the Commerce Twp. Walmart on Pontiac Trail, with a good reception from a smaller dinner time audience of about 50.

Altogether, 419 persons heard a cappella from the Big Chief Christmas chorus Saturday. Each stop included a 30-minute show, with a shuffling of the chorus repertoire and contributions from 4 UR PLEASURE, LIMITED FRED/Edition, and Bidin’ Our Time. “All in all, a very good day for a chorus that works hard to entertain in the community.”

Week 4

The 2015 Big Chief Chorus Christmas Chorus ended its season at Independence Village of White Lake with a performance to 75 enthusiastic residents and guests. Tom Blue led the 29-man chorus thru essentially the whole Christmas repertoire - fourteen songs. Jeff Doig got his first ovation as Rudolph. Doc David Stone enjoyed singing to his fellow residents and to his daughter Peggy McVea and husband Bud. Emma Blue persevered thru her umpteenth visit with her dad. Walt Bachmann added the German “Silent Night.” Walt DeNio kept blowing those pitches accurately.
Bidin’ Our Time sang “Christmas Chipsticks.” 4 UR Pleasure sang “I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas” with Jeff Doig subbing at lead. Limited Edition sang “God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen” and “Chestnuts.”

We bid goodbye to many chorus guests til next Christmas, but hope that some will return for our regular season.

We welcomed:

- Pat Hefner (Tenor)
- Bob Hunt (Lead)
- Dick Knapp (Bass)
- Jim Lawson (Bass)
- Gary Owens (Bass)

(John Harden had to “back out” with four herniated disks.)

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Around the Patch

From VP Music Roger Holm

GENTLEMEN: Merry Christmas everybody! And Happy New Year! See you all back at Waterford Oaks for our first chapter meeting on January 5th! To get us started on the right foot, our chorus song list for 2016 has been emailed! Tom hasn't chosen the songs for Spring contest yet, but they may be two of the NEW songs listed!! Stay tuned!

From Director Tom

Men and Friends of the BCC,

Thank you all for a wonderful year of barbershop harmony! The Blue Family are so thankful for your support and friendship and we wish you all the Merriest of Christmases and the Happiest and Healthiest of New Years!

From Prez Jack

WOW! What a whirlwind month it was for the Big Chief Christmas Chorus. It flew by quickly. Thanks for making it a successful season.

Gil Schreiner would like you to turn in your Christmas Books on Tuesday, January 5th.
**Chapter Membership Statistics** as of December 22, 2015

Chapter members: 49  
Number of active chorus members: 42 (86%)  
[40 year-round, 2 snowbirds]  
Inactive members: 7  
Median member age: 75  
Median years of service: 16  
New members in 2015: 3

**Quartets**

4 UR Pleasure

On Sunday, December 13th, 4 UR PLEASURE entertained the Christmas Luncheon at Crestwood Lutheran Church in Union Lake. They presented a seven-song set including "What a Wonderful World." Spotted in the audience was one of our favorite members Ted Prueter. Ted looked good and is feeling well.

Jack Teuber, Tenor, 4 UR PLEASURE

Bidin’ Our Time

**Bidin’ Our Time** sang on Friday December 4, 2015 at Oakland Hills Country Club. We sang and greeted the 93 insurance company employees as they arrived and mingled with their friends and associates over drinks of their choice. We were all dressed in tuxedos that were very appropriate for the Christmas-themed party.

(Mike Frye)

On Friday, December 18, Jim Owens provided an opportunity for **Bidin’ Our Time** to entertain 165 workers at the New Horizons Rehabilitation Facility in Auburn Hills. New Horizons provides a wide array of vocational and rehabilitation services to people with disabilities in southeastern Michigan. Jim uses their services to assemble and package his famous Cathole products. **Bidin’ Our Time** was enthusiastically received by workers as they sang Christmas songs at various locations throughout the plant.

(Ray Sturdy)

Limited Edition

**Limited Edition** missed Canterbury Dec 10 to sing as part of the Milford High School Christmas Concert. Ms. Maryann Lambrecht let about 175 school singers in an assortment of choral groups through an hour and a half program, during which **Limited Edition** sang “God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen” and “Little Toy Trains,” and joined the men of Center Stage in a rendition of “We Wish You a Merry Christmas.”

**Limited Edition** sang a 30-minute, 14-song holiday program Friday evening, Dec 11, at a home in Southfield. The recipient was Elizabeth Gorecki, Nancy Miller’s mother, arranged by Nancy’s daughter, Tamra Ottaway. Tamra’s husband, Mike, and their daughters, Hannah and Elle were also present to enjoy a mix of Christmas and secular songs. As the wife of our departed director, Chris Miller, Nancy is invited to each of our shows. She said she thought this year’s show was “the best one yet.”
The quartet with Nancy Miller, Chris’s wife

LIMITED EDITION performed Dec 19 for Nick Hytinen’s birthday. Departing partway thru the Christmas bus tour, the quartet spent an hour at a Chili’s to rest their voices before arriving to sing for 25 minutes at the Livonia American Legion Hall. About 70 friends and family honored Nick. They were lively and included quite a few persons with musical links, including appreciation of barbershop.

Chapter 2015 Performances thru December:
123 gigs to 8,420 people (plus 800,000 on TV)
This included 27 sing-outs by the Christmas chorus to 1,791 people.

MEMBERSHIP: (at 49)
Renewals: None
Due in January: None
Overdue: Mike Keith
January Birthdays: Len Barnes (Jan 3), Tom Blue (Jan 7), Bob Marshall (Jan 10), Ray Sturdy (Jan 18)
Medical:
In Memoriam:
Jan 30, 2004, John Smith #34
Jan 30, 2012, Dave Monroe #131

District
The Jackson Chorale’s 50th season Christmas concert was December 12 at Central Methodist Church. “I did a Google search and cannot find another instance where a person formed a choral group and remained as its director for 50 years.”
Greg Moss

A valuable resource is soon available: Leadership Academy (formerly COTS). Not just chapter officers, but everyone can benefit, and LA is a legitimate chapter expense. Please consider going to Mt Pleasant in January, and encourage your brothers to go also.
Here is the link;
http://www.pioneerdistrict.org/COTS/LeadershipAcademy.htm

International
Deke Sharon is bringing his roving band of a cappellists to East Lansing, January 26. It’s called Vocalosity, “the ACA-Perfect Concert Experience.”
The Wharton Center. Tickets from $28.
http://www.vocalosityontour.com/

The BHS has its own YouTube Channel at
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjJn75rK6lUaYwal1Ald1gg

Craft

What’s Up, Gil Schreiner

Media
Danny Fong brings Star Wars to life!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TsN9G-AK40

Omigosh, listen to these kids!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DfD3NAb9M&feature=youtu.be
Apparently they will be at the summer Convention. See the new rules at [http://www.barbershop.org/youth-barbershop-quartet-contest-evolves-with-changes-for-2016/](http://www.barbershop.org/youth-barbershop-quartet-contest-evolves-with-changes-for-2016/)

## History

### O C CASH THE EARLY YEARS

by Idress Cash

Idress Cash was the sister of SPEBSQSA co-founder Owen C. Cash. At the request of editor Ron Dudley, she wrote this article especially for the Gateway Gazette. It appeared originally in the January and June/July 1983 issues. This was seen in the Fullerton, Calif. Chapter’s Clippin’s, Dick Cote, editor.)

I was not aware of barbershopping until the big explosion of 1938. My brother, Owen, worked in a barber shop when he was a youngster, and I suppose he encountered the craft there.

At home, my mother was always singing—hymns, ballads, Stephen Foster songs—while she was in the garden or busy with housework. Mother and Dad attended singing school when they were young and we had the book they used. Dad used to sit in a big chair with the book and we would look over his shoulder and sing, but not often. Dad’s time to sing was Sunday mornings. He used to get up singing some favorite hymn—very loud. When we were teenagers, groups of us used to spend a lot of time singing around a piano. Owen was the leader in our crowd. He managed to get songs from the current New York musicals shows. He also visited with friends in neighboring towns. Then Owen learned to play the cornet and played all the Sousa marches. I played all the accompaniments and we made a lot of noise. Then he switched to the trombone and more noise. Then he took violin lessons and explored the world of classical music for a time.

In the latter part of World War I, Owen was in Officers’ Training School. I have no idea whether he sang barbershop style there; he could have. It is evident he knew the craft so surely he must have practiced it.

One Friday afternoon in the spring of 1938, I stopped by my brother’s house. The table was set for 12 and he told me he had invited some men friends for a stag dinner; they wanted to see his new house. He was anxious to show them the club room which was decorated according to his plan. It was in that room that the seed was sown that grew into the Society for the Preservation and Propagation of Barbershop Quartet Singing in the United States (SPPEBQSUS). The men had such a good time, someone suggested that they meet again, and that was the meeting on the roof garden of the hotel. When the story appeared in newspapers all over the USA, men began writing letters to Owen wanting to know how they could be part of such a group. When Owen and Mr. Hall met in the Muehlebach Hotel and talked it over, the answer became clear: incorporate. That provided a home for the many “orphans” out there crying to be adopted. The movement was really born that night when 27 men sang under the stars on a hotel roof.

### e-Technology

My annual reminder that if your computer is running slow, install Advanced System Care from Iobit. It’s free, at [www.iobit.com](http://www.iobit.com)

### Music Committee Meeting, Sunday, December 6.

Several important things were discussed.

- General agreement on the success of our November 7th show. Critic Al Fisk wrote a very complimentary report. Show net was about $9800 ($18,626 in income, $8827 in expenses). Opinion that we have raised the bar for future shows.
- The committee was excited about a theme for the 2016 show - Cruise.
- Potential guest quartets for the show will be contacted.
- Jeff Doig has agreed to become Lead section leader, replacing Bob Stephenson.
- The repertoire was reviewed - songs added, songs deleted.

### Editorial - Hosting a Pioneer District Convention

Pontiac-Waterford has not hosted a District Convention within the memory of current members. It’s time to step up to the plate.
To answer a couple questions, the host chapter need not be from the location city, and rarely is, as the list below shows. Host chapters also are not prohibited from competing.

It would mean a weekend commitment by a majority of our members for the weekend. But it also comes with some remuneration, at least free registration for those members working, I believe.

We are one of the biggest chapters, so I feel we should shoulder the responsibility. And I think it would be fun to be channeling the other choruses through their paces.

2016
Apr 22—24 Spring District Convention GR Crowne Plaza, host: Grand Rapids
Oct 14—16 Fall District Convention in Kalamazoo; host: The QCA

2017
Apr 21-23 Spring Convention at Grand Traverse Resort, host: Mt. Pleasant
Oct 20-22 Fall Convention in Battle Creek, host: open

2018
Apr 20-22 Spring Convention Grand Rapids Crowne Plaza host: D.O.C.
Oct 19-21 Fall Convention in Battle Creek, host: open

2019
Apr 19-21 Spring Convention at Grand Traverse Resort host: open

Letters
Hi John! Merry Christmas! I thought the chorus was excellent, what a great show! I know my dad was in 7th Heaven with all his friends there. It was perfect!

Thank you again for all you have done for my dad.
Peggy (McVea, Dave Stone’s daughter)

John, thank you for the updates on the Big Chief’s sing-outs. Bob was conflicted with sing-outs because many of Big Chief shows were set at the same time as Church Street Singers shows. The number of singers in CSS is dwindling - at one of our gigs it was only Bob and I singing. We feel obligated to uphold CSS because BCC has more members who come out to sing. That is so good. Happy New Year to you.

Eileen (Marshall)

Thank you again for making our party wonderful!!!! The seniors and staff had a wonderful time and we look forward to having you back in 2016.

Karen S. Adcock, SDC
Director of Senior Services

Thank you John. The entire experience was an outstanding one for my girls. They were thrilled to perform the piece one last time. Knowing that I choreographed it to help me deal with my father’s illness, they have always felt the piece deeply. They were so impressed with all of you and the quality of your work, and were very excited to have been rewarded with so much praise. It was definitely unexpected to receive such a generous contribution from the Chorus. Please express our gratitude to the rest of the men.
Wishing all of you continued good health and personal success.
Sincerely, Terri (The Dance Shoppe)

We are on a 14-day Viking cruise called the Mediterranean Odyssey. From Venice to Greece to Barcelona.

Dick Knapp (who made the last half of our schedule)

CALENDAR, (With Performance Times; Warm-ups 30’-45’ earlier)
2016
Jan 5, T, 7:00 Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
Jan 9, Sa Leadership Academy, Mt Pleasant
Jan 12, T, 7:00 Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
Jan 19, T, 7:00 Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
Jan 26, T, 7:00 Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
Jan 26-31 Midwinter Convention, Reno
Feb 2, T, 7:00 Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
Apr 22—24 Spr. Dist. Conv., GR Crowne Plaza, host: Grand Rapids
Jun 10 Send Off Show - Windsor
Jul 3-10 International, Nashville
Oct 14—16 Fall Dist. Conv., in Kalamazoo; host: The QCA

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP
Director: Thomas Blue (248-814-9627)
Assistant Directors: Fred McFadyen, Mike Frye, & Bill Holmes
President: Jack Teuber (248-334-3686)
Past President: Doc Mann (248-628-0189)
VP: Chapter Dev: Eric Domke (248-674-2323)
VP: Music and Performance: Roger Holm (248-623-7452)
VP: Marketing & PR: Open
Secretary: Charlie Perry (248-880-9356)
Treasurer: Jim Owens (248-682-4311)
Members at Large - Fred Pioch, Ray Sturdy, Jeff Doig, Walt DeNio
Chorus Manager: Gene Downie (248-682-9321)
Captain Sunshine: Bill Maxfield (248-698-1393)
Section Leaders: McFadyen, Doig, Cowlishaw, Moss
Music Team: Holm, Blue, Cowlishaw, Doig, Frye, McFadyen, Moss, Murray, Prueter, Stephenson, Mazzara
Bulletin Editor: John Cowlishaw, (248-891-4498)

Ms. Rudolph’s Rack (For Jeff)
Caribou/Reindeer are the only deer species in which both sexes grow antlers. But males lose them in late fall, the females not until later; pregnant cows keep their racks all winter. So on Santa’s Christmas trip, Rudolph was probably a pregnant female. (National Geographic, January 2016)

Note: To minimize Doug Metzger’s printing costs, the paper version distributed Jan 5 will have some photos deleted. They look better online anyway.