The Big Chief Chorus continued its tradition of performing a St. Patrick’s Day show at Canterbury on the Lake, March 17. The men seemed especially enthused to return to this resonant chamber as they sang a 40-minute, 12-song set to 70 residents and guests. Tom led the chorus, and Freddie added direction of “McNamara’s Band.” Three quartets added to the enjoyment, 4 UR PLEASURE, LIMITED FRYDITION, and BIDIN’ OUR TIME. The chorus’s stellar uniforms included green bow ties and arm bands. Afterward, beer and popcorn were served.

Ray Sturdy’s “legal” quartet, FORUM SHOPPERS, sang a couple songs on WJR that morning at 6:30.

**Around the Patch**

**Jeff Doig’s brother**, John, died Friday, March 18. John was 70, a rather unique individual - aircraft mechanic, pilot, flew for McDermott’s offshore oil rig ops in Africa and Saudi Arabia, lived on a 38-ft boat in the Virgin Islands for ten years, built his own Challenger airplane, and more recently has been a resident of Redding, California, where he helped develop Turtle Bay Exploration Park, Northern California’s “premier cultural and environmental education center.” Jeff was his only close relative.

We’ve been enjoying Ray Sturdy’s new vocal warmups. Eric Domke continues to lead the physical warmups. John Cowlishaw is available when they’re not. And Tom Blue continues to lead us thru the numbered pitch sequence exercises. Mike and Freddie add polecats and repertoire review.

We’ve happily welcomed Austin Suthers to our rehearsals. He sings in the Huron Valley Community Chorus with Charlie Perry.

The Board has designated Zach Schroeder as our new Facebook manager. Check it out at: https://www.facebook.com/Big-Chief-Chorus-195338833812959/?fref=ts
Thanks to Wayne Oberstadt for his past service managing the site.

Anna Blue had a second orthopedic surgery on her hip, to take care of things that were not done effectively the first time.

**SPRING CONVENTION, April 22-24**

The Big Chief Chorus and several of its embedded quartets will sing and compete at the spring convention in Grand Rapids.

**Performance Venue:** DeVos Center for Arts and Worship (in G.R. Christian High School) 2300 Plymouth Rd. SE Grand Rapids, MI 49506

**Headquarters hotel:** The Crowne Plaza
5700 28th Street S.E. Grand Rapids, MI 49546

All competitors must be registered, and be dues-current
The Chorus will sing/compete sometime Saturday morning. Around 4:30 o’clock, the chorus will dine at Carrabba’s at 4061 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512.

**Competitions** will include the District Chorus Championship Contest, the Seniors Quartet Contest, the International Preliminary Quartet Contest, and the new Youth Barbershop Quartet Contest (which replaces the old College Quartet Contest).

**The Voice** will have two quartets in the Youth Barbershop Quartet Contest: Kickstart and Frontier.

Sean Devine’s “new” quartet, (well, new in 2012), Throwback, will be here to compete “out of district.”

[https://www.facebook.com/throwbackquartet](https://www.facebook.com/throwbackquartet)

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**Quartets**

No gigs this month

**Chapter 2016 Performances thru March:**

29 gigs to 842 people, plus an estimated 800,000 on TV.

**MEMBERSHIP:** (at 49)

**Renewals:** Dave Stone (2), Eric Domke (8), Bill Maxfield (8), Fred Pioch (8), Tom Blue (9), Dar Johnson (10), Dave Myre (10), Greg Moss (13), John Cowlishaw (16), Bob Legato (16), Jim Owens (16), Jeff Spires (16), Bill Holmes (17), Gene Downie (18), Chuck Murray (20), Jeff Doig (23), Bob Marshall (25), Roger Holm (28).

**Due in April:** Walter Bachmann, Tom Blackstone, Art Carinci, Howard Lynn

**Overdue:** Mike Keith, Mike Doyle

**April Birthdays:** Wayne Oberstadt (3rd), Jeff Doig (16th)

**Medical:**

Mike Keith is having some vision problems
Bob Marshall’s back surgery went well (March 28). He expects to be home on Wednesday, March 30.

**In Memoriam:**

Apr: None

**District**

Oakland University’s A Cappella group, GOLD VIBRATIONS, just won the regional a cappella competition to go to the internationals, as reported on WXYZ.


**Harmony Explosion** is July 21-23. The BCC Executive Board has approved up to nine scholarships.
JUG NIGHT IN BATTLE CREEK
7:30 pm TUESDAY, MAY 17
First Wesleyan Church, 14425 S. Helmer Rd, Battle Creek, 49015.
“In addition to our top quartets, we’ll feature the HARMONY
MERCENARIES CHORUS -- around 60 voices strong from
chapters in West Michigan, with some really great music.”

Quartet Boot Camp (for quartets) and Quartet Factory (for quartet
wannabe’s): Saturday, June 18, Okemos Conference Center.
Contact Roger Lewis at rjlewiscmc@aol.com.

International

All information for the International Convention in Nashville is at:
http://www.barbershop.org/nashville/

What’s Up, Walter Bachmann?
JC: There was a brief period around 2011 when you weren’t coming
to rehearsals because of a new job. Are you still working in the
automotive supply field, or are you now fully retired?
WB: I am no more working in the automotive supply field and am
retired. I am helping a friend of mine in Sales and Marketing of
Medical devices such as orthopedic reamers, bone screws,
intramedullary reamers (femoral, humoral and tibial).

JC: Some years ago, you sang in a Chris Miller quartet with Bob
Stephenson, Teuber, and Wallace. Tell us about your
quartetting since then.
WB: I am singing the Bari-part with the FRED PIOCH QUARTET.
Currently we are learning "Danny Boy" as interpreted and sung
by ORIOLE FOUR QUARTET. Sometimes Tom Blue calls me
to join the TOM BLUE QUARTET to sing the Bari-part. Fred
intends to learn more up-tempo songs with "his quartet."

JC: You have gotten back into instrumental music. Tell us about
that.
WB: I began learning to play the drums in 1956. Elvis P. and Bill
Healy were our idols then. In 2015 I met a Swiss in Ypsilanti
who plays accordion and piano. He is married to Marylin, an
American Singer and guitarist (bass guitar). She played and was
the Bandleader of a "Girlie Band" and they toured Europe (Italy,
Sweden, Switzerland). Now we rehearse together. We play
Oldies from Switzerland/Germany, I sing in German and French,
my college "Jodels", we play older country songs, we play Blue
Grass Music and Classic Rock. Currently we rehearse "The
Moondance," as sung by Van Morrison, Brown Eyed Girls, love,
don't love nobody" as interpreted by Etta James, "Tom Dooley."
I rehearse every day in my basement playing the drums to the
rhythms of Levon Helm Band starring Little Sammy Davis. (Blues)

JC: You also have private German-language students, yes?
WB: German Tutoring: I tutor currently one student in German. He
speaks German, French and Spanish. His Great Grandfather was
a General in the Civil War (General Russel Hastings).

JC: What spring tasks do you have planned around your home?
WB: Spring tasks: I have my "to-do-list." But I am mainly working
outside of my house. Cleaning and cutting brush. Cleaning up
fallen trees. Splitting oak logs with my wood splitter. I use
wood to heat my house. And sometimes I am just being lazy
doing nothing. Also teaching my German shepherd how to
behave and become a good family dog. She is still a 7-month old
puppy.
“[Chorus] rehearsal is not for you to sing correct notes and rhythms. It is to gel as a group so that the artistic vision and interpretation are unified from individual to individual. The moment you think it’s okay to miss rehearsal because you think you are one of the better musicians and singers, you have missed the point and have just demoted yourself to one of the worst. Even if you are perfectly accurate, there is no way to be perfectly unified without time dedicated to group intent. It is for this reason that I think a lot of professional ensembles are not exceptional. They can throw it together, but unifying the intent beyond something general takes rehearsal time and attention... careful cultivation by all.”
(From The Voice of Rushmore)

A Barbershop Quartet Job Description (The Lead)
by Ron Knickerbocker

As seen in In Tune, Linda Williams, Editor

Leads have the easiest job in that they are the only ones who actually sing the song, but they have the greatest responsibility because the rest of us are completely dependent on them. We can’t even start a song without them (with the exception of the songs that start with the Basses singing “boom, boom, boom”!)

1. Sing firmly and accurately.
   A. A high percentage of inaccurate singing is a result of a lack of concentration. (As in, “I’ve sung this song since nineteen-ought-two.”)
   B. Remember – the harmony parts harmonize with the note they think you will sing, so your job is to be there, not just “in the vicinity.”
   C. Don’t listen to the sounds the group is making. Obviously you will hear it, but you should hear it “in passing”- like driving through some fantastic scenery in heavy traffic. You will be aware of the scenery but you can’t forget where your main responsibility lies.
   • Your primary responsibility is to sing the song in such a way that the harmony part singers can do their job without worrying about yours.

2. Sing vowels the same way every time.
   A. Harmony part singers can’t match the lead until he sings stable, consistent vowel sounds. This is important not just for competition, but for general performances as well.
   B. It is easy to match sounds in your section, but it takes time and effort.

3. You listen (as you sing) with “goose bumps” in your ears, but general audiences don’t.

4. Be aware of the few spots, if any, in a song where you aren’t singing the melody.
   A. Exaggerate giving up and taking over the melody. This helps avoid confusion on the part of the listeners. This most often occurs on tags, but occasionally it happens within the body of the song.

5. Be aware of spots where harmony part singers might need your help.
   A. In your upper register (don’t bury them),
   B. At the extremes of the ranges of the harmony part singers.

You’ll find the best advice for going into a contest on the label of a mayo jar; keep cool, but don’t freeze. (From Bill Gibbons)

Similarities in Vocal Advice?
- Breathe into your back; feel the expansion there
- Relax the pelvic floor as you inhale
- Expanded belly, pressing against your pants belt
- Sing, pushing down, as if out your anus
- Support is the active resistance to exhalation

Perhaps the first two deal with inhalation, and the last two with exhalation (singing), and the middle one, throughout. Pick the ones that work for you.

Three related quotes:
- ‘To understand music, you must listen to it. But as long as you are thinking “I am listening to this music,” you are not listening.’
  Alan Watts in The Wisdom of Insecurity.
B. Words make you think. Music makes you feel. A song makes you feel a thought. 
E.Y. Harburg (From the Orange Spiel)

C. Having to concentrate on notes and words keeps the body from moving. We must tell the audience, “I’m having fun.” While we do tell a story, we don’t sing words, we sing sounds that represent words [i.e., Singlish]. Audiences hear emotion, not just words.
Jay Giallombardo (From The Orange Spiel)

History
The last time that International was in Nashville, Chris Miller wrote a report which included this: (July, 2001)
“I had to rush dinner to hear Power Play perform live on the Grand Ole Opry to a capacity crowd of 4,000 people and a radio audience of millions. The quartet brought the audience to its feet with a standing ovation. Power Play was only supposed to sing one song but the audience wouldn't let them go and applauded until they sang an encore which received another standing O (the only act to receive an encore the entire night). The MC remarked that “following this barbershop quartet would be like following a bulldozer with a spoon”. Although many in the audience were barbershoppers, I heard more than one non-barbershopper remark “if this is barbershop, I have to find more of it.”

Exc Bd Minutes, February 18, 2016, Excerpts from Perry's minutes
Members present were Pioch, Schroeder, DeNio, Perry, Schroeder, Owens and Teuber.
Motion to bond membership was passed.
Treasurer’s Report: Available funds $19,045.
VP Growth and Development: Pat Heffner will become a member.
Lance Shew will make up Chorus Business cards for anyone who wants them.

VP Music and Performance: Contest preparations are progressing.
We can’t reduce the size of the guest books. Gene is working on straightening them out, and updating them.
Frontier has agreed the headline our show. Details to be worked out. Other possible performers include New Verizon Band for pre-curtain, Double Date mixed quartet, The Voice, and the Classy Dancers from last year.
Old business: Overtime Grille has offered a menu featuring pizza & pitchers for afterglow.
Bus for Dead Creek Picnic will cost $420.
New business: The board denied Ross Ensign’s request for dual membership.
Motion passed to offer up to nine $100 scholarships for students from Milford High School and Rochester Adams High School to attend Harmony Explosion.
Zach Schroeder will update email address list and handle our Facebook page.
BSOM: Bill Maxfield for handling Valentines.

Editorial - Barbershop as Community
A community is a social unit that shares common values. The word "community" is derived from the Latin communis, things held in common. Members of our Barbershop community share
• Goals (fun, fellowship, and good singing)
• Beliefs (that music can make the world a better place)
• Resources (shared leadership, planning)
• Mutual support (encouragement)
• Risks (singing publically as a group)
• Tolerance (of diversity and individual limitations)

For me personally, Barbershop has become my primary community.
As a secularist, the community that I once knew - as a youngster in the Presbyterian Church and as a young adult in the Methodist Church - is no longer available to me.
I have been in other communities:
A branch of psychotherapy called bioenergetics.
A branch of body-work known as Trager work The Biology Department at Oakland University Aviation

But none have stayed with me as long and been so personally meaningful to me as my friendships within barbershop, the warm camaraderie over the 16 years that I have been a member of this wonderful chapter, and a member of the larger Barbershop Community.

Letters:

From Maryann Lambrecht:

Thanks to help from our Barbershop friends, we [had] two Barbershop numbers on [our POPS concert] March 18, 19, “Hello Mary Lou” and “Hooked on a Feeling.” I am hoping you will be helping us send more men to the Harmony Explosion Camp this summer. It is really catching on and my men are singing so well because of it. You have been such a great support to us.

From Tom Blue:

John, Another fine installment and thanks for putting in the Mitch Albom quote. I need to read the book.

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

2016

Apr 5, T, 7:00 Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
Apr 12, T, 7:00 Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
Apr 19, T, 7:00 Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
Apr 22—24 Spr. Dist. Conv., GR Crowne Plaza, host: G.R.
Apr 26, T, 7:00 Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
May 3, T, 7:00 Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
May 21, Sa, 6:00 Flint Chpt Show
Jun 10 Send Off Show - Windsor
Jun 21, T, 5:30 bus Frankenmuth, Dead Creek Picnic
Jun 25, Sa, 3:00 Waterford Historical Soc., Log Cabin Days
Jul 3-10 International, Nashville

Jul 21-23 Harmony Explosion, CMU
Oct 14—16 Fall Dist. Conv., in Kalamazoo; host: The QCA
Nov 5, 7:00 72nd Annual Show

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Director: Thomas Blue (248-814-9627)
Assistant Directors: Fred McFadyen, Mike Frye
President: Jack Teuber (248-334-3686)
Past President: Doc Mann (248-628-0189)
VP: Chapter Dev: Walt DeNio (248-922-9090)
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 - Eric Domke, Fred Pioch, Zach Schroeder, Ray Sturdy
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, Mazzara
Bulletin Editor: John Cowlishaw, (248-891-4498)

Humor

Bob Shami, Music Director of the Northland Barbershop Chorus, tells the story that his quartet Solid Ground was asked to sing at an Alzheimer Support Group event where about 30 early-onset Alzheimer and dementia patients and their care partners would attend. “I selected several songs from our repertoire that I thought would feel "warm and fuzzy" to these couples. At a social afterwards, one lady came up to me and clasped my two hands in hers. She said to me "I wanted to thank you personally and tell you something special. Tonight you made my husband cry, and he never cries. This was the first time he has been able to cry since the diagnosis. I think he is finally coming to terms with what we know is ahead. Those songs perfectly expressed how I feel about him, especially "Stand By Me" and “Lean On Me." Then she added this last bit that landed like a
bombshell: she explained, with a broad smile and a sparkle in her eyes I'll never forget: "By the way, I'm the Alzheimer's patient!"

Did you ever wonder why there are no dead penguins on the ice in Antarctica? If a penguin is found dead on the ice surface, other members of the family and social circle have been known to dig holes in the ice, using their vestigial wings and beaks, until the hole is deep enough for the dead bird to be rolled into it, and buried. The male penguins then gather in a circle around the fresh grave and sing: “Freeze a jolly good fellow.” “Freeze a jolly good fellow.”
(From the Voice of Rushmore)

Anniversary

This issue completes 15 years of *Smoke Signals* - 180 issues. The first issue was May of 2001. It gained the name *Smoke Signals* by the fourth issue. Material comes from diverse sources, much easier in this digital age than in the old days when Bill Pascher and others put out a bulletin. It is composed in Word, in a double column format that allows folding into a 5x8 booklet, unique in the Society as far as I know. The only other active bulletin in the District is Paul Howe’s excellent weekly Lansing e-bulletin, the *Woodshedder Weekly*.

*Smoke Signals* is currently distributed by email to chorus members and about 35 friends of the chorus, as well as put on our [www.bigchiefchorus.org](http://www.bigchiefchorus.org) site by Jeff Doig, and posted to Pionet and Bbshop user groups. Printed copies are provided gratis by Doug Metzger of The Print Shop, and snail-mailed out to chapter members who don’t pick them up during rehearsals. Financial burden to the chapter is minimal, about $10 monthly for postage.