PIO District Convention

For the 20th straight year the Big Chief Chorus competed in the Pioneer District’s Spring Convention.

This year it was in Traverse City, April 21-23.

The chorus bounced back from its disappointing Plateau 3-level performance last year (52.6%) to place 7th of 11 choruses, with a score of 734 points, or 61.2%.

7th place is also our highest placement since 2003. And our 24 men on stage was 4th only to Grand Rapids (46), Lansing (25), and D.O.C. (25).

Then came the Judges! and David Wright was especially appreciated. He also directed the Joe Barbershop Chorus, which sang the famous “Hello, Mary Lou” arrangement that he arranged. He explained that it was just a song for his quartet until a predecessor of The Acoustix picked it up, and it went viral.

The quartet competition was notable for the fact that every competing quartet sang above the 60% bar. Winning it all was FRONTIER who wowed the crowd with a score of 79.0. But THE HEMIDEMISEMIQUAVER 4 (76.4) and UPPER DECK (76.2) will also be going to International in Las Vegas, since they crossed the 76 point threshold, which no three Pioneer quartets have done in recent memory.

Our “one-fourth chapter quartets” were CHECKMATE (Bruce LaMarte is a Big Chief member) and CODA HONOR (Ray Sturdy). CHECKMATE was the 1990 Pioneer District Champion, and has re-formed to win the Seniors contest, with a 71.7, and they placed 5th in the open competition. CODA HONOR scored 63.8 which was 10th out of 13 quartets.

CHECKMATE: Bruce LaMarte (T), Craig Pollard (L), Scott McNutt (Bs), Brian Kaufman (Br)
CODA HONOR: Euel Kinsey (T), Aaron Wilson (L), Ray Sturdy (Br), Dave Montera (Bs)

Chieftain virgins Bill Sclesky and Jon Knapp enjoyed their first-time competition experience.

Several of us attended the classes that were available Friday afternoon. Steve Curulla gave a nice history of how we got from the original judging categories to the present. The last iteration was because Presentation got too artificial; the goal was supposed to be to perform and entertain, which is the thrust of the new Performance category. Andrew Carolan talked about how to take advantage of the embellishments that barbershop music contains.

Jeff Doig and John Cowlishaw represented the P-W chapter at the House of Delegates meeting Friday afternoon.

- Chip Ballent said, to reach educators, offer to usher and help out school music programs in any way.
• There will be an ebiz update in the membership section that will make it more user-friendly.
• The Healthy Chapter Initiative is an effort to get each chapter in compliance of all the rules.
• The Pioneer Executive Board has voted to approve Mixed Group Festivals, to begin in the fall.
• Roger Boyer reported that 43 tubs had been contributed to Jubilee in Traverse City, the district’s second service project. The mission of Jubilee House is to provide assistance with daily living needs and support, which promotes the dignity and respect of the homeless, marginally employed and low income citizens in the greater Grand Traverse area.
• Next fall, the project will support Haven. Sponsors of the Spring convention will be D.O.C. and P-W and the service project will be the Methodist Children’s Home.

Ex-Troub-editor Greg Humbel did a great job of promoting Troubadour, at H.O.D., on the Big Screen, and even from the podium. As a result, FRONTIER Bass Cody Harrell has agreed to become the new Troubadour Editor. He’ll do it differently, more modern, more electronic, and starting in the summer; but the important thing is that the Troubadour continues.

From Director Tom:

   Men and Friends of the BCC,

   Another contest is in the books and what a sing for us! We are back into the 60% category and a score of 734? I think that is about 100 points better than last year. Wow, a job well done and thank you! TC is always a nice place to stay and gather (not necessarily the best stage set-up this time). We came and we conquered. Thank you all for your time, effort to be there and to sing the very best, and special thanks to those that managed to sing in two choruses. Thanks to everyone who helped make our contest showing a success. It was nice to dine with you on Sat. evening, to visit hospitality rooms, and to sit with you during quartet singing.

   *Let’s keep encouraging one another to be our best at singing barbershop harmony. Lots of good information in the Harmonizer and it was refreshing to realize that many of the points discussed have been a part of our vocabulary!

   **District contest was an opportunity to be evaluated by Dr. David Wright. Wow, what a privilege and his feedback was valuable and instructive (he must be a teacher☺). Some of us got to watch him in action and some of you sang under his direction. Taking advantage of those opportunities of a lifetime must be like a gold-medal moment.

Around the Patch

The BCC Music Library

   Since Roger Holm retired from chairing the Music Committee, he has had time to inventory our chorus music library ... from A (“A Hard Day’s Night”) to Z (“Zip A Dee Do Dah”). Altogether, we have
285 Songs. (At 3’ per average song, we could sing thru the whole catalog in 14 hours.

The Shevitzes
On April 11, we had guests, Loren Shevitz from Chicago, and his father from West Bloomfield. Loren is an assistant director from the New Traditions Chorus in Chicago.

Welcome New Member, Jon Knapp

Huron Valley Community Chorus presents its Spring Concert, May 7, 4 p.m. at Faith Lutheran Church, 3501 E. Highland Road, Highland, MI 48381. Chieftains Charlie Perry and Austin Suthers are members of the chorus. More info at HVCommChorus.com

The 2017 Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award.
Tom Blackstone’s daughter, Ashlie Blackstone Smith, an eighth grade physical science teacher at Cranbrook Kingswood Middle School for Girls, in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., recently received an outstanding honor. She was selected by the Astronauts Memorial Foundation (AMF), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Space Foundation as recipient of the 2017 Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award.

The award is given annually in recognition of creative and innovative use of technology by K-12 educators.

The award, named for Mercury and Apollo astronaut Alan Shepard, was presented during the 33rd Space Symposium opening ceremony on April 3 at The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, Colo., USA. The opening ceremony was co-sponsored by Northrop Grumman, and the award presentation was followed with a by-invitation reception co-hosted by the Astronauts Memorial Foundation.

The Space Foundation’s annual Space Symposium is the premier gathering of all sectors of global space leadership, attracting thousands of participants from dozens of countries.

http://www.astronautsmemorial.org/alan-shepard-award.html

hosted by D.O.C. to support the Pioneer District’s International Representatives. Last year the event was supported by several chapters. The location is Royal Oak Middle School 709 N. Washington, Royal Oak. Time is 7:30.

The second date Friday, May 12th is The Mothers’ Day Luncheon at Elmhaven Manor, 600 W. Walton Blvd., Pontiac. Warm-up is at 12:30; performance at 1:00 p.m.

Look for sign up lists for both.

Jack

From Past President Jack Teuber
MEN,
Following the Spring Convention we have two dates coming up in the month of May. On Monday, May 8th it will be Jug Night

Jon Knapp being inducted into the Society
**Quartets**

**Limited Fredition**

Limited FREDITION responded to Tom Blue’s offer to celebrate National Barbershop Quartet Day at Rochester’s Van Hoosen Middle School where he teaches.

LF (McFadyen, Doig, Cowlishaw, Perry) arrived at 11:00 am Tuesday, April 11, and departed, a tired foursome, around 3:00 pm. In between, the quartet sang to three of Tom’s music classes, and a band class. But Tom had advertised our appearance among the Van Hoosen teachers, eleven of whom invited LF to sing for their classes. These were brief one or two song performances, with a quick plug for barbershop and life-long singing.

Chosen as part of the repertoire were an intro song (“It’s a Good Day”), an old song (“Nellie”), a new song (“Can You Feel” or “Breaking Up” or “Come Fly”), a song to demonstrate the integration of voice parts (“Saints”), and a tag co-sung with the group (“When It’s Sleepy Time Down South”).

We sang for four hours, and to 14 classes, plus the teacher-staff meeting, and the front office staff, altogether to about 270 folks.

Singing for kids always makes us feel like rock-stars, and Tom said he received a number of favorable emails.
attended by the campers and demonstrates to them first hand that singing is something that is a life-long opportunity!

You can view, download or print a camp detail sheet using this link:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B4IGsBiXAHtcDZXeWFqdRmZk0

View or download the fantastic camp staff pdf:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B4IGsBiXAHtdktrV3A3XzZR

Open a window to complete the camp registration form here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScYzhN20xaFqGzOobfMINFSLkvgljo8hW38N-vOtF7txOosg/viewform

All of this information can be accessed on the MountainTown Singers Website: www.mountaintownsingers.org or on the Facebook page for camp.

Looking forward to seeing you in Traverse City!
Joe McDonald
MTHX2017 Camp Administrator

Great Lakes Harmony Brigade

The dates are May 19-21 with our show on Saturday night, 7:30, at the Okemos Conference Center. The guest quartets will include THE REEN FAMILY SINGERS/QUARTET.

Yours in XQ, Mike O’Donnell
http://www.harmonybrigade.org/glhb/

Bush League

“Just received the word from Traverse City President Jess Kuznicki that the Bellaire High School Auditorium is set for the 71st Bush League contest and show . . . The Date will be August 11th and 12th . . . we are working on Shanty Creek Lodge for Headquarters Hotel.”

The 44th annual GLC/Baker family Corn Roast will be held - Monday, August 21st.

International


HARMONY UNIVERSITY - July 23-30, Nashville, TN

MIDWINTER – January 16-21, Orange County, CA

MEDIA

Champs Deliver: CARA Awards announced!

“The broad aca-world demonstrated its keen good taste in balloting for the 2017 Contemporary A Cappella Recording Awards, awarding top honors for Best Barbershop Song to two champion quartets. VOCAL SPECTRUM got the top prize for “Zoot Suit Riot” from Vocal Spectrum V. Runner-up mention went to FOREFRONT for “Georgia On My Mind” from their second CD, The Loveliest Thing.”

Deke Sharon’s keynote speech at Midwinter

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UufvNhiwwDg&feature=youtu.be

“Deke Sharon, the music director of the Pitch Perfect movie franchise as well as NBC’s The Sing-Off, gave a powerful keynote address at the 2017 Midwinter Convention in San Antonio. The BHS Honorary Lifetime Member encouraged Barbershoppers to make audiences cry while singing a Polecat, addressed the issue of mixed voice singing, spoke about the importance of video in growing the popularity of barbershop, and so much more. It’s a candid yet impactful perspective that warrants the attention of all who love our amazing art form.” (41’)

Web Sites

The BCC chorus website is www.bigchieffchorus.org
The Pioneer district website is http://pioneerdistrict.org
The BHS website is http://www.barbershop.org
SINGING, MUSIC, AND PERFORMANCE

Listening for the Baritone line (By John Cowlishaw)

I have a confession to make. When I’m listening to a quartet, the hardest part for me to pick out is the Baritone. And here I am, a Baritone with a fairly good ear. Why should this be true? Even while listening to a very good quartet, where one expects the baritone to sing with just the appropriate volume (e.g., Don Slamka in HemiDemiSemiQuaver 4).

Let’s assume an ideal quartet. They start out by matching their volumes. Then let’s add about 30% to the Lead voice, because the melody needs to be discernable. Then let’s make a slight adjustment that the higher pitches need to be a little softer and the lower pitches a little louder. There we go … that should ring, and bring pleasure to a barbershopper’s face.

Now, as we listen to them, try to pick out the individual voices.

The Bass and Tenor lines are easier to discern because you can just listen for the lowest and highest voices.

Now, in between them (normally) are the Lead and Baritone. It’s easier to pick out the Lead line, because he is singing it a tad louder, and furthermore, you know, or can discern, the melody. That leaves only the Baritone. It’s not the lowest, or the highest, or the melody.

I think that’s why the Bari voice is hardest to hear. Whadya all think?

Tuning

The latest LiveWire contains an article by Jay Dougherty entitled “What Does it Mean to Sing in Tune.”

In it, Jay says: “When you hear dissonance, you hear beats in the sound - small fluttering disturbances in the sound that, if prominent enough, can make you cringe. The fewer beats you hear, the more in-tune you’ll perceive something to be. A great way to learn to hear beats is to sing against a fixed pitch: a pitch pipe works great. As you blow air through your pipe, hum the same note. Now, hum a little flat and hear how the beats are very obvious. Slowly bend the pitch back up, and when you finally match pitch, the sound will smooth out and the beats will go away.”

Try it and see if you can discern the beats. For me, it worked better with my Tombo than with an electronic pitch pipe.

Upcoming Local Events

I Love a Piano. (Irving Berlin music), MBT, Apr 19 - May 14, 2017

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

May 2, T, 7:00 Chorus rehearsal, WOAC
May 7, Su, 4:00 Huron Valley Community Chorus concert
May 8, M, 7:30 Jug Night, Royal Oak Middle School
May 9, T, 7:00 Chorus rehearsal, WOAC
May 12, F, 1:00 Mother’s Day Celebration, Elmhaven Manor. Summer Class C
May 16, T, 7:00 Chorus rehearsal, WOAC
May 20, Sa, 7:30 Great Lakes Harmony Brigade Show, Okemos
May 23, T, 7:00 Chorus rehearsal, WOAC
May 30, T, 7:00 Chorus rehearsal, WOAC
Jun 6, T, 7:00 Chorus rehearsal, WOAC
Jun 16, F, 12:00 Auburn Hills Senior Center, Summer Class C
Jun 20, T, 5:30 Bus leaves for Frankenmuth Dead Creek Picnic. Short sleeve yellow polo and pants/shorts
Jun 24, Sa, 3:00 Log Cabin Days (Warm-Up 2:00) Summer Class C
Jul 2-8 International, Las Vegas, NV
Jul 23-30 Harmony University, Nashville, TN
Aug 11,12 Bush League, Bellaire, MI

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Director: Thomas Blue (248-814-9627)
Assistant Directors: Fred McFadyen, Mike Frye
President: Eric Domke (248-674-2323)
Past President: Jack Teuber (248-334-3686)
VP: Chapter Dev: Walt DeNio (248-922-9090)
VP: Music and Performance: Zach Schroeder (248-929-1285)
VP: Marketing & PR: Jack Teuber (248-334-3686)
Secretary: Charlie Perry (248-880-9356)
Treasurer: Jim Owens (248-682-4311)
Members at Large - Pat Hefner, Fred Pioch, Ray Sturdy, Austin Suthers
Chorus Manager: Gene Downie (248-682-9321)
Captain Sunshine: Bill Maxfield (248-698-1393)
Chorus Librarian: Roger Holm (248-623-7452)
Section Leaders: McFadyen, Doig, Cowlishaw/Sturdy, Moss
Music Team: Schroeder, Blue, Frye, McFadyen, Doig, Cowlishaw,
Moss, Mazzara
Bulletin Editor: John Cowlishaw, (248-891-4498)

Endgame

Bill and Nancy Maxfield, 50th anniversary

"Uh-oh, here comes the Mike again. Cut the barbershop quartet and go back to mournful whistling."