Chapter Executive Board

Officers
Chorus Director: Chris Miller
President: Gene Downie
VP, Chapter Development: Walt DeNio
VP, Music and Performance: John Smith
Secretary: Bill Holmes
Treasurer: Dick Johnson
Member at Large: Jeff Spires

Chairmen
Quartet Activity Chair: Len Barnes
Service Chair: Bruce Brede
Singing Valentine Chair: Bob Marshall
Chorus Manager: Don Denoyer
Music Librarian: Roger Holm
Uniform Manager: Bill Auquier
Newsletter Editor: John Cowlishaw

Calendar
May 18-20 Harmony Roundup, E. Lansing
Jun 1 Return of the Jug Night, DOC
Jun 8 Windsor sendoff
Jun 14 Board Meeting
Jun 26 Chorus to Frankenmuth
Jun 30-Jul 8 International Conv., Nashville, TN
Jul 29-Aug 5 Harmony College, St. Joseph, MO
Aug Picnic
Oct 19-21 District Convention
Oct Election of officers, 2002
Nov 3 Fall show
Nov 6 Christmas singout season begins

Membership
We’re currently at 48 members. The newest five, who joined SPEBSQSA in the last year, are Leads - Irwin Mann, Pete Mazzara, and Al Monroe, and Basses - Zaven Melkonian, and Jack Teuber. (Now where are all those Tenors and Bari’s out there?) Also, welcome to Wally Plosky and Bruce LeMarte, new to our chapter, though hardly new to Barbershop!

District Convention:
As Director Chris Miller said, going into it, “We may not win, but two years from now, we’ll be the show everyone remembers.” Presenting the only parodies in the District competition, audience responsiveness was high! Judges’ adrenalin may have risen even higher when Ron Arnold shot a puck into their midst that they couldn’t have known was foam, (or were their heads down, writing notes?) and Mike Keith whacked Art Carinci’s “candy teeth” into the crowd. On a more serious note, the critique suggested ways to keep our score improving (see right for recent trends). Shtick and antics have to be BIG, more visual, without music becoming punchy, and married better to the music; criticism of breaks; of muddiness; synchronization problems; stronger support from chorus; smile with eyes; more confidence in moves; vowels (“sorry” and “fall”). Thanks to Chris for the concept and Linda Liddicoat for coaching! And congratulations to our members who also sang in the winning Detroit-Oakland Gentlemen Songsters - Jeff Spires and Marv Wilson. Best wishes to “Power Play,” representing the Pioneer District in Nashville!

Year/Place MUS PRE SNG SCORE Men
2001 8th of 14
Hi Stickin’ 115 118 121 701 40
Mistakes 109 120 118

2000 12th of 15
Sing Me That Song 100 116 107 645 34
Let’s Get Away… 97 118 107

1999 13th of 14
M-A-Double-M-Y 91 93 94 547 32
Sing Me That Song 91 89 89

1998 11th of 11
Side By Side 99 103 87 552 25
My Buddy 88 93 82

Board Meeting
At the May meeting, the Board discussed the Fall Show, and choice of music, and approved making the Directorship a paid position.

Barbershopper(s) of the month (May)
Wally Plosky & Don Sheridan
“For service above and beyond the call of duty by singing injured at Battle Creek”

Also Ailing
Bill Auquier (Broken foot)
Howard Lynn (Skin surgery)
Dennis Robinson (Cancer recovery)
SPOTLIGHT on … SUNNYSIDE
Each month I’ll shine the spotlight on some person(s) in our chorus. This month, the Spotlight is on the Sunnyside quartet (Smith, Barnes, Johnson, Holm). I interviewed Len Barnes.

Your editor: How long has Sunnyside been together?
Len Barnes: Let’s see, I just sent in the new registration, for the 10th yr.

Ed: Always with the same singers?
LB: Yes, Harmonic Progression was the predecessor, but when Mike Keith had to drop out for a few years with Meniere’s disease, and George Mekras wouldn’t learn his music (he was a great woodshedder), we recruited Smitty and Roger.

Ed: What about practice?
LB: We try to practice once a week, Tuesday mornings at my place, but it’s tough; you know, us retirees with our schedules. Smitty’s just left for Florida, and we do all these fishing trips.

Ed: How many songs do you have in your repertoire?
LB: Oh, probably 45. We try to keep up with 12 to 15 at any time for singouts. That way we can fit the songs to the occasion; old ladies like sweet gushy stuff, like mother-songs, and seniors like the old songs, and young kids like peppier things.

Ed: You do a lot of singouts.
LB: Yes, but our schedules limit it; we could be doing more.

Ed: What have some of the memorable ones been?
LB: Well, we sang for Art Carinci’s post-wedding party. And last summer, the Ford dealers hired us to sing for a big party at Hockeytown Restaurant for their people before the final baseball game in Tiger Stadium, so we were singing at the tables for several hours, and then sang “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” as they left in busses for the stadium. For sheer sound, singing to a bunch of retired schoolteachers at Blossom Heath over in St. Clair was wonderful; they’ve got a dome in the center and we sounded like a 40-man chorus.

Ed: Has there been any song that just brought you grief?
LB: Not really. We introduced “Sittin’ on Top of the World” to this area. We’d been up on Obalake for a week together and had that song down deadnuts; we were really hot. So we came back to town, and at the Fall Convention, there was a hospitality room and first we sang “RagTime Cowboy Joe,” and then we sang “Sittin...” and we sounded so good that Bob Whitledge, the Director of “City Lights,” the chorus culled from the region specifically to make it to International, practically jumped out of his wheelchair and said, “Where are you guys on Wednesday nights?” Probably the most rewarding comment we’ve gotten.

Ed: Is there some challenge that you’re working on now?
LB: No, not really. We’ve done the Seniors Competition a couple times, and one time we were sure we’d won it; another quartet scored two pts higher with the judges, but they thought we’d won. We sang “Crummy old Quartet” and the audience loved it. Now if we could win that, it would be great, but it’s hard. Ringer quartets can be formed, without registration, at the last minute, guys like Russ Seely and John Waring, and they’re all such good singers. Doesn’t bother me though, we’re in this to have fun. I guess that’s our goal.

What is Barbershop?
The following quote is taken from the SPEBSQSA tutorial site, www.spebsqsa.org/Tutorials

“SPEBSQSA is devoted to promoting, preserving, and enjoying a special form of harmony known as barbershop. But what makes a particular song or arrangement "barbershop-able"? What's the difference between barbershop and doo-wop, jazz, madrigal, and other a cappella music?

“Technically speaking, barbershop harmony is a style of unaccompanied singing with three voices harmonizing to the melody. The lead usually sings the melody, with the tenor harmonizing above the lead. The bass sings the lowest harmonizing notes and the baritone provides in-between notes, either above or below the lead to make chords (specifically, dominant-type or "barbershop" sevenths) that give barbershop its distinctive, "full" sound.

“Probably the most distinctive facet of barbershop harmony is the phenomenon known as expanded sound. It is created when the harmonics in the individually-sung tones reinforce each other to produce audible overtones or undertones. Barbershoppers call this "ringing a chord." Singing in a quartet or chorus and creating that "fifth voice" is one of the most thrilling musical sensations you'll ever experience, leading to goosebumps the size of golf balls.”

Chapter website Yong McDowell is building a multi-page website for our chapter. Look for it soon at www.pontiacchapter.com.