



SMOKE SIGNALS



Bulletin #7, November 13, 2001 Pontiac Waterford Chapter SPEBSQSA

And on the Web at www.PontiacChapter.com
Big Chief Chorus Sings: Tuesdays, 7:30-10:00
Crary Middle School, 501 N. Cass Lake Rd
Waterford, MI

FORTUNE IN DREAMS



Frenchie, John-Paul, Fast Freddie, Bean, & Claude

It was **November 3** at Central United Methodist Church when Donna Bevington dimmed the houselights, the capacity crowd of 420 grew quiet, Master of Ceremonies Penny Savage stepped out on stage to warm up the crowd with her humor, and the 57th Annual Barbershop Harmony Show of the Pontiac-Waterford chapter of SPEBSQSA was under way!

Onto the stage stroll Fast Freddie and Bean, looking for a hockey “enforcer” for their Zed Wings. No one mean enough in town, they’d have to look out of town, and the Big Chief Chorus breaks into song: “If There’s Anybody Here From Out of town...” Sure enough, up from the audience comes “Make-‘em-fall John-Paul” ... and he even speaks French! Fast Freddie is so impressed that he solos “It Had To Be You” with the chorus in the background, as he and Bean coddle and pamper John-Paul around the stage. The contract has the usual features, including prosthetics, but with the warning that he better not get kicked out!

The scene shifts to BSPN, as announcers Claude and Frenchie LaPuke



interview John-Paul. Is he really a hoser, as mean as everyone says? No, “I am a LO-V-V-RRR!” The chorus reinforces the message that he “Aint Misbehavin” (as he escorts a bevy of women across the stage).

As the curtain closes to prepare for the big game between the Zed Wings and the Maple Geeks, quartets of ex-hockey players come out to sing/cheer their teams; Harmony Way sings “Look Out World” and the Chieftones sing “Dream a Little Dream of Me.” Then the curtain opens on the full chorus at hockey venue, singing “O Canada” before breaking into the parody, “Hi Stickin,” including slipping skaters, foam pucks, hi-stepping front line, egregious checking, the taunting by “Sneaky Jacque Horner” and the ref’s miscall on John-Paul. “What a hoser! The Ref is blind!” And the chorus plays between deviltry and honesty as it admits, “We make “Mistakes” when we’re

checking..." But especially when they're making faces at the Ref, who turns too late to catch anyone but John-Paul. Out of the game! And off the team. And out of hockey! And his contract! And his chance to make a "For-tune."

While the consequence are getting sorted out, Hi Octane arrives from the St. Louis Blues to sing "Old St. Louis." And Sunnyside sings "Zippety Do Dah." Well, John-Paul has seen the light, so the BSPN staff sings "Shine on Me," which expands into the whole Chorus's "This Little Light of Mine."

With John-Paul leaving town to start a curling league, (that silly game?), Fast Freddie and Bean see the lighted \$ and begin to recruit a curling team "from out of town," a finale to the first act.

After the intermission, the crowd responded enthusiastically to the Silverdomes, Seniors Quartet Contest Champions in 1997, and Philatoga Township, our brand new Pioneer District Champions. Then the curtain opened on the chorus in full formal attire with the romantic ballad, "If I Had The Last Dream Left In The World," followed by "Fun In Just One Lifetime," featuring Sunnyside, and finally, in remembrance of 9/11, "God Bless America" featuring the chorus and guest quartets and our American flag unfurling.



How does such a performance get carried out? Well, not without lots of hard work. Thanks to Chris Miller for the concept, the script, and his energetic and knowledgeable critiquing. Thanks to Pete Mazzara for managing the whole thing and acting so convincingly. Thanks to Gene Downie for his inspiring pep talks and for the stage construction of the BSPN station and the hockey boards, aided by the artwork of Howard Lynn and the flag-rigging by Walt DeNio. Thanks to Ron Arnold for warm ups and help with choreography. To Bill Auquier for the fog. To Bruce Brede for arranging and managing the Afterglow. To Mr. Comeau, Art Carinci's French teacher. To Jeff Doig and his son Brian for the audio system. To Donna Bevington for stage managing. To Jim Owens for tickets and his team of ticket-takers (Carol, Corinne, & the two

Lynn's). To Mike Fry for ushering. To Bill Holmes, Hospitality, for his well-received care of the two guest quartets. To Roger Holm for arranging extra chairs, with help from Walt DeNio and Lenny Barnes. To Dick Johnson for programs, advertising kits, and flyers. To Bruce LaMarte for his individualized work with our sound. To Smitty for all those extra Monday night rehearsals. To Mel Parrish for publicity (on cable, radio, and newspaper). To Irwin Mann for arranging videotaping. To Penny Savage for choreography and emceeing. And for Linda Liddicoat for coaching.

We put 43 men on stage. (And three women). We sold 432 tickets, at \$11 each, and over \$3000 in ads. Most tickets sold? Don Denoyer, Gene Downie, and Mike Keith. Most ads sold? Walt DeNio.

Chris has his brainstorm for next year's show before the echoes of this year's had even subsided. Something about a wizard? Oz? Who will play Dorothy????

2001 Christmas Program

On November 8, the Board approved the 2001 Christmas Program coordinated by Chairman, Bruce Brede. The Christmas activities include sixteen concerts and singouts beginning Friday, November 30 at Canterbury Village for the "Tree of Hope" project and concluding December 18 at Canterbury on the Lakes with a concert and chapter Christmas party. On November 30 at 6 pm, the Big Chief chorus will sing God Bless America for the flag lowering followed by a 30-minute concert in full tuxedos for the Michigan Governor, Senators and Representatives. The occasion is expected to attract over 10,000 visitors with 250 attending the Big Chief chorus concert. The "Tree of Hope" project consists of a large Christmas Tree cutting in the Upper Peninsula, followed by flat-bed trucking through 10 Michigan cities on it's way to Washington, D.C. Canterbury Village is the last stop and celebrates its send-off. Other activities will include the Acoustix Quartet as well as a Fireworks display at about 7 PM. (Big story in Oakland Press, Saturday, Nov. 10.)

Welcome to seven Christmas singout members who joined us Nov. 6: Mike Frye, Bill Jordan, Dean Nelson, Russ Parry, Tom Thomas, Dennis Stein, and Howard Warren. May they enjoy our singing together, and even possibly keep right on singing in January!

Interview with Bill Pascher, by John Cowlshaw, July 18, 2001, Conclusion

Our interview with Bill Pascher concludes with talk of Nashville, Dallas, and hobbies:

JC Tell me about your being honored at Nashville (July 7, 2001) for longevity.

BP Going to Nashville, I packed my full tuxedo, fancy shoes, and so forth, but I didn't have to use them. I think there were 15 of us on stage, for this kind of an honor, and not all the same amount of time of service. The awards

came during the half-time of the chorus contest. But I didn't know that until I saw the program that day.

JC So how could you prepare yourself for that?

BP It was like the best-kept secret in the world.

JC I was there; I saw you, with your white cap and your swinging cane. Why were you honored for 50 years when you've been a continuous member for 58 yrs?

BP Don't ask me. The governing body changes, swap jobs, and records are not all what they should be.

JC How did you travel there?

BP Grand Rapids had chartered a tour bus, and they were left with a couple of open seats. You don't want to do that. To get between here and Lansing is a nightmare. Took me 5 hours to find the downtown Lansing hotel. And the countryside is full of cloverleaves and bridges and new roads. And nobody there. Not even a farmhouse. I finally got to a station in Rose Twp where I saw cars and just sat and blew my horn until someone came to give me directions.

JC You've probably been just about everything in our chapter.

BP Everything except treasurer. For some reason I never liked the handling of money and the accounting.

JC Have you had any formal role with AHSOW?

BP No, I was a member, even before Smitty, but my interest was not genuine enough, and I guess my ability to improvise, woodshed, was not something that I wanted to pursue.

JC Why was that?

BP I guess I was content in the role I was playing in the harmony scale. At that time too in the '70's, I was involved as PowWow editor, and feeling stretched too thin.

JC There seem to be subgroups in SPEBSQSA such as AHSOW, PROBE, and gospel singing that I first learned of in Nashville. Joe Liles seemed to be instrumental in that.

BP Yah, I'm surprised when I pick up Harmonizer that there are so many pages by Joe Liles. This song for our show was arranged by Joe Liles.

JC What about Jim Clancy and Greg Lyne?

BP Oh, yah, I was in two classes with Greg Lyne. In fact I had an altercation with him on interpretation of hand movements, you know; I took one view, he took the other. Clancy, I've got an interesting story about him. At the convention in Cincinnati, I was there in time to see the "Vocal Majority" in warm-up on stage. I was sitting in the hotel lobby, and I got into conversation with Clancy. I was Director of the Pontiac chorus then. And he's telling me about some of the things that happen as a director. At that time, they were big; I've forgotten if they were champions as yet. But when he learned that I was an old hand, probably in the Society for 40

years, he couldn't get over it – a man of my age, so long, loved it so much that nothing else mattered. At a later date, I went to Dallas. I had a brother working there (for one of the aircraft companies), who I'd tried to get to go to the chapter meetings, and he'd go but it never grabbed him like me, and his voice wasn't really ... well it was good enough for chorus work, so I tried to get him in. So we went together. Well, they have an organization in these big choruses, one man does this, another does that, and each gets 1 minute or 2 minutes or 5, and Jim isn't even in the picture yet. So I was met at the door by the greeting committee, and I was introduced to the group. When the rehearsal started, Jim thought it was so worthy of information that he wanted to impress his guys that here was a guy that was older than they were, and who'd been in it a hell of a lot longer. Whether it had any effect on them, I'd doubt, but when it came to closing time they asked me to lead "Keep America Singing." I got up and asked for an E flat. And nothing, not a sound, not a pitch pipe, nothing. Finally, the guy over here says, Hey, we don't need it. They went into that song without having a pitch.

JC But they cant all have perfect pitch!

BP Well, I guess they'd sung it so many times; maybe you can have a perfect pitch for a song.

JC Amazing!

BP Yah, it was amazing to me then. But Clancy, he's an easy guy to talk with. You know, the top quartet in "Vocal Majority" was named "Focal Minority."

JC Want to talk a little bit about your seven hobbies?

BP I guess I use the term "seven" cuz I was gone every night of the week. But my main interest in my working years was barbershopping, and those were the years when the chapter only met on Friday nights, last Friday of the month. I was in Archery, Photography Club, Audubon Society, and a wildflower group that was sort of a sideline of the Audubon Society, but that did take up a lot of time, once a week at least.

JC Have you been involved in the Christmas bird counts?

BP Oh, yah. And their representative to the state board. In Archery, I was club champion for three years.

JC You've sure had a lot of different interests.

BP My wife, Ruth, could rattle them off, and probably a few more.

JC Any pets?

BP Oh, I should mention that I raised Brittany Spaniels. Made mother and son obedience champions. I never got very far in conformation.

JC Where were you living that you could raise dogs?

BP In Gingellville. I built a kennel with an outside entrance to a building 21 by 12, I guess it was, with a concrete floor and platforms to keep them up off the concrete.

JC Have you been involved in churches?

BP Not particularly. Never even had good church attendance, except when I was a kid, I had all kind of ribbons for going to the Methodist church without fail. But no, I never followed up on church things. I guess... well, it's not a pleasant thing with me. It was always a matter of money and needs, and I just never got a lot out of church. Although I taught Sunday School for, gosh, 3 or 4 years when I was living in Franklin Village.

JC Where?

BP You know where the general store used to be? Right across the street was a brick house.

JC I lived near there in the house built by the Franklin postmaster.

BP Bill Jones. Well, at that time the post office was in the back of the general store.

JC When I first joined the chorus I was aware of you, but it was later that I really noticed you, and it was the crinkly, smiley eyes. Well, here is this old guy that was a founder, I thought, and then suddenly I saw you smile and I realized, my goodness, you have such a young, lively mind, that sees fun and lightheartedness in life.

BP Well, I never had any particular philosophy in life, except ... I don't think I ever got into anything – whether it was a fun thing or a hobby – that I wasn't serious about. But on the other hand, I never took seriousness as being self-deprecating. I always thought that whatever was worth doing was worth doing well.

JC But the lightheartedness comes through so strongly. You're serious about doing well, but you're also lighthearted.

BP I think that some of that comes from just experience.

JC But for a lot of people, their experience has soured them so much.

BP Yah, well, let me tell you about your job. Why did I quit?

JC OK, tell me.

BP I had all the top honors that I wanted. And it was getting to the point where I was making up stories. I was actually writing them and editing them. I thought one day, in a desperate moment, this isn't honest. I'm trying to make something all by myself. The last 2 or 3 issues that I submitted were entirely my own work. I did the illustrations, all the writing, the reporting. That's when Pontiac was in its heyday.

JC Do you have any of the old issues?

BP Yah, I'm going to try to find them for you. I've been looking thru these boxes for the slides; I've been doing this slide lecture for years and years. On my own works, wildlife, and I've got a slide tray taken from all the towers in the big cities – Toronto, and Chicago. I was up in the top of the Sears Building taking pictures. And Seattle. The gathering of those pictures goes hand in hand with spectacular views. And as I said that, I recall also gathering some pictures of colors other than flowers. I was never an officer in the Audubon Society, but I represented these on the state board, and I've been assistant naturalist at Seven Ponds Nature Center

for about seven years. That's a long trek up there, a couple times a week. Not for the last year or two. And I was on the search committee for the Boy Scouts for the Northern Camp at Lost Lake. That search took 3 years. I've been to a lot of properties owned by hunt clubs that failed. Those searches took me as far north as Hubbard Lake, Thunder Bay. We finally found this spot on Thunder River in Clare County. Our property was owned by Harry Bennett of Ford Motor. We agreed on a 97-acre plot on Lost Lake. Used as a camp, a sportsmen's club. Farwell is the nearest town, right on US 10.

JC A last question. Our chapter has grown so much in the last few years. Are you excited by that?

BP Oh yes, In fact if you'll not say anything to anybody, I'll confess, I was on the doorstep, going out, when that happened.

JC Sounds like just about everybody was on the doorstep. Was anyone not?

BP Well, luckily. I really don't know where the impetus originated, unless it was the finding of Chris.

JC Is there a double feeling to seeing the success?

BP Oh sure, every success points to a past failure. I don't believe that I was involved in the chorus as a director at Crary School. I can't remember. (As to the upcoming elections) I'd be satisfied with the appointment as Delegate. My seniority is something that fits right into that, I think.

JC Thanks, Bill.

John Cowlshaw, July 18, 2001

(The whole interview will now be available on our web site.)

AROUND THE PATCH

Membership:

III: *Bob Woodward* continues his cancer recovery work; don't miss Dick Johnson's sweet piece in the Show Program on Bob's long-term commitment to this chapter.

Al Monroe had a mild stroke, apparently two days before the Nov 3 show that he nevertheless participated in!

Marv Wilson's wife is now out of a serious hospital stay.

New Member: A big welcome to Ron Clarke.

And! Don't forget the last days of the Big Chief **Membership Contest**, to run through Dec 31, 2001

Renewals: Jack Cavalier, Dick Johnson, Bruce LaMarte, Zaven Melkonian, and Chris Miller.

Barbershopper of the month (October) Jack Cavalier for his interest and loyal attendance, among other things. Jack sang in the Show Saturday night after attending his brother William's funeral earlier in the day.

Haven't the **learning tapes** been great? For getting thru the hard stuff? And then putting them aside to do the final memorization?

Pete Mazzara, Jeff Spires, and Wally Plosky will attend the 2001 Chapter Operations Training Seminar (**COTS**) December 1&2.

The Pioneer District is sponsoring **TWO chorus coaching** days, one in Gaylord on February 23, and one in Lansing on March 2. Will we go? Yes, says the Board, and we already have our reservation ... for the morning of March 2!

"How to Become a Member" For guests who are interested in pursuing membership in The Big Chief Chorus and in SPEBSQSA (Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America), see Walt DeNio, the Chapter Development Vice President, for guidance. In brief, you must attend three chapter meetings, complete a voice placement exercise, complete an application form, and pay 1st year's dues (\$99). Transfer of memberships or dual memberships are also an option.

Board Minutes Treasurer reported balance of \$6035.60. Jeff Spires reported on search for a new show venue. Bruce Brede gave his Christmas Chorus report. We have a morning slot for chorus coaching in March. Three to attend COTS. A discussion on the advisability of adding an Executive VP position to the Board will be continued. Walt DeNio will form a recruitment committee. December Board meeting on goals, January on budget.

2002 Officers were elected at the Oct. 16 meeting. New officers are: Jeff Doig – Secretary and Pete Mazzara and Wally Plosky – Representatives at Large. They join continuing officers: Gene Downie – President, Walt DeNio – VP Chapter Development, John Smith – VP Music, and Dick Johnson – Treasurer.

BARBERSHOP ON TV

NFL

Two upcoming NFL games will be opened by Barbershoppers singing The Star Spangled Banner. ACOUSTIX will sing at the San Francisco 49ers game in San Francisco, November 11. They'll perform "Stars And Stripes Forever" in the pregame show, sing "The Star Spangled Banner" to open the game, and perform "God Bless America" at halftime. On November 19, Great Northern Union will perform before Minnesota Vikings game on Monday Night Football. Also, Acoustix sang God Bless America and the National Anthem for the Dallas Mavericks/Detroit Pistons opener.

PBS

"Egg: the arts show" will feature barbershop harmony in an upcoming program, titled "Paint By Numbers." The highly acclaimed show had a crew filming at this year's Harmony College. The show features interviews with students and faculty members and captures the great Harmony College experience. It will be

broadcast on WFUM, UofM Flint, on Sunday, Nov 18, 11:30 p.m., Friday, Nov 23, 10:30 p.m., and Sat, Nov 24, 5:30am. Here's how WFUM describes it: "Set the artist inside you free! EGG presents three stories about how anyone can make art. Want to make a *Mona Lisa*? Paint by numbers. Want to free your soul? Take some classes in African Dance. Always wanted to sing in a Barbershop Quartet? Enroll in Harmony College!" Hopefully it will be on WDET in a later month.

OUTSIDE THE PATCH

Chris Miller was spotlighted in the **Pitch-Pipe**, the bulletin of the Grosse Pointe chapter. (Did you know Chris was delivered by a musical director??)

Tit-for-tat, let's highlight **Russ Seely** of Grosse Pointe, excerpted from a letter I wrote to Eric Smith of WXYZ – TV, on the urging of Mel Parrish, suggesting Russ as a guest on "7 From The Heart."

"Russ just finished writing, producing, and performing "Bring in the Clones," the Fall show of the Grosse Pointe Chapter of SPEBSQSA (the Society for the Promotion and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America). And he is the lead in the long-time Seniors quartet, the Silverdome, that will be performing as guest quartet in "Fortune in Dreams," the Fall show of OUR Pontiac-Waterford chapter, Nov. 3.

He comes from a very large musical family of 6 brothers and 3 sisters, and began his musical experience as a paid choirboy at the age of 8.

His first quartet experience started in the Detroit Public School system as an 8th-grader. By high school he was in a family barbershop quartet and was "discovered" by the Grosse Pointe Chapter of SPEBSQSA on the old Detroit #1 Moonlight Cruise.

His first competition was in 1954, the same year he married Shirley St. Pierre, with whom he has sired three children: Russ, Jr, Matt, also a barbershopper, and Jill.

He has sung with 3 District Champion Quartets.

He has appeared 11 times on the International Stage, including once as chorus member.

He has been a Senior Quartet Champion 2 times with 3 International appearances, finishing as high as 6th place.

He has been Chapter President and directed the Grosse Pointe Chapter of SPEBSQSA for a record of 33 yrs.

He has been District President plus 14 years as a member of the District Board of Directors.

He has been inducted into the District Hall of Fame.

He is the current Present of the District Association of Champions.

He has published the Pioneer District History.

Outside of his music career, Russ has degrees from Wayne State University and the University of Michigan in Business and Industrial Engineering, and is President of Quality Vending and Threading, and a member of the Detroit Athletic Club."

Tina Gunther of Whittier CA revises an old **joke**:

The leader of the Bulletin Editing class wrote, "Tenors Baritones and Basses without those Leads are nothing," on the chalkboard for the class to correctly punctuate.

He got two sets of responses:

"Tenors, Baritones and Basses, without those Leads, are nothing."

and

"Tenors, Baritones and Basses; without those, Leads are nothing."

Guess who responded how?

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: Len Barnes

Service(Charity): Bruce Brede

Singing Valentine: Bob Marshall

Chorus Manager: Jeff Spires

Music Librarian: Roger Holm

UniformManager: Bill Auquier

Sunshine (Chaplain): Don Denoyer

Bulletin Editor: John Cowlshaw

Calendar

Nov 13, 20, 27 Christmas rehearsals

Nov 30, Dec 4,6,8,11,16,18. Christmas singouts

Dec 1-2 COTS

Dec. 2: "A Dickens of a Christmas" Thumb-area Sweet
Adelines, Flushing High School, 2 & 7 pm, \$12

Dec 13 Bd meeting with new officers

Jan 20-27,'02 MidWinter Convention, Riverside, CA

Mar 2 Chorus coaching, Lansing

Jun 30-Jul 7, '02 International Convention, Portland, OR