Welcome, 2009!
And not a day too soon! An exciting year lies ahead of us. Our chorus is growing under Tom Blue’s directorship. The Executive Board goes to COTS this weekend for training and re-training. Jack Teuber continues to find singouts for us. We look forward to Valentines gigs, our 53rd Woodshed contest, Higgins Lake retreat, Pioneer District Convention, and our 65th Annual Show – “Disney on Broadway.” Be a part of it - the music, the companionship, and the fun!

2008 CHRISTMAS SEASON
(by Jack Teuber)
December was a very busy month for the durable members of the Big Chief Chorus. Weather and appreciative audiences were the story line for the 2008 Christmas Sing-Outs. By the end of the month, the chorus had sung together at eighteen different venues. The audience for the month totaled 1,162.

The chorus sang well and was greatly appreciated at the Waterford Tree Lighting on December 1st. There were no reports of anyone slipping or falling on the crisp, icy metal stage. The weather continued to be a factor at the Holly Dickens Festival, as the Bus Tour enjoyed a wintry day that turned to an icy rain by the Holly presentation. Thanks to Tom Blue, the chorus was able to sing its normal thirty minute performance in a record ten minutes and quickly get in out of the rain.

A performance at the Super Chief Coney Island, home of the Big Chief Coney Dog, was led by Ross Ensign and Fred McFadyen. A downsized chorus of sixteen entertained a Standing Room Only audience at the restaurant. Delicious cookies were provided to the chorus as a result of their efforts.

The weather was really a challenge on Friday, December 19th. The chorus of eighteen men entertained an audience of forty-eight Oakland County Parks and Recreation employees. Tom Blue led the chorus for this annual event. Tom was available as all schools in Oakland County were closed. The County warned that the roads were too hazardous for unnecessary travel. The chorus enjoyed the buffet provided by Oaks Management. There was ample, delicious food provided as they had planned on 125 guests. Those guests with better judgment must have stayed home. Chorus members Mann, McFadyen and Northey, with no concept of fear, traveled an especially great and hazardous distance to attend.

The chorus wrapped up the Christmas Season on December 23rd at Canterbury on the Lake.

We were delighted to be joined this season by the following ten guest singers: Dick Chapman, Tim Kelly, Gary Kibbe, Bob Kleemann, Gary Manley, Pat Newkirk, Bill Schoen, Roger Socotch, Bob Stephenson, and Jerry Twomey.

Rexetta Johnson

Dick Johnson’s wife, Rexetta, died on December 19. Dick was at her side, as he has been almost continuously since her stroke in January, 2007.

Rexetta and Dick met in high school, Rexetta a band member and Majorette, Dick a performer in the Gondoliers. Dick writes: “Rexetta was the consummate wife and homemaker; she loved bowling … traveling … the grandchildren and great-grandchildren … the color red… eating her favorite coconut shrimp and green bean sandwiches.”

The chorus’s love of Dick was shown by the large turnout at her funeral at Harrington Funeral Home, Tuesday morning. Thirty-nine men arrived through the snow to sing “Precious Lord” and “Irish Parting Prayer.”
AROUND THE PATCH
The Big Chief Chorus and its associated quartets ended the year with a total of 119 performances to 8,768 people. Five of these performances were to more than 500 people, including our Spring District competition, our Fall show, and Four Wheel Drive performances at Oxford High School, Wixom Elementary School, and Moments to Remember at South Lyon High School. At the other extreme, six of our Valentines gigs were to a pair of appreciative recipients.

The Annual Installation and Awards Dinner was held December 12 at the Coyote Grill. NIGHT SHIFT sang, and Jim Kunz installed the officers. The following members were honored with awards:

William Pascher Founders Award – Bill Dabbs
Barbershopper of the Year – Ted Prueter
Rawley Hallman Music Man of the Year Award – John Cowlishaw

You can hear the Big Chief Chorus sing “Aura Lee” and “Heart of my Heart” at Canada Night in snippets of recordings that CHORDIOLOGY has put on its website. Go to http://www.chordiology.com/canada_night_2008

Eight of us ordered poinsettia plants from Adams High School through Tom Blue. The plants beautified the stage at the Adams Christmas show before being enjoyed by Chieftain families.

The Big Chief Chorus quartets will perform singing Valentines on February 13 and 14. Contact person will be Bill Auquier, 248-762-1880 bill.auquier@bigchiefchorus.org
Website www.bigchiefchorus.org

QUARTETS
Celebration
Our CELEBRATION BARBERSHOP QUARTET, like the Big Chief Chorus, has had a busy December singing Christmas carols to over 500 people in our community. It began on December 8th & 9th with two evening singouts at Waterford Oaks as fifty-six Oakland County seniors were bussed in for coffee and song while on their Light Tours. Then later that week, CELEBRATION entertained thirty-two seniors at a luncheon at Woodward Hills Nursing Home and then went directly to a St Joseph's Mercy Hospital Christmas luncheon for ninety-six hospital volunteers.

The following week began with the first of seven more singouts for our Show Program Ad Sponsors. Monday, December 15, was at Suburban Ford for 28 and then a dinner crowd of 34 at Copperstones. The following Saturday, CELEBRATION had its own “bus tour” by car starting with breakfast crowds at Copperstones for another 28, on to Everybody's Cafe for 24 and Big Apple for 54. Then on to 60 customers at Tenuta’s Foodlane, who opted out of the BCC Bus Tour this year due to economic conditions, and finally on to Pete's Coney for 80 total in two luncheon shifts...two sets of about six carols each.

All in all, there was great appreciation shown for the Quartet, the BCC and the Chapter. We were once again reminded that many residents consider us an important and integral part of the Pontiac, Waterford, Lake Orion and Clarkston communities.

(Bruce Brede)

MEMBERSHIP (at 61)
Welcome back: Art Carinci, Bob Kleeman
Pending: Len Barnes, Mike Keith, Bill Nevaux, Ted Prueter, Marv Wilson
Bye-Bye: David Allen
Birthdays: Len Barnes (3rd), Tom Blue (7th), Bob Marshall (10th), Bob Butcher (25th)
Medical: John Cowlishaw’s sister-in-law, Deborah Bachman, passed away in San Francisco, Dec. 5.
In Memoriam: Jan 30, 2004, John Smith (Issue #34)

AROUND THE DISTRICT
“Andy Brenz has announced he is resigning as Musical Director of the Heart of the Hills Chorus. Mike Hartrick, the chorus’ young, energetic assistant director will take the reigns as interim-director while the chapter searches for a new front line director.”

G. Lynn Webster has been selected as the new Director of the Lansing Chapter. “The credentials that Lynn brings to the Chapter are very impressive including but not limited to his experience in Vocal Music, his Arranging skills, Public Relations and Graphic Design, Leadership qualities, and Enthusiasm etc. Lynn has attended many of our Lansing Chapter shows over the years and has been vocal coach and arranger for THE CALVARYMEN and STRONGHOLD southern gospel quartets. A retired Vocal Music schoolteacher he now brings his talents into the World of Barbershop.”

There are twenty-eight chapters in the Pioneer district and only seven appear to have active bulletins. That is the reason John Cowlishaw agreed to present a seminar on chapter bulletins at COTS.
http://www.pioneerdistrict.org/COTS/cots.htm
AROUND THE WORLD
The first baritone and last surviving original member of the Buffalo Bills has died. Herschel Smith, 84 or 85 years old, of Antigo, Wis., was profiled in the July/August edition of The Harmonizer (page 18-19) which marked the 50th anniversary of "The Music Man" and the Buffalo Bills on Broadway. He was one of the two Bills that DIDN'T go to Broadway. Smith had left the original Bills for a job reassignment from Buffalo to Madison before the Broadway opportunity. He was replaced by Dick Grapes, the cover subject of the Harmonizer issue who left the group before "The Music Man" premiered and was replaced by Scotty Ward.

The BHS newsletter is called Livewire. The holiday issue was sent to everyone, but you can continue to receive it each Friday if you officially subscribe, please e-mail livewire@barbershop.org. Or you can go to the website, www.barbershop.org/livewire The Holiday issue included these notes:

1. New Music Available: The updated library of published and unpublished arrangements has been posted to our website. 201 new arrangements have been added since our last posting in August. To access the searchable PDF file, go to the Society website: http://www.barbershop.org/ and click on “Get Music”/”Search Music Library.” To place your order for music, contact marketplace@barbershop.org or call 800 876-7464 and ask for Harmony Marketplace.

2. Dick Van Dyke and The Vantastix are booked to perform on the 2009 AIC Show in Anaheim: For information related to the upcoming International Convention, visit www.barbershop.org/anaheim.

GROUND FOR JOY
With so much bad news in 2008, we need to hear some good news. “What one thing happened in 2008 that you look back on with joy, that the chorus might not know about, but that you would be willing to share?”

Life marches on! I'm happy that a healthy new life in Emma Hope Elizabeth Blue will carry on for a long suffering Rexetta Johnson who has blessed many over the years and is now finally feeling no more pain.

(Bruce Brede)

Some of our family members were having Thanksgiving holiday at my daughter’s lake house an hour’s drive north of Port Huron. Present were Curt, Nena, and their two children (Evan, 9 & Jordan, 12) adopted at their birth, Cheryl and her son, Christian, 12, and Barb & I. Before dinner we take turns to name one thing for which we are thankful.

Jordan who has inquired about her birth parents of late spoke at her turn: “I am glad I was adopted into this family.” What a joy for parents and grandparents to hear this affirmation of her life rather than words of rebellion.

(Bill Holmes)

DOC Chapter’s Uncle Sam night, when Pontiac Chapter out-sang the Macomb County Guardians of Harmony, to take second place in the mini-chorus contest. That says something really good about the chapter learning from Tom Blue’s teaching efforts.

Doc Mann’s singing the Lead part to the song, “Shenandoah,” in his show quartet with Freddie, Roger, and Bob.

The way the Show “came together,” and the several chapter quartets that “stepped up to the bar” to help make the Show something memorable for the audience. Special costumes, special lines, special effects, etc.

The Music Team’s finalizing policy regarding quality singing, quality performances, and a “friendly” auditioning procedure for quartets, etc. Singing well is mo’ fun. The reward is in the audience faces, and outcries, such as “Grand Pa!”

(Chuck Murray)

Listen to barbershop on YouTube (You gotta try this!)
Daniel Landman has tried to keep up with all the barbershop that’s available on YouTube and publish it for the rest of us. You have to try out his new site: http://barbershopvideos.pbwiki.com/ which is explained below:

“Many of you have visited my "Barbershop On YouTube" website (freewebs.com/barbershoponyoutube) during the past several months. Some of
you commented on it to me, speculating that it would be too difficult to maintain the site properly all by myself. Because of the nature of YouTube and similar sites, new videos pop up and old ones are taken down every day. I found that this is true; there's no way for me to make sure that every link on my site leads to a working video, nor can I hope to keep updating the site indefinitely. In light of this, I migrated all the content of Barbershop On YouTube to a new wiki site: http://barbershopvideos.pbwiki.com/

“A wiki is a website in which users collaborate on content. (Wikipedia is the most prominent example.) By joining Barbershop Videos, you will be able to edit the website on your own -- to add or remove links to videos where appropriate, and generally help to maintain the site's quality level. Besides the interactive element, Barbershop Videos has a dramatically improved categorizational structure -- you can browse by quartet or by song, and the search function is phenomenal. Please check it out and tell me what you think!

Best, Daniel Landman

OK, now go try it out. Click on http://barbershopvideos.pbwiki.com/

Tony Bennett was featured in the September, 2007 Smoke Signals. We might learn something more about technique from this recent NYTimes article, “He May Have Left His Heart, but He Brought His Hands,” by Ben Ratliff, Dec 17. Excerpts:

Tony Bennett performed standards and holiday songs on Tuesday night with the Count Basie Orchestra at the Apollo Theater.

…what’s impressive is… his consummate and subtle technique. You don’t look at his face for clues of what the song’s about, you look at his hands and gauge the timbre of his voice.

On Tuesday night at the Apollo Theater, where he performed with the Count Basie Orchestra (currently led by Bill Hughes), he kept demonstrating the meaning of lyrics with perfect hand gestures. In Kander and Ebb’s “Maybe This Time,” after he sang the pitifully hopeful epithets “Mr. Peaceful, Mr. Happy,” he raised an open hand, as if he were in a classroom, to finish the line: “that’s what I want to be.” The raised hand meant that these are privileges, not rights.

Near the beginning of “I Left My Heart in San Francisco,” delivering the line “the glory that was Rome is of another day,” he folded his arms as if about to deliver a history lecture. This is the moment, the motion implied, where you start trusting the protagonist of this song. And in Alan and Marilyn Bergman and Michel Legrand’s “How Do You Keep the Music Playing?,” as he sang the counterintuitive line “the more I love, the more that I’m afraid,” he did something so quickly it was nearly subliminal. It was a slight shoulder shrug; a half-swivel of the wrists so that the left thumb is pointed to 10 o’clock and the right thumb to 2 o’clock; eyebrows raised and eyes looking downward. It meant: This might be hard to understand, but stay with me. Obviously, he made all these gestures while holding a microphone.

Mr. Bennett holds the mike in the left hand, up between his tie knot and his breast pocket, and occasionally down by the button of his jacket; he never raises the upper arm or blocks any part of his face. The crooked-arm posture looks comfortable, as if he’s not thinking about it, but he is a one-man mixing board: he slightly raises or lowers the microphone constantly, depending on the force of his singing — from the conversational level to the almost flamenco-style yelling he got into during the first and last songs of the set — and the force of the band.

All unattributed articles and photos by John Cowlishaw

**CALENDAR** (Times are Performance Times, Warmups 30’ earlier)

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 3-4</td>
<td>COTS, Comfort Inn and Conference Center, Okemos, MI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 6, T, 7pm</td>
<td>Chorus rehearsal, Crary Middle School</td>
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<td>Jan 7, W</td>
<td>Exec Bd Mtg.</td>
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<td>Jan 13, T, 12:30</td>
<td>PTK 1st Presbyterian Senior Outreach</td>
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<td>Jan 13, T, 7pm</td>
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<td>Feb 3, T, 7pm</td>
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<td>Feb 12, Th, 12:30</td>
<td>Auburn Hills Senior Center</td>
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<td>Valentines singouts</td>
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<td>February 27-28</td>
<td>Detroit-Oakland Chapter Show</td>
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<td>March 7</td>
<td>Lansing Chapter Show</td>
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<td>Mar 27</td>
<td>Woodshed Contest</td>
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<td>Apr 3-5</td>
<td>Spring Retreat, Ralph MacMullan Center, Higgins Lake</td>
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<td>April 17-18</td>
<td>Pioneer District Convention – Traverse City</td>
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<td>August 21-22</td>
<td>Bush League Quartet Contest, Gaylord</td>
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<td>September 12</td>
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<td>October 16-18</td>
<td>District Convention - Kalamazoo</td>
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<td>October 24</td>
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<td>November 7</td>
<td>Pontiac-Waterford Chapter Show</td>
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CHAPTER LEADERSHIP
Director: Thomas Blue (248-814-9627)
Assistant Directors: Fred McFadyen, Dick Johnson, & Bill Holmes
President: Doc Mann (248-628-0189)
Past President: Zaven Melkonian
VP: Chapter Dev: Bill Holmes
VP: Music and Performance: Roger Holm
VP: Marketing & PR: Jack Teuber
Secretary: Bill Auquier
Treasurer: Dick Johnson
Members at Large – Ron Clarke, Dave Myre, Gil Schreiner, David Shantz
Chorus Manager: Dave Myre
Music Team: Holm, Blue, Johnson, Doig, Ensign, McFadyen, Melkonian, Murray, Prueter, Moss, Cowlishaw, and Brede

From the January PROBEmotor

Celebration sang a special song to Hazel Inscho, age 104, a number illustrated here by Keith, Newkirk, and Owens.

Singing at Inn at Cass Lake

Warming up at Lakeland Place