



BIG CHIEF CHORUS
SMOKE
SIGNALS



Pontiac/Waterford Chapter
 Meetings on Tuesdays: 7:30 to 10 PM

Vol. 9, No. 3, (#99)

July 1, 2009

The Big Chief Chorus sang at **Log Cabin Days** in Fish Hatchery Park, Saturday, June 27, for the second consecutive year. The Waterford Township Historical and Preservation Society, which organizes the event, has located there: a house, log cabin, play house, Grand Trunk Caboose, depot, hardware store, Jacober's General Store, carriage house, outhouse, print shop and water tower. The Hatchery House, built in 1919 and restored to that era, serves as a museum and headquarters.



Under Tom Blue's direction, the chorus sang "Hi Neighbor," "Welcome Song," "When Good Men Sing," "In My Room," "Under the Boardwalk," "Aura Lee," "Let the Rest of the World Go By," "Ridin' Down the Canyon," "Happy Trails," "God Bless American," and "Keep the Whole World Singing." The chorus's singing was supplemented by a pair of songs each, from NORTHBOUND SOUND, CELEBRATION, VINTAGE, and THE NATURALS. Jack T. informs us we're already invited back next year, June 26.

From Director Tom Blue:

Men of the BCC,

[T]hank you for your attendance the past two weeks. We have had close to 50 singers both weeks and our sound is coming along. It is so encouraging to have so many of you there as it makes singing so much more enjoyable. It's kind of like sharing the musical wealth.

Keep up the good work and your commitment. It is very encouraging to me and I think for all of the other guys as well and especially to our "new" potential members.

AROUND THE PATCH

For the 5th year in a row, the Chorus rode the Big Chief Bus to **Frankenmuth**, June 30, to enjoy the Flint Arrowhead chorus's **Dead Creek Picnic** at Heritage Park. We 29 Chieftains swelled the crowd to 197, forcing a return to the market for more Brats. The Flint chorus welcomed us with Director David Longroy's Sauerkraut song. Six choruses and thirteen quartets entertained the assembled. (Multi-voice-part Jacob Welty was in most of them.) The BCC quartets were too numerous to count, but eleven of us sang in them, and all 29 joined in the chorus's smooth renditions of "Aura Lee" and "In My Room."



From Jack Teuber:

The Big Chief Chorus serves the community. The Big Chief Chorus has a mission to entertain and serve our communities. We do this in a variety of ways. This month, the chapter had more opportunities to serve. On June 10 our new quartet **THE NATURALS** joined the Choral groups from Crary Middle School in presenting the Crary Motown Review. A great show and a great connection with

the Waterford Schools. On June 13, **CELEBRATION** entertained at Relay for Life. (Details on both events, below.)

Terry Jamison has completed his course in Robotics.

Nine of us have signed up to watch the Quartet Finals webcast from Anaheim, Saturday, July 4, 10 pm, Jim Owens' home, 4575 Motorway, Waterford, 48328

From Jack Teuber: (in Boston til July 21)

Chieftains,

The **Grosse Pointe Chapter is hosting a Fun Night / Picnic** on Tuesday, July 14. Quartets and choruses will be singing. Food and drink will be plentiful. Pontiac-Waterford, Windsor, Macomb and D.O.C. have been invited to the event at Grosse Pointe Farms Pier Park.

RIDE THE BUS. Tom Jackson will have the bus ready to leave Waterford Oaks at 6:00 pm returning at 11:00 pm. Please e-mail ROGER HOLM or sign up on his clip-board on Tuesday in Frankenmuth. It is always a FUN NIGHT with the Grosse Pointe Chapter.

Good to see **Charley Parry** and **Harold Weaver** returning each week.

QUARTETS

“**THE NATURALS** Quartet representing the Big Chief Chorus had a prominent place in the Crary Motown Review. The quartet including Doig, Holm, Johnson and Mc Fadyen sang “In My Room” and “In the Still of the Night” to a very receptive audience of parents and students. The Review was held at Mott High School's Performing Arts Center. They also joined the entire cast of various Vocal Groups in the finale "I'm Yours" or "Signed, Sealed, Delivered.” Their focus on the choreography was evident, with a lot of movement. They were unable to find the barbershop arrangement by Stevie Wonder. I think Dick Johnson will include the title in the next Woodshed Contest.

“The Crary vocal groups and soloists performed eighteen songs in total of many of the great Motown Hits. As part of the semester long study Ms. Julia Kohring took the students on a field trip to Hitsville, USA home of Motown. A second highlight of the evening was the solo work of Crary Principal, Craig Blomquist. He performed a great rendition of "Sugar Fly Honey Bunch," showing great potential as a lead singer at some point.

“As a result of this performance by **THE Naturals** and an earlier one by **FOUR WHEEL DRIVE**, the Big Chief Chorus has been invited to sing in future Crary performances.”

(Crary Middle school music director Julie Kohring wrote, “Once again thank you so much for having **B-Natural** be part of our Motown Revue last

night. I kept hearing wonderful comments about their performance! People really enjoyed the community connection! Let's keep this in mind for next year.”)

Submitted by Jack Teuber

“On Saturday, June 13, the **Celebration** quartet entertained an overflow crowd at the Pierce Middle School track. The track was surrounded by cancer survivors and friends. Tents and RVs were everywhere. As our quartet strolled the track we sang and talked with many old and new friends. It is a great event that takes place in many communities throughout the state.

“**What is Relay For Life?** Relay For Life is the American Cancer Society's signature activity. It offers everyone in a community an opportunity to participate in the fight against cancer. Teams of people camp out at a local high school, park, or fairground and take turns walking or running around a track or path. Each team is asked to have a representative on the track at all times during the event. Relays are an overnight event, up to 24 hours in length. Teams of people from all walks of life have fun while raising much-needed funds to fight cancer and raise awareness of cancer prevention and treatment.”

Submitted by Jack Teuber

MEMBERSHIP (at 66)

Renewals: Bob Greenwood (2), Tom Jackson (11), John Northey (21), Fred McFadyen (43)

Pending: DeVries, Flatoff, Mersino, Tailford.

Birthdays: Tom Jackson (1), Chuck Murray (6), Dave Shantz (7), Doug Metzger (14), Bill Maxfield (29), Dar Johnson (31)

Medical: Bill Dabbs' sister and Greg Moss' mother both died this past month.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

WILDCARD helped to raise money for our Int'l Reps, THE PARTY. Those who ordered a WILDCARD CD for \$15, the full amount was granted to THE PARTY to help defray the cost of their trip to Anaheim. Peter Westers, Tenor of WILDCARD reports that they sold 34 CDs and sent THE PARTY a check for \$510. “Thanks to all who supported this effort to help our reps!”

From Toby Shaver, THE PARTY

“Hey gang...

“First, we want to humbly thank the chapters and quartets of the Pioneer District for your overwhelming support and encouragement as we prepare for Anaheim. There is no way we could have made this trip without your generosity and help. This is a dream come true for us, and we hope we will make you proud.

“For those that will be attending, we wanted to let you know that THE PARTY will be performing as part of Barbershop Day at Disneyland next

Tuesday (June 30). We will be singing from 3:00-3:20 at the park (near the castle). We would love to see some friendly faces from home as we make our "west coast debut."

"Thanks again for everything... We love you guys!!"

"The (almost) annual **BBB party at the Roger Lewis ranch** will be held on Saturday, July 11, 6pm. Please let me know if a group is coming from your chapter so we don't have to water down the beer if too many unexpected guys show up.

Stag event – only \$7.00 – cheap!

BBB in the Barn

(Barbershop-Beer-Beans-BBQ) & TAG SINGING

at the Lewis Ranch in Battle Creek

20125 12 Mile Road, Battle Creek"

Allan Webb, Co-Executive Producer of *American Harmony*, the documentary on BHS competition, needs some indication that we could gather at least 300 people in the metro-Detroit region in order to get a theater showing here. It takes that number to make it affordable for him to pay out of pocket for a traditional release in a given market. Michael Baribeau is collecting numbers from Michigan.

Erv Erickson, Chairman, Bush League 2009, reminds us, "It is time to start planning for your trip north on the weekend of August 21-22. We have already received an application from NORTHBOUND SOUND. Registration forms are available on the Gaylord Chapter web site at (<http://www.harmoniemeisters.org>) Our current District Champs, CHORDIOLOGY, will conduct the Masters' Class Friday evening and will be coaching contestants Saturday afternoon following the morning contest."

AROUND THE WORLD

This **three-minute ad** may get you on the plane to the **International Convention in Anaheim this week**

...<http://anaheimoc.org/microsites/sites/Barbershop.asp>

...but if not, tune in LIVE on the webcast! For your viewing pleasure, there are multiple packages offered this year! Go to <http://bhs-live.com/> Or come to Jim Owens' home and share the expense with your barbershop buddies.

At longer length (40 mins), check out the new video-cast that has been added to the podcasts that Brian Philbin (the Jonathan Winter look-alike from Metropolis) and Mike McGee have been doing. Click on www.YouBarbershop.com and then click on "**Convention Preview Video**" (under the screen). Weed the garden for 11 minutes. Or go as quickly as your download will allow to:

11:00 where they review the top choruses competing this summer.

19:45 is Vocal Majority. If you've never seen a video of them, you MUST! At 20:40, they start in on their predicted five finalists for Quartet competition.

They expect CROSSROADS to take Gold. That's the quartet with Mike Slamka on Lead that placed 2nd last year.

YouBarbershop: A FUN Place for Barbershop Information

Barbershop meets technology. Talk about keeping up with the times - the Society has the main website (www.barbershop.org), the blog (www.barbershopHQ.org), and we're keeping up with three public social forums (Facebook, MySpace and Twitter).

Some of our members have also gotten creative with an approach to keeping the barbershop world "in the know." One of the newest editions is www.YouBarbershop.com. Devoted to offering all the news and information on your favorite barbershop quartet and choruses from around the world, this site covers all barbershop organizations (Barbershop Harmony Society, Sweet Adelines International, Harmony Inc, and Affiliates) and events such as shows, harmony schools, competitions, etc.

The latest contribution to the youbarbershop.com website is an exciting video about the 2009 International Convention. From information to interviews and top performances to top five predictions, this video will get your mind in Anaheim mode for sure. Visit <http://www.youbarbershop.com/articles/20090623>.

Big Chief Jeopardy, #30. (Did you get these?)

1. **Answer:** Their most recent gig was the Memorial Day parade through Sylvan Lake and Keego Harbor. **Question:** Who are the Fun Addicts?
2. **Answer:** His school associations have included Pontiac Webster, Oxford High School, Roberts Wesleyan College, West Middle School, and Rochester Adams High School. **Question:** Who is Tom Blue?

Big Chief Jeopardy, #31. (Try these.)

1. **Answer:** He has tenored with the FOUR HATS, SOUND OBJECTIVE, THE VERY IDEA, THE CHORD REPORTERS, BACK PORCH MAJORITY, THE VERY QUICK IDEA, MICHIGAN ASSEMBLY, and B-NATURAL.
2. **Answer:** He and his wife have both taught math and science, he in the Bloomfield Hills school system, she at O.C.C. (Clues to the Questions in Issues # 63 and 73.)

MEET BILL MAXFIELD

Bill was born in Pontiac and raised in Waterford. His dad worked for GM (and is still active at the age of 93), and his mom was a bookkeeper for Maple Leaf Dairy, back in the days when milk was delivered by horse-drawn wagon. Bill has two brothers and a sister.

Bill graduated from Waterford Township High School on the site of the present-day Kroger store. He was active in student government, a member of the student council. As a high school senior he chaired a student committee protesting the Board of Education's plan to change the name of the school. Their presentation to the Board made the front page of the Pontiac Press and catalyzed community anger toward the Board and involvement in Board elections. Bill was also in the National Honor Society.

After graduating in 1960, Bill enrolled at G.M.I. (General Motors Institute, now named Kettering University) and received his bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering in 1966.

During his college years, he worked part-time at Pontiac Motors. In 1979 he moved to GM's central office as a Systems Analyst, designing and implementing (business-side) computer systems. When GM acquired EDS in January of 1985, he worked there, until his retirement in December 2007.

He was 65, had worked for 47 years under increasing stress, and had a 10-month severance package under his belt, so he was searching for a new outlet. Dar Johnson, whom he had known in the Waterford JC's for 35 years, urged him to try barbershop. So he visited, began singing bass, and was impressed by our attitude of "giving back to the community" that was on display thru our Christmas season singouts.

He lacked experience in vocal music and had difficulty singing the transitional notes between normal voice and head tone, so he has taken a couple of lessons with Tom Blue who has just encouraged him to sing quietly in problematic range. He senses how much he is improving. He started singing in his church choir at the same time.

Bill met his wife, Nancy, at the church they attend, Bethany Church in Waterford. Nancy had quit college when her dad died, but later received a degree in Gerontology from Oakland University, and has worked as activities director at a senior center, and at assisted living homes. Bill and Nancy have



raised two children, Tim, a math teacher, and Beth, a counselor, both at Mason Middle School. Tim has two sons, Devin and Connor.

Bill golfs in the mid-40s, often at White Lake Oaks. He also enjoys fishing. He and Nancy have played bridge for thirty years, and recently Bill started a men's bridge group. Each summer the extended family rents cottages on Burt Lake for a week; this will be 50 years of going there for Bill's dad.

Bill is a member of the Waterford Optimists that meet at the Big Boy for breakfast every Thursday morning. He also works out at Bally's gym, keeping that blood pressure down from the heights it reached in the competitive culture of GM and EDS.

Warm-up Exercise: Sing Ahh-Ohh-Ooh-Eee to run thru the gamut of mouth shapes and vowel sounds. Start with a high-palate, "hot-potato" bubble.

THE NATIONAL ARTS TREND THAT WE'RE FIGHTING AGAINST

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is the only federal agency to conduct long-term and detailed analyses of arts participation. Its [2008 survey](#) has just come out. Their main finding: "American audiences for the arts are getting older, and their numbers are declining." "Between 1982 and 2008, attendance at performing arts such as classical music, jazz, opera, ballet, musical theater, and dramatic plays has seen double-digit rates of decline." "Fewer adults are creating and performing art." "Furthermore, "performing arts attendees are increasingly older than the average U.S. adult."

(The next two articles are from John Elving's bulletin, *Voice of Rushmore*, Rapid City South Dakota.)

Famous Barbershoppers

The more than 250,000 men that have joined SPEBSQSA/BHS have included:

President Harry S. Truman, Governor of New York Alfred E. Smith, singer and actor Bing Crosby, composer Irving Berlin, orchestra leader Mitch Miller, choral conductor Fred Waring, composer Meredith Wilson (*The Music Man*), the Osmond Brothers, folk singer Burl Ives, pop singer Gordon Lightfoot, television actor Dick Van Dyke, creator of "*The Flintstones*" Bill Hanna, film actor Ned Beatty, Attorney General and Congressman John Ashcroft, and former South Dakota Senator George McGovern.

Using Learning Tracks

Recently some comments have come up about our learning tracks. "*I learned all the music just like it is on the learning tracks and now you're changing the interpretation.*" "*Geez, you changed it again. How can I ever learn*

this music when that happens?" Last, but not least is, *"That's not the way it is on the CD!"* There are more, but let's leave it at that.

Let me explain how this works. Unless we have learning tracks made specifically for us, and we know what the interpretation will be when we have them made, we just won't have "our" interpretation done. Whoever it is that makes the learning tracks, whether **Tim Waurick, James Ellis, Irving Fernbladder**, or the **Sump Pump Four** from the basement of Society Headquarters, they most of all make sure that the notes and words are correct.

Next, some of them will put some interpretation into the tracks they make, but it won't be our interpretation. As a matter of fact, it may be the interpretation of a quartet or chorus that paid the big bucks and said, *"Do it my way."*

We have been very fortunate to find learning tracks done by people who take pride in near perfection and producing tracks that are very musical. That hasn't always been the case. (Remember some of the learning tracks we used to get and make compared to what we get now?)

One other thing to think about is that whatever is done by someone else isn't necessarily what we need to do in our chorus. The ultimate interp decision is ALWAYS up to the director. We don't want to be just another cookie cutter chorus which mimics one of the big boys. We want to be known as an individual chorus with our own unique interpretation and way of doing things. These learning tracks are just guidelines in helping us learn the music faster and better. All of us need to be flexible when it comes to interp and styles. Maybe, just maybe, what we end up doing will be so good that someone else will want to copy us!

Remember the Beatitudes in the Bible. The one beatitude not printed there is the most important one for us to remember: *"Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape!"*

Sing-cerely & Humm-bly,
John

Letters:

From **Tom Blackstone**:

I've been going over all the part learning tapes tonight for my part that came on the repertoire CD. I played around with songs using Audacity and learned a really easy way to further isolate my part almost totally. I find that if I have 90% of my part I can hear it in my head better when singing with the other three voices. By the same token, I can then take that music and eliminate the tenor part almost totally and sing along with the other three parts now as dominant. On top of that if a song has super fast sections like the Disney Medley, I can slow the tempo down without affecting the sound or the key and solidify my learning.

JUST SO YOU KNOW, YOU CAN TOO. HOW? **AUDACITY**

Some of you may have heard CHORDIOLOGY tout *Audacity* at the District Competition in breakouts. It is free software that anyone can download at <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/> I encourage any of you to try it as it can really

facilitate the learning of your part. If you would like to make an mp3 of the part to put on a CD, I use free software to do that which is available at www.mpsmym3.com Let me know if anyone has questions about the process. It is super easy to do.... Even for those who are somewhat computer-challenged.

From **Dave Shantz**:

Hi John:

Carolyn told me of your call, wondering about my situation. I can walk for short periods of time without pain in my foot, but can't work it hard. It's still "weak" and not back to normal.

I see the doctor again on the 20th of July, and assume that we will then decide surgery is indicated. If we go ahead with that, I don't know how soon it can be scheduled or how long the recovery period will be. I'll know more about that after the 20th. I plan on being back to chorus when I can participate actively in chorus activities (singouts, etc)

It's encouraging to see so many guys turning out each week!

Hope to be back to normal and active again in a few months (?)

I'll keep you posted.

Dave

Update: Last month, I mentioned Steve Cook's **on-line part-dominant training track of pole cats** at <http://www.jazzinbrighton.com/bshop/> Unfortunately, it included copyright infringements, and only "Down Our Way" remains. He's hoping to get new recordings of the other pole cats on line soon.

All unattributed articles and photos by John Cowlshaw

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 – Bob Butcher, Wayne Cheyne, Ron Clarke, Erik Domke

Chorus Manager: Bob Greenwood

Music Team: Holm, Blue, Johnson, Doig, Ensign, McFadyen, Murray, Prueter,
Moss, Cowlishaw, and Brede

CALENDAR (Times are Performance Times, Warmups 45' earlier)

Jun 28-Jul 5 BHS International, Anaheim, CA
Jul 4, Sa, 10pm Webcast party at Jim Owens' home, 4575 Motorway, 48328
Jul 7, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks
Jul 14, T, 6-11pm Grosse Pointe Fun Night/Picnic, by bus
Jul 21, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks
Jul 28, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks
Aug 4, Tu, 6pm Auburn Hills Community Center, Yellow shirts
 (Rehearsal follows?)
Aug 11, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, at the Fridge
Aug 18, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks
Aug 21-22 Bush League Quartet Contest, Gaylord
Aug 25, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks
Sep 11, Fr, 7pm Fallen Heroes (Blue blazers, white shirts, gray pants)
Oct 16-18 District Convention - Kalamazoo
Nov 7 Pontiac-Waterford Chapter Show