SHOWTIME – Dorothy Returns to Oz

Weather forecast at Clarkston HS: Thunderstorms with a Tornado watch in effect...poor Dorothy!

At the aftergleow, Chris said he and Pete had cast the only votes against moving to Clarkston High School. By the end of our first song, “Over the Rainbow,” as the cheers and applause from 700 patrons filling the first floor of the voluptuous new auditorium rolled over us on the stage, we knew we had a winner. Penny Savage’s witchy cackle had opened the show with such fierce reality that little children screamed! Jeff Doig’s pre-recorded storm spilled Dorothy onto the stage, and the crowd roared at little Toto’s tossed entry. The Munchkins tittered. Mayor Chris told Dorothy to follow M-59 home to Waterford, but warned of those horrible Barbershoppers. As Chris tried to collect on some old debts, Dick Johnson led the Munchkins in “I Feel a Song Coming On.” Then the straw-covered Scarecrow appeared. “You talkin’ to me?” With a replacement for his politician’s brain, he’ll “begin to see the light.” The wanderers encounter their first obstruction, Harmony Knights, who lay “Let’s Get Away from it all” on them. What’s that creaking tin can? It’s the Tin Man, who oils his lawyer’s heart with an indigestible bag of sliders. Perhaps now he can have “The Heart of a Clown.” With a blood-curdling roar, the Lion joins them. Only, he’s still afraid – of the Dark. A second obstruction appears – Four Wheel Drive – who, happy for ANY audience, sing “I Love That Old Barbershop Style.” It makes our reluctant heroes blue, of an indigo hue. A third blockage, road construction, but “Don’t Blame Me.” Followed by a fourth obstruction, B-Natural who sing “Once Upon A Time.” Finally! the wizard, in a cloud of smoke, rotating in a giant chair to show neon lights and realistic twin flames. “Hey, that’s not the wizard, that’s Bill Pascher!” Bill grants their wish – if the Scarecrow will remember the words to songs, if the Tin Man will sing with feeling, if the Lion will stay on pitch, and if the Munchkins will help by singing, “I’m Sittin’ on Top of the World.”

The next generation of Barbershoppers was represented by The Clarkston High School Barbershop Chorus, under the direction of Michael Peterson. The Men of Grace sang inspiring Gospel songs. And Chordiac Arrest had the audience howling with laughter. After the final set, the audience gave the groups a standing ovation.

Thanks to so many: Chris for the concept, Pete for chairmanship, Penny, Linda, John, Donna for coaching and managing, Jim Owens for tickets, Bruce Brede for a wonderful Aftergleow at Liberty Grille, Gene Downie for scenery, Dan Atkinson, Howard Lynne and Doc Mann for props, Dick Johnson for flyers, programs, and tickets, Jeff Spires for arranging The Clarkston High School Barbershop Chorus, Doc Mann, Yong McDowell and Mel Parrish for Publicity, Ron Clarke and Jayne Barnes for costumes, Walt DeNio, Roger Holm and Jeff Spires for House Committee, Jeff and Brian Doig and Nick Carrico for sound effects, Bill Auquier for smoke, Jack Teuber for quartet hospitality, Doc Mann for videotaping, Bill Dabbs and Chuck Murray for the raffle, and Gwen Keith for makeup.

What’ll it be next year, Chris?
The Fall convention also included two notes of controversy. One was criticism of the quality of the videotapes. But the major one was that winning chorus, Macomb County Harmony Heritage Chorus, refused to sing in the evening show.

Al Bonney, Pioneer President wrote about it:

There has been considerable discussion since Saturday night in Battle Creek about the unfortunate issue that caused Macomb to choose not to sing on the Saturday night "show" due to the "fifth step" (of the risers) being unavailable. Certainly everyone in the audience was disappointed to miss their performance and surely no one was more disappointed than the 49 men who had won the right to represent Pioneer in Montreal. They were looking forward to strutting their stuff that night and everyone wanted to see them.

There are those that … wonder why Macomb did not just go on and make the best of it. It is easy to ask that question but if you have an artistic package ready to perform (and they did) they would not want to sacrifice any of the quality of their performance by having to rearrange the whole chorus at the last minute. This is understandable. At the same time, some ask, why did they not just sing something else? Well because their director, in the heat of the moment chose to take the artistic high road and it was his decision. It is unfair of us to second guess him after the fact.

We run our contests, as everybody knows, on a split second timing clock; highly organized and extremely well managed. When the last quartet leaves the stage, however, all that organization disappears and the show becomes a real Chinese fire-drill. We can do better than this. Several of us will be meeting in the next few weeks to plan how we can insert a higher level of organization and planning into that whole Saturday night show so that not only will errors like this not happen again but so the show is tighter, better flowing and more fun for the audience. I know we are smart enough to do this. I invite you all to watch in the Spring - I hope you will see a substantive change.

Thanks for your patience and understanding of all the issues involved. Now . . . . let's get back to the singing!

SOCIETY OFFERS HARMONY HALL FOR SALE
SPEBSQSA President Roger Lewis announced that the Society Board has approved offering Harmony Hall for sale. The announcement was made at the Society’s annual Leadership Forum held in Racine, Wisconsin November 1-2. The decision follows a year-long study by the Harmony Hall Task Force, a blue-ribbon panel commissioned by the SPEBSQSA Board. The Society headquarters has been located in the historic lake-front Alford Mansion in Kenosha, Wisconsin, since 1957.

VALENTINES
Greg Humbel, District VP for Marketing & Public Relations writes: Is there a need to have some type of central clearing house for the Singing Valentines in ...
the Metro Detroit Area? I'm suggesting a meeting some time in November to discuss this topic. The goal would be to exchange orders to avoid a chapter's traveling from one end of the Detroit area to the other. Would all Singing Valentines Coordinators contact me so I will know of your interest. I look forward to hearing from you.

Al Bonney writes that “Gene Hanover has felt it necessary to resign his position as DVP for CDD effective the end of this year. Naturally I will begin recruiting a replacement immediately. The function of supporting, educating and improving our director corps in the district is one of our most important tasks. Gene's replacement will have big shoes to fill and a wonderful array of opportunities in 2003. Please join with me in thanking Gene for his past service to all of us.

The Lansing Chapter announces that Boston Common, 1980 International Quartet Champion, will be the headline quartet for its annual show, "Spirit of America", on Saturday, March 8, 2003. Showtime is 7:30 pm. The show will be at Michigan State University's Wharton Center for the Performing Arts.

Wes Tomlinson of the Rochester chapter writes that he took advantage of the District’s offer of a Standing Ovation review of their latest show. Initiating the review was as simple as “a phone call to Dan Bezare who heads up the SO program. A few days later, Al Fisk called and said "I’m your man. Send me a couple of tickets."  And then a few days after the show we received an excellent very comprehensive written report from Al with comments on virtually every aspect of the show---auditorium, lighting, script, props, mic usage, song selection, to name just a few of the many---and including some aspects that we hadn't given a thought to. The Standing Ovation program is something you DO NOT WANT TO PASS UP!"

Is anyone going to the Midwinter Convention in Albuquerque, NM? If so, (you lucky dog), let us know.

Chris Miller’s Contribution from SPEBSQSA web site: Top Ten Habits of Highly Effective Lead Singers

- Learn basic barbershop chord structures to be aware of proper balance.
- Diligently study successful leads' strengths and adapt them to your own voice and personal style.
- Plan ahead for maximum mental focus in each rehearsal and performance.
- Be fully prepared in every aspect of your music.
- Be consistent; sing each song the same way every time.
- Practice singing the melody against a continual, fixed, tonal center; an electronic pitch pipe works great.
- Always rehearse as though in front of an audience.
- Develop a physical exercise plan that works for you.
- Drink a lot of water every day to keep your body and vocal cords hydrated.
- Find a great bass, baritone and tenor whom you trust musically, and who in return, have faith in you to lead them onward and upward.

Did you know that we are members of The Barbershop Harmony Society? The Society Board has approved that we adopt the practice of regularly representing the Society this way. The legal name, the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc., remains unchanged.

Champions Four Voices and the Masters of Harmony were inducted into the Barbershop Hall of Fame, part of the Vocal Group Hall of Fame, in Sharon, Pennsylvania, at ceremonies on Tuesday September 17. Visit the Vocal Group Hall of Fame web site, http://www.vocalhalloffame.com/ to find a complete list of this year's inductees.

“You're a Grand Old Rag” from George M. Cohan’s “George Washington, Jr.” (1906) Tenor Billy Murray recorded this song for Victor on February 6, 1906, six days before Cohan’s show opened in New York City, and cut it for other record companies shortly afterwards.

Nearly all of his versions have the original words: “You’re a grand old rag, you’re a high flying flag…” Soon after his show opened at Herald Square Theater, Cohan was stung by criticism that “rag” was in a song about the American flag. Cohan should have held his ground since the chorus expresses only respect, and in the show a war veteran does carry a flag that is tattered and worn – a rag.

However, he revised the chorus, with some printed versions of the song merely changing “rag” to “flag,” thereby weakening the chorus with repetition. But others retained the words, “You’re a grand old flag tho’ you’re torn to a rag…” (Reprinted from “The Pitch pipe”)

Executive Board Meeting, November 14, 2002, minutes by Jeff Doig

The Treasurer, Dick Johnson, reported a balance of $13,406.37. Show summary: The initial estimate for show profit after expenses was hoped to be $8,800.00. But at the time of this report we have $9,746.75. Still more to report on later. Pete has compiled a survey on the show and has emailed it to all. The board voted and approved the suggestion to pay both Brian Doig ($50.00) and
Nick Carrico ($35.00) for their help on the show. Also a gift certificate ($75.00) for Donna Bevington.

**Christmas Program:** Bruce B. and Roger H. are working on the schedule. Walt D. has scheduled us at the Summit Place Mall Dec. 8th. The Christmas party will be at Canterbury again this year. The WPPFA will presented at that time.

**Candidates for office:** Tentative Slate
President----------- Mike Frye (not confirmed)
VP Chap Dev.------Doc Mann
VP Music----------John Smith
Secretary--------None at this time
Treasurer--------Dick Johnson
At Large---------Chuck Murray, Jack Teuber, Zaven Melkonian

NEW BUSINESS:

**Show 2003:** The board is checking possible dates for the show. Possible dates are Oct. 25th, Nov 1 or Nov. 8th.
Clarkston High School cannot confirm a date until August. That makes it real hard to plan a show. So we are still searching for a permanent venue. Maybe other chorus members have some suggestions on a venue.
We are also looking for a Show chairman and a guest quartet for the show.

**Membership Summit:** The board approved paying for any or all board members ($110.00) to attend COTS this year. Jan. 3rd thru Jan 4th. Also any chorus member attending will be subsidized $55.00.

**Valentines:** Looking for a Chairman. We have 3 quartets so far.

**Grant Money:** Gene filled us in on the requirements for another Grant. Walt informed us and will check into a company that subsidizes nonprofit organizations.

**Alternate Activity dates (no Crary):** Feb 25th looking for more ideas. Apr 22nd need a place to practice for contest.

**Events Chairman and Chorus Manager:** We need some candidates.

**VP Report:** approval of Dan Atkinson membership.

**Directors comments:** Coaching, Woodshed contest March 28th. Possible chorus retreat. Add Awards to web site. pursue dialog with Michael Peterson with the possibility of sending him and his chorus or a school quartet to Harmony Collage.

**ALL ELSE:** We would like Bruce B. to update his chorus chart. We need to return the Jug by giving it to Jeff S. or Zaven M.

**Next Meeting:** January 9th 2003

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**Calendar**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov 19</td>
<td>Second Christmas Rehearsal, 7:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 26</td>
<td>Final Christmas Rehearsal, 7:30</td>
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<td>Dec 2</td>
<td>Waterford Tree Lighting</td>
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Dec 3, noon        Elks Singout
Dec 3, eve         Singout
Dec 5, noon        Silver Lake Singout
Dec 8, 2:00 pm     Summit Place Singout
Dec 10, eve        Singout
Dec 14 noon?       Bus trip singout
Dec 17, eve        Singout
Dec 19, 6:30 pm    Canterbury Singout, Chorus party
Jan 4-5, 2003      COTS, Okemos, MI
Jan 7             Rehearsal, 7:30, quartets with Linda, 6:30&7
Jan 9             January Board Meeting
Jan 19-26         Midwinter Convention, Albuquerque NM
Feb 4             Rehearsal, 7:30, quartets with Linda, 6:30&7
Feb 22            Chorus Coaching Clinic, Lansing
Mar 4             Rehearsal, 7:30, quartets with Linda, 6:30&7
Mar 28            Woodshed contest
Apr 1             Rehearsal, 7:30, quartets with Linda, 6:30&7
Apr 15            Rehearsal, family night
April 25-27       District Convention – Lansing
May 16-17         Harmony Round-up, Mich. St. Univ.
Jun 29 – July 6    International Convention, Montreal

**Chapter Executive Board**

**Officers**
- Chorus Director: Chris Miller (248) 960-5101
- President: Gene Downie (248) 682-9321
- VP, Chapter Development: Walt DeNio
- VP, Music and Performance: John Smith
- Secretary: Jeff Doig
- Treasurer: Dick Johnson
- Members at Large: Pete Mazzara and Wally Plosky

**Chairmen**
- Quartet Activity: Len Barnes
- Service (Charity): Bruce Brede
- Singing Valentine: Bob Marshall
- Chorus Manager: Jeff Spires
- Music Librarian: Bill Holmes
- Uniform Manager: Bill Auquier
- Sunshine (Chaplain): Bill Dabbs
- Bulletin Editor: John Cowlishaw

Bruce Brede asks a poignant Thanksgiving question:
If you divide the circumference of a pumpkin by it's diameter, do you get pumpkin pi?