



**BIG CHIEF CHORUS**  
**SMOKE**  
**SIGNALS**



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

**Vol. 6, No. 10, (#70)**

**February 1, 2007**

**Welcome to our new Director, Thomas Blue!**

As Roger Holm said in his recent e-mail,

“GENTLEMEN: Mr. Tom Blue has accepted our offer to be our chorus director, and will start getting his feet on the ground with us tomorrow night!

“Tom and his wife Jana have been married for 14 years, and have two daughters, Anna, age 8, and Grace, age 5. They live on Joslyn road, just north of the Lake Orion library where we sang once last summer (that's where he heard us, and why he contacted Jack about singing with his high school chorus on Feb. 13th!) Jana teaches English as a second language in the Rochester school system. So - let's give Tom a BIG welcome!”

Tom joined Rochester Adams High School last fall as head of the vocal music program. Adams has always been known for its instrumental and theater programs, and Tom is determined to raise the level of the vocal music program also. There are currently 75 music students in his choruses whereas the other two Rochester high schools average 200 singers and five choirs.

It's always good to wear name badges, but would be especially important now, as Tom gets to know us.

**AROUND THE PATCH**

**MEMBERSHIP (at 55)**

**Renewals:** Ron Clarke (6)

**Pending:** Bill Auquier, Len Barnes, Andrew Lesnew, Tom Newman

**February Birthdays:** Ross Ensign (7<sup>th</sup>), John Northey (22<sup>nd</sup>), Pete Mazzara (23<sup>rd</sup>)

**Barbershopper of the Month** – December – Fred McFadyen – for his excellent contribution to the chorus as member, associate director, and yes, as tenor par excellence.

**Medical:** So many cares and concerns:

**Dick Johnson's wife, Rexetta** suffered a serious stroke, from a brain hemorrhage, January 7. Although she remained unconscious, with some paralysis, there were initial encouraging signs, and she is returning home this week, but her long-term prognosis is not encouraging. Dick and Rexetta have a large family – five children and many grandchildren, all of whom live in the area.

**Jan DeNio** had knee replacement and is having a difficult post-surgical recovery.

**Bill Dabbs** had two stents inserted at St. Joe's, January 22. He is expected back shortly.

**Pete Mazzara** has had serious lumbar disk pain.

**Mel Parrish's 62-year-old son-in-law** died of a brain tumor in December.

**Bob Legato** has been suffering from a burning back.

**Marv Wilson** is having a difficult time, healthwise.

**Lyle Howard** is doing much better, from shoulder, hip and carotid artery surgeries.

**Candy Nevaux** had a fall over the holidays and suffered a concussion.

**Lynn Densmore** suffered a mild heart attack over the holidays.

At our **January 20 sing-out** at American House, we sang well under Freddie's direction, but it is disappointing when the choir outnumbered the congregation!

Such will not be the case at our **next public performance**, Feb 13, at Rochester Adams High School. Tom has made great plans for the day, including quartet(s) singing during the day to the high school vocal music classes, and the combined singing of “Keep the Whole World Singing” from the stage. On Jan 23, we practiced the songs from which our portion of the show will be chosen: Aint Misbehavin, Happy Trails, Hello Mary Lou, In My Room, In the Still of the Night, Let the Rest of the World Go By, Ridin' Down the Canyon, and Under the Boardwalk.

The distance to the site of this spring's **Pioneer District convention (Traverse City)**, and past uncertainty over the directorship led some to wonder whether we should attend this year. Current thinking is that we will.

**Art Carinci** has moved to Las Vegas. (See his letter, below.) President Zaven has reminded us that we will need a new chorus manager.

**Doreen Miller**, daughter of Bill Pascher, has sent her thanks via Neil Braun for our memorial service.

**Andy Lesnew** sends his greetings and hopes to be back singing with us soon.

The **Big Chief Chicks** had their January 13<sup>th</sup> get-together at the Farmington Hills Family Buggy on Orchard Lake Road.

**John Cowlshaw** and **Jack Teuber** each submitted in the District competition this year, John in the Bulletin contest category, and Jack in the Publicity Officer contest.

## QUARTET NEWS

B NATURAL is being reconstituted as of Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup>.

## AROUND THE DISTRICT

**Margaret McTaggart**, wife of Pioneer District Hall of Fame member Doran McTaggart, passed away peacefully Jan 11 after an extended battle with cancer.

"The Songsters Take Manhattan," **D.O.C.'s show**, is Feb 23 and 24. Guest quartets include 2006 International Medalist **FLIPSIDE** and the funny Sweet Ads quartet **NOVELTY SHOP**. More info at <http://www.harmonize.com/doc/show/flyer07.pdf>

The **Lansing** Chapter will host its **annual show** on Mar. 10, 2007, at the Wharton Center on Mich. State campus, 7:30p.m. Special guest quartet is **METROPOLIS**, (another 2006 Internationalist Medalist).

## AROUND THE WORLD

The Society Plans to Celebrate 50 Years of The Music Man. For details, see [http://www.barbershop.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/pub\\_id\\_077439.hcsp](http://www.barbershop.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/pub_id_077439.hcsp)

## Lloyd Steinkamp 1927-2007

Lloyd Steinkamp died in San Diego, CA. He was a quartetter, a chorus director, a judge, a coach, an arranger, a teacher, a writer, an emcee, a COTS instructor, and a Society employee, who started up literally hundreds of chapters throughout North America.

**Harmony University 2007** is on the campus of Missouri Western State University, in St. Joseph MO. That is only 750 miles or 12 hours drive from us.

Steve Sutherland reminds us:

**LiveWire** is now linked on the Pioneer District web site. It's at

<http://www.harmonize.com/Pioneer/links/links.htm>

Or, a direct link is

[http://www.barbershop.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/nl\\_livewire\\_home.hcsp](http://www.barbershop.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/nl_livewire_home.hcsp)

The Society database finally came back online. The 2007 Pioneer Chapter officers and the Registered Quartets lists are now on the Pioneer web site. Remember that you have to give the password of "pio99" to see Chapter details.

## VOCAL TECHNIQUES

### Selected Vocal Warm-up Exercises, Continued

#### Yah-tongue:

Starting on a medium-range pitch, and with your tongue stuck out and down to touch your chin, sing Yah-Yah-Yah-Yah-Yah, down the scale from 5 (sol) to 1 (Doh). Repeat, a half-tone lower each time.

#### Ornery ogre:

Let out a wounded, peeved moan/groan/howl while you simultaneously distort your face in every imaginable way. This is to loosen all the muscles of your face, your outer mask, so be sure you open wide and close tight your eyes, open wide your mouth, move your lips all around, move your head around on your neck, etc.

### Five Easy Steps To Good Vocal Technique

*From: The Voice of Rushmore, January, 2007*

(This is the fifth and final part of a five part series written by Bill Biffle, BHS director, music category judge, Society board member and newly elected Executive Vice President of the BHS.)

"Well men, we've come to the end of this five part, five month, discourse on vocal technique. If you've been diligently practicing these techniques, they have become habitual with you and you're enjoying singing as you never have before! If you haven't been working, you're still making about the same contribution to the sound of the Shrine of Democracy Chorus as you were three months ago. (Shame on you!)

“Now the good news is that it’s not too late to put these techniques into action. If you have the past four issues of The Voice of Rushmore, you can refer to the ones you missed and BEGIN NOW to improve your enjoyment of this great hobby, and increase your contribution to the chorus. If you don’t have the past issues (you mean you don’t bind them in hard covers and store them in your walk-in safe deposit box?), I’m sure your happy editor will gladly give you a full set. Just let him know. (Past copies are on the website. Ed.)

“Well, to recap the steps to good singing and a healthy attitude:

“I. Stand up straight. Keep the chest up and expanded with the shoulders down and relaxed (see Part One).

“II. Expand the area around the belt line, NOT the chest (it’s already up and expanded, remember?) as you inhale (see Part Two).

“III. As you inhale, expand and extend the vocal cavity (the mouth and throat by dropping the jaw, opening the throat, raising the soft palate, placing the tip of the tongue on the inside of the front teeth and extending the lips off the teeth) Whew! (See Part Three, then see it again!).

“IV. As you exhale, keeping the chest elevated and the vocal tract open, support the tone with the lower muscles of the abdomen (the ones you expanded in Part Two) WITHOUT undue tension (see Part Four).

“V. Now for the LAST STEP. Keep the face as involved in the act of singing as is the rest of the body! You must raise the cheeks slightly (SLIGHTLY) and express the emotion of the song in your face. We call this the “active” face and it is not only essential to your stage presence, it really affects your sound in a positive way, too. I repeat, the facial expression you have is as much a part of vocal technique as is good posture, breathing, or anything else we have discussed. This is the “UP” face as opposed to the “DOWN” face . “UP” is better! (Remember to keep the lips off the teeth and shape the mouth in a more “vertical” rather than “horizontal” way. Keep the corners tucked in slightly for all vowels).

“Spend five minutes a day in front of a mirror, singing your part. If you look like a singer, you’ll be a better singer. It’s really that simple. Watch your posture, your inhalation and exhalation techniques, your mouth shape, and YOUR FACE! If we would all spend just FIVE minutes each day for a few weeks doing this simple task, the chorus’s contest scores (and audience appeal) would SKYROCKET - I MEAN SKYROCKET! Let’s really dedicate ourselves to being the best chorus member we can be.

“Thank you for your attention these past months. And remember, if you want a complete package of these steps to better singing, just let your fearless editor know. Good luck and good singing!

“Bill B.”

**Sound and Music** (the eleventh in a series by Bruce Brede)

Take heart! Breathing is easy in spite of an intimidating vocabulary of technical terms, lively differences of opinion and conflicting practices. There are only two ways to breathe...“in and out”!

What is correct is determined by the needs of the moment. The natural function of breathing requires no improvement because our respiration is involuntary as it is with other animal life. The reassuring fact is that breathing can be trusted. It goes on whether awake or asleep!

Breathing can be favorably modified by conscious impulses within certain limits. When we sing with our vocal “instruments”, we must be aware of, but not focus on, our breathing. When we sing, we must approach it with a sense of play and fun. With that focus, both we and our audiences will “feel” the experience and stimulation.

### MEET DAVE MYRE

Dave was born (1944) and raised in Pontiac. Dave’s name is pronounced like the Russian Mir Space Station, but his national origin is not Russian, but French (shortened and Anglicized from Le Myre de Masier). His dad was a supervisor in Truck and Bus; his death from a heart attack in 1958 left thirteen-year-old Dave alone with his mother and perhaps with an aversion to working in the factory. They moved into a smaller home, and his mom attended night school in order to begin working as a secretary at the age of 50. She died recently at the age of 91. Dave has a surviving older brother in Missouri, doing very well after a heart transplant thirteen years ago.



At Pontiac Northern High School, Dave sang in choirs and ensembles, acted in a couple plays, and ran the half-mile, the mile, and cross-country.

Upon graduation, he attended barber school and worked for several years at a barbershop on Joslyn. His barbering was interspersed by an invitation to spend two years with Uncle Sam. The Army schooled him as a cook and baker, and Dave became first cook for Headquarters Company at Fort Leonard Wood Missouri. (This carried on a cooking/restaurant family tradition.)

It was the era of hippy-length hair, so when the barbering business with his GM clients slowed down, Dave agreed to work at GM “for a few years,” the “few” becoming thirty-two. He worked at several Pontiac Motor plants, including the Foundry, the Stamping plant, and Assembly. When Assembly was shut down, he was in the first group to go to the new Lake Orion plant to help set it up. He worked on the engine line and the brake line. He drove a hi-lo, and worked on the pilot team that assembled the first hundred Aurora/Rivieras, and then taught the assembly line work. Eventually he worked in Communications, doing plant tours and utilizing his new talent in photography. During his last ten years at GM, he was editor and photographer for the union paper. He retired in 2002.

Photography came easily to him, and for years, he had his own business of doing wedding and portrait photography. He also entered competitions and won prizes. Nowadays, the dark room equipment is gone and has been replaced by his computer.

During his army stint, he returned to Michigan to marry Mary Lou. They have a daughter Pam, married to Chris, and two grandchildren – John, 14, and Jack, 11. Mary Lou is now retired from deli manager and head cashier at Farmer Jacks.

Dave enjoys woodworking, walking, time with the family, and his new hobby of raising roses. He loves to do most of the cooking (and thereby avoids dishwashing) at their home. He works at White Lake Oaks Golf Course enough to get free golfing privileges. His handicap is about 15. He also has mentored 2<sup>nd</sup>-graders at Waterford Riverside Elementary since he retired.

Despite working in a barbershop, he first learned about the Big Chief Chorus type of barbershop through our Christmas season advertisements, 2005, and came to hear us perform at VG’s on M-59. He began singing as a Bari, but when he kept drifting to the Lead line, Dick Johnson suggested he switch sections. He is too busy at this point to consider quartetting, but he has launched energetically into his new Board position as Member At Large, and is currently assisting Wayne Cheyne during his absence.

### **BIG CHIEF CHORUS SINGING RETREAT 2007 (Revised)**

**March 30, 31, & April 1**

**Friday, March 30, 6:30pm Dinner**

**Saturday, March 31, B, L, D**

**Sunday, April 01, B**

**GOAL: Fun, Fellowship, & Good Singing**

**LOCATION:** Ralph A. MacMullan Center, North Shore of Higgins Lk  
Ext. # 244 off of I-75, then 5 mi. west, 989-821-6200

**COACH:** Al Fisk, Pioneer District Music Judge & Vocal Teacher/Coach.

**DIRECTOR:** Tom Blue

**RETREAT COMM.:** Pete, Roger, Jack, Zaven, & Bruce

**ACTIVITIES:**

**Song Polishing** – Al Fisk & Tom Blue

**Quartet Coaching** – Al Fisk

**Quartet/PoleCat Singing** – Bruce/Zaven

**Tag Singing** – Al Fisk

**Woodshedding** – Fred

**Vocal Craft – Al, Tom, Fred, Bill, + Section Leaders**

**MUSIC GOALS:**

Perfect 2 Contest songs; unit sound; target vowels; Wall of Sound

**COST:** (for two nights lodging in Community Dorm + Coaching + 5 Meals = \$100, by Feb. 6th. (\$144 solo)

### **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING JANUARY 10, 2007**

Excerpts from Bill Holmes’ minutes.

Present were: Zaven Melkonian, Ron Clarke, Dave Myre, Jack Teuber, Roger Holm, Gil Schreiner and Bill Holmes.

Minutes of the November meeting were approved.

The treasurer’s report prepared by Dick Johnson indicated available funds as of 12-31-06 of \$20,837. The Board authorized Dick Johnson, Jim Owens, Bruce Brede, Dave Myre and Dar Johnson to handle money on behalf of the chapter for this year.

Dave Myre, assisting Wayne Cheyne, reported Corey Flatoff is completing an application for membership and Jim Troeger is transferring his membership to our chapter. It was reported that Art Carinci is leaving the area to take a new job in Las Vegas. A new program is in place whereby a member will get 20% off his dues for each man of note. Dave Myre will provide information regarding cost of going to contest.

Roger Holm reported that attention has been given to the theme of “CARS” for our 2007 Fall Show. However, the consensus of the Board, following Roger’s suggestion, was that consideration be given to the topic or theme of “Music Man” since this is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that show. The Music Committee is also developing a list of songs for the member’s file folder for 2007.

Jack Teuber reported on potential new sing-outs for the chorus. The Board approved them, knowing that Jack will adjust the performances based on the chorus members availability and response.

Roger gave a brief report on the search committee's efforts and where we stand at this time. There was a general positive response by the members to Tom Blue's visit and participation in our rehearsal as a candidate.

BSOM for December: Mr. Fred McFadyen. Chosen for his excellent contribution to the chorus as member, associate director, and yes, as tenor par excellence. The Board and chorus appreciate Fred's leadership and his sharing of his plus 40 years of Barbershop Harmony experience and training.

**Cory Flatoff** writes that he and his wife, Kathleen, are honoring the memory of her father, M J Krakowiecki, who passed away from Leukemia eight years ago, by participating in the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Hike For Discovery.

The money raised pays for support groups, educational programs and financial planning for afflicted families. It also funds grants for local researchers at the University of Michigan and Children's Hospital of Michigan whom are working toward better treatment and a cure.

Last year, Kathleen participated and raised over \$6400.

**This year**, Kathleen has recruited Cory. "Together we need to raise over \$8200. While we are raising money, we will also be training. We will be hiking in Yosemite National Park in California on June 16, 2007. Our official training begins at the end of January. As Kathleen remembers from last year, the Michigan weather will be very different from the June weather in California. We are expecting to train in rain, snow, sleet and maybe even a few nice days as spring approaches.

"We need your help to reach our fundraising goal. We are asking you to reach into your pocket and heart and give at a level you feel comfortable. Every dollar you donate is tax deductible and every dollar helps us to reach our goal faster.

"We are asking that donations made out to "The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society be sent in by **March 21, 2007**. Online donations can also be made at <http://www.flatoff.com>. This website is a direct link to the Hike For Discovery fundraising page.

p.s. Don't forget to check our website for training and fundraising updates!  
[www.flatoff.com](http://www.flatoff.com)

Cory and Kathleen will also fund-raise by a TEXAS HOLD 'EM Poker Tournament to Benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, March 24, 2007, 12:00 pm. There is a \$50.00 buy-in. Registration begins at 11:00am at the OverTyme Grill & Tap Room, 4724 Dixie Highway.

## FROM OUR DISTRICT & INTERNATIONAL PUBS

### Nov/Dec Harmonizer:

Pg. 7 – story on the Dapper Dans of Disneyland

Pg. 12 – lineup for this year's Harmony University, St. Joseph MO (It's only 12 hrs drive)

Pg. 13 – Solo warm-ups in contrast to group warm-ups.

Pg. 15 – Six of the best quartets that never won gold (and three of them are from this area – Clef Dwellers and The Vagabonds from Oakland County, and Nighthawks from London, ON.

Pg 20 – Getting ready for anniversary of The Music Man

Pg. 22-27 – Plans for the Summer convention in Denver, July 1-8.

Pg. 37 – Cheap sets

## Letters to the editor:

(From Art Carinci)

Hi John,

I know this was a sudden thing but yes I am here in Vegas and I miss the guys already. The swiftness of the move came as a result of a job opening in the Las Vegas Clark County School District. While I was out here on vacation in December, I applied for a French position in the district and they called and asked me if I could be available for the second semester and I accepted the position.

Maria came out here with me, but has now returned to S. Lyon to take care of business and the house. I will be coming home for the holidays and the summer.

I have not yet contacted the Barbershop Harmony Society here in Vegas because I need time to get myself situated but that is in my future plans.

John thanks for keeping in touch and I hope you keep e-mailing me the Smoke Signals because I want to know how my buddies are doing. Tell them I miss them all already and I wish them all well. Maybe I can drop in when I'm in town.

My best to all, Art.

(From Dick Johnson)

Congratulations Tom Blue and BCC!! You certainly have my blessings. I am pleased that the director issue has reached such an outstanding resolve. Thank you Roger, John and Greg. Well Done!

In harmony, Dick Johnson

I received this response (which I will reproduce anonymously) when I emailed the link to 'Thousand Hand Guanyin' Performance by 21 deaf dancers at: [http://www.phapvan.ca/SinhHoat/05\\_vanhoc/11\\_SuuTam\\_Collection/Audio/thousandhandguanyin.wmv](http://www.phapvan.ca/SinhHoat/05_vanhoc/11_SuuTam_Collection/Audio/thousandhandguanyin.wmv)

"I do not think we could get forty guys to stop talking long enough to take instructions as to how to perform this choreography. What a splash we would make on stage when put to barbershop music.

I had so much fun at Christmas singing again but was quite dissatisfied with the lack of discipline in the chorus when it comes to paying attention to the director or anyone else who stands in front and tries to get a message across.

And some wonder why I do not come back on a full time basis. Sorry but this really bothers me. We could be so much better in our performances if we would just pay attention and do what is asked. Gang singing is fun but not out in public. We can still have as much fun and perhaps more fun if we would sing better.

Your friend...

And this one who says the crossword puzzle increased marital communication!

Dear John:

Thanks for creating this novel crossword puzzle.

I have to admit to you, my wife really liked it, and came to me for help on many of the words. Thanks for helping us communicate more at this stage in our lives!

Chordially...

### **Some thoughts:**

*I sang lead in a high school quartet. After our first public performance my mother suggested that I find three other kids who didn't sharp so often. Mothers are wonderful.*

~Author Unknown

*Music is what feelings sound like.*

~Author Unknown

Note: All un-attributed articles and photos are by John Cowlshaw

## **CHAPTER LEADERSHIP**

Director: Thomas Blue

Assistant Directors: Dick Johnson, Fred McFadyen, Lyle Howard, & Bill Holmes

President: Zaven Melkonian (248-698-1144)

Past President: Pete Mazzara

VP: Chapter Dev: Wayne Cheyne

VP: Music and Performance: Roger Holm

VP: Marketing & PR: Jack Teuber

Secretary: Bill Holmes

Treasurer: Dick Johnson

Members at Large – Ron Clarke, Dar Johnson, Dave Myre, Gil Schreiner

Chorus Manager: (open)

Music Team: Holm, Johnson, Doig, Ensign, McFadyen, Melkonian, Murray, Prueter

## **CALENDAR**

Jan 30, T	Chorus rehearsal, Crary
Feb 6, T	Chorus rehearsal, Crary
Feb 7, W	Exec Bd Meeting, Dar Johnson's
Feb 13, T	Combined concert, Rochester Adams High School
Feb 14, W	Valentines Singouts
Feb 20, T	Chorus rehearsal, Central United Meth. Church
Feb 23,24, F,Sa	D.O.C. show, "The Songsters Take Manhattan"
Feb 27, T	Chorus rehearsal, Crary
Mar 30-Apr 1, F-Su, NEW	- Spring Singing Retreat, MacMullan Ctr, Higgins Lk.
Apr 6, F	Annual Woodshed contest
Apr 13-15, F-Su	Pioneer District Convention, Traverse City
June 16, Sa	Cory and Kathleen Flatoff's Yosemite Hike for Discovery
Jul 28, Sa, 7:00	Goodrich Summer Concert Series, Goodrich Village Park
Jul 29 – Aug 5	Harmony University 2007, St. Joseph MO
Aug 2-5	Harmony University, Weekend session, St. Joseph MO