AROUND THE PATCH

“ON THE WESTERN PLAINS OF LAKE ORION”

On October 14, the chorus and its quartets sang at the Orion Township Library. It was well advertised as a reprise of last fall’s show, How the West was Sung. We hauled out western shirts and vests and hats, members brought spurs and chaps and guns, Cookie had his chef’s outfit and triangle, Bob Legato brought bales of hay, and the library even supplied horses – so light in weight they seemed to float upward from one’s hands. Tom Blue led the gathering with a light touch, a western accent, gracious speech, and, one is sure, a sense of weirdness that just one year ago he was in the audience and now he was directing the whole she-bang – well, as much as the Big Chief Chorus is directable. (What is that joke about herding cats?) Tom’s new moniker is “Trusty.” Performing quartets included B-NATURAL (rejoined by Dick Johnson), FOUR WHEEL DRIVE, CELEBRATION, LOCAL COLOR IV, and NORTH BOUND SOUND (with Matt Tipton subbing on Lead).

This is beginning to be a regular thing, as the Library has already invited us back next year. Thanks to Penny Peterson as Library contact.

The loosely structured script transitioned from Reprise, to religious songs, to a taste of Country Roads, and to Doo-wop, which seemed to be especially well-liked by the enthusiastic crowd of about 110.

DVD’s of the Performance will be available soon for $5 a copy.

On October 9, the chorus sang for Tuesday Musicale at Central United Methodist Church.
Election of officers was held October 16. Thanks to everyone that ran for office, and to the Nominating Committee that organized it: Al Monroe (Chair), John Cowlishaw, and Jeff Doig.

Our new officers, for 2008 are:
- President – Doc Mann
- V.P. Music & Performance – Roger Holm
- V.P. Chapter Development – Wayne Cheyne
- V.P. Marketing and PR – Jack Teuber
- Treasurer – Dar Johnson
- Secretary – Bob Butcher
- Members at Large – Ron Clarke, Dave Myre, Gil Schreiner, Dave Shantz

Stay tuned for Dave Myre’s announcement of the date of the Officer Installation Program. It will be during one of our November rehearsal nights.

What a great job Zaven has done as President. He has faced big issues in his two-year tenure and led the Board through important decisions, the biggest, of course, being the hiring of Tom Blue.

Cory Flatoff has been selected for training in Hawker aircraft.

QUARTET NEWS
B-Natural sang for 25 to 30 retired priests at the Colombiere Center during their dinner on October 18. “We wound up singing nine songs plus a requested encore of Coney Island Baby, and we seemed to be well received!” (Roger Holm)

Jack Teuber and John Cowlishaw will be out of the area in February, so Celebratton and Four Wheel Drive will be looking to substitute a tenor and bari respectively for Valentines sing outs.

MEMBERSHIP (at 57)
- New Member: Dave Allen. Dave has strengthened the Bari section and learned music exceptionally well, aided for sure by his persistent attendance, and his youthful mind!
- Birthdays: Ron Clarke (8th), Doc Mann (13th), Gil Schreiner (18th), Marv Wilson (19th), Paul Smith (21st), Fred McFadyen (24th), Lew Mahacek (25th).
- Barbershoppers of the Month – Ross Ensign, for all his many works.
- Medical: Mel Parrish has been hospitalized.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

The good news is that our Four Wheel Drive was within 15 percentage points of first place. The bad news is that so were eleven other quartets. Nevertheless, the quartet felt good about its performance, that they sang up to their potential. The top eight quartets went on to the finals Saturday night, where Chordiology came out on top with a score of 68%, just edging out Something Big!

Chordiology has “paid its dues.” Lead Paul Ellinger has been spending more time singing with “elmo THUMM” lately, but the barbershop foursome came back with experience and confidence this year. In the hospitality rooms later, Four Wheel Drive and Chordiology crossed paths and much to the delight of both, sang “What'll I do” as a perfectly synched octet.

The best quartet of the weekend (72%) was a new Seniors-only quartet. Resisting-A-Rest was put together by bass Phil Haines with Tenor Bruce LaMarte from our chapter, Lead Tom Connor from Fermata Nowhere, and Bari Steve Warnaar from Something Big!. They displaced Antiques Roadshow and will represent Pioneer at the Midwinter convention’s Senior competition.

In chorus competition, Mt. Pleasant’s Mountaintown Singers displaced Macomb County’s Guardians of Harmony to gain entry to the Nashville stage next summer. (Sounded funny when BHS CEO and emcee Ed Watson introduced them as the Mountain Pleasant chorus.) About a third of their members are Central Michigan University music students, with a consequent high rate of turnover. Another large fraction drive in from all over north central Michigan in order to sing under Dr. David Gillingham.

All scores at: http://www.pioneerdistrict.org/contmenu.htm
**Paper Troub to cease?**

With the increase in postal rates, Pioneer can't afford to continue to provide the *Troubadour* as it is now. One possibility is for the Troubadour to be in e-form only. Costs for members who are not on-line would be picked up by the local Chapter.

The October 18 issue of *LiveWire* is at:

www.barbershop.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/nl_livewire_home.hcs

**Power Play’s farewell show** will be Saturday, February 16 in St. Clair Shores. It will include performances by The Ritz, Gas House Gang, Uptown Sound and Rural Route 4. The advertising flyer is at:


DOC’s annual CANADA NIGHT, is Friday, November 2nd, at 7:30, with dinner at 8:15. The location will once again be Msgr. Burnett Hall, St. Aidan's Parish, 17500 Farmington Rd, Livonia. Admission is $10.00, which includes food and soft drinks.

**AROUND THE WORLD**

Wally Plosky is now singing with the Jacksonville Big Orange, which has just secured the services of Tony DeRosa as Director. “My current chorus, the Big Orange is sitting on the last wild card for International with a 79.5%. Depending on Pioneer's runner-up score and JAD, we'll know which side of the cameras we'll be on come next July. Wally.”

**Big Chief Jeopardy, #13** (Did you get these?)

1. Answer: After graduating from Bethel, he attended Purdue University where he met his wife Carolyn, and where they both earned Ph.D.'s in psychology. Question: Who is Dave Shantz?
2. Answer: His parents had met and married here in 1921, after emigrating from Turkey. They had each lost entire families, including their spouses (and three daughters), who were massacred by the Turks in 1915. Question: Who is Zaven Melkonian?

**Big Chief Jeopardy, #14** (Try these.)

1. Answer: Our only Spring Retreat that WASN’T held at Higgins Lake was held here. (Issue #48)
2. Answer: While visiting in Mazatlan, he met an old acquaintance and owner of *The Purple Onion*, who invited our Dixie band down to Mexico for a few months gig. (Issue #58)

**MEET MEREDITH WILLSON**

The man behind *The Music Man*, Meredith Willson, wrote surprisingly well-crafted, complex, and subtle music that classical music fans could appreciate, with intricate and sometimes startling counterpoint, well-crafted melody, and subtle orchestration, all while still appealing to mass audiences. We caught up with Mr. Willson on Halloween in a graveyard in Mason City, Iowa.

Smoke Signals: Tell us, Mr. Willson, (may I call you Meredith?) where were you born and raised?

Meredith Willson: Right here … in Mason City.

Sm.Sig.: Was music important to you as a child?

MW: Oh yes, I learned the flute and began playing semi-professionally in high school.

Sm.Sig.: And then?

MW: I left Iowa at sixteen to study music at Julliard in New York.

Sm.Sig.: Composition?

MW: No, the flute. I was hired as principal flutist and piccolo player for the John Philip Sousa Band and then joined the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, where I was first flutist under Arturo Toscanini for six years.

Sm.Sig.: Whoa. That sounds pretty serious. How did you move into popular music?

MW: I began doing radio work and moved to the West Coast, eventually as musical director at NBC. I worked on a succession of popular radio shows.

Sm.Sig.: Is that how you connected to Hollywood?

MW: Yes, I composed the scores for Charlie Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator* and Lillian Hellman’s *The Little Foxes*.

Sm.Sig.: Then came the war.

MW: I was a Major in the U.S. Army and was the Musical Director of the Armed Forces Radio Service, where I worked with George Burns and Gracie Allen,
as bandleader, and later as a character on their radio show, sort of a ditzy male version of Gracie.  
Sm.Sig.: What did you do after the war?  
MW: I returned to network radio, working in commercials, and as the musical director for The Big Show, hosted by Tallulah Bankhead. I wrote the show closer, “May the Good Lord Bless You and Keep You” and the University of Iowa fight song. I also wrote “It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas” in 1951; Perry Como made that one famous.

Sm.Sig.: Not to leave a medium undone, you moved on to Broadway.  

Sm.Sig.: Tell us about writing Music Man.  
MW: It was an Iowan’s attempt to pay tribute to his home state. I remember my childhood so well that each character in the show is not one, but a composite of three or four different people. One possible exception could be Marian Paroo who is pretty exactly my mother. It cost me eight years and thirty revisions to complete. After all, it contains over forty songs.  
Sm.Sig.: Yes, including “Till there Was You,” which the Beatles later made famous. And you won Tony Awards for Book, Music, and Lyrics. Then on to Hollywood?  
MW: The Music Man hit the big screen, retaining the incomparable Robert Preston in the lead role and adding Shirley Jones, Buddy Hacket and a very young Ronnie Howard. One of my favorite memories was at the movie’s premiere, where I led 100 marching bands thru Mason City.

Sm.Sig.: What’s your oddest work?  
MW: “Go You Chicken Fat, Go.” It was used as the theme song for President Kennedy’s youth fitness program in high school gyms across the nation. And of course, I was a regular panelist on the game show, “The Name’s the Same.”  
Sm.Sig.: Yes, I remember watching you. Then my memories about you fade.  
MW: That’s because I died, in 1984, at the age of 82.

Sm.Sig.: Bringing us full circle. Thank you, Mr. Willson.

(This interview was channeled by Google.)

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A Journey through Time
By Lyle Howard

SEGMENT TWO:
After an hour or so of socializing, quartet singing, and attempting different tag progressions, President Clinton “Chase” Sanborn called the meeting to order. The Master at Arms closed down the bar, rounded everybody up and all took their seats. The Secretary and Treasurer both read their reports. Additions and corrections were made, if any, and approved. New and old business was addressed.

Bill Pascher once again offered his garage for work crews to build the black light staging for the upcoming show at Pontiac Central High. Bill, of course, would oversee the design and construction. Every Pontiac show opened with a completely dark auditorium. Suddenly the black lights came on and the audience exploded with applause as the brilliant colors pierced the darkness. Pontiac was noted far and wide for its excellent staging. The show was off and running ---- More on this later.

Bill also offered to find a location for the chorus to begin rehearsals for their one or two songs they would perform on the show. It was sometimes a schoolroom. Sometimes we rehearsed at the Catalina Lounge lower level in Gingellville. We never rehearsed at our hall. We never rehearsed at regular monthly meetings. We occasionally sang our show or contest numbers before the guys once or twice as an added bonus to be ready. We always picked another night of the week for our once-a-week chorus rehearsals. After the show, rehearsals would cease until the board decided whether or not to enter the upcoming contest. Then they could begin again with a reasonable amount of time to put two songs together.

Other minor business was attended to. Most board meetings never lasted more than 30 minutes or so. The board also met on a regular basis at someone’s home to argue the serious stuff. It seems to me that back in those days there was some kind of a rule that board meetings had to be conducted before the membership at regular meetings.

With the meeting concluded, the President then turned the meeting over to the Program Vice President ---- But, before we go there, let’s figure out where all these extra people came from mentioned in the last segment. Now follow me closely on this. You might miss it. Very rarely did any two chapters meet on the same night of the month in a given region, say, Southeast Michigan. Pontiac had the advantage of sewing up the third Friday with the District every year. I think choices were made based on the age of the chapter. Chartered in 1943, Pontiac was an old chapter. Other chapters had dibs on the other Fridays. Still other chapters met on other nights of the week, but most only one night a month, some chapters met twice a month. Every year every chapter reported their meeting nights, times, etc., to the District. The District published and distributed to every District member, a pocket calendar near the beginning of the year. The calendar listed all chapters, contact people, meeting nights and times, and special dates like Pontiac’s Woodshed Contest which was always held on a fifth Friday to make it easy for anyone who wanted, to attend. As a side note, Pontiac almost always fielded 20 to 25 quartets on Woodshed night. The calendar also listed all District Champions, all International Champions, the years they won, all District registered quartets, contacts, International info, phone numbers address, etc. (There were no email addresses in those days) And the calendar had twelve monthly calendars for members to keep track of chapters you or your quartet
wanted to visit, jobs contracted for, or for any other purpose. The key thing here is; EVERYBODY got one. If you happened to be camped out near Boyne City for a week, you could check your calendar to see if they were meeting that week. Yes, Boyne City had a chapter, as did Milford, Holly/Fenton, Utica, and many others no longer in existence.

By now you should have figured out where these guys came from. They came from everywhere! Nobody else in this area was meeting on this third Friday. Everybody knew if they visited Pontiac, or any other chapter on their meeting night, they were going to have a good time. They would not be intruding on a rehearsal, or interrupting anything not previously known about. Everybody knew that Flint met on a Tuesday night. Everybody knew that Flint was a really fun chapter. Many times quartets I have sung with drove to Flint on their Tuesday night meeting just to be there. And, being a quartet, we were treated like kings. But, that was true no matter where you went. And it was true for the quartets that came to Pontiac. They were treated like kings. They routinely could sing as much of their repertoire as they wanted to. They also tried out new material on chapters before going public with it. Time was not a concern.

It was not unusual for a bus to pull into the parking lot with a bunch of barber shoppers from who knew where, Jackson, Bay City and Saginaw combined, Lansing. Of course we reciprocated likewise on their meeting nights. These were usually planned in advance by the Program V.P.’s of each chapter and kept secret to members. We usually included one or two of these a year in our activities.

Back to the Program Vice President. It’s pretty obvious that his job was to plan chapter activities throughout the year. One of his most important jobs was to seek out and assign certain members to the task of M.C. at each meeting. This was done well in advance so the M.C had plenty of time to plan his meeting’s activities. He might contact a local registered quartet to visit that night. He had at his disposal a myriad of ways to get everybody involved in singing. Tag quartets, reverse tag quartets, gang singing, utilization of playing cards given to everyone as they signed in according to part sung, clubs to bases, hearts to baritones, octets, etc. Many of the things that are done now were done then, but maybe more. The whole point of the evening was to sing, listen to good singing, and some not-so-good singing, laugh, and get everyone up front who wanted to participate.

At some point about half way through the program he would call for a “Refreshment” break lasting about ten minutes, then back at it, bar closed again. It would soon be time to eat, and … (tune in next month)

**Big Chief Chorus Budget**

Treasurer Dick Johnson has supplied percentage data for yearly monetary income and outgo, which I have converted into the following pie diagrams. These percentages are based upon to-date activities. Percentages can change somewhat by year’s end. Thanks, Dick.

The miscellaneous category is large because it includes: donations, Valentine, web site, storage, postage, member directories, ticket printing, show flyers, show programs, State nonprofit fee, show license, show venue, & show props.

**HERE'S HOW TO HELP**, by Bruce Brede

You say, “I'm not very good at selling Show Program Ads so how can I help?” That's a question many are asking so let me make a suggestion. You can help by patronizing our Show Program advertisers and letting them know.

Find an advertiser that offers gifts or services you think your family member would like for Christmas or birthday or whatever. For example, call Kerry in Union Lake at Kerry's Therapeutic massage and, for $50 bucks, purchase a gift certificate for a one hour massage and tell Kerry that you’re a barbershopper.

About once a quarter, I drive to M59 & Airport, leave my car at Tuffy at 8 am for a $14.95 early bird oil change special, walk 1/2 block to Everybody's Cafe and, at 8:15, enjoy their $3.49 breakfast special (2 eggs, bacon, fried potatoes, toast) (ask Bill Holmes) and then on the way back to Tuffy, stop and see Gene at Expressions (ask about the Pope) for a $12 haircut before picking up my car at 9:30. That's three sponsors in 90 minutes using money I'd spend anyway.
If you feel like moneybags, visit Suburban Ford across the street and buy or lease a discounted new Ford car from Shannon Wright with an X-plan PIN from Bruce (ask Jack Teuber) or go down the "country road" a 1/2 mile to Donelson Johns at 10:00 and arrange your funeral (ask your Precious Lord). And be sure to tell each one that you saw their Ad in the Barbershop Show Program. Then next year when I call them for another AD, we've sold it together...I just pick up the money.

We 50 barbershoppers represent purchasing power of probably $100,000 per year for the goods and services of our program advertisers. So, if soliciting an Ad is not your bag, visit and spend your money with them – that helps the Chapter just as much as actually getting the Ad. What you see above is an example of Ads that paid for four bus rentals. Walt's would take us all to Contest! I think that's worth a little effort to spend our money just a little differently in 2008.

Letters to the Editor
John.

I just got a chance to read the October Newsletter. I really enjoy reading the issues you put together.

Three of the Chicks went to see the Great Lakes Sweet Adeline chorus show that featured MAX Q – Barb Holmes, Jan DeNio and Lynn Densmore. They enjoyed it a lot. Jan couldn't get over how long Tony could hold a note. They also loved the way the gals changed costumes right on stage before the audience even realized that they had changed.

The Spirit of Detroit Sweet Adeline chorus show is on Sat. Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. at the Ford Community and Performing Arts Center in Dearborn. Tickets are $20 and Senior and students are $15. The featured quartet is SPOTLIGHT, the 2006 International Quartet Champions, and a men's quartet called HUM.

Eileen (Marshall)

Dear John,

Thanks for the GUBOQS update! As I look around, I don't see the loss those associated with GUBOQS are expressing. I have attended the last nine International Competitions, starting with Kansas City. The quartet singing has done nothing but get better!

I don't have the official data in front of me, but I suspect quartet singing has grown, relative to the number of barbershoppers in the society.

If some of those men who are concerned about the survival of quartet singing would get busy and work with the new members who have joined the society, we would see even greater growth. If they are truly concerned with the survival of quartet singing, then they should come in and mentor men who have expressed an interest in the craft, and teach them the in's and outs of the subgroup called "quartets."

Regards, Jeff (Spires)

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING: October 17, 2007, Excerpts from Bill Holmes’ minutes

The president, Zaven Melkonian, called the meeting to order at the home of our host Roger Holm. Also in attendance were: Wayne Cheyne, Ron Clarke, Jack Teuber, Dave Myre, Gil Schreiner, Dar Johnson, Doc Mann, & Bill Holmes.

Secretary:

The minutes of the previous meeting, taken by Jack Teuber, were approved as distributed. The Board clarified the handling of the director’s expenses for the Spring Convention. Namely, Tom will turn in the expenses for his attendance at contest and will be reimbursed for his registration, hotel room and expenses such as travel and meals.

Treasurer:

Dick Johnson submitted his written report on finances via Zaven. The board received the report noting the balance of October 10, 2007 was $23,611.52. Dar Johnson, treasurer-elect, will meet with Dick in the coming months. Dar, who is assisting Jim Owens, requested that members turning in money for tickets make every effort to turn it in by check rather than by cash.

Membership:

Wayne Cheyne submitted the application of Fred Pioch. The Board noted it will delay approving all applications until after the Fall Show and the December activities. The Board affirmed the previous membership enrollment of Dave Allen and Lance Shew.

The Board decided that the newly elected Board re-visit the policy of membership application procedures involving voice placement, etc. when they take office.

The various methods of paying dues were discussed. Wayne accepted the request from Zaven that he develop a policy regarding this matter and present his recommendation to the Board in the near future.

Music:

Roger Holm reported presenting some 43 songs for 2008 season to Tom for review. It was noted Tom Blue will determine the up-coming year’s songs based on his knowledge of the chorus, its interest and its capabilities. Roger has ordered music for Tom’s review and is in the process of ordering music for our contest in the Spring. Roger has already penciled in a number of sing outs for our Christmas activities. Roger will also talk to Tom Blue regarding the interest in coaching which developed following Gene Hanover’s offer to coach interested members.

Marketing & Publicity:

Jack Teuber reported receiving good reviews regarding the program at the Lake Orion Library. They have requested us to return next year. Jack is checking with other venues and the consensus of the Board was generally not to accept any south of 15 Mile Rd.

Jack will contact Eileen Marshall regarding taping our Fall Show.
Jukebox in Storage:
The Board concluded that Gene Downie may disassemble the Jukebox if he so chooses.

Dave Myre received clarification regarding providing show and cast party tickets for the guest quartets.

Assignment:
Zaven requested Dave Myre, Chorus Manager, to arrange for the Installation Dinner in January. Dave was given a number of suggestions regarding restaurants: that the selection of a guest quartet would be great. Zaven will explore when DOC will have their installation and whether or not “Night Shift” would be available.

All else:
Roger prompted discussion: 1- The director’s contract is prepared and being reviewed by Tom. 2- Zaven will continue for the time being to secure member badges. New members receive theirs free; members who may have lost theirs will pay $5. 3- Following discussion it was noted that the Rochester chapter members who wish to sing with the BBC on Christmas sing outs may do so just as any member of the community may do. 4- Ron reported that matters connected with the Fall Show are moving along on target.

The Barbershopper of the Month is Ross Ensign. Ross works up a storm when he takes on an assignment. His efforts regarding the program for the show, inter alia, invoke praise.

Although Doc’s B/D is the 13th and Ron’s is the 8th, the Board decided to have the NEXT BOARD MEETING on November 7, 2007 at the El Patio Restaurant on M59 near Williams Lake Rd. The meeting will include the current Board members and the newly elected Board members.

THERE IS NO BOARD MEETING IN DECEMBER.

Submitted by Bill Holmes, Secretary

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP
Director: Thomas Blue (248-814-9627)
Assistant Directors: Dick Johnson, Fred McFadyen, & 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: Dave Myre
Music Team: Holm, Johnson, Doig, Ensign, McFadyen, Melkonian, Murray, Prueter

CALENDAR Times are performance times; Class C=Yellow Shirt+Black pants
Nov 1 Extra 2-hr chorus rehearsal at MOTT
Nov 3, Sa, 7pm BCC 63rd Annual Show
Nov 6, 7pm Christmas chorus, Central United Methodist Church
Nov 7 Exec. Bd Mtg, El Patio Restaurant
Nov 13, 7pm Christmas chorus, Crary
Nov 20, 7pm Christmas chorus, Crary
Nov 27, 7pm Christmas chorus, Crary
Dec 1, Sa, 4:30 Lake Orion Christmas Parade
Dec 6, Th, 1:00 White Lake Oaks, O.C. Retirees
Dec 15, 11:00-6:30 Annual Christmas Bus Tour
Dec 20, Th Canterbury

All unattributed articles and photos by John Cowlishaw

"GHOUL OF MY DREAMS, I LOVE YOU. HONEST I DO."

Cartoon by Stash