The 63rd Annual Show of the Big Chief Chorus was a smashing success. Once again, the chorus defied earlier fears and sang well and kept the plot going with no major hitches, to a nearly sold-out house, Saturday night, November 3, at Waterford Mott High School Performing Arts Auditorium.

The plot of the show, created by Jeff Doig and Pete Mazzara over the preceding months and tweaked by the various performers, concerned the chorus’s attempts to get to West Virginia to sing “Country Roads, Take Me Home” at the Wheeling Festival. Their practice of the song at the Oakland-Pontiac International Airport is interrupted by an announcement that their flight has been cancelled. What will they do? Ross Ensign dons his metallic cap to call Professor Ditz to the rescue, the white-haired Bill Holmes, Doctor of Intergalactic Transportation Zones and his amazing teleportation gun. With smooth confidence, Professor Ditz aims the gun at the chorus and fires. ZAP! BOOM! BUZZ! The chorus is not in West Virginia … because it is in Memphis, an opportunity to sing “Aura Lee/Love Me Tender.” While Bill fiddles with his machine, conductor Freddie McFadyen and coal-stoking Doc Mann load the train with LOCAL COLOR IV including Bob Butcher returning to the West Virginia mines, and Roger Holm, bless his understated sport coat, to River City Iowa. The chorus sings “Ain’t Misbehaving.” ZAP! BOOM! BUZZ! The chorus is behind bars of the Tucson city jail. Warden Terry Jamison taunts the prisoners as he walks past the bars. And the chorus sings “In My Room,” a joke that brings chuckles from the audience. Suddenly with a crash, there’s a jail break by NORTH BOUND SOUND, the penalty being working on the railroad. Jeff Doig points out that the chorus is still waiting, watching the sundown, and sings “Riding Down the Canyon.” ZAP! BOOM! BUZZ! The chorus is in darkness under the boardwalk in Atlantic City. With flashlight-illuminated faces, it sings “Under the Boardwalk.” CELEBRATION uses the occasion to put up construction cones and sing “Coney Island Baby.” ZAP! BOOM! BUZZ! The locals explain the chorus is now in River City, Iowa and better not be salesmen. As B NATURAL they sing “Ice Cream/Sincerely.” This leads into the chorus’s “Lida Rose.” When Ron Clarke explains that on-line ordering obviates salesmen, Professor Harold Hill appears to plead his case, but is quickly removed in a Wells Fargo shipping container. The Professor discovers that the problem is a poor recoupastat. When he leaves to fetch one, Jeff asks, “What’ll I do, the romance of this trip is gone,” cueing FOUR WHEEL DRIVE to sing “What’ll I Do.” Finally, ZAP! BOOM! BUZZ! Success! The chorus is announced to the cheering crowds at the West Virginia Arts Festival by a drawling Donna Bevington.

Without an intermission, Neal Braun announced NOVELTY SHOP and Doc Mann introduced FOUR MAN FISHIN’ TACKLE CHOIR. The chorus returned to sing “Precious Lord” and “God Bless America,” and a final “Keep the Whole World Singing” for which audience members Bill Nevaux, Mel Parrish, and others stood to join in song.
The cast party was arranged by Bruce Brede at Liberty Grille, where the chorus and guests feasted on hot dogs (oh, well, a week before its closing) and enjoyed more songs by the in-house and guest quartets.

Pete Burns bass of FERMATA NOWHERE was there as gofer for his wife Sally Burns of Novelty Shop.

DVD’s can still be ordered from Eileen Marshall for $20.

AROUND THE PATCH

From Director Tom:

Men of the BCC,

As we approach the Thanksgiving and holiday seasons, let us not get so caught up in the preparation that we forget the reasons that we are preparing. I am continually thankful for all of you and your willingness to come to rehearsal on a weekly basis to meet, greet, fellowship and improve the musical output of the BCC. I appreciate all of the support at each rehearsal and appreciate the fact that from 7:30-10:00 you concentrate on doing your part to make the chorus better and better. For that I am grateful.

As we continue work on the Christmas package of music please keep in mind the following:
- People know these songs and thus we should know them better.
- These are familiar songs and so it should be easier for us to communicate. (Let your face know you're singing.)
- Tall and round vowel sounds continue to be the reason for good tone.
- Tall, upper body, lifted posture, chins level. (Contrary to popular belief, taller chins do not produce easier high notes).
- Breathing from below. (Fill up the inner-tube all the way around even in the back.)
- Continue to sing on the breath; if you run out of breath, take another; the air is free on Tuesday evenings.
- Consonants are our friends, especially in fast songs, lips, teeth, tongue, and your palates.
- Oh, and while thinking about all of this... have fun. It does make the singing easier and allows you to produce a more relaxed and free tone!

Happy Holidays to you and yours!

Tom

From Prez Zav:

As I prepare to vacate the office of President of this great organization, I’d like you to know what a pleasure it has been for me to serve the men of The Big Chief Chorus these past two years. Together, as a team, we have made some great strides in moving the chapter forward. It has been an exciting two years, with two successful annual shows, and many additional local performances throughout each year.

I think each of us will agree that 2007 was a banner year for many reasons, not the least of which was the addition of Tom Blue as our Primary Director. Tom has brought, along with his lovely family, a wealth of choral music experience to the Big Chief Chorus that only a trained educator could provide. Our vocal production has steadily improved, not only by Tom’s observation, but by audience reception and comments. True, we still have room for improvement, but under Tom’s leadership, and the dedication of each and every chorus member to be the best that they can be, the sky’s the limit. We are truly blessed by having Tom, together with our Associate Directors, Fred McFadyen, Dick Johnson and Bill Holmes, lead us into the new year.

In closing, I’d like to thank each and every one of you for making my tenure in office the apparent success that it has become. With an Executive Board of dedicated, unselfish men, who gave of their time and talent to make sure the chapter functioned properly on a day-to-day basis, to the men on the risers who showed up, not only for rehearsals, but, most importantly, to the myriad of performances throughout these two years. I would be remiss if I failed to mention the various individuals and committees who performed the often thankless jobs, most of them unnoticed and behind the scenes. You all have my undying gratitude.

As we move into the new year, I hope that you will give your newly elected President, Doc Mann, and the members of his Executive Board, the same spirit of cooperation that you extended to me.

Sincerely,
Zaven Melkonian

Thank you all that were able to come to Meadowbrook Christian Church to sing at Tom's father-in-law's funeral Saturday, Nov 10! There were 38 of us, including Bill Nevaux and Mel Parrish - who haven't been able to get away much lately! It was an honor to sing for your family Tom! I think too that your response is another indication of the great fellowship we have in the BCC! Now on with the Christmas Chorus.

Roger

We had 47 members and guests present at Christmas chorus practice, Nov. 20!

Our annual Awards ceremony will be held Dec 20, after the Canterbury concert.

Pete & Hermine Mazzara are moving from Southfield to Howell.

Our printer Doug Metzger became a guest in our Christmas chorus.
MEMBERSHIP (at 58)

New Member: Lance Shew. Welcome Lance!

Birthdays: Stanley Mersino (5th), Jack Teuber (15th), Howard Lynn (18th), Mike Frye (23rd), Zaven Melkonian (26th), Jim Owens (28th)

Barbershoppers of the Month – Walt DeNio, champion ad-getter!

Medical: Tom Tailford is undergoing radiation therapy.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

(From Al Fisk)

“Just received word that ANTIQUES ROADSHOW has been invited to compete in San Antonio’s Mid-Winter International Seniors Quartet contest. Way to go guys!!! This is only the second time that Pioneer has sent two quartets to International. Congrats to RESISTING-A-REST and ANTIQUES ROADSHOW as they prepare to represent us on stage!!!”


The Macomb County Guardians of Harmony Christmas show is something special. If you haven’t seen their Christmas package, this is your chance – Dec 8, matinee (reduced price for kids) and evening. Yes, Slamka Claus is coming to Town! See Jack Slamka as Santa Claus! See Mike Slamka as Frosty the Snowman! See Mark Slamka as Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer! And the extra bonus is to see the whole Toronto Northern Lights chorus on a local stage. With just 47 men on stage, this chorus took 3rd place last year at International, behind only Vocal Majority and Westminster Chorus. Tickets are available from Chuck Murray or at the web site, http://www.guardiansofharmony.org or call 586-996-1701.

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: http://powerplayqt.com/images/flyer_pdf.pdf

CHORDIOLOGY started its reign as Pioneer District Quartet champions with a visit to the Lansing chapter. As Bruce Smith wrote, “If one of the primary missions of barbershop is to Enrich Lives then CHORDIOLOGY accomplished that when they volunteered to perform at the Lansing Chapter guest night. They thrilled our guests, and their families, as well as chapter members with there with there performance, sang with the chorus and Paul and Rob who apparently live close and don't have to work stayed late into the evening to sing songs and tags.”

AROUND THE WORLD

LiveWire is available at: www.barbershop.org/livewire

The current issue includes:

2008 International Competition: Initial Chorus Draw
ASCAP fee payment changes
Boyz II Men A Cappella Quest

Big Chief Jeopardy, #14 (Did you get these?)

1. Answer: Our only Spring Retreat that WASN’T held at Higgins Lake was held here. Question: What is the old Pontiac Masonic Temple Ballroom, now called the Lafayette Grande?

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. Question: Who is Lew Mahacek?

Big Chief Jeopardy, #15 (Try these.)

1. Answer: His most challenging experience involved the Chrysler problems of 1979. He was responsible for negotiating Chrysler’s indirect costs on the M1/A1 tank contract. The resulting two-year negotiations included his flight to New York City to sign the agreement, pick up a check for $11.9 million, and deposit it in a Cleveland bank. (#49)

2. Answer: He windsurfs and sails on his Sunfishes, and plays lots of platform tennis in the winter. (#59)

MEET BOB BUTCHER

Bob was born in Milwaukee in 1948, but his family soon moved to Michigan, where he lived in Lincoln Park, Hazel Park, Royal Oak, Clawson, and Walled Lake. In Clawson he played on a 9th grade football team whose front five averaged 225 lbs. Needless to say, the team was good. At Clawson, he also played the trombone and baritone (euphonium). Then he moved to Walled Lake, where his mom managed the well-known Woody’s Café, which had been founded by her parents, Marge and Woody Smith.

Bob sang in the all the Walled Lake choral groups. He graduated in the class of 1967, along with Jeff Doig and entered the Army. After training at Fort Leonard Wood Missouri, he spent a year in Vietnam as a heavy equipment operator in the Danang - Hue region, building the bridges and roads that connected the artillery support bases.

His third Army year was dramatically different, when he saw a sign for auditions into the Fort Benning Infantry Chorus. He ended up singing baritone in the chorus, which practiced six hours a day, five days a week, and was exempt from all the normal Army constraints (reveille, etc.) The three-star base commander had the chorus perform for visiting dignitaries, music chosen from a
broad spectrum of styles – Beatles, folk, Broadway, religious, military, patriotic. It was such a good life, he would have re-enlisted for 17 more years, if they could have guaranteed him continuation in the chorus.

Bob on his Harley

Back home, he couldn’t find work as a heavy equipment operator, so he took a job waiting for him at General Motors. He went from production to materials stock to assembly inspector to the last 23 years as skilled tradesman, lately in experimental auto products for prototype vehicles. A recent stint has involved the component testing lab in Pontiac where a four-post simulator can shake a car for 30 days to simulate 100,000 miles of wear.

He married his childhood sweetheart, Mary, in 1971, and they have two sons – Gene who is a Waterford firefighter, and Kenneth who is a restaurant general manager – and two grandchildren, Caitlin (7) and Connor (4). In 1998, Mary was diagnosed with leukemia, and Bob became a primary care giver. Though she has been in remission since 1999, Bob’s experience led him to consider continuing health care as a service to the community. After a three-month medic course, Bob began working part-time with Star EMS.

Bob bought his first motorcycle in 1966 – a Triumph 650. Now he owns a Harley which he rode to the 100-year Harley anniversary in Milwaukee, WI.

Bob attends Marimont Baptist Church and sang in the choir, ensemble, and quartets in the 70’s and 80’s. In the 90’s too much overtime at work, and raising the family at home stopped that. When his kids were raised, he had time to explore barbershop, which he first experienced around 1976 in a show at Pontiac Northern. (The guest quartet Center Stage blew him away.) So he googled and came up with our chapter and first attended in January 2006. Already he has made a name for himself in the Baritone section, is singing with Local Color IV, and will take office as Secretary in January.

THIS AMERICAN LIFE – Mapping sound

Episode 110 on the popular NPR radio program called “This American Life” was an interesting hour on mapping, five ways of mapping the world. One story about people who make maps the traditional way—by drawing things we can see. And other stories about people who map the world using smell, sound, touch, and taste. The world redrawn by the five senses.

Act Two (11 minutes) on hearing, pertains to us directly. TAL contributor Jack Hitt visits Toby Lester, who has mapped all the ambient sounds in his world: the hum of the heater, the fan on the computer. Of interest is his suggestion that superposition of ambient sounds can create harmonic chords that affect our mood without our realizing it. You can still listen to the episode at: http://www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio_Episode.aspx?episode=110

Tuesday Musicale performance: Excerpts from Fred McFadyen’s Introduction

Many years ago, a small group of men at the GM Truck & Coach Engineering Building in Pontiac would gather during their lunchtime to sing old songs. They harmonized by ear and eventually in 1943 recruited the necessary twenty members needed to form a chapter within SPEBSQSA, the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America. Until this last year, the chorus was still blessed with the voice of one founding member, Bill Pascher, who passed away November 20, 2006.

Originally known as the Merry Motormen, it is now the Pontiac-Waterford Big Chief Chorus; and SPEBSQSA has become the Barbershop Harmony Society.

The chorus and its quartets are very active during the year, performing at numerous functions in the Oakland County area including schools, senior establishments, restaurants, businesses, boats, parks, parties, and private residences. In 2006 it had 42 appearances, the highlight being the singing of the National Anthem at Comerica Park prior to the Detroit Tigers vs. Minnesota Twins game on August 8. Its appearances will easily surpass that number this year.

The chorus membership is currently 55 men, with approximately 30 performing for us today.

Beginning in January of this year, Tom Blue became the director of the chorus. Mr. Blue is the Vocal Director at Rochester Adams High School and, guess what, he’s in the classroom today. He is fortunate to have three assistants, Fred McFadyen, Bill Holmes and Dick Johnson.

Fred will be directing the chorus today. Fred started singing barbershop in 1966. He has been involved with several quartets and has won the Pioneer District Senior Championship with both THE VERY QUICK IDEA and MICHIGAN ASSEMBLY. He now tenors in the quartet, B-NATURAL. He has sung and directed the Oakland as well as the Wayne chapters. He has also directed a Sweet Adeline Chorus. He has been selected Barbershopper of the Year three times, by the Oakland, Wayne and Macomb chapters.
Also noteworthy are two men in the chorus who were distinguished at this year’s Pioneer District convention, a district of 28 chapters, including those in Michigan plus Sault St. Marie and Windsor. The convention presented only two awards, and they were both won by a member of the Big Chief Chorus. John Cowlishaw won as Bulletin Editor and Jack Teuber was awarded 1st place in Public Relations. I know they both spend a great deal of time promoting their organization.

The barbershop genre is highly recognizable by most of us.
Along with enjoying the sound of the chorus today, you can also listen for some of the characteristics used in barbershop music such as: Call & Response patterns in which the lead sings a musical phrase which is either repeated or extended by the other voices; listen for its rhythmic character and the use of propellants. These are designed to maintain the metric pulse through held melodic notes and rests; for example, an echo while the melody holds a note; listen for syncopation, countermelody, fills, swipes and tiddlery. Tiddlery are little flourishes to color a held chord. Barbershop harmony uses the “Blue Note,” which is the lowered 3rd and the lowered 7th in the major scale and is usually only heard in our Western music.

The Big Chief Chorus and their quartets are preserving a sound that goes back as early as 1870 so that audiences, such as us, can still enjoy live performances. We thank them very much for singing and sharing with us today.

From Michael Baribeau, our new Troubadour editor
Give your group a voice!
Want to plug an upcoming show? Have an unsung barbershop hero in your midst? A quartet of special merit? Thoughts or photos on a barbershop event you attended?

In a continuing effort to include all Pioneer District chapters in promoting their barbershop people and events, the District's publication the Troubadour is using a new newsgroup email network to hear your stories and publish them. Join the PioNews Troubadour, and email those stories here for consideration in the Troubadour publication. Forward this membership invite to others you think would well represent your group. If you read a good email from a member that could be an interesting commentary for the Troubadour get permission to send to us or forward this invite.

The Troubadour also has an upcoming online publication with lots of room for any compelling, heart felt article. It can be just a couple hundred word blurb or a whole page. Share with us what fund raisers have worked for your group. Describe your spaghetti dinner show and put us in those seats.

To join just send a short reply to... PioNews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
Make your voices heard!

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING: November 7, 2007, Excerpts from Bill Holmes’ minutes**

President Zaven Melkonian called the meeting to order at the El Patio Restaurant. Attending were: Jack Teuber, Roger Holm, Wayne Cheyne, Dick Johnson, Ron Clarke, Gil Schreiner, Dave Myre, Doc Mann, Bob Butcher, Dave Shantz, Dar Johnson, and Bill Holmes.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as distributed. Office lapel pins are on order. The board discussed attendance at COTS January 5-6. Those who planned to attend were noted and the names were given to Dick who would remit the registration amount.

Dick Johnson presented a written treasurer’s report which showed a balance of $26,118 as of 11-7-07. Dick reminded the board of its yearly donation to the school for use of the facility. Discussion ensued regarding costs and revenue of the chapter. Dick spoke on his view and philosophy based on his many years with the barbershop society. The treasurer’s report was accepted as submitted.

Wayne Cheyne noted the membership list on the Website is not up-to-date. Wayne reported there are 58 members in the chapter. The board approved the application for membership of Fred Pioch pending a placement determination by the director.

Roger Holm presented, and the Board approved, the purchase of music of four songs from the Society. Roger will talk to Tom Blue regarding the retreat and the coaching of the chorus members. He will develop a policy regarding quartets qualifying for the show and will review the current policy manual, edit the manual, and present his recommendations to the board.

Jack Teuber noted there are three singouts planned, two of which would be directed by Fred McFadyen. Dave Myre noted that Pete Mazzara will officiate to install our new officers.

**Letters to the Editor**

I wish to take off my "Derby" hat to every member for a fine performance, including the behind the scenes activity by all. Also, I was pleased with each chapter quartet's efforts (thanks for keeping the BCC quartet active). My “Derby” is in the air for FOUR WHEEL DRIVE; you're on your way!!!

As for the BCC...gentlemen, your singing is music. It shows, Tom, thank you. Thanks to your direction, the BCC is headed for “A” level.

Also, good work Section Leaders.

As it always happens, certain individuals stepped forward with tons of extra effort to make it happen. We all know who they are...we see it...you’re appreciated.

During post-show milling around with the audience, the compliments I received were glowing and I believe sincere.

Finally, thank you for allowing me to join in the fun as well as the courtesy I was shown. The whole evening was uplifting. I needed that.

Keep up the good harmony. Dick Johnson
Dear Zaven, Dave and the Big Chief Chorus,
On behalf of Novelty Shop, I want to thank you for having us perform on your show. It was our pleasure to be a part of such an entertaining show. Your audience was so much fun to sing for and your chorus sounded wonderful. We always have so much fun being on a show with our good friends, FOUR MAN FISHIN’ TACKLE CHOIR. Congratulations to all of you on a very successful show.

I want to especially thank Zaven for his part in contacting us to be on your show and his communication with us. Thank you to Dave for attending to our needs at the show and having water, Kleenex and a bathroom close by!

We wish you much success in the coming year.

Sally Burns, Novelty Shop

Men of the BCC,

It is great to be a "barbershopper!!" Better yet, to be the leader of a group of barbershoppers! You guys are amazing and your support was a wonderful "testimony" of your commitment to the organization and to its goals and to the support that you generate to and for each other so very often. Your music provided a wonderful and meaningful part to the funeral service of Jaromir Mejta. Many compliments were spoken of your music and your very presence. You are all so greatly appreciated! I am extremely proud of the fact that in a matter of a day you all banded together to support one of your own in his family’s time of need. You are to be commended for your commitment, dedication, and overall support. Thank you from our family to all of you!

Blessings to all!

Tom

I am thankful that you all have welcomed me into your Christmas Chorus. I feel like I have already learned so much in two months of coming to your rehearsals. Thank you, Tom and thank you, BCC.

Donna Bevington

For your records, please change my email address. I really enjoy getting the newsletter from your chapter.

Thanks, Jim Gaylock

All unattributed articles and photos by John Cowlishaw

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

I was a 90 pound weakling, both mentally and physically, until I joined the BIG CHIEF CHORUS

Now I'm a hunk!

From “Classic Barbershop Graphics”

CALENDAR
Times are performance times; Black pants, white shirt, Christmas tie
Tues, Nov 27 7pm Final Christmas chorus practice, Crary
Tues, Dec 4 6:45 pm Lockwood, Crescent Lake Rd @ M59
7:30 pm Independence Village, 935 Union Lake Rd
Thurs, Dec 6 1:00 pm Oakland Cty Parks Retirees, White Lake Oaks
Tues, Dec 11 6:30 pm Golden Oaks Care, County Civic Center
7:30 pm Lakeland Place, 2700 Elizabeth Lake Rd
Sat, Dec 15th 11:00 am Board Bus, Waterford Oaks
11:15 am Elmhaven, Walton near Telegraph
Noon VG's-Pontiac, Walton @ Baldwin
12:45 pm Tenutas Foodlane, Walton @ Sashabaw
1:30 pm VG's, Waterford, M59 near Williams lake Rd
2:30 pm Pine Tree Place, Dixie near M15
3:15 pm Sunrise, Dixie near White Lake Rd
4:30 pm Holly Dickens Festival, Downtown Holly
6:30 pm Return, Waterford Oaks
Tues, Dec 18 5:50 pm Clausen Alzheimer Unit, Lourdes Campus
6:30 pm Fox Manor Ind. Living, Lourdes Campus
7:30 pm Inn at Cass Lake, Cass Lake Rd near Crary
Thurs, Dec 20 5:45 pm Mendelson Home, Lourdes Campus
6:30 pm Canterbury on the Lake, 5601 Hatchery Rd
Fri, Dec 21 1:45 pm Oak. Cty. Parks Employees, Waterford Oaks