



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



BARBERSHOP  
HARMONY  
SOCIETY

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

**Vol. 8, No. 1, (#85)**

**May 1, 2008**

The Spring 2008 **Pioneer District Convention** was held in Battle Creek, April 25-27. Convention headquarters were in the McCamly Plaza Hotel, and competitions were held three blocks north in the W. K. Kellogg Auditorium. A few of us arrived Friday but most got up early Saturday morning for a back-and-forth one-day trip.

The Big Chief Chorus led off the chorus competition, singing “Aura Lee/Love Me Tender,” and “Let the Rest of the World Go By.” Five of the six judges gave us an average score of 56%, but one judge rated us much lower, a puzzling imbalance. (Category scores that differ between the judges by eight or nine points are very unusual.) Furthermore, our final score of 664 pts and 55.3 % was lower than last year’s 58%. We know with surety that we have improved, so why this decrease? The judge’s response was that the standards had been toughened last summer. This was a discouraging answer since one of the reasons for attending competition is to see whether one is on an uphill slope. The other reason for attending... let, me see, there must be another reason. Why are we attending if we end up feeling bitter about a result that feels unjust and with

judge’s comments that sound generic rather than telling us anything new or helpful? It’s a question that many of us were asking.

Discussion at the chapter meeting Tuesday night got our feet back on the ground. Those 664 pts are just one small part of the convention and of our entire year. It is still rewarding to share the barbershop experience with one’s colleagues from outside the chorus. Here are some favorite moments: Singing the National Anthem with an auditorium full of singers is rousing. Singing tags in the hallway is another. Experiencing the excellent quartets in Saturday night’s finals was another. How else could one hear METROPOLIS, CROSSROADS, SEP, WILDCARD and FOUR MAN FISHIN’ TACKLE CHOIR all in one evening, without going to International? Furthermore, we are known and appreciated throughout the district for our singouts and community involvement. We are drawing new members who understand that.

Battle Creek venue from John’s Piper Tomahawk



McCamly Hotel   Mich. Ave. Restaurants   Kellogg Aud.

Macomb’s Guardians of Harmony won the chorus competition (74%) under the leadership of their post-Slamka coaching staff of Glen Hipple and Al Fisk. Grand Rapids, Hillsdale (with their baseball shtick), and D.O.C. followed at a distance. The Big Chief Chorus beat out Flint and Windsor handily. Our 35 Men on Stage stood up well to the counts of Hillsdale (45), D.O.C. (42), and Macomb (37). It was sad to see such small numbers from long-standing choruses Flint and Grosse Pointe.

In the quartet competition (which determined who will represent us at International this summer), it was WILDCARD from Grand Rapids, scoring 72% to edge out FOUR MAN FISHIN’ TACKLE CHOIR. MOXXY, SOMETHING BIG!, and CHORDIOLOGY all sang well. Three out-of-district quartets (METROPOLIS, CROSSROADS, and SEP) outscored WILDCARD and will

go to International based on their scores even though they were not eligible to compete for District championship.

RESISTING-A-REST won the Seniors title, and HARMONY 101 the College Quartet title – to round out the results.

As always, you can get complete scores online at:

<http://www.pioneerdistrict.org/contestsummary/contmenu.htm>

#### **Some additional comments.**

Our post-competition dinner was held at the Griffin Grill, (two doors west of BiCi Bistro, where many an earlier beer was consumed). We assuaged our grief with beer and wine and salmon, steak, and chicken, and got drunk on the tags of Mike Frye.

Doran McTaggart was his usual humorous self, showing how far he is ahead of other emcees.

Russ Seely presented the QCA Glenn Van Tassel Heritage Award to Al Fisk.

There was confusion during the pre-performance warmup when we were led away from the warmup risers. (After all, the flow chart said “leave pict” at 10:45 and “arrive warmup” at 10:50, suggesting a trip of more than 20 feet.)

Lew Mahacek had a medical episode prior to the competition. The convention staff responded admirably, and Legato, Owens, and Frye helped him get treatment and coordinate communication. He was released Sunday.

Roger Lewis used his time as emcee Friday night to show photos of the new BHS facility in Nashville. More than twice the cost of the building has been spent on refurbishing it, and it should be a treat to visit. For example, there is a 30-foot-high scrim of a quartet on the outside wall of the building. There is a tag chamber just inside the entrance. There are historical rooms.

Our Pioneer District International chorus representative (chosen last fall), MountainTown Singers, presented *Eclecticity* after the Friday evening competition as a fund-raiser. Those who stayed around heard a burst of creativity from the chorus and its director, Dr. David Gillingham. The chorus sang “Down Our Way” historically, from the purported discovery of this chestnut as a 9<sup>th</sup> century Gregorian chant, then as a 16<sup>th</sup> century baroque piece, as a Bach fugue, as a Beethoven piece, a Debussy piece, and finally as a Beach Boys song. Gillingham did shtick and concert-level piano playing in a skit called “The Sunday School Pianist.”

Joe Liles presented “Tune It or Die” on Friday afternoon. This one-hour abridgement of his Harmony College class discussed intonation and tried it out with simple exercises for developing an ear for tuning. As many of us know, a keyboard/piano is tuned so that each note is equally out of tune. (I.e., if it were tuned so that all of the notes in the key of C were correct, other keys would have seriously wrong intervals.) But that leaves the 5<sup>th</sup> a little too low, the major 3<sup>rd</sup> is way too high, the minor 3<sup>rd</sup> too low, and the 7<sup>th</sup> is the most out of tune of all. In singing barbershop, where ringing chords is all-important, we must find the right intervals, which Joe calls finding the “sweet spot.” He introduced some vocal exercises to help train the ear find the sweet spot.

Doc Mann and John Cowlshaw attended the House of Delegates meeting on Friday afternoon, where, among other items, Jack Teuber and John Cowlshaw were given first-place awards for PR and SMOKE SIGNALS respectively.

New members Eric Domke, Lance Shew, and Austin Quinn brought along their wives, Mary, Nola, and Martha – a full intro to Big Chief Barbershop in one day.

CHORDIOLOGY put on a free seminar Saturday morning on the use of Audacity software. This allows one to pull in (legal) learning tracks and record one’s own part and then use the results for training. Go to [http://www.chordiology.com/Blog/Entries/2008/1/6\\_the\\_tyranny\\_of\\_the\\_truth\\_machine\\_\(rob\).html](http://www.chordiology.com/Blog/Entries/2008/1/6_the_tyranny_of_the_truth_machine_(rob).html) for more information, but it seems to be similar to software that we already own.

#### **From our Director:**

Men of the BCC,

Thank you all so much for your time, commitment and energy toward the contest in Battle Creek this past weekend. I appreciate all of your support and encouragement for myself and to the other members of our chapter. It is certainly my privilege to work with you on a weekly basis. I think we have come a long way on our journey of barbershop sound.

I wish you all good singing this Tuesday as I will be at the fair! Our State Fair is a Great State Fair!

Y’all should come, ya hear?

#### **From the Prez:**

Gentlemen: What a fun-filled, busy and exciting first quarter of the year, 2008. COTS for the Board members, Valentines Day singouts, St.Paties Day singout, Retreat, District Contest and how many other singouts Jack. WOW!!!!!!

And speaking of Jack and John, both received 1st Place recognition from their peers at the House of Delegates meeting at District Convention. Sometimes

because we see them as just one of the GUYS we see weekly or more, we don't appreciate their enormous talent and contribution. "Thank You Boyz" as the wonderful Lawrence Welk would say. We are so fortunate to have you as fellow chapter members.

We are entering into a pivotal time for our chapter's future. I hear much rumbling from the Indians, so it must be time for the Big Chiefs to pow-wow. We will do so at our next Board meeting May 14th. Come hear what's going on, you just might find an interest in getting involved in the chapter leadership for the future.

See all next week when Big Chief Director comes back from the State Fair.

Have a great week and don't forget 1/2 hour a day practice on words and music---Proud to be President of YOUR Chapter--- Doc Mann

#### **From Competing Convention quartets:**

SEP's Bobby Gray wrote: "Thank you so much for allowing SEP to compete at the Pioneer District. We had a wonderful time and were treated like gold by your district and the folks who attended the contest... We've been competing for a long time and [ . . . ] we have prioritized "having fun" as our top goal. In that regard, the Pioneer District had at least (7) hospitality rooms [where we] had a BLAST singing ...

Hopefully, we'll be able to come back and do some shows in your area.

**Please let everyone know that they can hire "SEP for a Song" and we will do their chapter show in 2008 or 2009 for "EXPENSES ONLY"! We're donating our show fee back to the chapter!**

Ex-Michigander Brian Philbin from METROPOLIS wrote: On behalf of METROPOLIS, I just wanted to thank you all for your hospitality and enthusiasm over the course of the weekend. We felt extremely welcomed and Bob's & my quartet mates were very impressed by the amount of fun everyone was having.

You should all be proud of your District leadership for putting on a fine convention. Having the facility to provide big screen monitors and videos for the contestants is something that other districts still struggle to obtain. Everything was close and simple - the way it should be.

CHORDIOLOGY's Dave Spizarny wrote: "another great weekend – come to think of it, a typical barbershop weekend. We didn't let Cliff's and my laryngitis stop us from competing. The show must go on, you know. A special thanks to the presentation judge we met with, Judd Orff. He laid down the law about singing in the Hospitality Suites when sick. Short version – DON'T. He had a scary story about his own vocal cords. Let's just leave it at: be nice to your vocal chords.

#### **SPRING SINGING RETREAT**

The Big Chief Chorus held its Spring Singing Retreat April 4-6, once again at the Ralph MacMullan Center on the north shore of Higgins Lake. This year the snow was a little deeper. The facility was also a little busier, with trout fishermen, fire inspectors, and others sharing the facility. The time was used for intensive improvement on our two contest numbers. But it was also fun. (Austin Quinn called it the most fun he's had in 27 years of barbershopping.) In ensemble competition, the Crocs (Clarke, Teuber, Mann, Cowlshaw, Valko, Keith, Holmes, Allen, and Mahacek) beat out the Hippos, the Mooses, and the Apes.

Thanks to Pete Mazzara for his organization of the event! And to all those who assisted him.

#### **AROUND THE PATCH**

Tom Blue's students are presenting "State Fair" at Rochester Adams High School, Th, Fr, Sat, May 1,2,3. Go to [http://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/open\\_news.aspx?news=37900&name=Spring%20Musical%20-%20State%20Fair%20-%20May%201-3,%202008](http://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/open_news.aspx?news=37900&name=Spring%20Musical%20-%20State%20Fair%20-%20May%201-3,%202008)

Bob Marshall has a role in *Oklahoma*, put on by the Heart-of-the-Hills Players at Warren Community Center Theatre on May 8&9 at 2:00 P.M. and May 10 at 7:00 PM.

Bob Kleeman from Walled Lake has been guesting with us. He's been out of barbershop for ten years.

Dar Johnson has resigned as Chapter Treasurer, and Doc has appointed Dick Johnson as interim treasurer

Our annual Woodshed contest had to be cancelled this year, but will return.

Mike Keith was mentioned in an April 21 Oakland Press article on the Flight of Honor.

Pete Mazzara has circulated the next version of the script for our fall show – *History of America, Part I*.

The Barbershop Chicks will meet for a Cinco de Mayo Supper Thursday, May 8 (6:30), at Sandy Northey's Home, 133 Fabius Street, Troy, 248-879-0618

#### **QUARTETS**

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE had three singouts in April. It sang to 637 school kids and staff at Wixom Elementary School, on April 8. The occasion was the

shaving off of Principle Alec Bender's moustache, the consequence of his reading challenge to the school kids. They listened to the quartet sing "Barbershop Style, Zip-Ah-Dee-Doo-Dah, Mickey Mouse tag, Wild Irish Rose, I'm Sittin', and In the Still of the Night." Then a fanfare as the two local stylists went to work, and the gymnasium-full of kids did their ear-splitting chant, "Shave It!, Shave It!" The culmination was the handing out of fake moustaches for all the kids to don.

On April 30, FOUR WHEEL DRIVE sang to 170 at the Troy Senior Center. The occasion was a dinner recognizing volunteers at the Center.

On April 28, FOUR WHEEL DRIVE sang to forty veterans at the Wixom Senior Center.

The CELEBRATION QUARTET sang for a dinner at the Order of the Eastern Star (Masonic Temple) of Auburn Hills on Monday, April 28th. An audience of 45 was in attendance. The quartet was dressed in full tuxedos and sang 10 songs over 30 minutes for an appreciative audience of about 45 members. The group recited the Pledge of Allegiance and Celebration sang God Bless America as well as our two Contest songs, Precious Lord and the Shine/Do Lord Medley.



Doc presenting Jeff the BSOM award

#### MEMBERSHIP (at 62)

**New Member:** Fred Pioch. Welcome, Fred!

**Renewals:** Tom Blue (2), Dave Myre (3), Dar Johnson (3), Dave Shantz (4), Fred DeVries (6), Jeff Spires (9), Jim Owens (9), Bob Legato (9), Roger Holmes (10), Walt Bachmann (10), Tom Tailford (12), Paul Smith (17), Bob Marshall (18), Tom Blackstone (22), Stan Mersino (24), Howard Lynn (32)

**Pending:** Art Carinci, Cory Flatoff, Mel Parrish

**Birthdays:** Gene Downie (4<sup>th</sup>), Bill Dabbs (17<sup>th</sup>)

**Barbershopper of the Month.** Jeff Doig, for his contribution towards researching and developing the new sound system

#### AROUND THE DISTRICT

**Antiques Road Show Retires:** After appearing in six District Contests and six International Senior Quartet Contests, winning the Senior Quartet District Championship and two International third place medals, ANTIQUES ROADSHOW is canceling its record run. Bass Lee Hanson and tenor Raleigh Bloch have decided to leave the show, and since the quartet has medaled, the name must also be changed. Doug Lynn and Roger Lewis will keep singing and begin looking for a new bass and tenor (must be at least 55 years young to maintain senior status). We'd like to compete again in the fall season and hope to qualify for the midwinter convention and contest in Pasadena in January.

Since that weekend at Sage Lake Roundup in 2002, it's been great fun for the ten of us – Raleigh and Jean Bloch, Denny and Jan Gore, Doug and Laura Lynn, Roger and Sue Lewis and Lee and Jan Hanson. We've built lasting friendships with each other, and hopefully, with many audiences in the Pioneer District and the Society. That's what quarteting is all about... Thanks for the great support of the Pioneer District and its chapters.

ANTIQUES ROADSHOW QUARTET

The district has had trouble staging two-day Harmony Roundups the last few years – 5 of the last 6 have been cancelled for lack of registration. So they are experimenting with Micro-HEPs. The next one will occur May 10, from noon to 6:30 pm at the Sacred Heart Byzantine Catholic Church (Activities Center) at 29125 W. Six Mile Rd (just East of Middlebelt). One can register online at [www.pioneerdistrict.org/microhep](http://www.pioneerdistrict.org/microhep) for six hours of "vocal techniques" with Society expert Jim Debusman and with the aid of CHORDIOLOGY. For only \$10. Great chance, guys.

#### A Salute to Veterans concert

Carol Smist is looking for volunteer vocalists for a community concert choir to join with the Waterford New Horizons Concert Band in a concert Friday, May 16, 7:30, at Central United Methodist Church. The choir will be singing three numbers: "The Water Is Wide", "This Is My Song", and "American Tribute". There will be 2 rehearsals:

Monday, May 5th- 6:30-8:30 p.m. @ Crary Middle School

Monday, May 12th- 6:30-8:30 p.m. @ Central United Methodist Church

#### AROUND THE WORLD

This summer's International convention is only 560 miles away – in our new BHS home town of Nashville. You can register at:  
[http://www.barbershop.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/pub\\_id\\_106968.hcsp](http://www.barbershop.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/pub_id_106968.hcsp)

**How to Write a Song:** The newest blog to join the NYTimes.com family, [Measure for Measure](#), is written by accomplished songwriters like Andrew Bird and Suzanne Vega. It pulls back the curtain on the creative process of songwriting.

Mary Sue Twohy, Music Director of **XM Satellite Radio** ([www.xmradio.com](http://www.xmradio.com)) produces a **Barbershop show on XM Channel 4**, which features music from the '40's. It's called "Harmony Square" and airs 8 PM and 12 midnight on Sundays. She's even looking for additional playable CDs.

#### **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING: April 4, 2008, Excerpts from Bob Butcher's minutes**

Present at McMullen Center: Doc Mann (presiding), Dar Johnson, Roger Holm, Jack Teuber, Dave Shantz, Gil Schreiner, Zaven Melkonian, Dave Myre, Irwin Mann, Bob Butcher, Walt DeNio (sitting in for Wayne Cheyne) and Bruce Brede.

March 12 minutes approved.

Current membership at 62. Overdue renewals were listed.

Dar Johnson's Treasurer's report will be entered into permanent record with all income, disbursements and beginning balance from March 12, 2008. Balance carried forth to April 4, 2008 is \$24,470.20.

The required yearly audit is being worked on by Walt DeNio, Greg Moss, and Dar Johnson.

Walt DeNio gave Wayne Cheyne's Chapter Development report. He added that several renewal applications are in process at this time.

Roger Holm presented his report on Music and Performance. The possibility of a donation to Canterbury on the Lakes was discussed and tabled.

Jack Teuber gave his Marketing and Public Relations report. He emphasized that the Amy Jamison benefit concert is being handled exclusively by the Rochester Church of Christ, not the BCC or any other Barbershop Entity.

Jack announced that he has been working with Doug Metzger and Jim Owens about making business cards for each member of the Chorus. Doug Metzger designed and produced some cards to be distributed throughout the retreat weekend.

Jeff Doig was chosen as BSOM for March, for his contribution towards researching and developing the new sound system.

Pete Mazzara proposed a tentative date for the 2009 Retreat – April 3-5.

#### **INDEX TO THE 7<sup>th</sup> YEAR OF *Smoke Signals***

On-line at <http://www.bigchiefchorus.org/>

#### **#73, May, 2007**

Pioneer District Convention  
PR and Bulletin awards  
Higgins Lake  
Woodshed Contest  
Meet Wayne Cheyne  
Don't Sell yourself Short (Sound and Music #13)  
Historical chorus scores  
The Society for the Promotion and Encouragement of Italian Cooking in America

#### **#74, June, 2007**

Performance at American House  
Meet Ted Prueter  
Are we under-oxygenated? (Sound & Music #14)  
"Sisters of Swing"  
Barbershop Polecats Crossword Puzzle

#### **#75, July, 2007**

Performance at St Anne's Mead & Flint's Bratfest  
Flatoffs on Hike for Discovery  
Multiple chorus membership (interview with J. Spires)  
Chorus strategies, varieties

#### **#76, August, 2007**

2007 Summer Tour  
Westminster takes Chorus Gold  
International Webcast party  
Meet MaxQ, Quartet Gold  
Meet Fred DeVries  
Selected warmup exercises  
Why not eat before a gig (Sound & Music #16)

#### **#77, September, 2007**

D.O.C. Fun Night  
Annual Picnic  
Bush League  
BHS moves from Kenosha to Nashville  
Aviation and barbershop  
Tony DeRosa coaches Sweet Adelines  
Tony Bennett  
Selling show program ads

#### **#78, October, 2007**

Big Chief Jeopardy returns  
Meet Bob Legato  
A Journey through Time, I (Lyle Howard)

#### **#79, November, 2007**

“On the Western plains of Lake Orion”  
Election of officers for 2008  
Fall District Convention  
Meet Meredith Willson  
A Journey Through Time, II (Lyle Howard)  
Big Chief Chorus Budget  
Here’s How to Help

**#80, December, 2007**

Fall Show – Country Roads, Take Me Home  
Prez Zaven’s final message  
Meet Bob Butcher  
Excerpts from Fred McFadyen’s Introduction, at Tues’ Musicale  
Michael Baribeau, our new Troubadour editor

**#81, January, 2008**

Christmas chorus  
Notes on our Christmas singers  
The Long and Short of Tall and Round Vowels (Tom Blue)  
A Journey Through Time, III (Lyle Howard)  
Pandora

**#82, February, 2008**

Tom Blue’s one-year report  
Prez Doc’s first letter  
Rochester’s Fire and Ice Fest  
Meet David Allen  
Report on Chordiology  
“I’m OK with That” Kitty Slamka

**#83, March, 2008**

Valentines, 2008  
Ensign Four  
Media exposure for BCC  
Meet Lyle Howard  
Reports from Florida, and from Power Play’s retirement show

**#84, April, 2008**

St. Patrick’s Day Singout  
NORTHBOUND SOUND singouts

All unattributed articles and photos by John Cowlshaw

**CHAPTER LEADERSHIP**

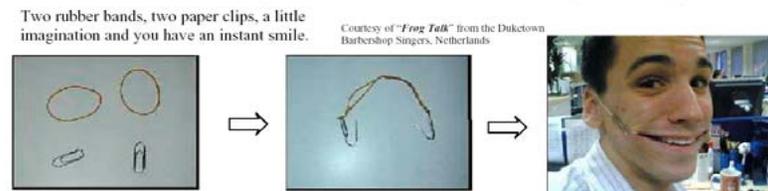
Director: Thomas Blue (248-814-9627)  
Assistant Directors: Fred McFadyen, Dick Johnson, & Bill Holmes  
President: Doc Mann (248-628-0189)  
Past President: Zaven Melkonian  
VP: Chapter Dev: Wayne Cheyne

VP: Music and Performance: Roger Holm  
VP: Marketing & PR: Jack Teuber  
Secretary: Bob Butcher  
Interim Treasurer: Dick Johnson  
Members at Large – Ron Clarke, Dave Myre, Gil Schreiner, David Shantz  
Chorus Manager: Dave Myre  
Music Team: Holm, Blue, Johnson, Doig, Ensign, McFadyen, Melkonian,  
Murray, Prueter, Moss, Cowlshaw, and Brede

**CALENDAR** (Times are Performance Times)

May 6, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Crary  
May 8, Th, 1 pm Gig, Waterford Senior Ctr, 3621 Pontiac Lake Rd.  
May 10, Sa, 12:30 Jim DeBusman Mini-HEP  
May 13, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Crary  
May 14 Exec. Bd. Meeting, Jack Teuber’s  
May 20, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Crary  
May 27, T, 7pm Chorus rehearsal, Crary  
Jun 28, Sa, 3pm Log Cabin Days, ~4490 Hatchery Rd, Waterford  
Jun 29 - July 6 International Convention, Nashville  
July 29- Aug 5 Harmony University, St. Joseph, MO  
Aug 2, Sa, 3pm Amy Jamison Benefit, Church of Christ, Rochester  
Aug 10, Su, 4pm Detroit Princess Cruise, [detroitprincess.com](http://detroitprincess.com)  
October 17-19 District Convention - Battle Creek  
October 25 Rochester Chapter Show  
Nov 1, Sa 64th Annual Pontiac-Waterford Chapter Show  
May 10, 2009 Lk Orion HS gig with the North Oakland Concert Band

**Do It Yourself improvement kit for the Facially Challenged**



(from “Frog Talk,” the Duketown Barbershop Singers, Netherlands, via Paul Howe’s “Woodshedder Weekly”)