Bulletin #9, January 15, 2002
Pontiac Waterford Chapter SPEBSQSA
And on the Web at www.PontiacChapter.com
Big Chief Chorus Sings: Tuesdays, 7:30-10:00
Crary Middle School, 501 N. Cass Lake Rd
Waterford, MI

Goodbye to the Holidays. We sang…
from the market…

...to the mall

And Hello to the New Year.

End of the Year party: Dec 18
Winners of the Big Chief Membership Contest were announced at the party. The first prize of $100 for sponsoring the highest number of new Society members was shared by Zaven Melkonian and Dick Johnson. The second prize of $100 for sponsoring the highest number of guests was split by Mike Keith and Jeff Spires. No one won the special Bonus Prize of two preferred-seating tickets to the 2002 international convention for three new society members.

No one could have been surprised by the announcement of Barbershopper of the Year – Dick Johnson – after Dick’s 32 years of dedication to Barbershopping. He is honored for his promotional ideas, for his computer skills in drafting certificates and flyers, for arranging uniforms at Harwoods, for Sunnyside and Harmonic Progression, for so many singouts, for his work as Baritone section leader, as program chairman, for program covers, ad layouts, and ad campaign kits. He has been Treasurer, maintained financial records, is Associate Director, has arranged for learning tapes, and name tags. Upon receiving the award, Dick said graciously, “I’ve learned everything I know from Bill Pascher.”

Ross Ensign rose to speak emotionally about how very, very thankful we can be for the special energy and group of guys we have...a blend of old and
new...and a very special Director. Dennis Robinson added comments of praise.

MEMBERSHIP
Renewals: DeNio (5), Auquier (3), Barnes (49), Keith (21), Nevaux (26), Smith (44), Murray (6). We also have 3 applications being processed.

Man of Note: Zaven Melkonian for bringing in three new members

Illnesses: The year begins with the sad news that Don Denoyer has been diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor. He welcomes cards and visits.

From the President: Gene Downie
The Year Ahead

With a very successful Christmas Season behind us, it is time once again to look at the year ahead of us. Judging from our Christmas performances, the chorus has improved tremendously over the past year. It is time to review our objectives and work to bring our chorus to an even higher level of quality.

Some plans are already in the works. Linda is scheduled to work with us five times between now and spring convention. She will be with us on the following dates: Tuesday, Jan. 29, Tuesday, Feb. 26, Tuesday, March 26, Saturday, April 13, and Monday, April 22. Please mark these dates on your calendar. It is imperative that we have the best turnout possible to take full advantage of Linda’s talents.

We must also recognize that Linda cannot do anything by herself. It is incumbent on each one of us to take Linda’s teaching and make it a personal goal to work toward becoming proficient in each identified skill. This means we have to practice these techniques in all situations, not just when Linda is present. If we do that, I am very confident we will achieve the status of being recognized as a top chorus in the Pioneer District. I am confident we have the talent. Let’s put it to work.

As our chorus has improved so has the need for a better venue to showcase our talents. Our present auditorium of 400 seats is just too small. We are looking into several possibilities. Some of these sites may require that we examine our entire years schedule and make some adjustments in order to move to a larger site. The executive board has their work cut out for them for the coming year.

Having had a small taste of what this chorus can become, I look ahead to the coming year with a great deal of anticipation. I think it is going to be a lot of fun and very rewarding.

From the Director: Chris Miller
LET’S GO FOR IT!

This was the consensus at the recent music committee meeting. Eleven interested members showed up at my house on January 5th to put in their 2 cents worth. The consensus of the group was to improve chorus singing via the following goals:

MUSIC GOALS 2002
◆ Self Improvement (equals Chorus Improvement)
◆ Chorus Improvement - through practice, coaching, & contest
◆ Increased Membership - especially Tenors and Basses
◆ Minimum 750 points in Spring Competition; 800 the following contest
◆ Establish a Chorus Ensemble - to perform multi musical tasks - 12 min.
◆ Establish a Singing Warm Up Team

It was further decided that the following “old” music would be kept in our repertoire:
Contest: “If I Had the Last Dream Left In the World”
Patriotic: “God Bless America”
Religious: “I Believe”, “Irish Parting Prayer”, This Little Light of Mine”

New music will include the following with a few more to follow:
“Star Spangled Banner” (Patriotic), “Let There be Peace On Earth” (Patriotic/Religious), “Amazing Grace” (Religious), “Teach the Children to Sing” (our new service song). Show songs will include “If I Had the Heart of A Clown.”

“Dorothy Returns to Oz” will be the title of our next Fall Show. Let me know if you’ve got any cute ideas.

Ross Ensign summed it up at final performance last year when he said we a lot of forward momentum and hard working members. Add “commitment” and I believe we can be Pioneer District Chorus Champions within 3 years. Do you believe?
What are your goals for the Chorus for 2002?  What frustrated you in 2001?  Where can we improve?  How would you like 2002 to be different?

I asked these questions of several members. Here’s what they had to say:

**Bill Auquier:** I’d like to see members pay more attention and more respect to Chris and others when they’re up there. I’d like more upbeat music. I’d like the 20 to 30 guys who own money for uniforms to pay up.

**Neil Braun:** Everything went so smoothly in 2001. I’d like to see more of the same.

**Bill Dabbs:** I have no bad feelings about the chorus. We’ve made tremendous strides. I’d like to see sectional rehearsals.

**Roger Holm:** I’d like to see excellent attendance and high-spirited rehearsals. I’d like to reach 900 pts - like the Great Lakes Chorus (grin). I’d like us to sing better, by being focused & not goofing off, by knowing the music, by not singing too loud, by listening for other parts. But basically, I’d like everyone to feel good about being a part of the chorus so they want to come back each week.

**Mike Keith:** Basically I’m very pleased with our progress. We’ve come so far in the last two years. My family agrees how entertaining we’ve become, compared to shows in years past. But we need more tenors! And more young people in general. More aggressive in outreach. I haven’t given up on my sons. (Michael, 41, and Brian, 46).

**Art Ripley:** I’d like to see us end up higher in competition, but I’m not so enthusiastic about all the repetition required to do that. I enjoy my own guitar playing in my basement, but Chorus gets me out, and it’s fun.

**Jerry Twomey:** Let’s sing softer, but better. My personal goal is to bring in two new members.

**Irwin “Doc” Mann:** You can feel the energy and enthusiasm snowballing. To keep that going, my goals include: more involvement and participation in committees, sell more show ads, daily work on new music, continue to enjoy the fun and fellowship. For the chorus: greater participation by section leaders, assistant section leaders, start at 7pm with sectionals, develop an assistant director’s program, (voluntary) individual checkouts on new songs, increase active membership, more committee participation, and entering both District contests, heading for #1.

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**From around the Patch:**

The **Christmas Chordsmen** (Barrett, Plosky, Cowlishaw, Melkonian) sang out at the Walled Lake Lions’ Club on Dec. 20. It was a small but enthusiastic gathering at Chuck Barrett’s “home club.”

At the **first rehearsal** of the year, Jan 8, Chris reviewed basics – Warmup, taking pitch, breathing, etc., and we applied what we reviewed to Polecats, critiquing pickup quartets. Ernie Morrow was a guest from Milford.

**Valentines program:** At the present time we are limited by the number of active tenors that we have. Are there any brave souls out there who would be willing to sing tenor for just a few Valentines songs? Last year we had 28 gigs, and we hope this year to double that.

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**From outside the Patch:**


Pioneers’ Seniors Entry, **New Wrinkle**, with Jack Frucci, Kelly Brummett, Walt Quick and Don Kondor will be competing in Riverside.

**NOTE on Spring convention.** Be prepared for changes! Not only in location (from Battle Creek to Lansing) but also procedures. The Grand Ledge High School Auditorium (eight miles west of Lansing) is not large enough to accommodate dressing rooms and warmup rooms. Therefore, we will dress in our respective hotel rooms (what if we are day-trippers?), rehearse in Lansing at the Holiday Inn West Hotel, and then arrange our own transportation to Grand Ledge.

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**Some important web sites:**

Information on the **Pioneer Spring convention**, and application forms are in the Troubadour, or at the Pioneer website: http://www.harmonize.com/Pioneer/pio.htm and click on Spring Convention.


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**Update** from SPEBSQSA headquarters is now available at: http://www.spebsqsa.org/Update/. The January issue includes: Leave a legacy for harmony, Special convention news, Pre-ordering The Harmonizer for PR and recruiting, Supporting the MBNA Collegiate Barbershop Quartet Contest, How to find arrangements on the Society Web page, the Chapter Supply Catalog is available online, “Teach the Children to Sing,” Portland convention update including changes in the schedule, and booking trip.

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**‘MEMBERS ONLY’ SPEBSQSA SITE.** A very useful tool called Members Only is available on the Society website (www.spebsqsa.org). There you can update personal information on file at the headquarters, particularly e-mail addresses. It also offers search capabilities to locate
quartets, other members, chapters and much more. Members Only requires
the use of a password. For first-time users, click on "Members Only" at the
top right of the Society web page. Then click where it asks "Don't have a
password?" and one will be e-mailed to you, usually within 24 hours. When
you receive the password it is yours permanently, and the Members Only
sign-in page will remember it so it will not be necessary to enter the password
each time you use the site.

From Pioneer President Al Bonney:

I have sent the final copy of our District work plan to the Society yesterday
and also posted a copy on our website for anyone who is
interested…. I encourage you to have a look at this plan - it represents what
the Leadership Team is ACTUALLY DOING (one of the concerns coming
out of the House of Delegates: "How are you going to achieve these lofty
goals?"). I welcome your comments and input because in August we will
begin developing the 2003 plan and the more input and comments we get
from our members the more likely we will develop work plans that will fulfill
your needs.

Happy New Year to everyone, and thanks for your continuing support.

Is this bulletin mailed to you each month because you are temporarily
inactive in the chorus? Well, listen to this piece of dialogue contributed by
Wally Plosky from the Big Chicken Chorus:

Inactive member: “Well, maybe some day I'll have enough time to get
involved again.”

Active member: “And when would that be? While you still have a great
voice, enjoy singing, while you can still enjoy the camaraderie of your fellow BCC members and can still get your jollies entertaining audiences? Or, perhaps, after all that's gone? Do yourself a BIG FAVOR…be there! If you're too busy to sing, juggle, make some room and bring a little harmony into your life again.

Board Meeting Minutes, Jan. 10. Pete Mazzara will organize our
participation in the March 2nd coaching clinic at Michigan State. Pete reported
on COTS that he & Plosky and Spires attended. Discussion on membership
and recruitment. (Doc Mann will help brainstorm.) Neal Braun is now
responsible for attendance sheets.

We are registered for singing valentines. Will charge $35.
Discussion and adoption of music committee’s goals (see above).
We’ll also plan on a working relationship with school(s) to promote our
Young Men in Harmony service project.

Membership goal is 60 members.

Next fall’s show will be “Dorothy Returns to Oz.” Jeff Spires will seek a
new venue.

Treasury balance is $7403. Our web site costs $117 per year.

Quiz time:

1. (a) In what city, in what year, and by whom was SPEBSQSA
founded? (b) What do the initials SPEBSQSA stand for?
2. Name our chapter director before Chris Miller, our President before
Gene Downie, our Bulletin Editor before John Cowlishaw.
3. If “Five Foot Two” begins in the key of C, it then moves to “…eyes
of blue…” in E7, and then thru four perfect fifths back to C. Name
those four chords. (Hint: the correct answer does NOT include Scotch and Absolut.)
4. “The Old Songs,…I love those minor chords.” But there aren’t
many minor chords in Barbershop music. The notable feature of
Barbershop music is the large number of __________ chords.
(Answers next month. Also I’m looking for new questions. Contribute a
question and get the credit.)

Chapter Executive Board

Officers
Chorus Director: Chris Miller
President: Gene Downie
VP, Chapter Development: Walt DeNio
VP, Music and Performance: John Smith
Secretary: Jeff Doig
Treasurer: Dick Johnson
Members at Large: Pete Mazzara and Wally Plosky

Chairmen
Quartet Activity: Len Barnes
Service(Charity): Bruce Brede
Singing Valentine: Bob Marshall
Chorus Manager: Jeff Spires
Music Librarian: Roger Holm
Uniform Manager: Bill Auquier
Sunshine (Chaplain): Don Denoyer
Bulletin Editor: John Cowlishaw

Calendar
Jan 15,22,29,Feb 5,12,19 Chorus rehearsals
Jan 20-27 MidWinter Convention, Riverside, CA
Feb 7 Board Meeting
Mar 2 Chorus coaching, Lansing
Apr 26-28 District Convention, Lansing
May 17-19 Harmony Roundup, MSU
Jun 30-Jul 7 International Convention, Portland, OR