



**BIG CHIEF CHORUS**

# **SMOKE SIGNALS**



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

**Vol. 8, No. 7, (#91)**

**November 1, 2008**

**64<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL SHOW**

It has been a long time coming (gee, half as long as Barack Obama and John McCain have been on the campaign trail) but Saturday night, November 1, it all came together in a fine performance of *American History*. The audience of 500-plus stood for the chorus's singing of "Star Spangled Banner." With the huge back-lit flag behind, it set the tone for this multifaceted, twisted but patriotic history of America, as told by Grandfather Bill Holmes to his Grandson, bed-bound Billy (Ross Ensign). Getting out the "big book," Grandpa described how the country was begun by a group of "good men," and the chorus responded "When Good Men Sing." The Founding Fathers Quartet (LOCAL COLOR IV) sang of the opening of the West with "Shenandoah." The awesomeness of that West was described in "America, the Beautiful." Then the four faces of Mount Rushmore (FOUR TO GO) arrived to joke about forming a Heavenly quartet and singing, "Everything's Coming up Roses."

What about Ben Franklin's kite? It flew across the stage above the chorus. Lightning flashed, thunder roared, and a dazed Ben Franklin stumbled onstage to conduct the world premier of Tom Blue's arrangement of "American Trilogy."

Then, to the dramatic repetition of the horns, NORTHBOUND SOUND entered from the four directions to sing the "Armed Forces Medley." The chorus responded with Ellis-Island-arrival Irving Berlin's "God Bless America," and FOUR WHEEL DRIVE sang the contemporary "God Bless the USA."

As the chorus sang its final number, "This is My Country," it came forward off the risers to the footlights in a large semicircle, waving flags and firing pops.

Without intermission, our two guest quartets sang - CHORDIOLOGY and ELMO THUMM. The show concluded with the chorus, decked out in their tuxedos, singing "Precious Lord," "Irish Parting Prayer," and "Keep America Singing."

Thanks to so many people - Tom Blue for his vocal inspiration and moving us to the next level with his Trilogy arrangement, Fred McFadyen and Dick Johnson for assisting in the directing, Ron Clarke as show chairman, Bill and Ross for their humorous acting, Pete, Jeff, and Ron for the script, Jeff as Manager, Donna Bevington as Stage Director, Jim Owens for tickets, Ross Ensign for advertising booklet, Bruce Brede for organizing the Afterglow, and all of us for helping create the ideas and energy for carrying this out.

### **Orion Twp library singout, October 12.**

Under Freddie's direction, we sang, "Hi Neighbor," "When Good Men Sing," "Aint Misbehavin'," "Let the Rest of the World Go By," "Aura Lee," "Precious Lord," "Do Lord Medley," "In the Still of the Night." "Under the Boardwalk," "Hello, Mary Lou," "In My Room," "America the Beautiful," "God Bless America," "Irish Parting Prayer," and "Keep the Whole World Singing." In addition, two quartets sang - Northbound SOUND, and FOUR-TO-GO. The chorus dressed in red, white, and blue for the occasion.

### **Woodshed Contest, by Dick Johnson**

The 52nd annual Pontiac/Waterford Chapter Woodshed Contest was successfully held Friday October 10th at the Pontiac Country Club. Over 40 "would-be" Woodshed Badge winners formed 13 quartets, picked songs from the 85 songs on the song-list board, huddled in room corners, worked up arrangements and performed in front of NIGHTSHIFT, the judging quartet. (NIGHTSHIFT also graced the evening in song).

The winning quartet, named "Bud-Lite" with lead Mike Frye (BCC) Tenor, Hank DeMars (Gross Pointe) Bari, Dale Petroski (Gross Pointe) Bass, and Dave Anderson (Macomb) Lead, sang "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles." They are all winners of the coveted 2008 Woodshed Badges.

The Flint Chapter had the highest percentage of participating members, so they will have their chapter's name engraved on the "Bennington Trophy" for 2008. Other chapters present were DOC, Gross Pointe, Macomb and Frank Thorne.

Len Barnes kept the evening rolling as MC. All of the 20 plus BCC members...Barnes, Butcher, Cheyne, Dabbs, DeNio, Doig, Frye, Greenwood,

Holm, Johnson, Legato, Lilly, Mahacek, Mann, Maxfield, Melkonian, Myre, McFadyen, Pioch, Schreiner, Shew and Teuber... helped make the evening a success by pitching in to register members as they arrived, run the 50/50, register quartets, erect and take down the woodshed and provide tasty snacks. Thanks to all.

And, in some kind of (modern-day) record, fourteen of the Chiefs participated in quartets – McFadyen, Frye, Schreiner, Shew, DeNio, Teuber, Doig, Mahacek, Melkonian, Holm, Howard, Butcher, (Dick) Johnson, and Greenwood.

## AROUND THE PATCH

Thanks to Greg Moss and Walt DeNio for serving as the nominating/elections committee this year. The election of officers was held October 21. Our officers for 2009 are:

President: Doc Mann  
Past President: Zaven Melkonian  
VP: Chapter Dev: Dave Shantz  
VP: Music and Performance: Roger Holm  
VP: Marketing & PR: Jack Teuber  
Secretary: Neil Braun  
Treasurer: Dick Johnson  
Members at Large – Ron Clarke, Wayne Cheyne, Bob Butcher, Eric Domke

Bob Marshall missed the show because he was singing and dancing in Heart-of-the-Hills Players “Magical Musical Memories – Songs, comedy & dance of the 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s.” It runs thru the weekend of November 6, 7, and 8.

Cory Flatoff missed the show because of being in Delaware for recurrent Hawker schooling.

Donna Bevington’s photos of dress rehearsal night are at:

[http://dsb539.myphotoalbum.com/view\\_album.php?set\\_albumName=album06&page=1](http://dsb539.myphotoalbum.com/view_album.php?set_albumName=album06&page=1)

The Board meeting Nov 19 will be a combined meeting of the old and new Boards. Dick Johnson is planning an installation dinner somewhere around Dec 3, 4 or 5.

COTS Leadership Academy is January 3-4 in Okemos, MI. Chapter officers as well as any other interested singers are invited.

## QUARTETS

Freddie McFadyen’s new quartet, FOUR TO GO competed at Pioneer District Competition in Battle Creek October 17 and received a 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Seniors Quartet Finals. They received a 60.5% score for their package of “Back in the Old Routine” and “Everything Old is New Again.” RESISTING-A-REST

(with our Bruce LaMarte) won the competition and will represent the district at the midwinter convention. Unusually for Pioneer district, a second quartet has been selected as a “wildcard” entry. (Beside the sixteen district representatives, the next nine highest scoring quartets from around the Society are chosen.) Competition among the twenty senior quartets will occur in the Pasadena Civic Auditorium on Friday, January 30, 2009.

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE sang at Dave Monroe’s wedding to Bernita Fuller, Saturday, October 18 at Clarkston Free Methodist Church. The quartet sang “Let the Rest of the World” from the chancel steps before the couple came down the aisle, and then were roundly applauded by the 120 guests at the dinner reception following.

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE performed in “Moments to Remember,” October 24. The show was put on by “The Center for Active Adults” at South Lyon High School. George Wheeler, “The Great Pretender,” lip-synched his way thru twenty (count them, twenty) songs made famous by Barry Manilow, Tom Jones, Eddie Arnold and most any other crooner you can recall. So by the time FOUR WHEEL DRIVE came out to sing, the audience of over 500 was more than ready for such upbeat numbers as “Zip-Ah-Dee-Do-Dah” and “Mary Lou.” The quartet helped raise over \$3,000 for the senior center. Shane Gruber and his “Shane Gang” Cloggers were also much applauded.

Oakland County Clerk, Ruth Johnson, contacted FOUR WHEEL DRIVE about recording a musical campaign ad. After 4WD recorded its own arrangement, her campaign chose Ruth’s daughter to sing it. Ah, sigh.

## MEMBERSHIP (at 64)

**Renewals:** Lance Shew (2), Gil Schreiner (4), Lew Mahacek (7), Zaven Melkonian (9), Dick Johnson (39)

**Pending:** David Allen, Art Carinci, Mel Parrish, Jim Troeger

**Birthdays:** Ron Clarke (8<sup>th</sup>), Lance Shew (12<sup>th</sup>), Doc Mann (13<sup>th</sup>), Gil Schreiner (18<sup>th</sup>), Marv Wilson (19<sup>th</sup>), Bob Greenwood (20<sup>th</sup>), Paul Smith (21<sup>st</sup>), Fred McFadyen (24<sup>th</sup>), Lew Mahacek (25<sup>th</sup>)

**Medical:** Art Carinci’s brother-in-law died.

**In Memoriam:** Bill Pascher, Nov 19, 2006

## AROUND THE DISTRICT

Congratulations to our 2009 Pioneer District International Chorus Representatives MOUNTAINTOWN SINGERS, Pioneer District Internationals Seniors Quartet Representatives RESISTING-A-REST, and new Pioneer District Quartet Champs SOMETHING BIG!! Unusually for Pioneer district, a second quartet has been selected as a “wildcard” entry. Beside the sixteen district representatives, the next nine highest scoring quartets are chosen. Competition

among the twenty senior quartets will occur at the upcoming midwinter convention, in the Pasadena Civic Auditorium on Friday, January 30, 2009.

From Kerry M. Foley, Co-Director, South Bend-Mishawaka, IN Valleyaires, who sang “out of district” in the Pioneer District convention this month:

“Whether or not some of you out there in PIOland realize it, this is truly one of the most friendly and encouraging districts in the Society. I have been a member of eight different choruses in four different districts (budget cuts for the arts call for lots of moves-thank God that the South Bend/Benton Harbor area feels that the arts are an important part of a child's education), and I can honestly say that no one makes a Joe Barbershopper feel so at home like our own Pioneer district. Thank you so much for your hospitality.”

Brian Dunckel, Executive Vice President of the Pioneer District asks for “men willing to serve the district as ... the Director of Financial Development, and as the District Historian.”

Denny Gore (THE VAGABONDS, MARQUIS, ANTIQUES ROADSHOW) has recently been diagnosed with congestive heart failure and is in a very weak condition.

Saturday, Nov 15, 2:59 pm, is the 20th Annual Show by the GUARDIANS OF HARMONY, Clintondale High School on Little Mack (N. of 15 Mile and W. of Gratiot). Guest quartets are PRIME TIME and NOVELTY SHOP

#### **From Michael Baribeau Troubadour Editor**

“(The new Troubadour) is now available. Want to read about the Bush League Winners SINGING WITH DAD, Harmony U, naming of Pioneer Judge Applicants, CHORDIOLOGY singing on Mackinac Island, and the latest Chapters in Action? Just go to <http://PioneerDistrict.org> and click the true blue Troubadour button!”

#### **AROUND THE WORLD**

Todd Wilson of Barbershop Harmony Society headquarters announces the re-launch of the main content site [www.barbershop.org](http://www.barbershop.org). Many new features. Try it out. If you visit [www.barbershop.org](http://www.barbershop.org) and still see the old site, go into the Internet Options section of your browser and delete your cache and/or temporary internet files. When you hit refresh, you should see the new site.

METROPOLIS (Brian Philbin, Bob Hartley, James Sabina and Kelly Shepard) [www.harmonize.com/metropolis](http://www.harmonize.com/metropolis) has announced their “Swan Song” performance. “Our final bow will take place on the World Harmony Jamboree during the International Convention in Anaheim, California in July 2009... Over the past 12 years, METROPOLIS has endeavored to bring as much fun as

possible to our appearances.... We've managed three appearances on National Television (two of which continue in syndication to this day) and have averaged more than 21 shows per year, totaling over 450 performances on 270 different shows in 37 different States and 5 Canadian Provinces. In the past 9 years, we've been honored to have been asked to travel overseas on many occasions to educate and perform for barbershoppers the world over, beginning with the first Russian Barbershop Festival in 1999. Since then, we've returned for the third Russian festival in 2001 and subsequently repeated these same duties at the BABS Convention in 2003, the Pan Pacific Convention in 2004 and, in 2007, we educated and sang for the IABS Convention, the BABS convention, the Holland Harmony Festival and the Tokyo Barbers Show. We'll be returning to England once more to educate and perform with the Cottonwood Chorus in Bolton this coming February.

“Achieving medalist quartet status at the International level was certainly a tremendous bonus, as was becoming the first barbershop quartet to win the National A Cappella Championship.”

[METROPOLIS has ties to the Pioneer District and to Eastern Michigan University.]

#### **Big Chief Jeopardy, #22 (Did you get these?)**

1. **Answer:** He has a Doctorate in Podiatric Medicine and did a residency in biomechanics and sports medicine. **Question:** Who is Doc Mann?
2. **Answer:** He was in the first graduating class of Pontiac Northern, became a journeyman pipe fitter, and then was part of a traveling quality systems team. **Question:** Who is Al Monroe?

#### **MEET BILL AUQUIER**

I talked to Bill just before he and Bonnie went out for their customary Saturday morning breakfast at Pete's Coney Island. First question, how do you pronounce your name? AHH-kwer.

Bill was born in Detroit in 1950, the oldest of four children. His dad was a “number cruncher” with the Corps of Engineers. After a period in Dearborn, the family moved to Warren, where his dad worked as a tank plant accountant.

Bill's ancestors had been miners in Illinois, but after one more death in a mine explosion, the families left the mines, moved to Ohio and Michigan. One did pig farming. Another became a sheet metal layout worker at Packard and then Chrysler. That mechanical interest jumped generations and landed squarely on Bill from the time he was old enough to hold a wrench. He started working on bicycles, small engines, others' cars, (but his mom put the kibosh on his owning his own car).

In 1968 Bill graduated from Warren Woods High School. He enrolled at Lawrence Tech, married Debbie, and began working several jobs. School was terminated by the beginning of a family. He installed telephone office equipment

for Western Electric until the AT&T breakup ended that job in 1975. Then he did heating and cooling work, which led to a mechanic's position with General Motors in 1977. In 1996 he became a skilled trades mechanic with a journeyman's card in Experimental Product Engineering Layout and Assembly. Essentially, he was working with the engineering staff on the development of prototype vehicles.



Bill had neck surgery in 2000. During his convalescence he saw our Christmas Chorus signs and joined up. Though his music background had not been extensive (a couple of years of clarinet in high school and a year in a church choir), he quickly adapted to singing bass. However, in 2005, his work at Pontiac Truck and Bus was moved to the Tech Center in Warren, and his hours escalated to as much as 72 hours per week. That and the drive and the shift hours necessitated leaving the chorus. His retirement in 2007 was delayed by an arm-crushing injury from a (predictable) equipment failure, but by Christmas 2007, he was injury-free, retired, and ready to return with enthusiasm to the chorus.

He attended several of the now-defunct Harmony Roundups in Lansing and "learned a ton," especially about sight-reading. He might be interested in quartetting if a tenor were found, and other voice parts that matched his more robust voice.

He met Bonnie at the GM Truck Plant, and married her in 1995. He has two children from his first marriage, David and Heather, and Bonnie has two children Sherry and Paula. Together they have eight grandchildren.

Bill loves to hunt and fish. And his mechanical work continues as he has just finished designing and building a 10-foot pontoon boat, and the redesign of a snowmobile carrier to carry it. His next job is rebuilding a 1988 GMC pickup. He is also a member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles.

## ASK THE DIRECTOR



Dave Myre asks: I have noticed that you seem to enjoy a wide spectrum of music. Is there a particular kind of music that you prefer? And what type is not very appealing?

Tom replies:

People have noticed that I have a variety of musical tastes but I think they are many and yet discriminating.

I prefer classical music, especially Renaissance (most specifically vocal music), Baroque (Bach), Classical (Mozart and Beethoven) and music from the Romantic period (Brahms, Mendelssohn and Dvorak). I like classical music of the early 20th century, especially American composers like Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein. I also like listening to folk music from around the world like South African, Eastern European, Canadian, and American music – more specifically Appalachia (bluegrass) and African-American spirituals. I guess that is due in part to my mother's side of the family living most of their lives in eastern Tennessee. I grew up on Johnny Cash and Dolly Parton.

I also listen to Big Band, Jazz, Barbershop, Broadway, and Blues. I have an appreciation for classic rock, hip-hop, rap alternative and various other contemporary styles. I have no life connection to them because of my training, growing up and experience.

There are many other singers that I listen to, including Barbara Streisand, James Taylor, Allison Kraus and Union Station, Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Jessye Norman, Renee Fleming, Placido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti, and multitudes of choral music.

As some of my students have figured out, "Mr. Blue you have a lot of favorites."

### How to Preserve Your Voice for Your Senior Years

By Jim DeBusman

There are many senior quartet singers out there asking some very important questions such as; "I recently noted my 72nd birthday and am finding in the past few years that both my lung capacity and also my range (esp. low notes) are not what they used to be. Are there things I should know to help me combat the inevitable consequences of aging?"

Some of the answers to these questions are that the older we get, the more important it is to remember that we must spend more time on practicing our

breathing every day. Any deep breathing exercises like warm air, hissing, nasal or back breathing exercises will do the trick.

We must also keep physically active. Go swimming, ride a bike, play golf, go bowling, walk, but do some kind of physical activity every day. As your body matures, you just can't just sit on your favorite chair and watch TV. Do something that stimulates your muscles and your mind.

Here are some reasons why you need to do this. It is understood that muscles become tired as you become older. This causes an increasing stiffness of the vocal fold tissue. You need to keep the vocal muscle as flexible as possible and that is why singing a little bit everyday will make a difference as you grow older. Make certain you sing correctly. As you grow older, your voice will not be as strong as it once was and you probably won't have the range you once had, but you still can sing in good quality if you take good care of your vocal instrument. Don't expect to sing only once a week and be the quality singer you once were.

Singing is the stuff that keeps us full of life for a long time. It has the power to heal us and stimulate our minds and bodies. Singing will continue to build your skills and the discipline in your life as long as you wish it too. When you perform in your chorus and/or quartet, it requires fantastic coordination of your body and mind. Continuing to sing throughout your life, all your life, will keep you younger and healthier longer than you could have ever hoped for.

The *Saturday Evening Post* article mentioned in the October *Smoke Signals* has changed locations. It is still available, but at:

<http://saturdayeveningpost.com/America/Barbershop-in-perfect-harmony.html>

Read it for references to: Frank Sinatra, THE FOUR FRESHMEN, OC TIMES and VOCAL SPECTRUM, Elvis Presley and THE BEACH BOYS, Todd Wilson, and the new BHS headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee.

“The move to Music City from Wisconsin last August gives the BHS a chance to build more visibility and clout in the industry—there's currently no Grammy awarded for barbershop, for example—and eventually, the building will add an interactive museum and Hall of Fame to its existing Old Songs Library. With 750,000 sheets of 125,000 titles, it's the largest privately held collection of sheet music from the Tin Pan Alley era. The 30-by-26-foot reproduction of Norman Rockwell's famous Barbershop Quartet illustration graces its side. The image first appeared on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post* in September 1936, two years before Tulsa tax attorney O.C. Cash founded the Society for the Preservation and Propagation of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in the United States, or SPEBSQSA, now the BHS.”



BSOM, Ross Ensign

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)

Nov 4, T, 7pm	Christmas Chorus rehearsal, Waterford Oaks Activities
Nov 7, F, 7:30	Canada Night St. Aidan's Parish Hall, 17500 Farmington Rd
Nov 11, T, 7pm	Christmas Chorus rehearsal, Crary Middle School
Nov 18, T, 7pm	Christmas Chorus rehearsal, Crary Middle School
Nov 19	Exec Bd meeting (combined new and old Boards)
Nov 25, T, 7pm	Christmas Chorus rehearsal, Crary Middle School
Dec 3,4, or 5	Installation of Officers dinner
Dec 4, Th, 1 pm	White Lake Oaks – Oakland County Retirees
Dec 13, Sa	Big Chief Annual Bus Tour
Jan 3-4, 2009	COTS, Comfort Inn and Conference Center, Okemos, MI

Woodshed photos, by Jeff Doig



Show photos by John Cowlshaw & Utz Schmidt (Greg Moss' friend)

