



BIG CHIEF CHORUS SMOKE SIGNALS



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

Vol. 5, No. 9, (#57)

January 3, 2006

Our robust 2005 Christmas season included 20 singouts in 20 days. We entertained 1400 folk and averaged 34 men per event. Some memories:

- Bill Holmes joining the directorial group of Dick Johnson and Fred McFadyen
- The popular response to “God Bless America”
- Fred McFadyen not giving up on the chord change in “White Christmas”
- Adding Toyland to our repertoire
- Difficulty tuning the last chord of our last song, sigh.
- Eager sneaking in of “Under the Boardwalk”
- The variety of three quartets (Four Wheel Drive, Jackpot, and Harmonic Progression) and the Ensemble
- How very cold it was at the Lake Orion parade – especially through leather shoe soles.
- People a block away happy to hear us singing over the street-speaker system
- Getting snowed out at Canterbury on the Lake
- Pickup quartets – Jerry Twomey singing Lead in “Joy to the World”
- Dan Valko soloing on “Silent Night”
- The response of a lady resident at American house who pointed to the Chorus and said, “I’ll take one of those! And tell Santa my room number is 51.”
- A three-year-old at Independence Village responding to the sight of wheelchairs by remarking, “A lot of people brought their own chairs.”
- Our final Big Chief Christmas pizza party at OverTyme Grill

Christmas Season



At Sunrise



At Bordines



Director Dick, (by H. Lynn)



Cold at Holly, (by H. Lynn)

Happy New Year! From Roger Holm – for the Music Committee.

Here we go into 2006! We start right off with a couple of sing-outs on Thursday Jan. 19th, and Tuesday Jan. 24th! The one on the 24th will be special - a full-blown repeat of our show, at the Holly High School auditorium! So - we better get to re-polishing our show songs! Beyond that, we'll have several new western-theme songs to learn - as soon as the music committee decides what they are! You may recall - we were going to do Disney songs in 2006, but decided late in the year that western songs & theme offered more opportunity for a fun experience and another fun show! So - we better get started!

AROUND THE PATCH

Our **November 5th Show** was broadcast in its entirety by Waterford Channel 10 for three weeks. **Video copies** of the first half of the show are available from Eileen Marshall for \$15.

The Big Chief Chorus will be re-presenting the **Show** on January 24, 2006 (7:00 PM). The location for the show will be at the **Holly High School**. The High School and Middle School Choirs will be joining us for the show.

The Teuber/Cowlishaw Accounting Firm has determined that the chorus and its quartets sang **122 gigs during 2005**, to a total of 7189 people.

Greg Moss's wife, Beverly, was one of the soloists in this year's Christmas concert by the Jackson Chorale, December 10, at Central United Methodist Church.

QUARTET/ENSEMBLE NEWS

For the third year, our **Celebration** Barbershop Quartet toured several sponsors of Show ads. Saturday, December 10th, Jack Teuber, Greg Moss, Bruce Brede and Bill Dabbs sang Christmas carols to over one hundred customers at Copperstones, Everybody's Cafe, Pete's Coney and the Big Apple. A particular highlight was when they were joined at Pete's by a Lead from the Flint Chapter in the singing of "Rudolph." Our Show sponsors expressed much appreciation for the festive entertainment delivered by our Chapter.

Later that day, with Bill Holmes filling in at Bass, **Celebration** entertained a dinner gathering of about forty members of the Stephen Ministry at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Highland with Christmas carols, barbershop favorites, a patriotic song and the Irish Parting Prayer. The enthusiastic audience was very receptive and demanded encores.

The Five Wheel Jackpot quintet caroled nine women at their bridge-group Christmas party December 11.

MEMBERSHIP (at 60)

Renewals: Ron Clarke (5), Bruce Brede (9), Walt DeNio (9), Don Carrier (23), Mike Keith (25), Bill Nevaux (31), Marv Wilson (50), Bill Pascher (63)

Pending: Len Barnes, Dave Bartilson, and Ted Prueter

January Birthdays: Len Barnes (3rd), Bob Marshall (10th)

Ill: Lew Mahacek had a heart attack in early December, but was able to return to Christmas singouts.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Doug Joppie wrote on the Pionet of a great idea. His quartet, Today's Special, sang Christmas Carols for a couple of hours at the Oakland Mall beside the **Salvation Army** kettle. "We helped the regular Army volunteer there bring in four times as much money as they normally expect to get. We had a great time and met some really nice folks. And, people really appreciated the extra Christmas Spirit our singing brought."

Party of Four is so excited to be the 2005 Pioneer District champs that they now have their own Blog (an online journal). Check it out and read about their weekend in Battle Creek at <http://blog.myspace.com/pof2005>

Steve **Sutherland** has just updated the **Pioneer web site** - which is at <http://www.harmonize.com/Pioneer/pio.htm>

District Calendar

District Officer list for 2006

Chapter Officers list for 2006 (requires login. Password is: pio99)

Registered Quartets

This information was obtained from our Society's database. If you find anything inaccurate, update it on the Society database and let Steve know when changes have been made.

AROUND AMERICA AND THE WORLD

The Placerville chapter has had wonderful results with **Singing Valentines** by using a Stand-up Counter Ad. This ad is taken to many businesses in the area and the merchants are asked to place them on their counters. Almost all merchants have supported them. The counter ad has a pocket that will hold 20 business cards. Interested customers take a card which has all the information. For more details, go to <http://www.spebsqsafwd.org/files/index.html>

Big Chief Jeopardy. #2 (Did you get these?)

1. Answer: He called himself a male stripper in the 6th grade, since he manually "stripped" the last few drops of milk from a dairy herd after

the electric milkers had done their job. (Issue # 16) Question: Who is Chuckles Murray?

2. Answer: He wrote us that he was getting ready for a series of shows, Tenor with Naples, Bari with Cape Coral, and Tenor in Music Man for which he had a 450 mi round trip every Wednesday for practice with the cast. (Issue #23) Question: Who was John "Smitty" Smith?
3. Answer: They drove out to an old barn in the Hadley area to sing for a Hunters' Annual banquet. As part of their tradition the hunters take one evening each year to dress up in formal attire, prepare themselves a fabulous prime rib dinner with all the trimmings, and hire some form of entertainment. (# 31) Question: Who were the Harmony Knights? (Blackstone, Doig, Tailford)

Big Chief Jeopardy. #3 (Try these.)

1. Answer: His is an artistic family – his mom and aunt sang regularly on WWJ in the 30's, he was a cartoonist in the army, and his daughter graduated from the Society of Arts and Crafts in Detroit. (Issue #17)
2. Answer: After retirement, he took up tap dancing, shuffleboard, volleyball, softball, table tennis and eventually competed successfully in the senior Olympics. (# 24)
3. Answer: He played Frank Sinatra is our Fall "Ed Sullivan Show" (I know, your memory isn't very good!) (#32)

BARBERSHOP HISTORY – GENERAL KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

author: Mark Axelrod, editor of "Blue Chip Chatter," Teaneck, NJ.

QUESTIONS:

- 1- When did barbershop choruses become commonplace?
- 2- When did the first international chorus contest take place; for extra credit, where was the venue?
- 3- Which chorus won that first competition?
- 4- Why was that chorus not really the first champ?
- 5- Who then was the first genuine chorus champ?

(Answers at end of this bulletin.)

In Memoriam – Bob Wisdom (December 18, 2005)

A shocking loss to our barbershop community is the death of multi-champ, all round friend and singing talent Bob Wisdom this sad Sunday. Bob was scheduled to sing with The Silverdomes on Saturday night for the Grosse Pointe Show. We all share in the shock to Marcia and the Wisdom family on this great loss. (Russ Seely)

Bob was a regular at our Christmas party most every year. He'll be missed. (Ross Ensign)

Fellow "shoppers," we'll all miss Bob tremendously. In my brief BBshop experience, Bob was a tremendous inspiration to me, and I have great respect for the guy who would always take the time to mentor any new "shopper." If I do nothing else in this life, let me help carry on his tradition and share what barbershop "pearls" I have been blessed with over the years. Let us all take some new "shoppers" under our own wings, and help perpetuate the memory of Bob Wisdom. Bless you, Bob! (Chuck Murray)

I consider it an extreme pleasure to have known and sung in *Well Seasoned* with Bob. He made every rehearsal and performance a time to remember. However, the most memorable moments I recall are the days we spent fishing together on the annual Canadian trips organized by John Smith. From his first trip, Bob never missed one. He was always the first to plop down his deposit on next year's trip. I smile every time I think of that wide-brimmed, straw fishing hat he always wore. It did the job, but somehow it just didn't seem to fit Bob's persona. I'll miss him! (Lyle Howard)

It was a real shock that I learned of the death of my good friend, Bob, and a real sadness with the loss of a great Barbershopper. Many of you may not know that Bob was my behind-the-scenes organizing force in running our Harmony Happening events. It was only a little over a week ago that Bob and I talked about the mailings for HH-06, and he had graciously agreed to handle the mailings. I will really miss his expertise in handling such things. Bob's real love was teaching tags to these young future Barbershoppers. At last year's HH-05, Bob rounded up some of the best singers and began teaching them tags. Bob had such a great ear that he could pick out the ones that were singing on the top side of the notes and get them together to really make the tags ring ... and then Bob's face would light up with a big grin! I will miss Bob for many reasons; as a helper, an organizer, a great quartet champion, but most of all what he did to help young boys have the chance to really ring a chord. (Dave Anderson, Pioneer Director of YMIH)

50th Annual Woodshed Contest (April 7)

A dozen Michigan barbershoppers have responded so far to our special invitation to all past Woodshed badge winners. If you, or someone you know, has been a past badge winner, could you please reply to our V.P. of Marketing and Public Relations, Jack Teuber, at JackTeuber@aol.com or 248-334-3686.

Letter to the editor:

"I'm pleased particularly with your Dan Valko article. He is one of our unsung heroes who gives much back to the community. I am pleased too that he is a member of our Barbershop Harmony Society and the Big Chief Chorus." Dick Johnson.

Attention: All who can't sing with the BCC or can't switch from Lead because they don't read music.

Get your Masters Degree in Music Reading in four years. Attend a 2 1/2 hour lab course, one night per week, 2 1/2 semesters per year including summer school. Costs are less than \$50 per semester incl all tuition and books. Provide your own room and board. Limited scholarships are available for high potential students.

Meets every Tuesday from 7:30 - 10:00 with no final exams. Total credit hours earned are 3 per semester, 7 1/2 per year to meet the 30 total credit hour requirement for your prestigious Degree.

"Willingness" is the only requirement for admission. Class sizes are not capacity constrained. Faculty includes many former instructors and hands-on executives with extensive experience including a master teacher with experience dating back to 1947.

(Thanks, Bruce Brede)

MEET ZAVEN MELKONIAN

Our new president was born in 1927 in Pontiac, MI. His parents had met and married here in 1921, after emigrating from Turkey. They had each lost entire families, including their spouses (and in his father's case, three daughters), who were massacred by the Turks in 1915 during the Ethnic Cleansing of Armenians from Turkey.

Zaven graduated in 1946 from the Aircraft Mechanics Curriculum offered by Pontiac Senior High School. Knowing that he was about to be drafted into the Army, he enlisted in the Navy. What followed was a ricochet between aviation mechanic and "chancre" mechanic, as the Navy tried to figure out how to use his talents – at Great Lakes Naval Training Center, the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, FL, the Naval Hospital in San Diego, CA, back to Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, FL, and finally to the Naval Air Station at Green Cove Springs, FL.

Upon separation from active duty in 1947, Zaven transferred to the Naval Reserves. Although the Cold War was only a slight chill then, he sensed that it would heat up and felt it was his patriotic duty to re-enlist.

After returning to civilian life, he returned to Pontiac High School, to take the physics, chemistry, geometry and English courses that were needed in order to enroll in the College of Pharmacy at the Detroit Institute of Technology in the fall of 1949. He became engaged to one of the old neighborhood kids who, in his absence, had become the eighteen-year-old beauty, Virginia Derderian. Then Korea exploded on the scene, and he was called back to active duty with the Navy – not to the hot war in Korea, but to the cold climate of Adak, in the Aleutian Islands.



In 1952, he returned, married Virginia, and finished his schooling. Between 1954 and 1977, he worked as a pharmacist/manager at the Thrifty Drug Store in Drayton Plains, staff pharmacist at Sav-On Drugs in Birmingham, and staff pharmacist at Fitzpatrick's Pharmacy in Pontiac. In 1977, he became a partner in the L S Pharmacy in Lake Orion. He sold the business in 1993 and retired from active practice.

Zaven and Virginia had three children, Steven (1955), Douglas (1958) and Todd (1962). Steven died in a traffic accident in 1975, and Zaven's Virginia lost her battle with cancer in 1979.

Zaven has lived at his present address in White Lake Township for forty-five years. Douglas and Denise have blessed him with two beautiful granddaughters, 15-year-old Allison, and 11-year-old Erica. They live thirteen houses away, so Zaven sees and cares for them often.

Todd works with Kmart Information Systems at what's left of their Troy headquarters.

Many of us have met Zaven's 94-year-old sister, Isabelle, (who was nine when she came to the United States) and his brother Dodge, who has followed Zaven by singing with the Palm Harbor Crystal-Aires barbershop chorus near his home in Clearwater, FL.

At age 15, Zaven secretly took flying lessons, because his mother would never have allowed it. Sadly, he had to give it up when his meager earnings as a drug store clerk could no longer support the cost of the lessons. However, his

lifelong love of airplanes, and aviation in general, has made him an amateur Aviation Historian. Military aircraft of the 1930s, pre-World War II through post-World War II aircraft, are his special interest. He has an extensive library of books, magazines and photographs covering that era. (And he hops rides in friends' planes when given the chance, such as John's Piper Tomahawk).

Although neither of his parents played musical instruments, his mother had a beautiful singing voice and was often asked to sing at local Armenian functions. However, the person who had the greatest vocal musical influence on Zaven was a junior high school music teacher, Golda Hogue, who directed a boys' glee club in which Zaven sang alto for three years. Mrs. Hogue encouraged each of the members to sing not only solo, but also in duets, trios, and, yes, even quartets. He learned to love the harmony that his voice part produced within the chorus, orienting him to future barbershop. More recently he sang bass in his church choir. Jeff Spires recruited him into the Big Chief Chorus in September of 2000.

Since then, Zaven has sung in a number of quartets that have appreciated his resonant bass voice – High Octane, A Cappella Fellas, Four Wheel Drive, and Jackpot – as well as a gospel quartet – The Brethren.

He has served two terms on the Big Chief Executive Board as Member at Large, before his elevation to President this year. His long-time lady-friend, Lynn Densmore, has been recognized by the Big Chief Chicks as "First Lady."

When he's not singing or listening to barbershop music, his musical interests range from Dixieland Jazz, Fusion Jazz, Country Western right up to the classical, Mozart being his favorite.

My son Philip visited from California this Christmas. Given his musical background (musical theater, jazz, choral works, and opera), I asked him to **coach** Four Wheel Drive. Much of what he said to us, during that two-hour session at Al Monroe's home, seemed of more general interest, and I asked him to write it up:

The Magic of Music

I found that a lot of the words I spoke to them centered on Courage and Vulnerability: two of the ingredients that I find help create the magic of music. As a performer and participant of music, as well as an audience member, I find that there are magical moments and not so magical moments, which occur while music is being created. Why does this happen? Or rather, why doesn't this magic always happen? These questions lend themselves to a deep, long, philosophical discussion about art itself, but for now, will be limited by this author to the ideas of Courage and Vulnerability.

Although the two principles are interrelated, let me begin with Vulnerability. When I say to you, "Remain open while you sing. Stay vulnerable," what does that mean to you? What reaction or response do you have to this request? How does it affect you?

As a performer, I allow those words to affect me accordingly:

- I let go of artificially created **external** physical body movements, beginning with the **internal** first.
- I let go of "masked" facial expressions, allowing my eyes to become the window of my soul.
- I stand tall and open, but not rigidly or frozen; a dynamic balance is the goal.
- I remain in my "heart" as opposed to my "mind," present in the Here and Now.
- I allow myself to feel whatever emotions arise in the moment, giving to spontaneity and truth.
- I allow myself to make eye contact with my fellow performers and/or audience members.
- I remain genuine and authentic and honest.
- I stay out in the open, and exposed; I do not hide.
- I don't play it safe; I take risks.

Now, some say that doing the above is scary or something to be feared (which I don't quite understand. What is there to fear?). So, this is where the principle of Courage comes in. In Italy (or in Italian opera) they say, "Corragio!" In Mexico they say, "Fuerte!" or Strength. One must rise above fears (or allow themselves to go through fears; feeling the fear and doing it anyway!) and stand tall and confident with self-love and self-respect. One must allow the state of Love to preside over the "demons" of self-consciousness and the voices of fear. As a guitar teacher once said to his student:

If the string is too tight, it will break.

If the string is too loose, it won't play.

Therefore, balance creates music.

Experiment with that notion above. Be both strong and courageous, and yet allow yourself to be open and vulnerable, as well. How will this **dynamic balance** affect the music you create? Most likely, something magical will occur. When the heart and soul are exposed, explored, and expressed... magic occurs. Experiment. What do you find? Share yourself with the world and allow the magic of that interaction and gift to spread forth.

- Philip Evan Cowlshaw

Midwinter webcast delivers best in barbershop

You can see and hear the 2006 Midwinter Convention in Sacramento, Jan 20-21.

You can hear it for free.

You can see it for \$25 – for two days worth of barbershop. You'll hear all five of the medalist quartets from Salt Lake City. Saturday night will feature a special, high-quality video stream, so you will be able to preview the Indy webcast quality! Great for a midwinter party on your TV set!

The webcast will be available for \$25 if purchased by Friday, January 6. After that, the price will be \$30 both sessions.

IMPORTANT: Advance sales will determine whether the webcast takes place.

If there is insufficient participation by January 6, 2006 and it appears that production costs will exceed the income, the webcast will not be broadcast.

Sign up now, and spread the word. Your credit card will not be billed until we are sure that the webcast will take place!

Go to: www.barbershop.org/webcastpurchase

Scheduled events and time

Friday, January 20

2 pm PST (5 pm – EST) Association of International Seniors Quartet

Champions Parade featuring Most Happy Fellows

8 pm PST (11 pm – EST) Best of Barbershop Show featuring medalists

Metropolis, Riptide, and OC Times

Saturday, January 21

1 pm PST (4pm – EST) Seniors Quartet Contest

8 pm PST (11 pm – EST) Show of Champions featuring Realtime, Max Q, and the AISQC Chorus

Only one more week to sign up at the Early Bird Price. What a deal. Two full days of Mid Winter fun for only \$25.00!

Digital barbershop, from Naked Voice <http://www.nakedvoicerecords.com>

In response to a thread circulating here on the Harmonet last week we are pleased to be able now to silence the rumor mill and announce the impending release of thousands of barbershop songs for digital download. The Society has recently partnered with Naked Voice Records, LLC (NVR), in a collaboration that will have a profound effect on the availability of barbershop audio worldwide. NVR is a record label owned by barbershoppers (AIC members, in fact!) and dedicated exclusively to the digital distribution of a cappella music. Within a matter of weeks, Phase I of the project will make available worldwide virtually every quartet and chorus contest performance recorded at International since 1999 (Anaheim). This body of music will join the digital catalog of NVR already available through a variety of the most popular legal music download services such as iTunes, Napster, Rhapsody, MusicMatch, eMusic, LiquidAudio. These services offer legal digital downloads and/or streaming delivery of CD quality audio on a piecemeal basis. Both Apple and Windows based computers are supported both with and without the popular portable players such as the iPod, iRiver, Zen, GoGear, Sony and many more. Over the succeeding months, NVR hopes to digitize and add to the catalog available, all contest music dating

back as far as the technology will allow. As you might imagine, old reel-to-reel tapes from the 40s are rather fragile so a by-product of this effort will be the conservation and preservation of the Society's audio legacy. It is estimated that this initiative will ultimately result in an available barbershop catalog of tens of thousands of tracks

Adapted from Paul Howe's (Lansing chapter) Woodshedder Weekly

What did you get your wife/partner for Christmas? When one fellow asked his girl what she wanted for Christmas, she responded that she wanted something that went from zero to 200 in seconds - he got her a scale. Another fellow asked a similar question of his girlfriend and she responded that she wanted something with lots of diamonds in it - so he got her a deck of cards. Ouch!

Barbershop Slugs

Page 10 of the Nov/Dec *Harmonizer* mentions two short cartoons featuring animated slugs, produced by Canadian cartoonist Brent Forrest. Don't miss this one! They are singing barbershop (the vocals are by the Buffalo Bills and The Ritz.) Click on <http://snipurl.com/Sincere> for the Bills and <http://snipurl.com/SweetAd> for the Ritz. You'll love it, and your friends may too.

ANSWERS to BARBERSHOP HISTORY QUIZ

- 1- From the earliest days of the society, many members complained that they had neither the time nor the inclination to sing in a quartet, but they would love to hear and make the barbershop sound in a chorus. The purists, who opined that the only genuine barbershop harmony was, is and always shall be sung by quartets and quartets only fought like steers, but it was ultimately a losing battle. By the mid-1940s chapter choruses were becoming less and less newsworthy. Choruses may have been around even before 1945, but 1945 is the earliest reference I've yet seen.
- 2- 1953 in Detroit, MI.
- 3- The Great Lakes Chorus from Grand Rapids, MI.
- 4- Because the 1953 contest was a trial balloon to test the popularity of a society-wide chorus contest; not every district was represented. My source did not state which were and which were not.
- 5- The 1953 contest was enthusiastically responded to and in 1954 the first true society-wide contest with all the districts represented took place in Washington, DC. Our premier chorus champ was the hometown favorites, the Singing Capital Chorus. From 1954 on, choruses have joined quartets every year in international competition.

Note: All un-attributed articles and photos are by John Cowlshaw

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Directorial team: Dick Johnson, Fred McFadyen, & Bill Holmes

President: Zaven Melkonian (248-698-1144)

Past President: Pete Mazzara

VP: Chapter Dev: Wayne Chene

VP: Music and Performance: Roger Holm

VP: Marketing & PR: Jack Teuber

Secretary: Bill Holmes

Treasurer: Dick Johnson

Members at Large: Ron Clarke, Bruce Brede

Chorus Manager: Art Carinci

Music Team: Holm, Johnson, Doig, Ensign, McFadyen, Melkonian, Murray,
Prueter

Calendar

Jan 3, T Rehearsal, Crary

Jan 7,8, SaSu COTS @ Okemos

Jan 10, T Rehearsal, Crary

Jan 11, W Exec. Bd. Meeting, 7pm, at Zaven M.'s

Jan 17, T Rehearsal, Crary

Jan 19,Th,2pm Singout at American House (Rochester Hills)

Jan 20, F Uncle Sam Night, 7:30 Windsor

Jan 24, T,7pm "Jukebox Classics" – Holly High School

Jan 31, T Rehearsal, Crary

Feb 7, T Rehearsal, Crary

Feb 8, W Exec. Bd. Meeting, 7pm

Feb 10, F Bill Pascher, Charter Member's 91st Birthday

Feb 13,4 M,T Valentine Singouts

Feb 16,Th,8pm Clarkston Women's Club, Independence Twp Library, Full
chorus Valentines/Jukebox

Feb 21, T Crary closed

Feb 28, T Rehearsal, Crary

Mr 24, 26 Spring Singing Retreat, McMullen Cntr, Higgins Lake

Apr 7, F, 7:30 50th Annual Woodshed Contest, PTK country club

Apr 28-30 Pioneer District Convention

Jun 20, 7:30 Orion Parks & Rec Concert Series