From the Prez:

A piece of paper and a ribbon do not come close to expressing our Thanks to Ted Prueter, BSOM for May, for all the hard work he is doing as our Chapter Music Librarian. The 'other' major contributor in this effort is Bill Holmes. Thank You men!

We need your help with recruiting new members and discovering Sing out Gig opportunities. See Jim Owens for new member ideas and Walt DeNio for Gigs.

Thank You to Yong McDowell for establishing and maintaining the BCC chapter web site. Yong is leaving the area, and we wish him well. Another Thank You to Jim Troeger and Ross Ensign for taking over the BCC web site. We encourage all members to utilize and promote our web site, www.pontiacchapter.com, and soon to be linked to www.bigchiefchorus.org.

The Music Team, chaired by Roger Holm, continue to meet on a biweekly basis. They are doing a wonderful job and are a model for the whole Society.

Lew Mahacek and the BCC band continue to meet and rehearse on a weekly basis. We look forward to showcasing your efforts before our Fall Show. Start thinking of ways to sell lots of Ads and tickets, and promoting our Fall Show, November 06, 2004, at Clarkston H.S. We need to fill the Auditorium by selling at least 1,000 tickets. In addition to the BCC, we will have the Clarkston HS Barbershop Singers, and Thanks to Dick Johnson, 3 Guest Quartets: Insignia, Musicality, and Infinity. It will be a Great Show.

Aug. 20, Friday, is the date for the BCC annual Picnic at Tom & Beth Ford's house. Wayne Cheyne and Walt DeNio will again assist Tom & Beth in organizing this fun event. All members should plan to attend.

I would like to plan a BCC Golf Outing for some time in August. All BCC members would be encouraged to attend and bring some male guests with them. We could also invite some of our friends from other chapters. If we could get 80 guys, 20 foursomes, a golf course would probably give us from 1:00PM till 6:00PM for our exclusive use. We could play shot gun start etc., hot dogs on the turn, and dinner after. Of course we would be singing all over the place. Maybe we could even get donated prizes. What a great way to: have FUN; what a great recruitment tool - expose new guys to BBS singing what a great Marketing PR promotion

From Director Jim Troeger:

I am pleased to announce that we have 5 confirmed coaching dates leading us through the summer and into early fall. One of these coaching sessions will be with Linda Liddicoat and the other four of these are with Al Fisk. The dates are as follows:

- Tuesday, June 22nd – Linda
- Tuesday, July 27th – Al
- Tuesday, August 24th – Al
- Tuesday, September 28th – Al
- Tuesday, October 26th – Al

The session with Linda in June will be to primarily work on proper voice placement (arrangement on the risers) using Linda’s chosen methods as well as a voice screening on some individuals to ensure that they are singing the correct part. I do not want to force anyone to sing a part that they have no desire to sing, however there are several members that are not singing the correct part for their natural vocal range. They may not be aware of this, or if they are, they at least need to understand what areas of their range they need to back off on so as to lighten the sound and reduce the strain. Also, Linda asked if we could start this session a bit earlier in the evening, say around 6:30pm with as many guys as can make it at that time (with the goal being that almost everyone is there at 6:30). There may be times when Linda and I will be working with an individual or small group, so we will need to ensure that we have our Asst. Directors lined up to work through repertoire, teach tags, etc. during those times.

The four sessions with Al will encompass all things music and my primary goal is to have him “coach” us to a better music score the next time we compete… the side benefit is we will sound better and have more fun en route to the end goal!

Additionally, I would like to ask that we schedule July 20th of this year as our “Christmas in July” rehearsal to present and work on the Christmas music for
the upcoming Holiday Season. Moving forward to future years, I would like to
make Christmas in July be an annual event that we schedule for the 3rd Tuesday
of every July. It will be important that we reach out to those individuals that
traditionally only sing with our Christmas chorus so we can get them invited to
our July event as well. This will prove as an additional opportunity to expose
them to our hobby more than just during the holidays.

I will be doing a lot of updates to the website so if you have any specific
items you would like to have added, please forward them to me for consideration.

MEMBERSHIP (at 56)
Renewals: Pete Mazzara (5), Jack Teuber (5), Tom Jackson (6), Neil Braun
(15)
Non-renewal: Yong McDowell
Birthdays: June: Bob Legato (13th), Bruce Brede (22nd), Jim Troeger (23rd),
Tom Jackson (July 1)
BSOM – May – Ted Prueter – for all his work for the chorus, most lately as
librarian

AROUND THE PATCH
For over three years, Yong McDowell has built and maintained our web site.
Now his involvement in ballroom dancing in the Ann Arbor area has led him to
move to Pittsfield Twp between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor and he is leaving our
chapter. Like a good soldier, he put the May issue of Smoke Signals on the Web
site before handing over the reins to Ross Ensign and Jim Troeger. Thanks for
all your good work, Yong.

Jeff Spires’ brother, Jason, long-time barbershopper, was our guest twice in
May.

Thanks to Ron Clarke for providing the patches for our Class B uniforms.
Wear them just below the “welt.” Wall plaques of the same design are available
from Ron for $39.

 Quartet News
Ford, Nevaux, Cowlishaw, and Melkonian (Quartet name “under
construction”) have been rehearsing and hope to have something new to sing to
the chorus soon.

AROUND THE DISTRICT
The organization of Harmony Roundup left something to be desired, but
the guest staff was great. Accoustix was brilliant and gave of themselves all
weekend. (Their 54 TV theme medley package is amazing!) Rick Spencer
knows more than any 26-year-old ought to and taught it well. The
Knickerbockers were excellent coaches/teachers.

One of our Chapter Goals for 2004 was to send at least 8 men to Harmony
Round Up. We doubled that number, and our chapter had the most members
attending: Bruce Brede, Art Carinci, Bruce Collins, John Cowlishaw, Tom Ford,
Roger Holm, Bill Holmes, Jerry Howington, Dick Johnson, Mike Keith, Pete
Mazzara, Doc Mann, Zaven Melkonian, Gayle Mohler, Bill Nevaux, and Jeff
Spires.

On June 2nd the Bay Arts Council is offering an evening of barbershop
singing to kick off their summer concert series. This year guest quartets will
include not only Power Play, but Insignia, “the Farmington High School
quartet which placed 6th at Pioneer’s recent contest. We believe these young
guys will knock the socks off the kids in our audience and show them what youth
and dedication can do.” (www.harborsounds.org) That’s the same young quartet
who will be on our Fall Show.

Walt Quick died last week. He sang with the Macomb Chapter as recently
as Gaylord. Walt was the bass in “The New Wrinkle Quartet”, Pioneer District’s
2001 Senior Quartet Champions. Over the years Walt has been a member of
several Chapters including Macomb, Huron Valley, Wayne, and Detroit #1.

Russ Seeley reports that “Mr. MC” Doran McTaggart is now at home
recovering from a double bypass heart surgery. “Dear Margaret says he came
through with flying colors on his operation.

Former Pioneer member, Glenn VanTassel is reported to be in declining
health, suffering from ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s disease. Glenn was a member of
two international champs from Pioneer, GENTLEMEN’S AGREEMENT in 1971
and Auto Towners in 1966 (as noted in the last Smoke Signals). Among many
other claims to fame, he also was organizer and first director of the Huron Valley
chapter starting in the late 70’s. He’s lived in Sarasota FL for several years. Glen
also directed the Chorus of the Keys Chapter a couple of years ago.

LOUISVILLE CONVENTION
Louisville, Kentucky is the site of the 2004 international convention. It runs
from June 27 to July 4, 2004. Twenty-two choruses will be competing including
Macomb County’s HARMONY HERITAGE Chorus, singing 13th. Fifty-four
quartets will be competing, including the four top-ranked quartets, Max Q,
Gotcha!, Metropolis, and Riptide. Pioneer District’s INFINITY sings
53rd. To register, go to www.spebsqsa.org/louisville or call 800.876.7464 x8462.
Note: Online registration closes June 15.

The AIC show (Association of International Champions) will take place
Thursday, July 1 and will include Fred, Gas House Gang, Bluegrass Student
Union, Boston Common, Accoustix, Four Voices, Michigan Jake, and, of course,
Power Play. There will also be a special show – The Legendary Championship
Barbershop Performances Of The Vocal Majority.

And – if you’re not going by car or plane – go by WEB. Once again PROBE
(Public Relations Officers and Bulletin Editors) of SPEBSQSA will provide a
web page with up-to-the-minute news and coverage of the annual barbershop
convention and contests. Last year it had over 8000 hits and they’re predicting in excess of 10K visitors to the site this year.

The Website is ALREADY up and running at www.harmonize.com/PROBE/. There you will find a "one-stop-shop" for the event with the convention schedule, order of appearance and competitor rankings. When they are available you can read the daily convention bulletins, the official convention program, links to the live web cast and, of course, the official scores sheets. You will also find web cams from around the city of Louisville, maps, time and temps and even a conversion chart for the time zone impaired. One note; presently it’s BEST viewed with Internet Explorer.

The webcast will offer complete coverage of all major contest events. (Last year my family group whooped and hollered when **GOTCHA!** was announced on webcast as silver medallist, meaning that **POWER PLAY** had won!)

**MEET Jeff Spires**

We all know Jeff Spires for his broad smile, strong bari and lead voice, and his many contributions to the chorus. Here’s the rest of his story….

Jeff was born and raised in Pontiac, the 8th of 12 children. His family had moved from Illinois during the depression to work in the auto plants. He attended Pontiac High School and then a year of college at Anderson University in Anderson, Indiana. Anderson was founded as a Bible training school by the Church of God, before becoming broader in scope. Jeff returned to Pontiac to work in the auto plants and at Pontiac General Hospital, where a friendly nurse supervisor arranged for him to work with Sharon, whom he married in 1966.

They returned to Anderson, where Jeff got his degree in social sciences, minor in education, in 1970 before returning to Pontiac. Though he substitute taught for a few years, his intention was to study law, which he did for a year. Then he opened a dry cleaning business, with one store in Lake Orion and one at Perry and Walton. After selling that business, he sold manufactured homes, liking it enough that he and Sharon got their real estate licenses and joined Century Twenty-One. They have been top producers virtually every year since, and last year received a rare Quality Service award, with 100% satisfaction from their year’s customers.

Jeff and Sharon have three boys, all of whom have retraced the family steps to Anderson University, Jeff Jr and Derek in Information Systems, and Christopher in Business Management. Jeff Sr. had played football in high school and first year at Anderson, and the boys followed a sports path also – in soccer, Derek receiving national honors.

Jeff’s passion for music began at the age of three when he stood on the pew seat to clap excitedly to the congregational song leader’s direction. He went on to sing in the choir and boys’ glee club at Pontiac High School (where Gil Jackson was a student teacher, 1961) and the Anderson University men’s chorus. He has sung in church choir continuously since his teens. He was introduced to barber shop by his brother Jason in 1968, but the Muncie chorus was at a low spot and Jeff was busy with his studies. In the fall of 1998 he first noticed the Big Chief Christmas Chorus signs, and the next year he joined up. As his interest increased he desired more experience and training than Pontiac-Waterford could offer with its emphasis on the social/recreational side of barbershop. He wanted to go to district competition spring and fall with the chance of being selected for International. He joined D.O.C., and when Macon changed its rehearsal night from Tuesday to Thursday, he also joined its Harmony Heritage Chorus. (For example, each of these choruses spends most of their rehearsal time on the risers. He would not leave Pontiac-Waterford, but he recommends members trying out dual membership.) Macon won and went to Montreal in July 2003 and Jeff will be with them again this summer at Louisville. Jeff says that singing on the International stage is more exciting than district, and it’s more tightly organized, but as long as one controls one’s emotions and nerves it’s much like district. One big difference is that at International one has no illusions about competing for top spot.

The center of his life is still his family, and much of his time is now spent caring for Sharon, who contracted hepatitis C, probably from a blood transfusion in 1971. She has been on the liver transplant list for six years.

Jeff has served one year on the Executive Board of the BCC as Member-At-Large. He’s had some quartet experience, and is looking for more. He likes to listen to most kinds of music – barbershop, classical, sacred, country and western.
Barbershop on the Web
Not getting enough barbershop with your rehearsals, shows, CD’s and tapes? You can listen to it on the web at any time.

Go to www.live365.com and type in “barbershop” and you’ll have your choice of several, including Applause 24/7, and Encore – Barbershop.

Another possibility is The Harmony Network which has four live, interactive internet radio shows each week, at www.harmonize.com/THN, and hopes soon to stream Barbershop Harmony and Contemporary A Cappella to a world wide audience 24/7. As Grady Kerr says, “You can hear these ANYWHERE in the world as they are broadcast via the Internet.

MUSIC & PERFORMANCE
Tools you can use to enhance your barbershop experience
The Society’s Music & Performance Committee is committed to providing you with a variety of educational opportunities and tools to help you better enjoy participating in our wonderful art form. Live Wire will regularly contain several useful links to articles, sites or sources of important information that we hope you will explore and use. All too often, it seems, valuable information is readily available, but not highlighted to provide easy access. We hope you find this feature valuable.

For singers at all levels — www.thevoicecenter.org

A phenomenal source of information about the inner-workings and care of the singing voice, provided in encyclopedia form by Wake Forest University, with plenty of valuable illustrations.

More for singers — Secrets for singing in tune aren’t so “secret anymore. See this Society article to help conquer this challenge.

For quartet men or men interested in quartet singing — Men in registered quartets already receive the valuable electronic newsletter On the QT. (See below.) Any Society member can subscribe to the newsletter. Valuable articles are archived to provide help in all areas of quartet singing and administration.
http://www.spebsqsa.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/pub on the qt home.html

For directors — The Society’s Chorus Director Development Committee manages a free service for you provided through www.yahoogroups.com. The e-group, “directors,” provides a forum for exchange of valuable ideas on a regular basis. Register at the above url or send an e-mail to directors-subscribe@yahoogroups.com to subscribe.

From On the QT:
To sing in tune, go back to basics
To sing in tune, remember, it starts with the basics of good vocal production. A proper stance with good posture is a great way to start. The next step is to make certain to use a proper focus or head voice throughout your vocal range. Other important elements include supporting the tone with “warm air,” always keeping the throat and mouth free from tension, and never singing with muscle.

Combine those basic elements with proper vowel match and mouth posture maintenance, and you are well on your way to singing in tune.

The final element is to always being aware of where the lead is, thus creating good chord balance.

Here is an excellent exercise Dr. Jim Henry of The Gas House Gang and Ambassadors of Harmony fame uses to help quartets and choruses get a better understanding of what it means to sing on the high side of a pitch. He blows a pitch and has the ensemble sing the pitch. Then, he has them go up a half step from that pitch. Then has them go down just a quarter step. Try it. You’ll be surprised and pleased with the results. You’ll actually end up on the pitch you should be singing.

Barbershop groups win outside of category, too
The Contemporary A Cappella Society has announced the 2004 winners of the Contemporary A Cappella Recording Awards (CARA’s). Several of interest:
**Best Barbershop Album of the Year:** Vocal Majority X.
**Best Barbershop Song of the Year:** "The Best Times I Ever Had" by Power Play from the SPEBSQSA Top 20 Quartets 2003

(To see the complete list of winners in all categories, go to www.casa.org.)

According to a May 3rd news story by AP Medical Writer, Lauran Neergaard, “Creativity May Help Aging Brains.” For example, the show tune-blasting Arlington, VA-based Senior Singers Chorale are part of an unusual four-year study to study whether the challenge of learning from professionals can improve mental and possibly physical health. The singers' average age is 80. Final study results are due next year, but preliminary data suggest participants get more than support: Compared with their elderly neighbors, they suffer less depression, make about three fewer doctor visits a year, take two fewer medications and have increased their other activities.

The newest version of Finale NotePad (2004) is now available as a free download at www.finalemusic.com/notepad. It’s advertised as having a “new human playback.”

From Pionet:

**BASS VIRUS CONTINUES TO SPREAD IN MICHIGAN WATERS**

"LANSING, MI -- State officials today announced Largemouth Bass Virus (LMBV) continues to spread in south Michigan, and called upon citizens to help contain the disease.

The DNR suggested the following steps to help prevent the spread of the virus:

- Handle the bass as gently as possible (I like that one!).
- Minimize targeting of largemouth bass during the period from mid-July to mid-August, especially during exceptionally hot weather conditions (are you leads, baris and tenors listening?).
- Report dead or dying adult largemouth bass to Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division offices." (How does one know?)

So there you have it. Some of us basses may be in trouble! As a largemouth variety, I probably should learn to keep my yap shut for my own health. But I don't think that'll ever happen, especially when I'm singing.

**Doug Pearson**
Largemouth Bass, Patch Chords Quartet
Lansing Chapter

...which drew this response from Derek Hatley:
Doug - I don't like the Tenor of your message! If this infection should Lead to your death, then we'll just have to Bari you. The whole thing sounds fishy to me!

**MINUTES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS** (excerpts)
**February 5, 2004** (Bill Holmes)
Treasurer Dick Johnson’s report: Balance of $12,201.
VP Development Jim Owens report; 45 at last rehearsal
VP Music & Performance Roger Holm described the work of the Music Committee, including pre-selection and notification of rehearsal songs. Pete suggested the development of a list of songs by category: religious, patriotic, sing-out, and show songs. Decided that the chapter will cover the cost of CD’s and tapes for chorus members, Ross Ensign as Tape-CD librarian. Fall show venue is tentatively Clarkston High School.
VP Marketing & PR Walt DeNio described the excellent advertising coverage for the Singing Valentines, including a Clarkston Press interview.
Dick Johnson reported on the work of the Director-search committee.
Pete’s draft of chapter GOALS was approved.
Approval of a Class “B” uniform, consisting of a blue blazer and gray slacks. Recommended that warm-up leadership be rotated.
Continuing a tradition with Bob Woodward, Don DeNoyer, and Chris Miller, a contribution to the Society will be made on behalf of John Smith.

**March 11, 2004** (Jack Teuber)
The Music committee’s #1 goal is that of developing Learning Tools. Transparencies of music will be used.
Next sing-out – at Canterbury Chapel, March 17th. Summer rehearsals will be there also (June 8th to Sept 7th.)
Jeff Doig is working on script and music for the Fall Show, Dick Johnson on the guest talent.
Class B uniforms ordered.

**April 7, 2004** (Zaven Melkonian)
Treasurer Dick Johnson’s report: Balance of $12,584.
A committee to be formed to promote, identify and schedule sing-out opportunities. The committee shall include, as chairman, the VP of Marketing & PR, two members of the Music Committee, and two members-at-large from the chorus.

The Board approved the Music Committee’s recommendation that Chapter Quartets need not share any portion of their earnings with the Chapter even if the job was secured through an inquiry to the Chapter.

It was suggested that the members be polled at the next meeting for a unanimous choice of one person to coach the chorus.
Walt DeNio will research best type of promotional material (flyers and/or tri-fold), plus the possibility of using newspaper advertising.
Evaluations of the spring singing retreat returned by members showed overwhelming approval of this year’s program. Pete has asked the McMullen Center to reserve April 1-3, 2005 for the Big Chief Chorus.

Dick Johnson was pleased with results of this year’s Woodshed contest, and especially the big turnout of Pontiac-Waterford members. Next year’s contest will be scheduled for April 8th, 2005.

MAY 12, 2004 (Bill Holmes)

Treasurer Dick Johnson’s report: Balance of $4,996.96. One of the largest expenditures was the retreat totaling $4,701.75. The remuneration for our new director will be the same as with the former director.

Jim Owens, VP Chapter Development & Membership, stressed #1. the importance of chapter members bringing prospective singers to our rehearsals and #2. that the members should continue to make guests feel welcome.

Roger Holm, VP Music & Performance: the music committee has selected music for the year and will make available to the members a list of songs by category.

Walt DeNio, VP Marketing & PR, reported on the efforts to develop “gigs” for the chorus or quartets. Walt is currently processing five “gigs”, some of which would be gratis and some paid performances. Walt and Mel will attend Pontiac’s Michigan Week and man a booth for SPEBSQSA.

Consensus on the contract amounts for the talent at the fall show: Insignia - $300; Infinity - $550; and Musicality - $800. The youth chorus at Clarkston high will sing, prior to the Big Chief Chorus.

Jim Troeger and Ross Ensign are co-webmasters and encourage all members to visit our web site, at www.pontiacchapter.com. Jim wants feedback from the members regarding the web site. It was decided to register our name as Bigchiefchorus.org on the site.

Calendar
Jun 1, T  Rehearsal, at Crary
Jun 8, T  Rehearsal, Last at Crary
June 10, Th  Exec Bd, Dick Johnson’s Kroger
Jun 11, F  Send Off Show, Windsor
Jun 15, T  Rehearsal, at Canterbury.
Jun 22, T  Rehearsal, with Linda Liddicoat (6:30)
June 27-July 4  International Convention, Louisville, KY
Jun 29, T  Rehearsal, at Canterbury
July 6, T  Rehearsal, at Canterbury
July 8, Th  Exec Bd, Roger Holm’s
July 20, T  Christmas in July
Aug 1-8  Harmony College, MO Western State College, St. Joseph, MO
Aug 20, F  Picnic, Tom Ford’s house
Sep 14, T  ?mystery trip?
Nov 6, Sa  Fall show

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP (2004)
Director: Jim Troeger
(248-853-4360)
Assc. Directors: Dick Johnson, Bruce Collins
President: Pete Mazzara
(313-563-4026)
Past President: Gene Downie
VP: Chapter Dev: Jim Owens
VP: Music and Performance: Roger Holm
VP: Marketing & PR: Walt DeNio
Secretary: Bill Holmes
Treasurer: Dick Johnson
Members at Large: Jack Teuber, Zaven Melkonian
Chorus Manager: Art Carinci
Music Team: Roger Holm, Johnson, Collins, Doig, Ensign, Melkonian, Prueter
Bulletin Editor: John Cowlishaw
Music Librarian: Ted Prueter
Singing Valentines: Wayne Cheyne
Sunshine (Chaplain): Bill Dabbs
Uniforms Manager: Ron Clarke
Tape/CD Librarian: Ross Clarke
YMIH: Jack Teuber

And this warning from Dilbert about talking during rehearsal: