It’s show time! I know some of us are having a hard time following the story line, but it’s a pretty straightforward script as far as I can recall (though my memory isn’t very good). We open with the Beedles flying Delta to America, while singing “Darkness in the Delta” with the June Taylor dancers. Then the MC introduces Jackie Gleason who rushes in from coaching his football team’s playoff game, and he’s just nuts about commercials, beginning with that Chardonnay ad that we love to yak about, at the end of which we cleverly take “swallows in the air” before throwing the glasses behind us. Emmett Kelly reprises CHORDIAC ARREST’s “Heart of a Clown,” before being shot out of a Volkswagen, thus requiring cardiac surgery from the Ajax medical team. Then Elvis arrives, but his pants split, as the chorus sings, “Shine on, harvest moon.” We are so amused that we follow with “New Yuck, New Yuck.” Then Aura Lee sings Something, I don’t remember what, while applying Brylcream to her “golden hair.” Let’s see, what’s next? Oh, yah, the Coca Cola and Faygo quartets duel it out. Then Frank Sinatra comes on stage to moan about “Old St. Louie.” We conclude with “Back in the Old Latrine.” Now is that so hard, guys? Come on, come through, New Yuck, it’s up to you!
junior year, he quit and joined the Air Force Reserve. After Aviation cadet school in Chanute, IL, he flew single engine jets and then settled into a career as a helicopter pilot, (1954-1964), flying the Bell H-13 Grasshopper, the Sikorsky H-19, and the H-21 that carried 21 in troop transport. His stint overlapped Korea and Vietnam, but was spent stateside.

As a new officer, he could suddenly afford to buy a sparkling Ford convertible. When he got reassigned to Elmendorf Air Force base in Anchorage, Alaska, he drove there, along the AlCan Highway. After four years in Alaska, he was transferred to Duluth where he spent three years. As Base Housing Officer, he had some freedom; and with a fellow church member (who worked for Texaco, ironically), they bought and managed a motel/restaurant, and he resigned from the Air Force. When he grew weary of that, he sold his share and returned to Pontiac, where he worked for GM Truck and Bus for the next 26 years. He was in Material Control, and the last 3 years in Value Management, retiring in 1992.

Younger brother Larry had always looked up to his pilot brother, so upon Walt’s return to Pontiac, they bought a C-140 taildragger together, in which Walt got his civilian ticket, and then instructed Larry. At one time Walt even ran a small aviation business, selling aircraft cleaning products at airports that he visited. The brothers went on to co-own a C-177 Cardinal and a C-182 Skylane, which was sold about 15 years ago after Larry’s move out east. Walt lost his eye in an auto accident in 1972, but got his medical back after a year. Now, as Walt says, “I still stay current in my dreams.”

Walt’s marriage had broken up in Duluth, and he raised his two kids, Mike and Elaine, as a single parent for eight years. He met Janice on a double date, in which they all flew to Marshall’s Win Shulers for dinner. On their 2nd date they flew to Bay City Brown airport for banana splits, and their 3rd date was to Mackinaw Island.

Walt became quite close to Janice’s son Michael. He developed a real love of fly-fishing with him, but, unfortunately, Michael died in an auto accident in 1993.

Besides fishing, Walt enjoys golf and racquetball, and has also been a woodcarver, and a guitarist for a while, both initiated by his wife’s efforts to enrich their camping out.

Walt has always enjoyed singing. Seven years ago, Roger Holm invited him to guest night. (Bruce Brede started that night too.) The chorus was down to a dozen and he might not have continued except for Roger’s persistence. Also Chris had just come on board, and his encouragement of pickup quartets and tags helped keep Walt’s interest. He could read music but was struggling in trying to find the right part for himself, and in understanding what Barbershop was all about. He finally settled on Baritone, despite its being such a hard part. He has struggled learning to sing head tones, instead of being too guttural (which leaves him tired).

The second year, Roger asked him to take over as Chapter Development Officer from Len Barnes. He tried to set goals each year, and the chorus grew, eventually to 63 members. But it is a “continual struggle to keep ahead of losses. Christmas singouts worked well, guest nights not so productive.”

His first quartet, the CHIEF TONES (with Gene Downey, Bill Holmes, and Don Denoyer) broke up after Don’s death. The Chief Tones sang in several shows, but that always made Walt very nervous.

Now he is in LOCAL COLOR, with Doc Mann, Fred DeVries, and Tom Ford. Their first aim was to qualify in all the polecats. They try to practice several hours each week, and they are now ready to expand their repertoire beyond polecats and chorus show tunes.

What does he most enjoy about Barbershop? He was asked that question for last week’s article in the Eccentric, and answered, “the camaraderie,” but upon reflection changes that to “ring a chord.”

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE sang at a birthday party at Wyndgate Golf Course (Rochester) October 25. Spry 80-yr-old Charlie joined us in “Shine On, Harvest Moon.” (We’d only learned the chorus, and he filled in the verse.) As the story goes, Wally Plosky almost didn’t make it make due to an flight delay in Florida. After the plane had returned to the gate for an hour, Wally asked the flight attendant what the problem was. “Oh, the pilot didn’t like the sound of the engine, and it took us an hour to find another pilot.”
Calendar
Nov 3, Mon  Dress Rehearsal, Clarkston High School
Nov 4, Tue  BCC Rehearsal, Crary
Nov 6, Th  BCC Rehearsal
Nov 8, Sat, 7:30  BCC Fall Show, Clarkston High School
10:30  Cast Party / Afterglow
Nov 11  Christmas season begins
Nov 13  Exec Bd Meeting
Dec 23  No rehearsal
Dec 30  No rehearsal
Jan 3-4  COTS, Lansing
Jan 16 Fri  Uncle Sam Night, Windsor Host, 7:30pm
Jan 25-Feb 1  Midwinter Convention, Biloxi
Feb 13-14  Fri-Sat Valentine's Day Sing Outs
Mar 26-8, 2004  Spring Singing Retreat, MacMullan
Apr 2 Fri  48th Annual Woodshed Contest @ 7:30pm, Pontiac CC, BCC
Host
Apr 23-25  District Spring Convention, Gaylord
May 14-16  Fri-Sun Harmony Round Up, @ MSU
June 27-July 4  International Convention, Louisville, KY

Chapter Executive Board

Officers:  
Interim Chorus Director: Bruce Collins  
(248-666-9147)
President: Pete Mazzara  
(313-563-4026)
Immed. Past President: Gene Downie
Chapter Dev: Doc Mann
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Treasurer: Dick Johnson
Members at Large: Chuck Murray, Zaven Melkonian

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Associate Directors: Dick Johnson,
Bulletin Editor: John Cowlishaw
Chorus Manager: Art Carinci
Grants: Dick Johnson
Historian: (open) JC’s bulletins
Music Librarian: Bill Holmes
Picnic: Gayle Mohler
Pole Cats: Zaven Melkonian
Quartet Activity: Bruce Brede
Service (Charity): open
Singing Valentines: Wayne Cheyne/
Gene Downie
Sunshine (Chaplain): Bill Dabbs
Tagmeister: Mike Frye
Uniform Manager: Ron Clarke
Woodshedding: Len Barnes