



BIG CHIEF CHORUS
SMOKE
SIGNALS



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

Bulletin #43, November 2, 2004

This is the week when we drive everywhere playing practice tapes, and wake up in the night humming show songs. When Gene Downie finalizes props, and the script committee finalizes script, and we all finalize costumes. When we come down to the wire in ticket sales. Bring it on!

PIONEER DISTRICT CONVENTION, Kalamazoo, October 16, 2004

In a departure from past practice, the Big Chief Chorus competed in the Fall Convention. The events were held at the Radisson Hotel and Convention Center, downtown Kalamazoo, with the competition occurring in the main Ballroom, risers at one end, and seating for perhaps a thousand at the other.

Our chorus put 33 men on stage and sang "Old St. Louie" and "Ain't Misbehavin'" under Jim Troeger's direction. The score of 54.9% and 14th place out of 15 didn't send us out cheering, but on the other hand, the judges were encouraging in their evaluations, about how close we are to breaking solidly into the B-range.

Macomb Country Harmony Heritage Chorus won the chorus competition with a score of 73.5% and will therefore represent the district at Salt Lake City next summer. D.O.C. Gentlemen Songsters was second and had the unusual experience of an emptying of the hotel during their set, when an element of the

hotel's heating system began smoking. (We all stood outside, singing pole cats, and shivering under overhangs in the cold drizzle.)

Thanks to Art Carinci for arranging a group dinner at the Holiday Inn. Good to have Al Monroe there even though Huron Valley was a "pass."

Jeff Spires showed the community support that characterizes all of his activities, by bringing Bill Pascher along; they shared a room. So many Pioneers came up to Bill to say how good it was to see him still up there on the stage.

Great photos of the convention are available for viewing at www.anthonydugal.com/pioneer

As Paul Howe said in the Capitol City Chordsmen weekly WOODSHEDDER:

"It had to be one of the closest quartet competitions in a very long time! Wildcard edged out Fermata Nowhere by only one point, 1734 to 1733 over the two nights of competition, with Party of Four and Senior Champs Antiques Roadshow not that far behind. All four quartets produced a rich, resonant sound on Saturday night, with Fermata Nowhere having a slight edge. Wildcard took the award on the strength of their Friday night singing and a strong performance Saturday. Five quartets vied for the last two competitive positions on Saturday, with just fifteen points separating the group."

From the Prez:

Thank you to the 2004 Executive Board & Congratulations to the three new members of the 2005 Board.

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
Pres.	Pete Mazzara	Pete Mazzara
VP Membership	Jim Owens	Wayne Cheyne
VP Music	Roger Holm	Roger Holm
VP Mark/PR	Walt DeNio	Jack Teuber
Secretary	Bill Holmes	Bill Holmes
Treasurer	Dick Johnson	Dick Johnson
Member @ Lrg	Zaven Melkonian	Zaven Melkonian
Member @ Lrg	Jack Teuber	Ron Clarke

All members of the 2005 Board plan to attend the Chapter Officers Training Seminar (COTS) January 8 & 9, 2005, in Okemos.

Jim Troeger has arranged for us to have Gene Hanover as our Singing Retreat Coach, April 1-3, 2005. Gene is currently the Director of the Michiana Metro Lighthouse Chorus. He is a former Director of the Kalamazoo and Battle Creek choruses. Gene also sang with the 1998 District Champs Upstage Sound. He is also a Vocal Coach. We are very excited about having Gene as our retreat coach.

AROUND THE PATCH

Ross Ensign's 250-mile bike trip with his wife will void his participation in the show this year. See you for Christmas singing, Ross. **Bill Dabbs'** life has gotten a little too busy to be in the show, but he will rejoin us for Christmas, also.

Our **Christmas season** begins November 9th, with the first rehearsal at Crary Middle School. Get those Flyers out there. Many of us first joined BCC because of seeing a Christmas Flyer.

Jan DeNio has had surgery for her broken ankle. She says Walt has been "a wonderful wife" to her during this period.

Lew Mahacek wins some sort of a prize for suggesting the greatest number of songs for next year's Doo-Wop 50's show theme. But then of course his professional career as a bandleader began back then.

Eileen Marshall is singing with our jazz band and arranging the exchange of usherships and raffle-selling for SAI Spirit of Detroit.

Our featured SAI quartet next weekend, **Musicality**, came in a strong 13th place in the just completed **Sweet Adelines'** international competition in Indianapolis.

MUSIC MAN

Impresario was the featured quartet in the local production of *The Music Man* at the Starlight Theater, inside the Summit Place Mall. This production of Meredith Willson's well-known play had almost as large a cast as audience, but they performed with great spirit. Playing the roles of the town board, Ron Arnold, Jerry Howington, Gayle Mohler, and Bruce Collins had to do a lot of acting as well as singing, and their acting skills were in fine form.

For the few who've never seen it, here is the plot outline: A traveling con-man salesman, Professor Harold Hill arrives at staid River City, Iowa, intending to cheat the community with his standard scam of offering to equip and train a boy's marching band, then skip town with the money since he has no music skill anyway. Marian the librarian doesn't buy the professor's line but he convinces many of his other potential customers that the new pool table that has just been placed in the billiard parlor could mean "trouble in River City." How to keep the youngsters "moral after school?" Form a boys marching band. Things go awry when he falls for the librarian.

Trivia quiz: Who played the roles of (a) Harold Hill, (b) Marian the Librarian, (c) the little boy Winthrop Paroo, and (d) the Barbershop quartet in the 1962 movie? What town did Meredith Willson grow up in? (Answers at end)

QUARTET NEWS

Mel Parrish arranged a gig for **B Natural**, October 15th. There were about 350 attendees at the dinner to promote a "Pontiac Beautification" project. The Pontiac City Council Secretary, Denise Waterman, asked **B Natural** to circulate from table to table and then to perform two numbers from the head table. All of this was video taped for subsequent promotion efforts for the project.

MEMBERSHIP (at 56)

Renewals: Jim Troeger (16)

Birthdays: Ron Clarke (8th), Doc Mann (13th), Marv Wilson (19th), Graham Frye (20th), Jerry Howington (23rd), Lew Mahacek (25th)

BSOM: (November) - Bruce Brede. For leads sectionals, developing quartets, organizing non-quartet members into an ensemble, organizing the cast party, his interest, support and over-all leadership, plus Bruce's **KITTY**.

Illnesses: Bob Legato – rotator cuff surgery. Fred DeVries suffered a mild stroke, but was back to rehearsal by the next week!

AROUND THE DISTRICT

It's worth checking out Steve Sutherland's set of "links" at www.harmonize.com/Pioneer/links/music_links.htm. He just added a new link – to UCLA's Digital Archive of Popular American Music. (However, my first attempt to use it recovered very few of the Pole Cats, for example.)

AROUND THE WORLD

Summer convention

The 16 regional winning choruses have been chosen for participation at Salt Lake City. The other 20 highest scoring choruses have been invited to apply for the remaining 12 "wildcard" slots. If you're considering attending the summer international convention at Salt Lake City, the web site is: http://www.spebsqsa.org/web/groups/public/documents/pages/pub_saltlake_home.hcsp

The **new movie Ray**, a biographical treatment of Ray Charles, offers a stunning performance by Jamie Foxx and some close harmony by the Raylettes.

For a wider view of a **cappella singing**, visit the web site of Harmony Sweepstakes – www.harmony-sweepstakes.com Their annual national competition draws from hundreds of vocal groups from around the country with regional competitions in eight cities. The winning group from each festival is flown to perform in front of celebrity judges and a sold-out house of enthusiastic a cappella fans at the National Finals.

MEET LEN BARNES

(The October 28th Oakland Press "OurTown" section featured an article about Len Barnes. Here is a more accurate treatment of "the man.")

Len Barnes was born in 1926 in Schenectady, New York, where his dad was a radio announcer on WGY, the General Electric radio station. Later his dad worked at WLW in Cincinnati, announcing for such bands as Wayne King and Guy Lombardo. After a divorce, Lennie's mom moved to Pontiac, where his step-dad worked at GM, and he and his older sister, Kathleen, grew up.

Lennie graduated from Pontiac Central High School in 1944. At age 17 he enlisted in the Air Corps, entered the cadet program, and finished basic training and some primary training by the end of the war. From then until his retirement in 1986, Lennie worked for General Motors Truck and Coach. In 1951 he transferred into GM Engineering where he met Bill Pascher and they began their famous lunch-hour singing in its lobby. In the 1960s, he became a Quality Control Supervisor, and then Coach Sales Distribution Manager, his position at retirement.

Lennie's family had been musical on his mother's side. His mom played the mandolin, and an aunt, the piano. His grandfather played cornet, and gave Lennie his solid brass instrument for Lennie to use (and keep polished) in school bands, under the direction of the phenomenal Dale Harris.

Lennie met his future wife Yvonne when she was 6 years old, and began dating her when she was sixteen. They were married fifty-seven years ago, in 1947. Their daughter lives in Arizona, where Lennie has just bought a condo in Surprise, AZ, just west of Phoenix and Sun City, where Lennie and Yvonne plan to spend time in the winter, beginning this November 16th. Their grandson lives in Grand Rapids.

Lennie has always been athletic, an outdoor fellow. He swam endurance events in high school and also taught swimming at the Pontiac YMCA during the summers. He points out that swimming and horn-blowing strengthen breathing for singing.

He has enjoyed fishing of all kinds. He ice-fished for years with his father-in-law. Much of his fishing is irrevocably mixed with singing. For six years, he would join Smitty for a couple weeks each winter to fish in the Florida Keys. For 35 years he fished in Canada – on the Mississagi River, and on several lakes including Lake Nipigon on a 54-foot houseboat for a week, and further north on the James Bay rivers. There has been a particular history of quartets fishing and singing together – fish a little, sing a little, fish a little – from James Bay to the Keys.

During 2002, Lennie had lymphoma, spending nine months in chemotherapy. His weight plummeted to 115, he lost his hair, and we thought we had lost him.

In the last year, he has gotten a kick out of getting back to his instrumental roots, playing trumpet in the Fun Addicts Dixieland Band. This has also led him to join the New Horizons Band, which also meets at Crary.

His formal barbershop experience began when he joined the Pontiac chapter in 1954. He has sung in many quartets, but the two notable ones were **The Last Goodbye**, and **Sunnyside**. **The Last Goodbye** included Bill Pascher, Paul Lehmkule, and Mel Parrish and lasted for nine years, during which time they were the most active quartet in the Society, averaging 60 singouts/gigs a year. They made \$9,000, all of it going to charity except for the \$0.10 a mile to cover the 8000 annual miles they drove, throughout southeastern Michigan. When **The Last Goodbye** ended with Lehmkule's death, the group's ages totaled 304 years.

Lennie had met Smitty in the Pontiac chapter, and they formed **Sunnyside** with Roger Holm and Dick Johnson. Their 13-year life ended with Smitty's death last year.

He has held most of the chorus offices, including secretary, membership VP, chairman of the logopaedics charity, Lead section leader, and President three times.

Lennie enjoys a variety of good instrumental and vocal music; for example, he enjoys Nelson Riddle's band, and the singing of Linda Ronstadt and Roger Whittaker.

Exec Bd Meeting, Minutes, by Bill Holmes (abridged)

October 14, 2004

Present were Pete Mazzara, Gene Downie, Jack Teuber, Dick Johnson, Roger Holm and Bill Holmes

TREASURER REPORT: Current balance is \$9,344.93. Dick was very pleased with the result of the members selling ads, which rose to the total of \$6,270, compared to \$4,635 last year.

VP MUSIC & PERFORMANCE: There are various limitations on the chapter's copying of sheet music. The music committee plans to reduce the list of fourteen or more songs for the 2005 show to about eight songs.

VP MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS: 50 show tickets will be made available to the Clarkston High School. There will be no Mall Sing-out this year.

DIRECTOR: The coach for our Spring retreat will be Gene Hanover - an experienced and well-respected Barbershop singer and director.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT: Presentation of the nominated slate of officers. Dick Johnson is planning the installation dinner on November 19, 2004 at the Cass Lake Roadhouse.

Music Man Quiz Answers: Robert Preston played Harold Hill, Shirley Jones played Marian the Librarian, Ron Howard played the little boy Winthrop Paroo, and The Buffalo Bills were the Barbershop quartet in the 1962 movie. River City is based on Mason City, Iowa, where Meredith Willson grew up.

A young couple, a Long Island princess and her childhood sweetheart who had just finished his residency, got married and went on their honeymoon. When they got back, the bride immediately called her mother. "Well," said her mother, "so how was the honeymoon?"

"Oh, mama," she replied, "the honeymoon was wonderful! So romantic..." Suddenly she burst out crying. "But, mama, as soon as we returned, Sam started using the most horrible language -- things I'd never heard before! I mean, all these awful 4-letter words! You've got to take me home..., PLEASE MAMA!"

"Sarah, Sarah," her mother said, "calm down! You need to stay with your husband and work this out. Now, tell me, what could be so awful? WHAT 4-letter words?"

"Please don't make me tell you, mama," wept the daughter, "I'm so embarrassed, they're just too awful! COME GET ME, PLEASE!!!"

"Darling, baby, you must tell me what has you so upset. Tell your mother these horrible 4-letter words!"

Sobbing, the bride said, "Oh, Mama ... he used words like: dust, wash, iron, cook..."

"I'll pick you up in twenty minutes," said the mother.



CHAPTER LEADERSHIP (2004)

Director: Jim Troeger
(248-853-4360)

Asst. 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 Cowlshaw

Music Librarian: Ted Prueter

Singing Valentines: Wayne Cheyne

Sunshine (Chaplain): Walt DeNio

Uniforms Manager: Ron Clarke

Tape/CD Librarian: Ross Ensign

YMIH: Jack Teuber

Calendar

Nov 2, T, 7pm	BCC Dress Rehearsal, Clarkston HS
Nov 3, W, 7	Working man's rehearsal, G. Moss's
Nov 4, Th, 7	BCC Rehearsal, Crary
Nov 5, F	Canada Night, D.O.C., Livonia
Nov 6, Sa, 7:30	Fall show, "Family," Clarkston HS
Nov 9, T	Christmas rehearsals begin, Crary
Nov 11, Th	Old & New Exec Bd, Overtyme Grill
Nov 13, Sa	Spirit of Detroit SAI Fall Show
Nov 16, T	Christmas rehearsal, Crary
Nov. 19, F	Officer Induction Party, Cass Lk Roadhouse
Nov 20, Sa	Huron Valley Show, Washtenaw C.C.
Nov 23, T	Christmas rehearsal, Crary
Nov 30, T	Christmas Singouts begin, Sunrise
Dec 18, Sa	Bus trip, ending at Holly
Dec. 21, T	Christmas Party @ Canterbury
Jan. 8-9	COTS @ Okemos
Jan 24-30	BHS Midwinter Convention, Jacksonville
Apr 1-3	Spring Retreat, Higgins Lake
July 3-10	BHS Convention, Salt Lake City