AROUND THE PATCH
It’s crunch time – Pioneer District Competition October 16th, and Annual Show, November 6th. We need everyone’s full and energetic participation!

Repertoire for contest:
Old St. Louie
Aint Misbehavin’

Repertoire for Show:
Is There Anybody Here From Out of Town
Darkness on the Delta
Old St. Louie
I’m Sittin’ on Top of the World
Back in the Old Routine
New York, New York
Ain’t Misbehavin’
There’s No Business like Show Business
Keep the Whole World Singing

Jim Owens has built three beautiful promotional boards for advertising during our gigs.

One year later
John Cowlishaw and Nancy Miller had an absolutely perfect day – sunny and no wind – in which to disperse Chris’s ashes, Sunday, September 26. Flying in John’s Piper Tomahawk, we flew at 500 feet over Nancy’s home in Commerce Twp, as John squeezed the bag’s contents thru the window. Nancy’s family, on the ground, said it looked like a contrail as it came out, or the “smoke” used by aerobatic planes, and that it descended in a line over her property and the adjacent lake. John added a bucket of flowers. Afterward, Nancy’s family gathered at Villa Maria, site last year of the post-funeral wake.

QUARTET NEWS

Impresario is the featured quartet in this month’s local production of Music Man – six performances on the next two weekends (Oct 8,9, 15,16,17) at the Starlight Theater, inside the Summit Place Mall. Check it out at www.StarlightTheater.net

And B Natural responded to the need for a quartet at a local church service.

MEMBERSHIP (at 56)

Renewals: Bruce LaMarte (33)
Birthdays: Bruce Collins (13th), Art Carinci (18th), Walt DeNio (22nd), Bill Nevaux (27th), Roger Holm (29th)

BSOM – October – John Cowlishaw (for his work on the bulletin, warm-ups, and quartets)

AROUND THE DISTRICT

PIONEER DISTRICT CONVENTION

Fifteen choruses and 17 quartets will compete in Kalamazoo, Saturday, October 16th. The chorus contest will begin at 11:00 a.m. to allow more time for dinner between chorus evals and the evening session. Al Fisk has published the contest draw (order). Choruses on the same “plateau” (based on previous scores) have been placed as close together as possible. In Plateau 2, Pontiac-Waterford Big Chief Chorus will sing 9th, first after intermission, at about 12:45 pm.

Jamie Carey will direct the Joe Barbershop Chorus at 11 am in singing selected two Barberpole Cat songs, “Sweet and Lovely,” and “Honey - Little ‘Lize Medley.” Jamie has directed three Pioneer chapters, Cadillac, Lansing, and Grand Rapids. He directed Grand Rapids at International twice (2001 &2002) and has been part of two district quartet champions who competed at International, Full Chord Press (1993) and Firepower (1995, ‘96, & ‘98). Rehearsal is scheduled at the Radisson Hotel for 10:00 a.m., not the traditional 9:30 a.m.

If you will be present Friday night, the Quartet Champions Show, 90 minutes of Pure Barbershop enjoyment, begins about 10pm and costs $5 (tickets at door).
FULL FLOW CHARTS, MAPS, ETC ARE AT:
http://www.harmonize.com/Pioneer/nextconvention/convention_info.htm

BUSH LEAGUE, 2004
Bush League was held in Gaylord, September 25th. This annual event features quartets that have never won before or placed in the top three at Pioneer District. It’s intended to be a great venue for novice quartets that wish to gain stage and judging experience. However, this year’s entries were only six, all but one with considerable prior experience. Winning quartet was Windfall, a very smooth quartet from Traverse City that scored 68%. Crescendo, from Motor City and Huron Valley was 2nd with 66%. And Border Crossing, from Windsor and Macomb, garnered a 65% and broke into the top three – all of whom were invited to sing for the evening show. Four Wheel Drive (Al Monroe, Wally Plosky, John Cowlishaw, and Zaven Melkonian) was disappointed with its performance, scoring 51% and placing 5th of six. This lack of improvement has led to the difficult decision to part (quartet) ways.

The reduction in number of competing quartets (6 vs 13 last year and 11 the year before) and the average score (60%) may mean that the original intent of Bush League is being lost.

On the other hand, it was a beautiful weekend. We used TreeTops and the Evangelical Church as headquarters and venue. Antiques Roadshow was there to perform and provide coaching after the Saturday morning competition. Zaven and John flew up together with the return trip being especially calm and beautiful (Ren Cen in downtown Detroit was visible from Flint, 60 miles away).

Lyne Peirce has resigned as director of the Huron Valley Harmonizers, due to other commitments and opportunities. As a result Huron Valley Harmonizers has withdrawn from the up-coming International Preliminary contest.

AROUND THE WORLD
As broadly interested singers, we will appreciate the NPR site listing “the 100 most important American musical works of the 20th century.” Check out http://www.npr.org/programs/specials/vote/list100.html It has recordings and programs about each of the songs, which include “Alexander’s Ragtime Band,” “Good Night Irene,” “Mood Indigo,” “White Christmas,” and Wizard of Oz (“Over the Rainbow”).

General usage guidelines for Barbershop Harmony Society (from BHS)
Moving the term Barbershop Harmony Society to the forefront of our image efforts means a new look and nomenclature.

Legally, we’re still the Society for the Preservation… etc. But we found that many people like the shorter name - including our own members, who are more apt to use it in day-to-day business and contacts.

Meanwhile, you can start the habit now of using the full expression “Barbershop Harmony Society” wherever possible. When using the definite article "the", as in: “Brian is a member of the Barbershop Harmony Society.”

Logos can be downloaded from the web: www.spebsqsa.org/logos.
The abbreviated form of our name is now “BHS” instead of SPEBSQSA.
Legal documents referencing Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America or SPEBSQSA continue to be accurate, as it is our full legal name, and Barbershop Harmony Society is a designation we are Doing Business As. We do not anticipate the need for revising Society, district or chapter bylaws.

MEET John Cowlishaw
By press time, I had failed to interview my next two choices, so it was time to turn to my backup, who is almost always available to me, John Cowlishaw.

Smoke Signals Editor: So when and where were you born?
John Cowlishaw: In Grand Rapids, 1938, into a home of wood-finishing-company owning, Republican, Presbyterian parents.

SSE: Sibs?
JC: A younger brother and sister. Bob now runs an ecosafari in Southern Florida. (A day’s trip through the Everglades with experienced guides is great; check it out at www.ecosafari.com) Barbara lives in Paris (Michigan, that is).

SSE: What were your early musical experiences?
JC: My father couldn’t sing a note, but loved the Saturday afternoon Metropolitan opera, and I still get emotional hearing his beloved Rachmaninoff’s 2nd Piano Concerto. My mom was a modestly good singer and taught me piano. I sang in high school choir and church choirs. At Ottawa Hills High School Dave Hazenberg organized four of us guys to sing “Blue Moon” in the school show. He said his dad sang barbershop, and it was only three years ago, talking to Bill Pascher, that I learned that their quartet, Harmony Halls, was the Barbershop International quartet champions in 1944.

SSE: So you mostly sang and studied in school?
JC: Negative. I studied well enough, but I was in Boy Scouts, and loved sports, and wondered if I could make it in the Big Leagues as a shortstop who didn’t play on Sundays cuz of his Calvinist religion. However, the only sports that I was good enough to letter in were Track and Cross Country.

SSE: What about college?
JC: I loved the feel of algebraic equations, so after two years at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, I went to University of Michigan for a Bachelor’s and Master’s in Physics.

SSE: And then?
JC: I worked as an advanced development engineer for the Westinghouse Corp defense plant in Baltimore on microwave radar systems. Then I taught Physics for two years at Westminster College in Pennsylvania, liked teaching, heard about the exciting new field of molecular biophysics, and went to Penn...
State for a Ph. D. in biophysics. Then to Oakland University where I have taught in the Biological Sciences department for 36 years, and was chairman for the last three years.

SSE: What about your love life?

JC: Ahem, minimal til I married, just out of UofM, and raised three great kids, Drew, who works for Kelly Services locally, is married and has a son, Todd, Leslie, who lives with her husband and son Andrew in Yorba Linda, and Phil who is a singer/actor trying out his skills in Los Angeles. I was divorced in the 70’s, remarried in the 80’s, widowed in the 90’s, and now married to Corinne after a whirlwind romance six years ago.

SSE: How did you get into barbershop?

JC: Saw a Christmas chorus sign five years ago (well, Corinne did, bless her heart). I almost didn’t continue that January, but the attachment slowly grew. And grew stronger with quartetting. First with Harmonic Intentions (Jerry Howington, Ron Arnold, JC, Zaven Melkonian), then High Octane (Chuck Barrett, Arnold, JC, Melkonian) then A Cappella Fellas (Barrett, Wally Plosky, JC, Melkonian), then Four Wheel Drive (Al Monroe, Plosky, JC, Melkonian) and Jackpot (Tom Ford, Bill Nevaux, JC, Melkonian)

SSE: You and Zaven seem to be a staple.

JC: Yah. Zav’s great.

SSE: What do you do when you’re not teaching or singing?

JC: Seems like I’ve started a new hobby each decade. In the 70’s it was wine-making. In the 80’s I ran – five marathons – one year logging 1600 miles. In the 90’s it was aviation. In the 2000’s it has been barbershop, though a little running continues, and aviation too as Corinne and I own a Piper Tomahawk.

SSE: Where did you learn that stuff you do in warm-ups?

JC: When I started running and getting injured, I got interested in massage, and got certified as a massage therapist and Trager body-worker. They encourage body awareness.

SSE: Tell us something that not many people know.

JC: I’m a non-affiliated Buddhist who meditates each morning. One summer I spent a 10-day silent retreat in Massachusetts, just meditating.

HARMONY COLLEGE 2004, by Jeff Spires

How many times have you heard or read about a place or event that you wanted to visit because the stories made seeing it compelling? How many times did you end up disappointed at your own experience with that place or event? Well, as is my nature, I was somewhat skeptical when I talked to fellow barbershoppers about Harmony College. I must say that my personal experience at Harmony College was more than I expected.

Harmony College ran from Sunday to Sunday in the first week of August. The setting for Harmony College is Missouri Western, a campus of six thousand students in St. Joseph, Missouri. (Plans are to move next year to another school campus with a larger auditorium.)

Missouri Western does have adequate dorms, with air conditioning, and fairly good food. If you like ice cream, you won’t be disappointed! They have an “Open Bar” for ice cream. You can have soft ice cream or packed ice cream, assorted flavors, at any time of day and night, until about midnight. Toppings of all kinds are provided.

Oh, that’s right, my topic is Harmony College. The curriculum offered is tops. The teaching staff is tops. Even the music educators that were in attendance spoke glowingly of the quality of the courses and teaching staff. One student said “the quality of the courses and instructors were better than he had in his undergraduate work.” Another said it was “better than any music educators’ seminar” she had ever attended.

We were told that a student could take both undergraduate and graduate classes that count as two credit hours toward their degree work. To do so you simply have to apply and make sure the course work will transfer to the college at which you are taking the bulk of your degree work.

The classes offered were everything from the Physics of Sound to Music Theory I, II, III, Arranging, Vocal Technique, Choreography, Script Writing, Woodshedding, and Chorus Singing, and a host of other classes.

There is a Directors’ College that runs all week at the same time as the general curriculum courses. Many of those students attend some of the same classes as the general curriculum students.

My class load each day contained the following: Physics Of Sound, Vocal Techniques, Choreography I, Tune It Or Die, and Voice Placement. (I plan on taking Physics Of Sound every year for the next five, perhaps by then I will understand it!)

Physics Of Sound is a wonderfully well-presented class that helps you understand and validates overtones and undertones in the Barbershop chord. You are shown with instruments the Harmonics produced in each chord. The class gives you an understanding of why the piano is not desirable when practicing barbershop. “Every note on a piano is shaded and of less cycles than what is required to be in tune to the true pitch. The reason is that it’s necessary in order to have all the keys in tune with each other. Physics Of Sound is a wealth of information that can be best grasped by guys like John Cowlishaw, yet there is good information for those of us that lack a science background. Vocal Technique works with each student to develop proper singing technique, from posture and breathing to voice placement. Each student is evaluated and given suggestions on how to improve their vocal production. By the end of the week you are placed into a quartet to develop balance and sound vocally.

Basic Choreography was taught by Cindy Hansen, the number one choreographer in Barbershop singing today. She taught us the ten basic choreographic moves for any chorus. We were on risers and learned the moves and practiced them each day. An advanced class is also offered which I hope to take next year.
Tune It Or Die was taught by Joe Liles, one of the most prolific Barbershop writers and arrangers still around. He worked with us on maintaining pitch, chord balance, and shading. We worked with several practice exercises and finished the week singing a song he wrote. He was nice enough to personally autograph a copy of his song sheet on the last day.

Voice Placement was taught by Kevin King, son of another great barbershop composer, Fred King. Most of the students were directors. The course focused on voice placement, the pros and cons of tryouts, and what to test for in tryouts. The course also looked at voice and parts placements in a chorus. We examined four basic parts placement concepts and tested them using our class. We then watched Dr. Greg Lyne test and place the youth chorus and the adult chorus that were working all week on a show package for the Saturday evening show. We also put together quartets, based on each persons voice qualities.

Breakfast began at six thirty. Our first session was at eight forty-five. This was a combined session, all students and faculty. We started each session with different instructors teaching us various vocal and physical exercises to prepare us to sing. Each day we sight-read a new song. (This year, in memory of Val Hicks, a college music instructor, composer, and arranger of many barbershop songs, we focused on several of his songs.) During this time we also had a time of sharing by some of the great writers and teachers of our craft. We finished each session with a new tag, taught by a different instructor each day. (It was interesting to observe the varying methods each used to teach both the new song and tag.)

Our morning class was followed by lunch, then an afternoon class. The rest of the afternoon, I chose two mini sessions, Choreography and Tune It Or Die. We then had our dinner break followed by our evening class.

After that until fatigue set in we visited with other barbershoppers, making friends, sharing stories, singing tags, pole cats, or other songs everyone knew. Oh, you also ate as many banana splits, Sundays, floats, or other creative bedtime treats you or your friends could create with ice cream and toppings. Of course coffee and soft drinks were always available.

What a wonderful experience of getting away from “the rat race of life,” and spending time with hundreds of people who love the music created by our art craft and style. For those of you who have never heard an overtone or undertone, take Physics of sound and you’ll both hear it and see it.

On Wednesday night we had a cookout/pig roast. For those who don’t like pork, they had very good roast beef. They then offered bus rides in to town for those who wanted to gamble or sight see.

Friday night was a one-hour barbershop show, put on by all the quartets who were in attendance all week for personalized coaching, followed by ice cream and socializing.

Saturday night was the wrap up with a show production created by last year’s students who wrote the show. The cast was made up of quartets, youth chorus, and adult chorus of students who had worked all week on their show songs. Individual parts were performed by students and faculty. It was a wonderful, funny comedy titled: Technical Difficulties. The headline quartet for the night was Power Play, our 2003 international champions. I left for home right after the show, though Power Play and other quartets continued to entertain for a couple hours while everyone ate ice cream.

I can think of just one word to express my opinion of Harmony College. Remember Tony the Tiger’s word Great! I am planning next year’s Harmony College already.

**VOCAL TECHNIQUE: Posture**

**Paul Mason’s Vocal Technique Training builds an ascending pyramid from**

Posture>Breathing>Support>Phonation>Registers>>Resonance>Expression>Interpretation. Here is what he says about Posture.

**Good posture** is essential for a singer. Quite apart from wanting to appear, and feel, poised and confident in front of an audience, there are technical reasons why good posture is the most fundamental requirement in singing.

**What is good posture?**

Good posture is optimal vertical alignment of the various parts of the body, with minimum tension. A concept used in jazz and ballet is that of having an imaginary string attached to the top of the head. The string pulls straight up, causing head, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles to become vertically aligned. We want the body to be erect, but as relaxed as possible.

For singing, the sternum is also slightly lifted to expand and elevate the ribcage, and rotate the lowest ribs downward and outward.

Probably the most common student faults are a forward slump of the shoulders and sternum, which collapses the ribcage, and elevation of the chin, which pulls the larynx out of position.

Why is it important? Three reasons:

1) Correct vertical alignment with minimum tension leaves the vocal mechanism (the larynx and surrounding musculature) in as relaxed a state as possible. The larynx is suspended in a web of muscles that are attached to the skull and chin above, and the sternum and collar-bones below. Any unusual tension or alteration in the position of these muscles (such as lifting the chin) affects the functioning of the larynx itself.

2) Having the ribcage lifted and expanded frees the diaphragm to contract and descend as fully as possible with a minimum of resistance. This means you get a maximum inhalation with the least possible strain, and your breathing is as swift, easy and silent as possible.

3) Having the ribcage lifted is also optimal for the contraction of the oblique abdominal muscles and internal intercostal muscles. In combination with the natural elasticity of the ribcage, these muscles exert pressure upon the contents of the torso, and give the singer control of the air pressure being applied to the vocal cords. This control of air pressure is sometimes referred to as Support

How do I teach good posture?
MINUTES, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS (excerpts)

September 9, 2004, by Zaven Melkonian, Acting Secretary
The Meeting was held at the home of Gene Downie and attended by Pete Mazzara, Dick Johnson, Roger Holm, Walt DeNio, Gene Downie, Jack Teuber and Zaven Melkonian.

TREASURER: Dick Johnson reported that available funds as of September 9, 2004, total $3,810.82. The board is concerned about Dick’s comment that the Show Program ad sales are lagging by nearly $1,000.00 from last year’s same period sales. It was recommended that the membership be made aware of this fact, and need to make a concerted effort to dramatically increase the number of ads sold.

VP CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT & MEMBERSHIP: Jim Owens has now completed three promotional boards, with tripods, which can be displayed at chorus and quartet functions. The boards will be stocked with promotional literature to be used as part of the recruiting program.

VP MUSIC & PERFORMANCE: Roger Holm reported that the quartet to produce learning CDs & tapes for Christmas Music still needs a tenor. Approval to pay an amount of $128.00 for music. Future payments will be made as each song is recorded for chorus use. The amount to pay for copying sheet music is still to be determined. The Music Committee is beginning work on next year’s show, the theme of which may be based on songs of the 40’s, 50’s and 60’s. Members have been asked to submit a list of songs that they may remember from that era.

VP MARKETING & PR: Walt DeNio reported that he has firm ed up twelve requests for quartet or chorus performances that have either been completed or are in the process of being readied for presentation.

FALL SHOW: Gene Downie reports that staging is progressing, with some props ready to be painted. Pete Mazzara gave the Board an overview of the completed script.

EXECUTIVE BOARD NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Zaven Melkonian presented a list of nominees for the offices as of September 9th.

OFFICER INDUCTION PARTY: This function will held on the evening of Friday, November 19th. The Cass Lake Roadhouse was approved as the best venue. This will be presented to the membership.

CHRISTMAS PLAN: After much discussion, it was decided that November 30th will be our first singout at Bill Pascher’s SUNRISE facility. That will then give Roger the opportunity to utilize the next three Tuesdays (December 7th, 14th and 21st) for his usual singout stops, with Canterbury being the final Tuesday performance on December 21st. A mall performance (location still to be determined, Summit Place or Great Lakes Crossing) is scheduled for Sunday, December 12th. The bus trip will be scheduled for Saturday, December 18th.

VETERANS DAY PROJECT: Pete Mazzara suggested it would be appropriate to once again simply recognize the veterans in our own organization.

ALL ELSE: The board voted unanimously to send the newly elected Board Members to COTS in January 2005. The Board also voted to give a donation, equivalent to last year’s amount, to The Crary Middle School Music Program.

“CHICK NOTES” from Joan Cheyne, temporary secretary

Eight of the Big Chief Chicks met Thurs. Sept. 16 for a really fun lunch at Bravo Cucina Italiana in Rochester Hills. Present were: Janice DeNio, Lynn Densmore, Deanna Downie, Karen Ensign, Barbara Holmes, Jackie Murray, Barbara Workman, and Joan Cheyne. Many thanks to Barbara Holmes for arranging the lunch.

Discussion items:

Officers. The luncheon discussion was so productive, we will forgo officers and hold to a “steering committee” format.

Name. The ladies agreed to keep the name Big Chief Chicks (BCC or BCCx).

Name tags. Barbara Workman brought us terrific, handmade nametags. We hope all the Ladies of the Big Chief Chorus will wear nametags to all events so
every member can easily identify and get to know the others. It would help a lot if the guys did so too.

**A unifying color.** We agreed to wear some unifying color to show support for the chorus, to promote good-natured enthusiasm, and again to ease recognition of fellow members. We’re leaning toward yellow – Chicks, after all!

**Communication.** Barbara Workman agreed to design a flier for chorus members to take home telling all Ladies of the Big Chief Chorus about the Chicks and welcoming them to our activities.

**Tentative Schedule:**

**October 16** – the Fall Competition in Kalamazoo. Nametags will be available. Ladies are encouraged to wear something yellow (sweater, scarf, poncho, etc.). We’d enjoy meeting for dinner with chorus members.

**November 18** – a craft day at Barbara Workman’s house where we will make hand-crafted note cards. Tentatively 10:00 – 2:00. Lunch at noon. Chicks should bring sample craft items they’d like to make or be willing to share at a future meeting. Details later.

**December 9** – lunch and shopping at Canterbury Village in Lake Orion. Time to be determined.

**Question of the day.** Does this mean our children shall be known as "Chick-lets"?

**Some suggestions for next year’s show songs (or Charades) (from the Harmonet)**

- “I Still Miss You, But My Aim Is Getting Better.”
- “I wouldn't take you to a dog fight. (Even if I thought you could win)”
- “How can I miss you if you don’t go away.”
- “Get Your Tongue Out of My Throat ‘Cause I'm Kissing You Goodbye”
- “My Wife Ran Off With My Best Friend and I’ll Sure Miss Him”
- “Get off the table, Mable, the money’s for the beer”
- “She was jest a moonshiner’s daughter, but ah loved ‘er still”
- “She was only a mortician's daughter, but anyone cadaver”
- “She was only a welder's daughter, but she had acetylene legs”
- “I can't get over a girl like you, so you'll have to get up and answer the phone”
- “I kissed her on the lips and left her behind for You”

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): Walt DeNio  
Uniforms Manager: Ron Clarke  
YMIH: Jack Teuber

**Calendar**

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<td>BCC Rehearsal</td>
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<td>Oct 14, Th</td>
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<td>Oct 15-17</td>
<td>Pioneer Convention, Kalamazoo</td>
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<td>Oct 19, T</td>
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<td>BCC Rehearsal</td>
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<td>Nov 6, Sa</td>
<td>Fall show, “Family,” Clarkston HS</td>
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<td>Nov 9, T</td>
<td>Christmas rehearsals begin</td>
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<td>Officer Induction Party</td>
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<td>Jan. 8-9, SS</td>
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**CHAPTER LEADERSHIP (2004)**

Director: Jim Troeger  
(248-853-4360)  
Assc. Directors: Dick Johnson, Bruce Collins