Seasonal Blessings

This season is my favorite when it comes to singing. Speaking of favorite experiences reminds me of a most memorable Christmas. I was 5 years old at the time. In our family all the presents were wrapped ahead of time and from our parents. The one exception to this was the largest and usually the best present. It showed up Christmas morning under/in front of the Christmas tree. This one big present was from Santa Claus. Well that Christmas I awoke early to see a big truck with a missile launcher mounted on the back. It also shot plastic bullets. The turret turned via buttons (and was battery powered) and the long missile launcher barrel rose up and down via another button. My brother also got the matching toy. It was just so big and fascinating to me that this still is the most exciting Christmas ever. Well imagine the joy my parents got by our reactions.

As an adult I like the joy my 2 boys would get when they received the presents they so wanted. The point is this: it is so much better to be the giver than the receiver. As we age the true meaning of life becomes clearer. This giving is what we are called to do. However, it becomes clear that this giving is not about the material things we chose as children.

The giving we are to do as we get older is not in “things” that we will one day give up. Instead it is in things we cannot touch with our hands. Remember the saying, “How do you spell Love? – T-I-M-E.” That’s right - giving of our selves is much more important than giving things.

I am a Hospice volunteer for St. Joseph Mercy and so many times I see that some patients cannot communicate with me. Some of these people can’t remember me or their family. Yet when they are sung to like Wednesday when I visited with Shirley, she sang Amazing Grace haltingly with me. She has Alzheimer’s disease. Singing touches a part of the brain where people can remember. Would a gift mean much to her? Not at all but time with her is what she needs.

When we sing during Christmas at the many locations, we often sing to the “able” residents. They so appreciate our time and gift of song and our presence. There are some exceptions to singing for the able, such as at Lourdes and to me these are the best. I would like to start singing in the memory care locations of these residences, when possible. A location where it would be appropriate (to visit memory care residents) is Autumn Ridge, where both another Hospice patient I visit and my Pastor’s father resides. We are scheduled to sing at the main building during our December 16th bus tour.

So keep in mind that helping others is actually helping yourself, as it is truly better to give than to receive.

Merry Christmas,
Eric Domke, President

Roger Holm

Thank you, Roger, for the exemplary way you have served the BCC! We look up to you as a Senior Statesman for our harmonious tribe. That impressively long list of your accomplishments and acts of dedication to improving our outreach which chief Eric read on your behalf shows exactly why we are enjoying success as a chorus. You truly deserve the honor as our newest Barbershopper of the Month!

Holiday Calendar

Dec 5, T, 6:30  Independence Village, White Lake
Dec 6, W, 6:30  Canterbury on the Lake
Dec 12, T, 6:30  Lakeland Place, Waterford
Dec 14, Th, 1:30  Waterford Seniors at CAI
   3:00  Elm Haven Manor
   4:00  Inn at Cass Lake
Dec 16, Sa, 10:30  - Christmas Bus Tour
Dec 19, T, 5:00  Our Lady of Lourdes, Waterford
Dec 21, Th, 7:00  Independence Twp. Library

December Birthdays

3rd  – Jon Knapp  23rd  – Mike Frye
15th – Jack Teuber  26th – Zaven Melkonian
18th – Howard Lynn  28th – Jim Owens

Membership Renewals

Barnes, L.  Brede, B.  DeNio, W.  Keith, M.

~~ Let’s Pow-Wow ~~

Please send reports & pictures of BCC events and BCC based quartets along with other items of historical importance to: jknappSLBC@att.net
Submitted by Chuck Murray

The Greater Portland Chapter was asked to sing at Portland International Airport early on Monday morning, October 16th, to the WWII and Korean War veterans traveling by Honor Flight to Washington D.C. There they would visit the various war memorials in the nation’s capital and be honored in ceremonies for their service to our country. It was a thrill just to be there to meet these men and women who served the U.S.A. so valiantly.

One of those so honored by our chorus and the Honor Flight personnel was Dick Lennox, a 94-year-old lead singer in our chorus and a Marine pilot who taught men to fly at Corpus Christi, Texas, near the beginning of WWII. Dick sang with our chorus to all of the other vets, "God Bless America" and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic".

The response was a standing ovation by hundreds of travelers touched by the moment, followed by handshakes and hugs as the vets headed for security on the way to their flight.

Norman Lawson - Greater Portland Chapter

Health Benefits of Singing

Singing strengthens the immune system, according to research by scientists at the University of Frankfort in Germany, published in the US Journal of Behavioral Medicine. The scientists tested the blood of people who sang in a professional choir in the city, before and after a 60 minute rehearsal of Mozart’s Requiem. They found that concentrations of immunoglobin (proteins in the immune system which function as antibodies) and hydrocortisone, an anti-stress hormone, increased significantly during the rehearsal. A week later, when they asked members of the choir to listen to a recording of the Requiem without singing, they found the composition of their blood did not change significantly. The researchers, who included Hans Guenther Bastian from the Institute of Musical Education at Frankfurt University, concluded singing not only strengthened the immune system but also notably improved the performer’s mood. From http://www.barbershop.org

A New-B’s First impressions

Has anyone seen our 73rd annual show? It’s gone missing. I suspect it was “Shoptimus Prime”; they really stole the show this year! What an amazing group of talented twenty-boppers. Makes me wish my baptism into barbershop came when I was 23 (instead of 53).

The last few show rehearsals got a bit hairy though with our quivers so full of songs that still needed quite a bit of sharpening. Even so, everything came together nicely at the last millisecond, and the audience was pleased, which is always the main concern for me. I had a blast singing with you fellow braves this whole year! Y’all made me feel very welcome.

Thank you, Music Team, for your hard work and preparation, and to Tom, Fred and Mike for leading us to sing better each week, and to Zach for coaching OverTime with our show pieces. And a special thanks to Donna Bevington for being a wonderful stage manager. Let’s doo-wop it all again next year. Jon Knapp, Editor

Who’s Who in the BCC

Director: Thomas Blue (248-814-9627)
Assistant Directors: Fred McFadyen, Mike Frye
President: Eric Domke (248-674-2323)
VP: Chapter Dev: Walt DeNio (248-922-9090)
VP: Music/Performance: Zach Schroeder (248-929-1285)
VP: Marketing & PR: Jack Teuber (248-334-3686)
Secretary: Charlie Perry (248-880-9356)
Treasurer: Jim Owens (248-682-4311)
Members at large: Pat H., Fred P., Ray S., Austin S.
Chorus Manager: Gene Downie (248-682-9321)
Captain Sunshine: Bill Maxfield (248-698-1393)
Chorus Librarian: Roger Holm (248-623-7452)
Section Leaders: McFadyen, Doig, Sturdy, Moss
Music Team: Schroeder, Blue, Frye, McFadyen, Doig, Moss, Mazzara, Sturdy

Extreme Quartetting

By Ray Sturdy

On November 10-11, 2017, Chuck Murray and Ray Sturdy continued the tradition of making sure members of the Big Chief Chorus were represented at nearby Extreme Quartetting Harmony Brigades. The 15th annual Indiana Harmony Brigade was held in Indianapolis with 117 dedicated barbershop quartet men spending the weekend ringing chords with one another on eleven designated barbershop arrangements. Chuck and Ray have been attending multiple Brigades for the past seven years, and are now starting to prepare for the 8th annual Great Lakes Harmony Brigade which will take place near East Lansing in early June. Some current, and former, BCC members who have enjoyed the Brigade experience include, Jeff Doig, Charlie Perry, Tom Blackstone, John Cowlishaw, Steve Armstrong, Ron Arnold and others.