Spring Convention

The 2016 Spring Convention of the Pioneer District was held, April 22-24, in Grand Rapids, MI. Headquarters hotel was the Crowne Plaza, but the competitions were in the DeVos Auditorium of Grand Rapids Christian High School, the same arrangement as in Spring of 2014.

The Big Chief Chorus was 9th out of nine choruses with a score of 52.6. That is 9.2 pts lower than last Spring. Some of that seems to have been tough judging, but we have to take responsibility for at least 6.7 pts-worth. The newness of the songs was certainly a factor, as neither song by contest time had become as comfortable as old shoes. A difficulty for the chorus was that both songs started on a 7th chord with almost the same lyrics.

The songs were “Little White House in the Glen” and “I Don’t Know Why.” We like both songs and will continue to perfect them for performances, and possibly for next year’s contest. Several judges commented that they had never heard “Little White House” before, and, here at Pioneer convention, they heard it twice. Coincidence? No, Tom Blue chose this lovely song after hearing it performed last year by the Lansing chapter, which re-offered it this year.

The chorus returned to Carrabba’s, a perfect place for dinner on Saturday at 4 p.m. The location, the service, the food, were all excellent. Thanks to Gene Downie for arrangements. We sang “Under the Boardwalk” and “Can You Feel” to generous applause.

Doc Mann and Pete Mazzara were sidelined by illness, and Walt Bachmann by work.

Thanks to Lance Shew for organizing transport of chairs.

Did anyone else notice that Jamie Carey directs like Tom Blue? The same big sweeping movements, outside the box.

The BCC had three newbies on the stage Saturday morning - Pat Hefner, Austin Suthers, and Zach Schroeder (though Zach sang on the stage with THE VOICE in Fall).

Zach Schroeder partook of the opportunity to sit in “Best Seat in the House.” He collaborated with the Presentation judges and gave scores within a few points of the “real” judges. They were so impressed they urged him to enroll in candidate school.
The Pontiac-Waterford Chapter had one voting rep at the House of Delegates meeting, since its membership fell below 50. It’ll be back at two now that we are at 51 members.

One to-be-unnamed Big Chief listed all eight quartets in correct scoring order Saturday night.

We can hope to have a video of our performance in G.R. In the meantime, here is our last pre-competition video: https://youtu.be/-0zPSEtBd2Y

Judges’ Evaluations - Summary

- Must know the words and notes; then you’ll sing lighter, more confident, more in tune.
- Tuning: in the vicinity is not good enough
- Lots of sectional and then duetting
- Freely produced resonant sound, by space and height
- Decide on the message of a song at the same time you start learning it; then buy into it, emotionally.

Limited Edition lost some points last year for its choice of songs. So this year it sang two old chestnuts - “Let the Rest of the World Go By” and “Goodbye, My Coney Island Baby.” Nevertheless, the foursome occupied the bottom rung of the scoring ladder (57.7). This was more perplexing, as there was good reason to believe that its performance exceeded last year’s 61.3. Furthermore, many more people came up spontaneously to quartet members to exclaim how much they enjoyed the performance. Nevertheless, the judges had valuable and insightful criticisms that the quartet must work on.

Ah, well, nothing beats the response of a family in the hotel hallway who enjoyed the quartet singing “Kiss the Girl” to their 8-year old daughter. Or the 16-yr-old son in the Bagger Dave’s restaurant who applauded one song and then asked if the quartet knew any Sinatra; we sure did, singing “Come Fly with Me.” We declined the $20 bill he offered us.

Coda Honor placed 7th with a score of 65.1, about the same as last Fall’s 65.6 and much above last Spring’s 61.3. (That’s what a week in quartet school at Harmony University last summer can do.) The audience enjoyed Lead Aaron Wilson’s command of the songs, Dave Montera’s solid Bass voice, and steady singing by Tenor Euel Kinsey and Bari Ray Sturdy. They sang “Love Me,” “‘What’ll I Do,” “When She Loved Me,” and “Cop on the Beat.”

Around the Patch

From Director Tom:
Men and Friends of the BCC,

Thank you all for your participation and extra effort to sing at the contest and convention. I appreciated your efforts to sing two new songs at contest. We didn’t score very high at all so my apologies but hopefully this has given us a jumpstart to next spring. One or both of these songs will be on the contest set next spring. Thanks to all who contributed in some way to our performance at convention. It was wonderful to be around all of you and to sup with you as well. A special thank you to whoever paid for my two-pork chop meal.

Janet Lynn

Howard Lynn’s wife of 60 years, Janet, passed away April 8, at Brookdale of Novi. She had suffered from Multiple Sclerosis for over three decades.

A memorial service was held Wednesday, April 13 at Lynch & Sons Funeral Home in Walled Lake. A luncheon followed at the Eagles, Walled Lake.

A young Howard and Janet and their children
Welcome to Pat Hefner and Austin Suthers who have joined the Pontiac-Waterford chapter.

Austin and Pat being inducted by Walt DeNio, while Fred McFadyen leads the chorus in a hum of “Keep the Whole World Singing.”

We’ve welcomed guest Adam Angelis. He sings in the Huron Valley Community Chorus, as do Austin Suthers and Charlie Perry.

Hermine Mazzara is undergoing treatment.
(From Pete)

Hi All,

Hermine’s condition has become progressive (increasing). She has become weaker; more tired; hardly eats; has loss of balance; etc. We have scheduled a consultation at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas; leaving May 3rd for a week? Hopefully they will have a treatment that works for her.

I am still dealing with a pinched nerve in my back, leaving us as quite a pair.

Your thoughts and prayers are appreciated.

Pete

Phyllis Braun’s sight has deteriorated to the point that she is now officially blind, limiting Neil’s involvement somewhat.

Change Eric Domke’s cell phone number to (248) 464-7048. That’s because he retired April 1 and turned in his old company cell phone. But he’s most reachable on his home phone, (248) 674-2323.

BSOM for March - John Cowlishaw - in recognition of his 180th issue of Smoke Signals

Quartets

4GVN

4GVN with Jack Teuber on tenor was able to celebrate National Barbershop Harmony Day (April 11, 1938) with seniors of Auburn Hills. The Holiday luncheon of 52 guests and staff were entertained by a 30 minute performance.
As always at Auburn Hills there was a standing ovation for the final song "God Bless America" as there were several veterans in the audience. The quartet then moved to Lourdes Nursing Center, (where Bari Eric Domke is a Hospice volunteer). We had two residents in mind to share the holiday with but found that there were several residents who remembered us from Christmas and had several song requests - all standard Barbershop numbers. We concluded the afternoon at Canterbury on the Lake, where Bob Marshall was recuperating, and who joined us in singing, handling the baritone part quite well.

(From Jack Teuber)

Limited Edition

LIMITED FRYDITION with Mike Frye on Lead sang Friday evening, April 8, at the social event that kicked off the weekend conference of the Detroit Power Squadron. Power Squadron is a national organization fostering education and camaraderie for power boaters, sailors, even paddlers. About 120 members enjoyed the songs, which were presented at the Double Tree Hotel in Dearborn. (This gig was in the works for a long time, inasmuch as two of their officers had visited LE’s backyard soiree last September to check us out.)

LIMITED FRYDITION, with the versatile Mike Frye now on Tenor, sang Wednesday, April 13, for a luncheon meeting of MARSP (Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel). The meeting was in the Cultural Center associated with St Mary’s Antiochian Orthodox Church, a magnificent cathedral on Merriman in Livonia. About 150 persons listened to the quartet sing ten songs, and were enthusiastic in their response.

Bidin’ Our Time

After a brief nap following a convention weekend in Grand Rapids, BIDIN’ OUR TIME journeyed (via the Frye Estate) to Debbie Murley’s West Bloomfield Home and joined a large contingent of Family and Friends in celebrating the 95th Birthday of Matriarch "Betty". The beautiful weather found us singing not only in the wooded back yard but inside, where every room seemed to be filled with mouth-watering food. Talk about over-hydrating ! Another highlight was seeing Nancy Miller, Chris Miller’s widow.

Larry Farhat of "Birmingham Barbers", through the agency of Sandy Pastor, engaged B.O.T. to provide entertainment for a Lunch Time Party celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the "Shop" at the Adams Square Plaza in (where else?) Birmingham. WHAT A PARTY! Lots of noshing, Networking, Happy Faces.

Nick Pastor (D.O.C./Macomb) provided the Bari for "Wild Irish Rose". A theatrical acquaintance of deceased Barbershopper Bill Schwedler (O.C.C.) fifth-wheeled very well on "Lida Rose," earning a recruitment card and a visitation invite.

A Videographer recorded some of the festivities including Larry and B.O.T. in the "Rockwell" pose which aired on Fox @ 5 and WXYZ @ 5 & 7. Forty Seconds of Fame! WHAT A PARTY !!!!

In harmony, 
F

4 UR PLEASURE

4 UR PLEASURE has enrolled in the Quartet Boot Camp, June 18 in Okemos.

Chapter 2016 Performances thru April:

39 gigs to 2,700 people.

MEMBERSHIP: (at 51)

New Members: Welcome, Pat Hefner and Austin Suthers
Renewals: Art Carinci (13), Tom Blackstone (30), Howard Lynn (40)
Due in May: Zach Schroeder, Bob Wallace
Overdue: Walt Bachmann, Mike Keith, Mike Doyle
May Birthdays: Gene Downie (4 th), Austin Suthers (9 th), Bill Dabbs (17 th), Bill Durham (27 th), Jerry Ramey (31 st)
**Medical:**

Bob Marshall is recovering from back surgery.
Bill Auquier fell while he was at the cinema. He broke a hip, had surgery and has had a partial hip replacement. Bill has transferred from St. Joseph's Hospital, to Lourdes for therapy.
Pete Mazzara has had awful back spasms.
Doc Mann has been hospitalized post-dental infection
Jerry Ramey has taken several falls, but is recovering and hopes to be back in May.

**In Memoriam:**

May 18, 2002, Don DeNoyer, Bio in #14
May 18, 2014, Lew Mahacek, Bio in #26

**District**

**D.O.C. Guest Night Gala & Fundraiser**

The Gentlemen Songsters want to raise some money for our Pioneer representatives in Nashville this year, and at the same time introduce our hobby to our invited guests--and your guests too.

Join the Gentlemen Songsters and their invited guests on Monday evening, May 2, 2016 at the Starr Presbyterian Church, 1717 W. 13 Mile Road (at Crooks Road) in Royal Oak, from 7:30 to 10:00.

Invite the guys you’ve been recruiting, or even just guys who wonder what barbershop music is or what that special brand of lunacy is that drives otherwise sane and sober men to devote inordinate amounts of time and energy to this hobby they all love so much.

See you on May 2!

Joe DeSantis, DOC Baritone

**JUG NIGHT IN BATTLE CREEK**

7:30 pm TUESDAY, MAY 17
First Wesleyan Church, 14425 S. Helmer Rd, Battle Creek, 49015.

“In addition to our top quartets, we’ll feature the HARMONY MERCENARIES CHORUS -- around 60 voices strong from chapters in West Michigan, with some really great music.”

**Quartet Boot Camp** (for quartets) and **Quartet Factory** (for quartet wannabe’s): Saturday, June 18, Okemos Conference Center.
Contact Roger Lewis at rjlewiscmc@aol.com.

**Harmony Explosion** is July 21-23. The BCC Executive Board has approved up to ten scholarships.

**International**

All information for the International Convention in Nashville is at: [http://www.barbershop.org/nashville/](http://www.barbershop.org/nashville/)

**Meet Pat Hefner**

Pat was born in Pontiac, where his father was a carpenter at Fisher Body.

Pat attended Pontiac Northern where he played violin in the school orchestra, and from which he graduated in 1974.
After a year at Oakland Community College in the automotive program he began working at a series of care dealerships, Lunghammer and Bowman among others. He has been a Service Adviser at Wally Edgar for the last three years.

He met his wife Donna in high school. They have two children, Jason who is a semi-professional jazz trombonist, and Julie who works at an Ortonville greenhouse.

He has been a member of the Waterford Baptist Cathedral for over 40 years. He is a deacon there, sings in their choir, and sometimes plays his violin. In fact he and Donna were married there.

He met Roger Holm at a garage sale; Roger invited him to our show last November, and that did it, Pat was hooked and has been a regular in our Tenor section ever since. He has also done quartetting with Fred Pioch, Chuck Murray, and Walt Bachmann.

Pat and Donna have ten acres in Ortonville, where Pat does “a little gardening and a lot of mowing.” He also enjoys taking and editing video.

Kohl Kitzmiller’s Senior Project

For his senior project, Kohl Kitzmiller (of INSTANT CLASSIC) put together a 40-voice multitrack Audio and Visual of Doug Harrington’s arrangement of “If I Had My Way.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rm1upT8XOyA

It includes all four members of INSTANT CLASSIC, plus Drew Wheaton (Tenor of FOREFRONT) and Joe Bourne (who did our learning tracks for “Wonderful World.”)

Kohl writes: “This was inspired by Eric Whitacre’s Virtual Chorus and was also used for my senior project at Ball State University.

“Participants (from left to right): Mike Beck, Chris Arnold, David Zimmerman, Kohl Kitzmiller, Theo Hicks, Kyle Kitzmiller, Patrick McAlexander, Drew Wheaton, Rhett Roberts, & Joe Bourne.”

Forefront sings “In Your Eyes,” the same song that was sung by Frontier in GR, I believe, on Youtube at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry95grTANus&feature=em-subsdigest

SINGING, MUSIC, AND PERFORMANCE -

Loose jaw

We continually hear that we need to sing “tall” with lots of spaciousness. The inner mouth needs to be tall to get sufficient resonance.

Three traditional ways of imagining this:

- Lift the soft palate
- Hot potato
- Yawn

Now the soft palate is pretty strongly attached to the roof of the mouth, so the only way to lift it is to tilt one’s head back. That doesn’t sound promising.
Hot potato and Yawn can be helpful, as long as they don’t introduce tension. But in my experience, tension creeps in.

But here is another approach. Just let the jaw drop, with the tongue lying on the bottom. As if gravity took over.

Linda Meehan calls it “dumb jaw.” Let your jaw hang down, not “searching.”

You might try this five-note descending exercise: “Nyah, Nyah, Nyah, Nyah, Nyah-a-a-a-ahh,” using the tongue, not the jaw, to frame the N,

My problem with this dumb jaw approach is that it is easier to be dumb lips too, getting sloppy with articulation. So the goal is to relax the jaw, let it drop, but exert more muscular activity to use the lips to articulate.

Donnie Slamka says, “Make the front of the mouth work more. So that the lips are doing the work instead of the jaw. Just let the jaw hang out there. Don’t force the jaw down. Just relax into that open space.”

**Tonic vs Dominant 7th Chords**

A recent posting on BBSnet asked for songs that contained only tonic (I) and dominant 7th (VII7) chords. The writer wanted to train his singers to be able to identify the difference. Responders listed over two dozen titles. Can you distinguish tonic and dominant 7th chords in these songs?

- Mary Had a Little Lamb
- The Farmer in the Dell
- The Itsy Bitsy Spider
- Achy Breaky Heart
- He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands
- How Much is That Doggie in the Window?
- Mary Had a Little Lamb
- Row, Row, Row Your Boat

**A barbershop quartet job description (The Bari)**

by Ron Knickerbocker from *In Tune*

An exhaustive survey of our Society forces one to conclude that baritones are, almost without fail, the most talented, the best looking, the most underrated, and the most humble members of the SPEBSQSA. For many years it was agreed—at least within our Society—that baritones should be seen but not heard. In the last 20–25 years the role of the baritone has changed significantly (but not the jokes about baritones—those will never change). Baritones have the same basic responsibilities as the tenor: Balance, Pitch, and stay out of the way.

1. Balance — If you listen critically to nearly any non-quartet baritone, (as well as a great many quartet bari’s) you will find that they sing out of balance most of the time. They are too loud when they are above the melody and not loud enough when they are below the melody.

   A. The bari’s balance responsibility changes often, dictated to a great extent by whether he is above or below the melody. 1) The general rule is when the bari is above the melody, sing more like a tenor; when below the melody, sing more like a bass.

   B. Be aware of not only whether you are above or below the melody, but also how far above or below the lead you are. 1) The closer you are to the tenor, the more nearly your volume must match the tenor’s volume. 2) The closer you are to the bass, the more nearly your volume must match that of the bass. 3) The closer you are to the lead, the more nearly your volume must match the lead’s volume.

   C. When the bari is assigned the same note as another voice part, the bari should surrender the note. 1) Usually, the bari will double the bass, but occasionally he can double the lead. If the bari is singing the same note as the tenor, someone is probably wrong!

   D. Be aware of what part of the chord you are singing. 1) Bass nearly always sings root or fifth of barbershop chords. The tenor nearly always sings thirds or sevenths. The bari can sing any part of the chord at any time. 2) Bari’s must recognize when they are singing roots or fifths and FILL. Sing with lead quality and power, but learn when to “throttle back.” 2. Tuning — It is usually preferable to tune to the bass rather than the lead because it is easier to tune to a note
below you than to one above you. Also, bases nearly always sing roots or fifths while leads can have any part of the chord at any time. As a rule, thirds and fifths have to be tuned a bit sharp, while minor sevenths should be tuned a little flat.

The statement about fifths and sevenths is justified by mathematics. The statement about tuning thirds sharp is true only because we sing thirds VERY flat from long years of habit.

A. A common trap for baritones is to assume that, just because two consecutive notes are written the same, they are sung the same. If they are parts of different chords, the bari might need to switch from a 7\textsuperscript{th} (slightly flatted) to a 3rd (slightly sharp), or vice versa. Listen. 3. Stay out of the way of the musical flow. A. Soft pedal hard consonants and B. Energize singable consonants.

The task of singing baritone is often accomplished when no one is aware of your part being sung. A quartet baritone soon discovers that he sometimes has no vocal identity. When he does (roots of chord modulations), he can shine.

Shoes

Do you have a favorite brand of black shoe for performances? This issue arose on BBShop. Here are some responses:


“Corfam (type of material) shoes. High Gloss military Dress patent leathers.”

“If you want patent leather get Bates premieres. If you want comfort buy waiters shoes. Corfams are like rental tux shoes.. look good but bad on your feet; hot and don’t breathe.”

“Shoes used by Firemen.”

“I personally think a round toe is one of the big comfort factors.”

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**Exec Bd Minutes, March 31, 2016, Excerpts from Teuber’s minutes**

Members present were Holm, Schroeder, Owens, Pioch, DeNio, and Teuber.

Treasurer’s Report: Available funds $18,675. Lance Shew and Zach Schroeder will be conducting the 2015 Annual Financial Review.

VP Growth and Development: Membership applications from Pat Hefner and Austin Suthers were approved.

VP Music and Performance: Holm reported the show talent includes FRONTIER, DOUBLEDATE mixed quartet, New Horizons Dixieland Band, and Dancers from the Dance Shoppe. We need to continue our conversation with the youth chorus “The Voice.”

Moved to charge $10 including tip for the 34 passenger bus to Frankenmuth.

Cast Party at Silver Lake Golf Course catered by Bartelli’s was tabled.

BSOM for March was John Cowlishaw.

**Editorial -**

Is it time for the BCC to take it to the next level? We all feel some disappointment at our performance and results in Grand Rapids, no one more than Tom. We have sort of plateaued in our quality. The judges have given us the feedback that we need in order to improve. Perhaps Tom and the Music Committee should hold a special meeting to consider how we can actualize that feedback. What can we do to improve the quality of our performance? Outside coaches? One-on-one singing coaching? More sectionals? Higher level demand placed on ourselves about learning the music? Considering the message of a song before learning words and notes?

**Errata -**

John,
I was reading your "history" story which started off, "The last time international was in Nashville... (July 2001). The editor will have to write a correction in the next Smoke Signals. The last time international was in Nashville was 2008.☺

--Tom (Ennis)
CALENDAR, (With Performance Times; Warm-ups 30’- 45’ earlier)

2016

Apr 26, T, 7:00  Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
May 2, M, 7:30  Guest night, D.O.C., Starr Pres. Church
May 3, T, 7:00  Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
May 10, T, 7:00  Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
May 17, T, 7:00  Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
May 21, Sa, 6:00  Flint Chpt Show
May 24, T, 7:00  Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
May 31, T, 7:00  Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC
Jun 7, T, 7:00  Chorus Rehearsal, WOAC, H.S. Guest Night
Jun 10  Send Off Show - Windsor
Jun 21, T, 5:30 bus  Frankenmuth, Dead Creek Picnic
Jun 25, Sa, 3:00  Waterford Historical Soc., Log Cabin Days
Jul 3-10  International, Nashville
Jul 21-23  Harmony Explosion, CMU
Oct 14—16  Fall Dist. Conv., in Kalamazoo; host: The QCA
Nov 5, 7:00  72nd Annual Pontiac-Waterford Show

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