MacNamara’s Band of Braves

The big Chief Chorus sang to approximately 200 people at this year’s Saint Patrick’s Day Sing-outs. Residents at Canterbury on the Lake, one of Waterford’s assisted living facilities, enjoyed pints of green beer with some of our chorus braves after the Thursday evening concert. And on Friday, March 16th the chorus provided lunchtime entertainment at the Auburn Hills Senior Center. Director, Tom Blue (pictured below) was on hand Thursday to warm up the proverbial band and to lead us into that harmonious fray. Assistant Director Fred McFadyen took over for the Friday gig, and the crowd was very responsive to the Big Chiefs’ renditions of the ballad “My Wild Irish Rose” and our dynamic uptune, “MacNamara’s Band.”

Quartets OverTime and 4GVN were also on hand to perform Can You Feel the Love Tonight, and What a Wonderful World at these events, and as always a few pick-up quartets spontaneously formed and made some more harmonies as a bonus for the shamrock-clad celebrants who stuck around for the afterglow.

“Tag-Time” Mike!

Perhaps having more fun than is humanly possible, our very own Assistant Director, Mike Frye, loves leading us in the grand ol’ tradition of singing “tags.” These tight harmonious endings to some of the best known and most beloved barbershop arrangements are not only enjoyable to sing and tartly sweet to hear, they are good training for the musical ear. Keep challenging us, Mike!

Welcome Kevin Lange!

Chief Eric led the charge at the ceremony to induct our newest bass, Kevin Lange (pictured on the left). Kevin is an experienced musician who loves to sing. He will be attending convention with us this month in Grand Rapids, where our robust bass section will be well represented. A special thanks to Bob Greenwood (pictured below), for reaching out to Kevin at Overtyme Grille and Taproom where we often go for our afterglows when we are exhausted from the hard work we put in at our Tuesday rehearsals. Bob’s successful invitation to Kevin earned him a “Man of Note” award, presented here by VP of Chapter Development, Jon Knapp.
Our Healthy Obsession

Just for the record there are no better potato chips anywhere in the world than the Sterzing’s I keep munching as I sit here at my Mom’s dining room table in Iowa City, preparing this issue of Smoke Signals. Since 1933 the Sterzing family of Burlington, Iowa has been perfecting their art. And as a result, that salty-crisp taste of heaven is so addictive that overindulgence is a virtual certainty. Come to think of it, that’s a pretty good marketing strategy. Running upstairs every few minutes to help my Sweet Adeline mom cope with her post-surgical challenges has been my best line of defense. Hopefully it will keep me from what could become the kind of addiction that might necessitate my own surgery.

Barbershop music, like potato chips, can be very enthralling. Perfecting the art is a never-ending challenge for all and perhaps even a borderline obsession for some in the Big Chief Chorus. Yet ours is a healthy obsession, in which “overindulgence” carries minimal risk, with a huge potential for reward.

"Musical excellence and exceptional performance are the keys to success! Good singing will bring growth and happiness for all." (Chuck Murray).

Before I joined the BCC a little over a year ago, my musical background consisted entirely of a half dozen piano lessons at age 7, a brief stint in the percussion section of my Junior High band, which ended abruptly when it was discovered that I had a severe lack of rhythm, and most enjoyably, singing at the top of my lungs in church. I could hardly read a note of music, and usually sang melody, though I tried to harmonize a bit here and there. As a musical novice I have been soaking up every bit of helpful information that I can use to perfect my art.

Quartet Time Perhaps the biggest cause for improvement in my singing has been devoting time to informal quartetting. Most weeks after our chorus business meetings we enjoy a few minutes of listening to various pick-up quartets, and hardly a week goes by without someone enlisting me as their baritone. It has also been a welcome development to see this opportunity expanded and different men taking part in it. I also find it encouraging that people are expressing interest in the BHS Barber Pole Cat learning program. Chuck Murray has been a big help in getting men motivated to sing in quartets. He is also providing leadership and coaching tips to some of the younger guys who would like to join quartets. And chorus leaders like Fred McFadyen and Mike Frye are always ready to support anyone who would like to earn their barber pole tie tack.

Vocal Coaching Under the leadership of Tom Blue and with tips from experienced barbershoppers in the chorus I have learned some techniques for making that big barbershop sound. Breath support and vowel matching are essential building blocks for the kind of resonance and chord ringing that is unique to barbershop. Eion Zinc’s article, “How to Sing in the Barbershop Style” (www.barbershop.org) was also very helpful. He outlines two basic techniques for maximizing vocal resonance, which he calls ‘Creating Space’ and ‘Vocal Perching.’ Creating space refers to expanding the resonating chamber for our voices by lifting the soft palate as we sing. This happens naturally when we yawn, and when we sing we can project sound more efficiently by mimicking the sensation of yawning. Vocal perching addresses the focusing of the sound we generate. The sound can resonate from far back in the throat, from way forward in the nose, or from somewhere in between. Gold medal baritone and quartet coach Tony DeRosa describes the optimal “perch” for our voices to make that barbershop sound as directly above our top molars.

Getting off the Paper & Good Listening We also need to learn our words and notes individually, which requires work outside of rehearsals. Learning tracks and sheet music help in that process, but real barbershop singing is so much more than words and notes. Jeff Doig, the lead in the OverTime Quartet, reminds me constantly to enjoy the music. It’s in the enjoyment of locking chords and ringing them for all they are worth that real barbershop happens. When the words and notes are not learned down pat, mental overload prevents my enjoyment of the music. But when the chords lock and ring the music is magical and the barbershop experience becomes that healthy addiction we love in the BCC.
On Monday, May 7, 2018, from 7:30 – 10:00 PM, DOC will be sponsoring and hosting the 3rd annual “Jug Night/Barbershopalooza” fundraiser at the Royal Oak Middle School, 709 North Washington, St, Royal Oak, MI 48067. All proceeds will benefit the Pioneer District quartets going to International in July and Midwinter next January. Last year over 170 attended and everyone had a blast raising over $2,000.

Barbershoppers are encouraged to bring non-barbershopping guests to the event—whether you regard them as actual singing candidates or not. Let’s show them a uniquely-good time as we display our great hobby and treat them to the music of some of our district’s top quartets.

Harmony Platoon
4:00 – 5:30 Saturday, April 21st
Crown Plaza Ballrooms, Grand Rapids, MI

Come experience the JOY and EXCITEMENT of quartet singing & friendly COMPETITION at the Pioneer District Spring Convention.

To take advantage of this opportunity you must commit to memorizing your voice part for at least three of the songs listed below, and register by April 16th to get full access to the learning tracks. Quartets will be drawn at random, and you will receive contact information for your quartet so you can figure out which songs you can sing at competition. The top two quartets will sing on stage at the Saturday night show.

Are you off paper with any of these songs?
- Hello Mary Lou Arr. David Wright Stock #8615
- Come Go with Me Arr. Tom Gentry Stock #200352
- Breaking Up is Hard to Do Arr. Tom Campbell #8643
- King of the Road Arr. Scott Kitzmiller Stock # 202414
- Under the Boardwalk Arr. BHS Stock # 8605
- Can You Feel The Love Tonight Arr. June Dale # 8203
- Never the Less Arr. Tom Campbell Stock #115419

To register, just sign up online when you register for the convention or call Chris Berry at 734-755-2926.

RISER ETIQUETTE
By Chuck Murray

At a chorus event, a “step-out quartet” may be asked by the director(s), to “sing one or two songs, to “give the chorus a break” from extensive singing. How should the chorus members act with respect to this “step-out” quartet? In this case, the chorus members’ jobs are to help the audience focus on the quartet’s singing and help create excitement about the quartet’s performance.

The way to do this is to keep your eyes on the quartet, not wandering about the venue, or looking at the audience. No distracting movements should be made. Look “excited” about the quartet’s performance, with a “happy look,” keeping your mouth slightly open and relaxed. The quartet is “giving you a break” from singing one song, right after another!

When the quartet is done, DO NOT APPLAUD! Merely SMILE, AND BEAM WITH PRIDE, as you again focus on your director! Remember, the quartet is part of the chorus, and applauding them looks to the audience as if you are congratulating yourselves. As our directors have said to our audiences, “Our job is to sing well, and your job is to applaud!”

Harmony at Sea

Local quartet, Detroit Sound Machine, along with world renowned coaches Cindy Hansen and David Ellis, will be hosting a BARBERSHOP Caribbean Cruise this coming February 2019. This is an exciting adventure they would like to share with the Big Chiefs and their tribe.

There will be optional daily Barbershop classes available as part of this Harmony at Sea Cruise package, and opportunities to sing on the Cruise Show. An optional 3-day trip to Disney World after the cruise could make this a wonderful opportunity for a vacation with the grandkids. Information will be presented soon about how to join this exciting adventure.

April Birthdays
6th - Jason Hanson  16th - Jeff Spires

Membership Renewals

| Carinci, A. | McDonald, D. |
| Hanson, J. | Owens, J. |
| Keith, M. | Ramey, J. |
| Legato, B. | Schroder, Z. |
| Lynn, H. | Wallace, B. |
**Some Benefits of Singing**

By Chuck Murray

Singing is an ageless enjoyment; you are never too young or too old to sing. The art of singing boosts your immune system, helping you to fend off disease and making you feel more energized and uplifted. This helps us forget about those normal aches and pains of life!

Studies have shown how singing is good for you, physically, mentally and emotionally. Singing, whether alone or in groups, increases the oxygen levels in your blood stream, and helps with the production of “feel-good hormones.” In this way singing can be likened to eating a chocolate bar, but without the risk of gaining weight! Exercising the vocal folds improves the voice and speech. Singing with a group benefits our social outlook and tends toward a happier life. Singing relieves stress and causes better sleep as well as mental alertness.

No wonder barbershoppers appear to be so “unusually happy!” As our past District President, Roger Lewis, once said, “Singing is Life!” If you’ve got friends and neighbors with whom you’d like to share the joys and benefits of singing, invite them to come to a rehearsal, and sing with the Big Chief Chorus!

**BCC Calendar**

Chorus Rehearsals are every Tuesday Evening from 7:30-10:00 PM at the Waterford Oaks Activity Center, 2800 Watkins Lake Road. Warmups begin at 7:25. Rehearsal afterglows follow at the Overtyme Grill and Taproom, 4724 Dixie Hwy.

**Chorus Events**

Apr. 20–22, Spring Convention, Grand Rapids
May 18, Fri. Elmhaven Manor, 600 W. Walton Blvd. Pontiac, MI. 1:00pm. Warm up at 12:30
June 19, Tue. Frankenmuth Dead Creek Picnic.
The bus leaves at 5:00 PM
Sept. 16, Sun. MIOCA (Ovarian Cancer Benefit), Rochester Hills Village, at 9:00 AM. Warm-up at 8:30 AM.
Nov. 3, Sat. 74th Annual Show at Mott PAC.
Nov. 27, Sat. Waterford Tree Lighting, 5200 Civic Ctr. Dr. at 6:00 PM.
Dec. 15, Sat. Christmas Bus Tour, bus leaves at 10:45 AM.

**A Belated Valentine**

Inclimte weather could not keep the hearty lovebirds of Scott Lake Baptist Church down, it just delayed things about a month. OverTime sang their repertoire of love songs to about 30 friends who gathered on March 10 for their annual Valentines Banquet.

**Barbershop Trivia**

By Chuck Murray

Sam’s Tavern opened in Seattle in the 1940s, in a little 1,200 square foot building on top of a hill near the University of Washington. Sam, the owner was a barbershop quartetter, who liked singing Harry Wood’s popuar 1926 song “When the Red, Red Robin Comes Bob Bobbin’ Along.” He liked it so much in fact that in 1960, he changed the name of his pub to “Sam’s Red Robin,” the very first Red Robin restaurant. In 1973, jumbo beers, cellophane-wrapped sandwiches, and popcorn, were replaced on the menu with the Red Robin Gourmet Burgers, including the revolutionary Royal Red Robin Burger™ (topped with a fried egg). Thanks to our fabulous hobby, the burger world has been forever changed!”

**Chapter Leadership**

Director: Thomas Blue (248-814-9627)
Assistant Directors: Fred McFadyen, Mike Frye
President: Eric Domke (248-674-2323)
Past President: Jack Teuber (248-334-3686)
VP: Chapter Development: Jon Knapp (248-766-0999)
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)
At Large: A. Carinci, B. Greenwood, R.Sturdy, A. Suthers
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
Bulletin Editor: Jon Knapp (248-766-0999)