The New Crew for the New Year

On Tuesday, January 14, 2020 our illustrious tribe gathered at the Shark Club in Waterford for the annual installation banquet. Past District President, Dave Montera (below), helped us celebrate a successful year by delivering the challenge to the new crew of officers and presenting them to the society. From right to left in the above picture, is Ed Reed (member at large), Pete Mazarra (member at large), Jim Owens (treasurer), Art Carinci (secretary), Jack Teuber (VP of promotions), Austin Suthers (VP of music and performance), Fred Pioch (VP of membership), Eric Domke (president), and Bill Maxfield (member at large). Missing from the photo is Ray Sturdy (member at large).

At the banquet MC Art Carinci presided over an award ceremony in which various honors were bestowed upon members of the tribe who had a hand in the success of the chorus during the year. Eric Domke (in the yellow shirt) has served as chapter treasurer for many years and is this year’s well deserving recipient of the President’s Award.

The Raleigh Hallman Music Man award went to OverTime Quartet for their musical contribution to the betterment of the chapter. Pictured here with Jeff Doig the original lead singer of the quartet, are from left to right, Jon Knapp (baritone), Austin Suthers (lead), Charlie Perry (bass), and Pat Hefner (tenor). OverTime performed several selections for the attendees including “When There’s Love at Home” which began with lead singer Austin, but ended with former lead Jeff who tagged himself in just before the key change.

“Smoke Signals Editor Emeritus” John Cowlishaw Interviews current editor, Jon Knapp who received the coveted Barbershopper of the year award for 2019.

JC: Good afternoon, Jon. Let’s begin. When did you start singing?

JK: I was 53 when I started, which was three years ago.

JC: Ah, yes, but you must have been doing singing other than barbershop before then.

JK: Yes, church choir and the usual shower singing were my only previous experience.

JC: Was your childhood family musical?

JK: Not really. My grandma gave us a piano when I was about six; and I took a few lessons, but didn’t have the motivation to continue. And my dad taught himself how to play a couple songs, but never pursued it further. I
tried playing drums in middle school but soon learned that I had no rhythm so that didn’t go very well. And though my mom is a Sweet Adeline, I never saw her perform until I was in my 20s.

JC: Well, you’ve surely come a long way from that humble beginning. Now you’re an integral part of two choruses and a quartet; What awards you’ve received this year.

JK: I received the Barbershopper of the Year in both the City Lights and the Big Chief Choruses. And my quartet OverTime [in which I sing baritone] received the Raleigh Hallman Award for our musical performances in 2019.

JC: We all know that singing is acting, performing. Jon, you are a committed Christian pastor. Some lyrics may differ from your own personal philosophy – for example, a song like Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah.” Has that been a problem for you?

JK: No problem so far, but I would have an issue singing something that offended my faith. A song that might offend if interpreted a certain way would need to be sufficiently ambiguous that I could interpret it consistently with my beliefs and the audience would need to have an avenue to interpret it favorably as well. In other words, I wouldn’t want to encourage inappropriate beliefs through my singing.

JC: As I have told you several times, I am tickled pink that you have maintained Smoke Signals and at such a high level. What has been most rewarding as the Smoke Signals editor?

JK: It’s a lot of work in my otherwise busy life. But the fellas are always extremely appreciative of my work, so in that sense it is very rewarding.

JC: What has been most difficult about the editorship?

JK: Doing my best work when I’m preoccupied with my many other responsibilities is very difficult.

JC: Will you be going to Los Angeles with the City Lights Chorus this summer? And will your wife get to go too?

JK: I will be going, but my wife, though she supports my hobby, is by no means a fan of barbershop music. I can hardly get her to attend our local shows, let alone putting her through a week of torture in LA. Thankfully with the money we earn as a quartet, my expenses are not too burdensome. In that sense LA will test her supportiveness for my hobby.

JC: Besides singing on stage, what are you most looking forward to at your first BHS International?

JK: I’m hoping to meet some of my “barbershop crushes,” and to root for my friends in Frontier Quartet at the Quartet Finals.

JC: Have you gotten any of your church members interested in singing barbershop?

JK: They have attended our shows, but so far none of the men have caught the bug. One member visited City Lights’ guest night with me and another came to a Big Chief rehearsal in November. Both have expressed an interest in further checking out the Big Chief chorus, but so far neither has been able to make time on Tuesday nights.

JC: Thanks, Jon.     JK: You’re welcome! And thank you.

**Benefits of Singing for Seniors**
by Tom Blue

This past weekend, I attended the Michigan Music Conference in Grand Rapids and had the opportunity to hear great choirs, attend informative sessions on singing and conducting and hear Bobby McFerrin and the Grand Rapids Symphony. While strolling through the exhibit booths I came across a book that has been of interest to me for awhile now, “Rejuvenating Senior Voices (myself included)” by Michael Kemp whose mother was the well-known choral conductor, teacher and pedagogue, Helen Kemp. Helen Kemp has two well-known sayings...

“Body, Mind, Spirit Voice; It takes the whole body to sing and rejoice!” and “You don’t stop singing because you get old; you get old because you stop singing.”

In Chapter 15 (pgs. 63-64) of Michael Kemp’s book, he shares the following “benefits for singers singing in a choir”...

- It’s an easy way to make new friends and feel a part of a tight-knit group who enjoy doing something they love.
Singing in a choir gives one a sense of doing something productive, which brings joy to many.

Singing in a choir is therapeutic; rehearsals become a time when singers can put aside, for awhile at least, their concerns for the day. It is a refreshing activity that leaves you uplifted and smiling.

Singing in a choir teaches beneficial posture and breathing techniques.

Singing in a choir gives members a sense of pride and self-worth.

Singing in a choir provides musical memories that can take you momentarily out of difficult situations by calling to mind a beautiful piece of music you have sung.

Singing in a choir opens the door to wonderful poetry in a medium easy to recall many years later.

Choirs can be a significant source of public relations and development for the institution, spreading good will and creating a positive image in the community. It is an opportunity to make a positive contribution.

Choir concerts provide opportunities for your family and friends to come spend more time with you and be proud of your accomplishments.

Singing in choir is like making pizza. Sure, it takes a while to grate the cheese, make the sauce, and roll the dough, but the final product is really worth it.

There is a bond among choir members – it’s like family.

Not only is the sound superior. But also there is such a spirit of enthusiasm, friendship, and enjoyment of music.

There is nothing as rewarding as knowing the chorus sounds wonderful, and you were a part of that beauty. Singing in a choir lets you form great friendships that otherwise probably wouldn’t exist.

2020 Mid-Winter Convention

Submitted by John Cowlishaw

Jacksonville, FL, Jan 8-11 - The Big Chief Chorus was singly represented by its southern member, John Cowlishaw, but the Pioneer District was represented by its 62-member Pioneer Spirit Senior Chorus, and Senior quartets – MonTAJJ (Coombs, Carey, Ennis, Masalskis) and Station Break (Hansen, Conner, Warnaar, Maclaren).

Pioneer Spirit sang very well and received an Outstanding rating. (There were three choruses above them, with Superior ratings.) Their second number opens with a quartet that then blends seamlessly into the whole chorus, a goose-bump moment.

MonTAJJ was 12th with a 71.7, and Station Break was 17th with a 69.7. The contest featured 25 quartets, with scores of 65 to 79, and was won by Hearsay, out of JAD. Competitions and performances were held in the Florida Theatre, two blocks from the Hyatt headquarters hotel.

The Florida was built in 1927 as a high-style movie theater. Tickets for the convention sold out for the first time, based on the 1900-seat capacity of the Theatre. 650 of those seats were occupied by high-energy youth, members of 15 NextGen Junior Quartets, and 13 Junior Choruses, and who squealed from the balcony as performers added their embellishments.

Highlights for this reviewer included:

- Harmony University classes:
  - “Arrangers Gathering,” particularly discussing the predominance of SheetMusicPlus, as a source of arrangeable music, and an easier destination of arrangements than the BHS site.
  - “The Evolution of the Barbershop Quartet Style,” by David Wright
  - Gold Medal Hour and Performances by Signature, a quartet with so much integrity
  - The passion of the Leads of Signature (Daniel Cochran) and Throwback (Sean Devine)
  - A vocal lesson with Steve Scott. He says that the Singing category is going to shift from emphasizing “support” to emphasizing “vocal fold closure.” (This will be a tough concept to teach.) He also helped me improve resonance by adjustments in upper body posture.
  - The high-energy presence of so many youths, boding well for the future of barbershop.

Performances will soon be posted on BHS’ YouTube site: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjJn75rK6lUaYwal1Ald1gg. The next Midwinter convention will be in New York City.

Happy February Birthdays

to these Harmonious Braves

22nd John Northey     23rd Pete Mazarra
Al Monroe 75, beloved Big Chief tenor was honored for his life and music at a memorial service in Clarkston on January 13, 2020. The chorus fondly remembers Al for his participation in chapter quartet and chorus events. John Cowlishaw’s bio of Al can be found in the Sept. 2006 issue of Smoke Signals. Dan Valco 93, sang lead for the Big Chiefs. He is remembered for his colorful life and long service. Dan was a WWII veteran who served in Germany in the 69th tank battalion. His Big Chief brothers were honored to sing at his funeral service on January 10 at the Pixley funeral home in Auburn Hills.

Jack Teuber - Tenor, Ed Reed - Lead, Art Carinci - bass, and Ray Sturdy - baritone, sing at quartet time one of their gospel favorites. Their quartet is yet unnamed, but they will be performing at the worship service in Battle Creek at the Pioneer District Spring Convention. Noah Blue receives appreciation at the installation banquet for his participation and interest in the chorus.

Chorus director Tom Blue seen here on the 2019 Christmas bus tour receives a gift from Eric Domke, including donations collected from appreciative chorus members.

OverTime Quartet seen here in Christmas apparel continue to bring harmony to many in Oakland county. They are preparing to compete in Battle Creek at the Spring Convention.

Chapter Leadership...

Director: Thomas Blue (248) 705 7952
Assistant Directors: Mike Frye; Jeff Doig
Section leaders: G. Moss, R. Sturdy, J. Doig, P. Hefner
President: Eric Domke (248) 674-2323
VP-Chapter Development: Fred Pioch (248) 330-2050
VP-Marketing & PR: Jack Teuber (248) 334-3686
VP-Music & Performance, Austin Suthers (248) 722-4464
Secretary: Art Carinci (248) 939-0956
Treasurer: Jim Owens (248) 682-4311
Members at Large: Mazarra, Maxfield, Reed, Sturdy
Bulletin Editor: Jon Knapp – jknappSLBC@att.net

Chorus Calendar

Rehearsals are Tuesday’s at 7:30 PM at Canterbury on the Lake, 5601 Hatchery Road, Waterford, MI 48329. Singout call times are one half hour before each scheduled event.

Feb. 14 (Fri) Singing Valentines
Mar. 13 (Fri) Auburn Hills Community Center at 12:30 PM
1827 N. Squirrel Road, Auburn Hills, 48326
Mar. 17 (Tue) Canterbury on the Lake Independent 6:30 PM
Apr. 24-26 Pioneer District Spring Convention, Battle Creek

Go Fund Me

Please use the link below to donate to our brother Mike Frye’s son Laine and his family as they recover from losses sustained when he was seriously injured in a car accident. $32,670 has been collected toward their $75,000 goal so far.

https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-laine