

Pioneer Troubadour

Official publication of the Pioneer District
Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of
Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc.



Oct/Nov 1999

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Third Coast — a quartet experience at Harmony College

By Al Bonney,
Traverse City Chapter President

As members of the Traverse City Chapter, we were four of a total contingent of 19 members who made the 16-hour drive to St. Joseph, Mo. With the largest chapter contingent present this year, our group took some pride knowing we would bring home a solid foundation of new singing skills to benefit the chapter as a whole. As members of the Pioneer contingent, we were proud to be among the five quartets from our district. The entire quartet-coaching group numbered only 30 quartets! Go Pioneer!

Formed only 16 months ago, THIRD COAST is a new quartet, and with no contest time under our belts, we knew we needed coaching if we were to move to the next level of excellence. Our previous experiences at Harmony College were strong enough for us to know that the concentrated focus for six days would be very helpful. What we did not realize was just how good it would be!

We began singing and learning on Monday morning and didn't stop 'til Saturday afternoon. On the first evening, I paused to make a list of all the things I learned in just the first day — my list filled a page!

From breath support and rehearsal discipline, to mellow sound, vowel matching, and voice production tips, the week was an immersion course in small ensemble singing taught by the best of the best.

Bobby Grey Jr., Freddie King, Bill Meyers, Jim Henry — the omnipresence of gold medals became dizzying and commonplace. While we never ceased to be just a little intimidated singing for them, they treated us with the respect and good humor usually reserved for good friends. True barbershoppers all!

The peak of the week for us was the opportunity to perform one of the numbers we had worked on all week during the *Parade Of Quartets*. Fearing the worst from an audience of our peers, we were treated like the other 23 quartets singing that night with cheers and hoots of enthusiasm and support.

Home now, and mostly caught up on my sleep, I know I will go



Hard at work in one of the many grueling sessions during Harmony College quartet coaching, Freddie King (center) demonstrates an intricate piece of choreography to quartet THIRD COAST. (l to r) Tenor Al Bonney, lead Phil Knapp, King, bass Dan Decker, and baritone Jim Mudgett. Photo provided by Al Bonney. Additional photos of Harmony College on pages 14 and 15.

back next year — hopefully with my quartet — but certainly I will return to our Society's finest and most wonderful learning experience. Only those who have gone through Harmony College understand the growth and joy the week brings to our individual and collective barbershop lives. The pity is that the depth and breadth of the experience is so significant and wonderful, mere words fall short trying to describe why the uninitiated should want to come along next year. ■



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Pioneer/pionet.htm**

Dazzling Diamonds sparkle

By Ken Gibson, Lansing Chapter

Congratulations to the DAZZLING DIAMONDS — champions of the Sweet Adelines International (SAI) first Rising Star Quartet Competition for young women held in San Antonio, Texas. How could such a young ensemble accomplish this? Where did they come from?

It was only a year and a half ago that the Lansing Chapter held their first quartet competition for area high schools. The event received great publicity in both the *Troubadour* and the *Harmonizer*. More than ten quartets entered and were judged by a highly qualified panel. The winners (one of three young women's quartets entered) were the DIA-

MOND GIRLS from Grand Ledge Middle School. Their music teacher, Jamie Carey (lead of FIRE-POWER! and then-Lansing Chapter chorus director), assembled the foursome from his choral program, assisted with music, and coached them to their victory. But this was just the beginning!

During the summer and fall of last year they were introduced to and regularly visited the Water Wonderland Chorus of SAI in Okemos, Mich. They soon became members and started coaching with Kendra (Gibson) Lapointe and Vicki Gibson. Their repertoire was expanding (along with their sound) and they were making numerous appearances in and around the

Lansing area. It was later that fall that they caught the attention of Region #17 of SAI which encompasses part of Michigan and much of Ohio and Pennsylvania. The region was excited with their potential and agreed to sponsor them as

these four young ladies competed against 11 other quartets from across the United States and Great Britain. They captured first place in three out of four categories and were crowned the first Rising Star Quartet Champions of SAI.



DAZZLING DIAMONDS

competitors in the first ever Young Women in Harmony event entitled the Rising Star Quartet Competition.

Now the work began to prepare for only the second contest in their young career, even though they were just starting eighth and ninth grades! New music, choreography, and costumes were the order of business for the winter and spring of this year.

They officially registered their quartet with SAI as the DAZZLING DIAMONDS since the name DIAMOND GIRLS was already taken. They then began a vigorous rehearsal schedule.

On Friday night, July 23, with their families all in attendance,

In addition to their \$2,000 scholarships (which matches Lansing's prize), they will be honored guests and performers at the Sweet Adeline International contest and convention in Atlanta this September.

These four Grand Ledge honor students, athletes (oh yes, and first generation SAI) are truly "Rising Stars."

Thank you Jamie and the Lansing Chapter! Thank you Kendra and Vicki! Thank you WATER WONDERLAND CHORUS and Region #17. And especially thank you to ALL Barber-shoppers and Sweet Adelines who are actively encouraging and promoting our wonderful hobby to the youth or our world. We will surely reap the rewards of our efforts for generations to come! ■

TDSC has new address

The Detroit Sound Co. has a new address:

<http://www.thedetroitsoundco.com>

Old address:

<http://hometown.aol.com/altonfisk/music1/index.htm>

Convention *a/* Wisdom

By Jim Styer, Convention PR

Pioneer District barbershoppers are invited to help celebrate a birthday during the fall convention Friday-Sunday, Oct. 15-17, in Battle Creek, headquartered at McCamly Plaza Hotel.

That Friday is the 57th birthday of Bill Cody of Alexandria, Va., the Society's representative to the convention.

"How about if we publicize this in the *Troub* and ask everyone to bring a birthday card for Bill," suggested Roger Lewis, convention chairman. Leave the cards at the registration desk by 6:00 p.m. Friday and they will be presented at the quartet semifinals, or Cody may read them at breaks if he's master of ceremonies of the chorus contest.

If you wish to send cards in advance, mail them in care of Jim Styer, 72 Allison Drive, Battle Creek MI 49017.

Cody, a 25-year barbershopper, is a Society Board member and has competed with the ALEXANDRIA HARMONIZERS in all 11 competition appearances, including three for gold medals. A bass, he also was a member in 1980-91 of VAUDEVILLE, five-time international medalists, and in 1992-95 of ARCADE, three-time international semifinalists. He has held many chapter, district, and Society positions, including Harmony College and COTS faculty member, presentation judge, and several offices and committees.

CONVENTION BIDS

During business meetings Friday, bids for future convention sites will be considered. The convention

is in Battle Creek through 2001.

Bids for the following three years have been submitted by Lansing and the Detroit northern suburb of Troy. Another may be received from Battle Creek.

"A site committee will make recommendations to the district board after visits to the cities. The board then will present the question to the House of Delegates," Lewis said.

The board will meet at 9:00 a.m. Friday and the House of Delegates at 2:00 p.m. Friday, both at the headquarters hotel. Other business will include election of officers for 2000.

COMPETITIONS

The quartet semifinals and finals to select a new district champion will be at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, respectively, at W. K. Kellogg Auditorium.

A new feature will be the show package during quartet finals Saturday. Quartets will sing two competition songs as usual, and may fill remaining time within 14 minutes with any other singing or show presentation they wish. Forty additional points are available for the show package. Pioneer is joining 12 of the 15 other districts in testing this concept.

The chorus contest, to select a district representative to the international convention next summer, will be at noon Saturday at the auditorium.

SENIORS' CONTEST

The Senior Quartet Contest will be held about 4:00 p.m. Saturday in the Branson Ballroom at McCamly

Plaza Hotel. It will not be a part of the quartet semifinals as previously planned.

Competitors' ages must total at least 240 and no member can be younger than 55. The winner can represent the district in the seniors' contest at mid-winter convention.

Quartets may register with Contest & Judging VP Joel Mills by e-mail (jmills@voyager.net), by contacting him during convention at the second-floor judges' room at the headquarters hotel, or at the Branson Ballroom just before the contest.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Pioneer District Quartet Champions Association show is scheduled at one-half hour after the quartet semifinals Friday at McCamly Plaza's Branson Ballroom. Cost is \$5.00. Ken Gibson, a member of 1969 district champs, THE VAGABONDS, is organizing the show.

Mike-testers for the chorus contest will be the JOE BARBERSHOP CHORUS, open to any barbershopper whether singing in another chorus or not. Rehearsal will be at 10:00 a.m. Saturday at the gymnasium in the auditorium building. (This is a change from the previously reported 10:30 a.m.)

Director will be Don Slamka of quartet POWER PLAY. Songs are Don Gray's arrangement of "Irish Blessing" (music on inside rear cover of this issue) and Mac Huff's "Sweet and Lovely."

A mass sing is to be held one-half hour after the chorus competi-

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A View From The Top

David Cole, President

How many people have seen the light?

In my limited years of barbershopping, I have had many wonderful moments, met many talented individuals, and seen many interesting sights. But I keep asking myself, "Does anybody get it?" I've seen T-Shirts with "Tune It or Die" and "Barbershop Is



David Cole

Not a Spectator Sport" printed on them, and have asked the same question: "Does anybody get it." I've seen grown men cry uncontrollably after winning the international contest — they get it! But I keep asking myself, "Does Joe Barbershopper get it?"

I wonder how many people in our barbershop society can truly explain what it is like to sing well, I mean really good four-part barbershop chords? I wonder how many people in our barbershop society can say they were a part of a chorus or quartet who scored 90s or better in competition? How about 92s? I wonder how many people in our barbershop society can explain what it is like to sing chords so well that they dare not mess it up for the benefit of the other singers?

I wonder if I will ever personally experience pure four-part barbershop harmony like it's never been felt before? Will you? How about the guy you stand next to on the risers? How about the other three guys in your quartet? Are you in-

involved in singing barbershop harmony solely to attain mediocrity? And if that is the case, is mediocrity fair to our customers, the audience?

Our ears are funny instruments, allowing us to instantly detect good singing from mediocre singing. Our brain places a limit on how poor the mediocrity will be before we choose not to participate, whether we are singing or listening. If these two statements are true (and they are), then our audiences are no different than ourselves. If they are not pleasantly entertained, they will either stop listening, simply leave, or choose not to participate the next time barbershoppers come to perform.

I want to take you on a trip. The destination is real, only the characters have been changed to protect the innocent.

Imagine a chorus which is so organized that when you walk through the doors for the first time, you are greeted by the membership vice-president, handed off to a mentor, given a guest book with all of the chorus' songs tabbed in alphabetical order, handed to a voice placement coach, personally greeted by at least a dozen chorus members, including the director, placed in your spot on the risers, all prior to the 30-minute warm-up session.

Imagine a chorus whose members are so focused on perfect singing that no one talks while standing on the risers for three hours. Imagine a director who only needs to whisper to make his point. Imagine having a performance package with

so much activity that you wonder what's wrong when you are simply standing in place. Imagine having sectionals at least once each week to work on perfecting notes and vowel placement. Imagine standing on the risers, hearing the purest chords like you've never heard before coming from all around you.

Imagine standing on the risers while they are vibrating from the undertones which the bass section is producing. Imagine not being able to sing simply because you were in awe from what was happening around you. Imagine never having the opportunity to enjoy these emotions.

What is it that drew you to barbershopping to begin with? Was it the style, the songs, or was it the good quality of singing? Are you still satisfied with that style, those songs, and the quality of singing?

If not, then what are you doing to create a positive change? Do you have the authority to initiate change? YES! You also have the responsibility to make sure that your barbershopping experience is satisfying to both yourself, and your neighbor on the risers.

So what can you do? It's simple. Speak out to your chapter board, and/or music team. Make it abundantly clear to the other three guys in your quartet. Shout it to the world that you will except nothing less than beautifully sung barbershop chords.

What would happen to our society if everyone, I mean everyone, demanded a higher level of quality in his barbershop experience?

We are at the threshold of a new era in barbershop quartet and chorus singing. We are beginning to see a newfound respect for our hobby.

(Continued on page 12)

Society Synopsis

Don Challman, Society Board Member

At our recent meeting in Anaheim, President Ed Waesche indicated that the Society appears to be having a financial shortfall of close to \$100,000 by the end of the



Don Challman

year. This may mean an even higher dues increase in 2000 unless we are able to:

- 1) Increase membership.
- 2) Expand our merchandising operations at district conventions.
- 3) Purchase more merchandise, music, etc., from the Society.
- 4) Promote the use of the MBNA America SPEBSQSA credit card (which already brings in the equivalent of a \$4.00 dues reduction).

By improving the above, we can substantially decrease the deficit.

New members are running close to 20 percent below expectations and our retention rate has slipped from 88 percent to 86.5. As was mentioned in a previous article, the Society Membership Department has shifted some of its responsibilities and will be spending 48 weeks in the field working exclusively on extension sites and chartering chapters. The goal is 100 new chapters by the end of 2000 and 1000 new members by December 31, 2001.

Key target areas for new chapters will include metropolitan areas where growth should be supported, not resisted, by existing chapters. We will meet our goal of 20 new chapters this year, but will not reach our objective of 36 new licensed chapters.

Harmony College/Directors College was very successful, with the largest attendance in 20 years. 30 quartets and over 140 directors/ass't. directors attended in addition to regular students. The Society continues to urge districts to sponsor music educators at HEP functions.

The Russian Barbershop Festival held in late July in St. Petersburg was a huge success. 250-plus participants included the Columbus-Buckeye chorus, and other barbershoppers from coast to coast. According to Society President Ed Waesche, "They evoked bravos, encores, and wild applause wherever they went." Some choral directors traveled over 2,000 miles to take in Dr. Greg Lyne's master classes.

Youth Outreach Camps were held in FWD, Cardinal, JAD, Rocky Mountain, Southwestern, and Sunshine districts. Other districts have plans underway and should be touting success stories shortly.

This year's Leadership Forum will again focus on team building between the seven functional district vice-presidents and their Society committees, between district presidents and their teams, and between district presidents and the Society Board. This forum is the setting for all district officers to develop their work plan for 2000, assign responsibilities, etc.

The following board actions took place at Anaheim:

- 1) The Board approved revisions in the Operations Manual concerning the new Young Men in Harmony Committee (effective January 1, 2000) and the position of DVP for

Young Men in Harmony (required in all districts by January 1, 2001).

2) Non-attendance at chapter meetings shall not be considered grounds for suspension or expulsion, but may at the discretion of the chapter board of directors be considered a reasonable cause for refusing to accept members' renewal dues.

3) Training for district personnel on writing grants, donations, gifts, and bequests will take place at the Leadership Forum and at COTS.

4) An ad hoc Cost-Sharing Task Force (mentioned previously) was established to determine how best to fund Society programs that involve leadership, training activities, and contest performances. ■

Harmonie Meisters urge medical exams

The Gaylord Chapter's HARMONIE MEISTERS are putting a new twist on the 60-year-old tradition of songs of sweetheart, Mom, flag and apple pie. The chorus at all of their singing engagements urge men over the age of 50 to see their physician once every year for a prostate gland exam and blood test. Also, young men age 15 to 35 are urged to do a "self-examination" for testicular cancer (the only means of detection). The two cancer awareness programs are endorsed and sponsored by Otsego Memorial Hospital of Gaylord.

Detroit radio personality Dick Purtan wrote a letter to the group declaring, "The PSA blood test for prostate cancer saved my life. Early detection is the best defense."

Congratulations, HARMONIE MEISTERS!

Here's the Pitch

Raleigh Bloch, Executive & Member Services VP

Help! I'm being held hostage

Help! I'm being held hostage. This column is being taken over by that guy who is always bugging me in these articles. He thinks he can do a better job than me. Hey you, shut up. This is my article now and I don't want any trouble from you.



Raleigh Bloch

But it's my picture up there and my name on this article. *Button your lip. I don't care. I'm taking over. You've had your say long enough.*

Don't hurt me. What, what, what are you going to write about? *You're always writing about membership, membership, membership. Well things are going to change. Do you hear me? They're going to change.*

Oh no, what will Ev Nau think. *You tell Ev Nau that if he has a problem, he should see me. I can take care of those New Englanders with their fancy accent.*

Whoa, this is getting ugly. So, what are you going to write about? *I'm going to write about Harmony College.*

No m-m-membership? *You heard me, Harmony College. Well at least you'll make Jim Debusman happy, so go for it. Hey! You guys in a quartet that didn't go to Harmony College, BIG mistake. See that it doesn't happen again, you hear?*

That's it? *Don't bug me, man. I'm just getting their attention. There were 30 quartets there and mine was one of them.*

One of the quartets was made up of four guys who wanted to go through the quartet experience at Harmony College, so they got together. My quartet took two new songs just barely off paper. The coaches showed us how to take a new song and get it ready for performance. They helped us insomuch that those songs will be in our contest package and the next time we start a new song we'll know what steps we have to take to get it ready. Then there were classes, in addition to the coaching sessions. I took the class, How to be a Great Tenor.

Did it work? *Hey, don't get smart. I picked up a lot of tips from Don Kabl that were specific to me. The rest of my quartet took classes in their voice parts as well. There is no doubt that we are a better quartet as a result of those classes.*

Hey, this is pretty good stuff. *Quiet. This is my article. Jim Debusman said we should write articles and encourage as many quartets as possible to be a part of this great experience. Pioneer had five quartets there. Five out of 30 is not bad. As for the guys that were there but not in a quartet, they had a lousy time. No singing, didn't learn anything, and no fun.*

Wait a minute! Wait a minute! That's not true. *Hey, cool it. I'm just trying to get their attention again. They learned new songs everyday along with 700 other guys. They sang tags, woodsbedded with Ab Sob, attended more classes than the guys in quartets, and sang tags and the songs they learned 'til the wee hours, ate ice cream, swam, played tennis, sat in on coaching sessions, listened to REVIVAL in person, and met some of the greatest barbershoppers in the world from all over the world.*

Hey, don't tell them about all that good stuff. They'll all want to go. *Look fella. This is not just for the barbershop elite, this is for Joe Barbershopper.*

So are you saying this will make us a better quartet or singer? *Of course, you twit. You should have heard those quartets at the Friday night Parade of Quartets. There was not a lemon in the bunch. It was great! Everyone felt he was a better quartet singer by the end of the week.*

Do you think all the people that attended benefited from the week? *Definitely.*

Do you think better singing would attract new members? *Of course.*

Yes!

Well there. You did it. You got your membership plug in, didn't you.

Well how much fun do you think you'd have at Harmony College if you were the only one there? *OK, OK, you're right. Hey you guys, get out there and invite someone down.*

If you're done, I'd like my keyboard back. *OK, but could you ruin dis thrue spell chek four me.*

No problem. ■



Public Relating

Doug Pearson, Marketing & Public Relations VP

PR opportunities abound

Hey, look around you. Did you just bump into one? Did you pick it up and use it? Did you see it but simply ignore it? Did you even recognize it? Or maybe it skimmed right by you and you didn't even see it.



Doug Pearson

I'm talking about public relations opportunities in our wide arena of barbershopping. They're all around us, and if we want to effectively market our excitingly unique art form, it's up to each and every one of us to seize these opportunities and use them in telling and selling our stories.

Let me give you a few recent examples of how public relations opportunities have been productively utilized within our Pioneer District:

* Once again, Mister Bush League, Hank Hedges, has done a superlative job in promoting Gaylord's festive Bush League activity. He's taken it from near failure to a major event. Hank's PR formula is fairly simple and he uses it with consistent effectiveness: Frequent publicity on PioNet, catchy Bush League fliers, a highly visible booth at the District Convention, articles in the *Troubadour*. They all go together to increase awareness and participation in this annual musical frolic.

* "Can't Stop Singing" on PBS stations throughout Michigan afforded some great PR opportuni-

ties, and congratulations go to our chapters who were quick to respond to this exposure potential.

All participating chapters served as vital vocal ambassadors in this high-profile event. Flint Arrowhead Chorus' Guy Hissong reports: "One of our fine quartets, TIME OUT, sang three songs during the evening. We started getting calls from people who pledged, once again stating that they truly loved barbershop music and don't see and hear enough of it. We ended the evening beating the station's goal for our performance."

In commenting on "Can't Stop Singing" support by our Pioneer District, Al Fisk said, "Doing this kind of volunteer work not only gives us a chance to give back to our community, but also gives barbershopping great exposure."

* Good promotion involving solid communications can help any barbershop event. Witness the success of the Huron Valley Chapter in accomplishing a truly amazing guest night with close to 40 visitors.

"We pulled out all the stops and took advantage of the creative approach," says director Lynne Peirce. "We mailed out what we called our 'compelling letters' to friends, former guests, at-large members, and chapter alumni. Over 60 letters were mailed, and the response was unbelievable." Good PR? Good communications? You bet! And the end result proved it.

* A year ago, the Lansing Chapter sponsored the district's first High

School Barbershop Quartet Contest. Thanks to great communications and PR coordinated by the administrative talents of Larry Best, it was an unqualified success. The winners, DIAMOND GIRLS, went on to win national honors in the Sweet Adelines' Rising Star Quartet Competition. This newsmaking achievement resulted in additional PR, including a five-column story/photo feature in the *Lansing State Journal*.

* Probably some sort of award for quick-thinking of the year should go to Lansing Chapter's Roger Cahaney. Roger was chairman of Fowlerville's annual Family Fun Fest. When asked by a *Lansing State Journal* reporter what the purpose of the Fun Fest was, Roger, who never stops extolling the virtues of barbershopping, didn't miss a beat when he replied, "We want to promote harmony in the community." What a great quote on the front page. And what better way to seize that golden PR opportunity.

Let's hope all of us continue to promote harmony in our communities by taking advantage of the many opportunities that await us. ■

100th anniversary of Hoagy Carmichael's birth

November 22 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth one of America's most famous songwriters, Hoagy Carmichael. In his lifetime, he wrote "Skylark," "Georgia on My Mind," "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening," "Old Buttermilk Sky," "How Little We Know," "Heart and Soul," "Lazybones," "Two Sleepy People," and the classic "Stardust."

He died on December 27, 1981, of a heart attack.

Chapter Coaching

Doran McTaggart, Chapter Support/Leadership VP

October is election month in our Barbershop chapters. This is not to be taken lightly. Each chapter has the opportunity to move forward by carefully searching out the most capable people to run for office, sending them to COTS for training, and then supporting them throughout the year. Good leadership will enable you to have rich and rewarding musical experiences as we close out the millennium.

The Chapter Challenge Program had less than 50 percent of our Society chapters enrolled in it. We had 18 chapters signed up in Pioneer. Despite a great deal of effort to have chapters enroll in the campaign, it didn't attract the attention it needed to be successful. No new applications will be received, but those chapters currently enrolled will continue to participate and be eligible for awards through the end of 1999. At that time, the campaign will end.

"Our objective is to create 100 new chapters by the end of 2001," said Ev Nau, Managing Director of Membership Services. This is the goal of Ev Nau and Pat Kelly under the newly approved staff reorganization. We recruit about 4,000 new men each year, but we lose almost 4,300 men yearly. Our average age has increased to nearly 58.

For the past 20 years our mem-

bership has shown small but continuous losses even though the number of chapters has remained close to 810. Each district will be receiving up to three weeks per year of staff visitations to develop new extension sites. An increase of 100 chapters in the next two years will increase our membership by 1,000 that we would not have had through our other sources.

Pat and Ev are exploring ways to create different kinds of chapters. There are many possibilities. Rural chapters composed of smaller groups over a wider area might work. Quartet-only chapters dedicated to nurturing quartets could be another option. Daytime chapters for shift workers or those who no longer can get out at night, college chapters, military chapters, and retirement chapters established more like a club are all opportunities that are worth consideration. None of these are finalized yet, but they are looking for more opportunities for more chapters to service more members.

Our Society Member Services Committee at the Leadership Forum last year introduced the slogan, "Ever-Growing ... Or Nothing Else Matters." Let's help them to achieve their goal.

Since the beginning of the Chapter Coach Program, I have asked that each chapter keep track of three numbers on a weekly basis. Over time, these numbers should reflect the health of your chapter. The numbers will show increases in total chapter membership, active chapter membership, and weekly chapter attendance. Good interest-

ing programming filled with exciting musical experiences will help these numbers grow. What are these numbers that we should be reporting to our chapter coach?

- 1 Total chapter membership. This is the number on your rolls as recorded by the international office in Kenosha.
- 2 Total active chapter membership. This number includes anyone who has attended a meeting in the last six months.
- 3 Weekly chapter meeting attendance. This number includes anyone who is in attendance for any part of the meeting.

Again I ask you to please have these numbers available to share with your chapter coach. He can assist you with membership, programming, administration, or any other need your chapter might have. Call him today.

Your chapter coach and I will be looking forward to seeing your leadership team at COTS. ■



Doran McTaggart

DON MICHAEL

MARK JACK



A Sound Advantage

Contact: Michael Slamka
(810) 326-0620
E-Mail: LIVE4SHOP@AOL.COM

Take Note

Fred Kienitz, Chorus Director Development VP

Commitment & dedication required

Gentlemen and ladies, I dare think that we know each other well enough to speak openly and above board on some matters which, by the way, are some of my biggest problems in dealing with my work at the district level, namely chorus director development within the Pioneer District. Please allow me to get right to the point and discuss the overall problem as I see it with many of the chapters in Pioneer. Oh heck, let's extend this common glitch to include all chapters in our mitten district because, to some degree, every one of you share this dilemma and if left unattended could very well be the death knell of Pioneer barbershopping not too many years down the road.

Obviously the need for qualified directors is paramount in this area. A quick look around would verify the fact that we have about four to five chapters currently with no director to supervise the musical program in any of these cities.

In many cases, even some of those chapters who do have a qualified arm-waver cannot keep their members because in many instances they prefer to travel hundreds of miles to sing under a "live wire" director in another city. And I'm not sure this is a healthy attitude to take. Most certainly I can empathize with these people and their burning

need to feast on some succulent barbershop harmony, but in the past three instances every one of these choruses folded and left their members with a choice of going back home and risk the chance of not being welcomed with open arms. The question in most of the home chapters is, "Will he cut out when the next mega-chapter starts up?"

Every chapter, whether they have a director currently or not, would agree that this concept I'm about to suggest to you would be one that might very well be a prerequisite for any director under consideration for a position, namely a desire to set up a program stressing commitment and dedication within the chapter chorus. And this is where the glue gets sticky because this program, in order to work, must be a commitment by not only the director, but also every one who wants to be a singing member of this chorus.

This concept is a two-way street and it requires the director to be prepared before every rehearsal. Now if he or she is to commit to this and agree to "play by the rules," then this requires the singing member to come in prepared to sing the assigned music and know his part. He must be on time, in his chair, and warmed up before rehearsal.

Are you starting to get the message here? For many years, we have blamed our problems on the STUPID director and his lack of C&D (commitment and dedication). Now

many times you have hit the nail right on the head but never point a finger until you have looked into the mirror first. Commitment and dedication involves and encompasses every member — the director, the chapter officers, and in many instances their wives and sweethearts.

Now pick up your *Harmonizer* that was published right after the international contest. Thumb through the pages and you'll see about 10 or 12 of our Society's finest choruses. For the past several years, where do you find Pioneer choruses? Let's be fair as possible in looking for reasons we have done less than desired.

The last three directors who took our choruses to the "biggie" didn't fare well in the standings. One is a college-trained and degreed teacher of music. One has been steeped in barbershop and its tradition, and is also a top-10 quartet bass. The remaining director is a superb talent and a person who seeks out and solicits coaching at the highest level possible. All three have selected music that could be compatible to high scores. SO WAH HOPPEN?

I honestly feel that these directors committed and dedicated themselves to the task at hand. However, I wouldn't be surprised if the singers' commitment and dedication, while probably in evidence, wasn't nearly at the level it should have been. Please don't think that I am trying to pick on anyone; I'm simply saying that 99 percent of all of our members have absolutely no idea what is involved in molding and creating a champion.

Now the question arises as to what is really necessary to create a

(Continued on page 16)



Fred Kienitz

Yours 4 A Song

Russ Seely, Music & Performance VP

Making our 'Q' more meaningful with plenty of 'E'



Russ Seely

Sometimes I get really confused! When this grand old tradition of barbershop quartets got formalized some 60 years ago, the main purpose — so I'm told — was to preserve and encourage the barbershop quartet. It was important enough that we made it part of our organization's name. Sounds like a simple premise, agreed? However, year after year that emphasis seems to become less and less.

Sure our district boasts a large number of "registered quartets" — four fellows who send their 20 bucks to Kenosha to officially register their selected name and receive cards to prove it. But how many of these quartets do we actually hear perform? We rarely get a chance to witness a performance at our "chapter meetings" simply because we're not devoting any time to them.

Of course, way back then (?) we really had chapter meetings where quartets of all shapes, sizes, ages, expertise or lack thereof, were encouraged to stand up and give it a go. Sure they probably wouldn't score all that great in today's refined barbershop style, but encourage them we did and it always

meant for a fun part of your evening.

If you were lucky enough to blend with three other guys and you were willing to rehearse with them you'd develop the beginning of a repertoire and start "dropping in" at neighboring chapters where EVERYONE encouraged you to stick together 'cause you "had a great sound." But alas, the shelter of the under-confident singer became known as "the chorus" and those fun nights turned into chorus nights.

Great! Now everyone had a place in barbershop, right?

Well, yes and no. Since we became so taken with the benefits of the chorus, we soon lost time to feature these chapter-type quartets and eventually they really didn't have a place to showcase their performance unless they entered a competition or were good enough to be asked to perform on a chapter show. Even at those two venues, what we now seem to see is a recycling of experienced quartet guys who compete time after time. This is a condition that is fairly prevalent throughout the Society. What happened?

The reason is quite obvious. We simply forgot to continually emphasize the "E" (encouragement) when it comes to the big "Q" when we operate our chapters.

Part of the problem, as I see it,

is that the Society has kind of let our quartet programs run by themselves, when, to the best of my knowledge, we have no present quartet subcommittee in our music & presentation program.

This is a strategic error in my opinion. The best goodwill ambassadors of our Society have to be "THE QUARTET." Their flexibility to perform anywhere at anytime gives them that precious privilege to mingle with all types of audiences simply to show them what barbershop is. Believe me, these quartets don't always have to be medal quality, either.

Most of our members come to us as a result of either singing in or listening to "a barbershop quartet!" My mentor, Mark Roberts, once stated shortly after the Society's Man-of Note Award program started, "All quartets should probably receive 50 of these award immediately for all the past recruitment they've accomplished."

Generous? Maybe!

So my "encouragement" to you is that you request that your chapter affords time on a regular basis to recognize our quartets and assist in the development of new quartets.

Who knows, the next Van Tassell, Kaufmann, Shumard or (fill in the blank) may be lurking on your risers just waiting for the opportunity to go for it.

We wish continued success to Lyle Howard and his followers for their monthly effort in Rochester to reinstate the importance of quartet singing by encouraging anyone who wants a quartet only meeting. So, brothers, can you spare some time?

■

Light

(Continued from page 5)

We are consistently seeing higher levels of entertainment on the International stage. But with all of these good things happening, we are seeing our membership decline month after month, year after year. This is not about getting new members one by one (although we need them that way, too). But rather bringing in new members by the tens, twenties, hundreds, thousands ... do you get it yet?

What if everyone demanded excellent singing and excellent presentation of that singing while singing excellently arranged music. Would we then have a product to sell to the public? Would that public then say to each other, "Hey, I'd like to do that — it looks fun."

Do you get it yet?

I submit to you that I am in this hobby for the applause — nothing else. True, there are a lot of other

things that must be done to get to the standing ovation point of that applause, but I have seen the light, and nothing else matters. I will do any amount of work to earn that standing ovation because I am in this to entertain and earn that applause and that standing ovation.

How about you? If your chorus or quartet agrees with this concept, you have an ally. And the Pioneer District is prepared to be your entertainment package coach. All you need to do is ask. PLEASE ASK! The district is prepared to attend your rehearsal and critique your performance package.

Recently I did this for a chorus that in turn made some modifications to their earlier performance, which greatly enhanced their second performance of the day. This is a simple and confidential service that we can provide.

PLEASE ASK! Contact me and I will make it happen. Allow yourself to earn that STANDING OVATION. ■

Youth Outreach

By Al Bonney

In our barbershop world, we tend to think of the year beginning in January and ending in December. If your chapter wants to have a Youth Outreach program, however, now is the time to recalibrate your calendar to match the school year.

Music teachers plan their year over the summer. Once it gets rolling, inserting a foot in the door can be a real trick. Successful Youth Outreach chairmen tell us that RIGHT NOW is the time to find those music teachers and begin the dialog. If you wait 'til November or January, you just may be too late.

There are three things you might think about doing if you want to start a YO program: review and agree on the chapter resources that you can make available to the music programs. Manpower, commercial products and services, money, skills ... they can all be helpful.

Meet with the teacher and see what THEIR needs are. Find a match between your resources and their needs.

... and you are in the door. It really is that simple ... if you have REALLY focused on THEIR needs and not your own. Remember, the YO program is not about us. It is about the kids and getting more of them singing in successful and fun vocal programs in the schools. If the teachers increase the kids on their risers, you have been successful.

The Society has finally published a really good manual on de-

(Continued on page 20)

Harmony Foundation midyear report positive

Submitted by Doug Pearson, district public relations VP

Harmony Foundation is doing well, according to its mid-year report. The Society reports that "through the generosity of individuals, chapters, and quartets, we are on track to reach our goal of raising \$450,000 for our service projects."

Donations to Harmony Foundation for the general fund, which benefits all the projects, as well as to the individual projects, SingAmerica and SingCanada, Heartspring, and the Heritage Hall Museum, are running more than 20 percent greater than last year



for the same time period. "But, according to the Society, this is being accomplished by fewer than half of our chapters and a much smaller percentage of individual members and quartets." The Society adds, "If everyone does his part, we will have a banner year and help thousands of young people discover the joy of vocal music through SingAmerica and SingCanada, learn basic life skills at Heartspring, and spread the word of barbershop harmony through the Heritage Hall Museum." ■

Interesting Additions to the Pioneer Web Site

By Steve Sutherland, district web site administrator

I'm always looking for ways to make the Pioneer District web site more interesting and useful. Recently while researching past contest scores for the Detroit-Oakland Chapter, it occurred to me that this was an activity others might like to do. Thus began my latest project.

I began scanning all of the old Pioneer contest score sheets in my library. I then sent out a request on the Pionet for score sheets that I didn't have. Two people came through! Jack Schneider and Bob Wisdom had every sheet I was missing back to 1972. Bob Wisdom even included some programs he had from those years.

Bill Wickstrom is also searching for some of the older sheets. Bill probably sang in most of the contests over his 50-plus years in the society.

I have placed all quartet and chorus score sheets from 1972 up to the latest 1999 sheets under the "Contest Summaries" button.

There are also a few earlier dates back to the spring 1961 quartet scores; the AUTO TOWNERS competed in that one. In addition to scores, you will find pictures of the covers of some of the contest programs. Included in the latest years in the "Contest Happenings" article written by Jim Styer. I am still looking for any sheets prior to 1972 and any missing programs.

Other additions to the web site that are still a work-in-progress include photographs of past men, quartets, and choruses of note. You will find the ones I have collected by clicking on the "Honor Roll" button. Also, keep me informed of chorus and quartet web pages and email addresses. Historical information provided by Jim Styer and the late Bob McDermott can always be augmented.

I hope you find something of interest. You will find the Pioneer district web site at: <http://www.harmonize.com/Pioneer/pio.htm>. ■

Herm Baker Corn Roast

By John Baker

Any barbershopper from the Grand Rapids Area knows that when August comes, all thoughts turn to the last harmony bash of the summer — corn, hot-dogs, and barbershop. Yes, the Herm Baker Corn Roast in Jenison, Mich. — a chance to catch up with old friends and meet new ones from all over the Pioneer District.

This year was no disappointment. It started out with a little rain, but cleared up nicely. The weather didn't dampen the spirits of those who showed. From Holland, Muskegon, Lansing, Roger Lewis and crew from Battle Creek and, yes, even from Grand Rapids.

The evening show under the trees was FANTASTIC! A few pick-up quartets and some registered ones sang. FOOL'S GOLD was there, and so was the house quartet (meaning the Baker house), CROSSTOWN CONNECTION.

Some old reunion quartets performed that night: BLACK VELVET (former district champs), NEVER BE FOUR (former district novice champs), 1997 Pioneer District champs, THE DETROIT SOUND COMPANY, and the CAMP SHIRT CHORUS (established by Jim Horton).

On behalf of the Baker family, thanks to everyone, especially THE DETROIT SOUND COMPANY, for making it there for the second year in a row to our home. I hope to see all of you next year. ■

The Spirit of Detroit Chorus

Presents their annual show

SPIRIT IN MOTION!

With LeAnn K. Hazlett, Master Director

Featuring

RUMORS

The 1999 International Queens of Harmony

Mercy High School, Farmington
Saturday, November 13 3:00 & 7:30
Tickets \$14.00 General Admission
For additional information call
(313) 937-2429



Thirteen members of the Traverse City and Sault Ste. Marie chapters traveled to Harmony College in a Class B motor home and a 12-seat Checker Cab limousine. A crowd gathered around the limo at each gas stop.



Burt Szabo instructs the bar "Repertoire." Class member week.

Harmony College 1999

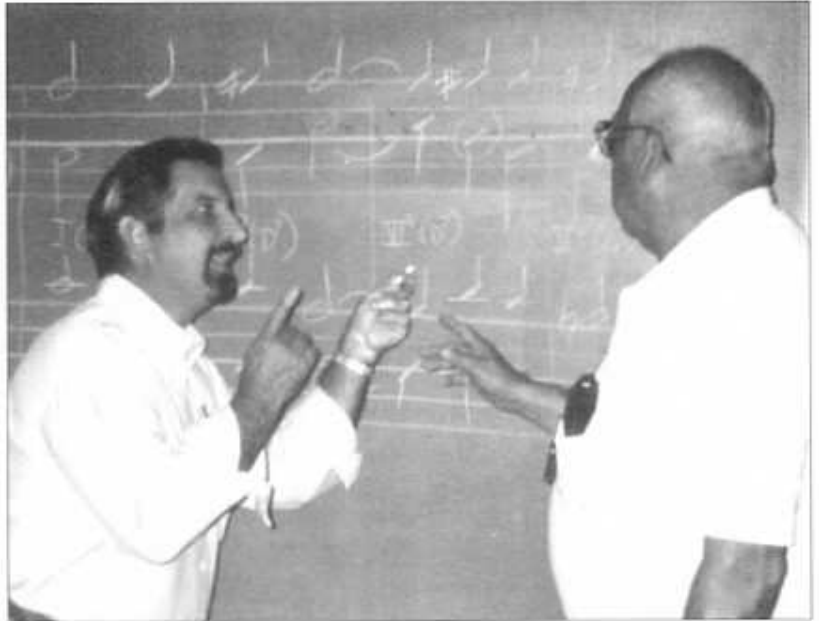
The Pioneer District contingent at Harmony College in St. Joseph, Missouri (at least all of those who were not at the casino)





Baritones, "Tune that C#." Burt's class was called "Theory of Barbershop Harmony." They sang through 36 pieces of music during the

Nick Papageorge explains a fine point of music to Don Bazely. Nick conducted a class in "Theory of Barbershop Harmony."



!)



Quartet CHORD ORDER sings at the afterglow.

Photos on these two pages provided by Don Bazely.

Flint Chapter still afloat

By Guy Hissong

The Don Wills Pontoon Float Party, held on Tuesday, August 17, was a great success and a fabulous time was had by all. We even had a Barbershopper from California who was visiting in the area and wanted to sing, so he climbed aboard and joined us in harmony.

Residents on Bald Eagle Lake sat on shore and warmed us with their hearty rounds of applause as we drifted by, with boats tied together, singing those good old songs.

The water was just the right

temperature for swimming, according to Mike Hammond, who just couldn't wait to go swimming and plunged in before the boats left shore.

Afterward, the brats, beans, and sauerkraut prepared by Dave Lonsbury definitely made the evening.

This type of gathering is just one of the many reasons our chorus looks forward to the next annual



ride.

Our hats off to Don Wills, who opened his home to us, and to all who helped make this a great time.

Barbershop singing — what a great life! ■

Commitment & dedication (Continued from page 10)

winning ensemble at the local, district, and international levels?

Let me begin by saying that if and when you win at any level, you are a cut above most of the members in your district. The problem now arises that you must act like champions if you want to soar like the eagles.

How then do you continue to rise? Very simple. Commit and dedicate yourself to learn how to do what the champions do. And again we in Pioneer need to stop looking for that silver lining, stop trying to hitch up with a shining star, and buy into the C&D concept. That means that you must start thinking like the guys from Dallas. The overall attitude in that chapter is, "I cannot win unless I execute to perfection. I cannot miss a single rehearsal. I know I live in London, England, but they allowed me to be a member and I WILL NOT dishonor that

trust." C&D, gentlemen!

All right then, what do they do in these chapters that we aren't doing? Answer: "I will not allow any member of my chorus to learn faster, step higher, breathe better, or exercise more (yep, a full-fledged exercise program). I will hone my vocal production skills to a diamond luster. What 'I' do will make a DIFFERENCE."

What are vocal production skills? Well, it's a theory whereby every member of an ensemble executes everything at exactly the same time as everyone else. By the way, there is only one quartet in our district that has honed these skills, and they placed seventh in the latest international. There is another one learning these skills and I'm sure they will be trying them out at our fall contest.

I hope that by now you are getting the idea that creating a champion is not the work of a coach, or a college grad with a music degree, or a hot-shot director. It is the enthusiasm, the drive, the commitment, the dedication, the support of others,

the hunger and tenacity of the individual, the foursome, chorus members, who want to be better after every rehearsal, the support of the chapter officers, and also one other vital component, the support of the singer's wife or sweetheart.

Gentlemen, I offer this challenge to everyone in Pioneer to get on the C&D bandwagon and forget about membership drives and the pessimistic attitudes.

If you come back to barbershop with a smile and a happy attitude, a willingness to be number one, to learn your music, to help others, to volunteer, to teach if and, when you are qualified, strive to be the best and most helpful member you can be.

Who is the most important member in your chapter, or for that matter, in the entire Society? It's obviously that Joe Barbershopper who dedicates himself to give 100 percent to his hobby and then commits the time and energy to do just that.

Now blow a C# and let's sing a tag! ■

Memories of Betty Cash

By Jim Styer, PioNet Administrator

I first came across Betty Cash in summer 1989 at an international convention historian's meeting. After the meeting, I introduced myself and asked whether she'd be interested in participating in our Pioneer District's 50th-anniversary celebration during the spring convention in Battle Creek in April 1990. She immediately said yes.

During the district convention, she appeared on area TV shows and participated in an anniversary celebration program in the hotel lobby. She unveiled a 65-foot-long wall of greeting cards from Sweden, England, Germany, Australia, Canada, the United States, and many other countries around the world.

Among the cards was "Our Golden Year," a special song written for the district by Enar Pederson of New Orleans. It was sung by Pioneer District quartet HARMONY HOUNDS. Then Betty sang tenor on the tag of "Johnny Doughboy" with the HARMONY HOUNDS during that program.

One of Betty Cash's stories: Her dad was an avid Democrat, "but he was miffed at Roosevelt because of all of the New Deal projects. So he decided to develop a name longer than anything any of the bureaucrats in Washington could think of. He came up with the Society for the Preservation and Propagation of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in the United States. That was SPPBSQHUS, nine letters. It later was reduced to the current SPEBSQSA, only eight letters."

At conventions, Betty said her father "would arrive early and plop himself down on a couch in the lobby and then when people would arrive, he would go up the elevator

with them and say, 'I'm gonna teach you the first line of a song.' They would ride up and down, up and down until they learned it. Then he would go back to his couch and wait for some more men to arrive."

She noted that she had the opportunity to date barbershoppers, "after my daddy checked them out."

And why did she call her dad "Honey?" She related: "I was born during the era of the 'daddy' songs, which my father detested. And so he wasn't gonna let me call him 'father,' 'dad,' 'papa' — any of those names. My mother was 'Sugar' and so he told her, 'Let Betty call me Honey.' And there was that song from the early days that says, 'You're the honey that I love so well.'"

"Being brought up in the founder's home," she said, "barbershop is a part of my heritage. In fact, I feel it's a legacy left to me by my father."

The presence of our founder's daughter at our anniversary convention brought home to all of us and made very personal the long-standing, close link between the Pioneer District — the first district — and our Society.

Betty Cash was the remaining living embodiment of the early days of our Society, having accompanied her dad at many barbershop events and conventions. She said this included his stint as master of ceremonies in Grand Rapids for the first district quartet show in 1940, the year our district was founded. She also recalled being at the international convention in Detroit in 1953, when Grand Rapids won the first chorus contest. O. C. Cash was real excited at that development, she

Betty Ann Cash Oathout passes away

By Brian Lynch,
Society Public Relations Director

Betty Ann Cash Oathout, daughter of SPEBSQSA founder O. C. Cash, passed away Sunday, August 1, in Tulsa Oklahoma, from complications arising from cancer. She was 67 years old, and is survived by her sons David and John Oathout.

Betty Ann was well-known throughout the Society, accompanying "Honey" to many barbershop events, conventions and shows throughout his life. In recent years, she had a renewed interest in the Society and made many visits to chapters to enjoy barbershop harmony and share memories of her travels with her father.

said. "It meant more men would get involved in barbershop singing."

"I have fond memories of early days in the Society, especially in Michigan," she said. "You have a special place in my heart. I knew Carroll P. Adams, the first district president and Society president, I used to call him 'Uncle Carroll.' Also I knew many others in your district. And I want to thank you for letting me be a part of this day."

Thank you, Betty Cash. Now you're with your dad, 'Honey.' Say 'Hi' to him for all of us in the Pioneer District. And give him our thanks, too.

Maybe you two can find a few fellows like Bob McDermott, Randy Chisholm, or even Rupert Hall up there and sing a tag for us. ■

Why few bulletin entries? The 'reasons' don't wash

By William Grant Carson, PROBE VP/BE

Pioneer District is one of those districts with the least participation in the Society-wide bulletin editors' competition.

An annual Bulletin Editor of the Year (BETY) contest is run by each of the 16 districts. Help in providing coordination and certified judges is provided by PROBE, the Association of Public Relations Officers and Bulletin Editors. The two top entries in each district can enter into further competition for selecting the best bulletin editors in the Society.

Last year, 100 bulletins were entered into BETY contests, an average of just over six per district. The most entries in district competition were in the Southwest and Far West districts, with 13 each. Sunshine and Johnny Appleseed districts had 10 entries each.

The districts with the fewest entries were Dixie, Johnny Appleseed, and Pioneer with three each. Why were there so few entries from Pioneer?

One reason could be that Pioneer is less populous. But that won't wash because the Rocky Mountain, Ontario, New England, and Illinois districts produced five each, and the populations are the same order of magnitude.

Another reason could be that sufficient publicity wasn't given in Pioneer. But that won't wash because Pioneer has one of the finest district contest coordinators, Jim Styer, and publicity has been much better than in most districts.

Another reason could be that editors feel they could embarrass their chapters and themselves by scoring poorly. But that won't wash, because the Pioneer coordinator, who establishes the rules for BETY in the district, does not require that scores be published.

Another reason could be that a smaller proportion of Pioneer chapters publish bulletins. I certainly hope that's not so, for bulletins make chapters better, and better bulletins make chapters better yet.

Another reason could be that Pioneer editors just don't see any value in entering the BETY. Well, every editor gets cogent, friendly advice in the three categories of layout and reproduction, content, and grammar and style. Surely any Pioneer editor could use advice in at least one of these categories. In short, there's no legitimate reason for Pioneer to be among the districts with the fewest entries.

Just do it! ■



HOW TO ENTER

All bulletin editors who will have at least six issues this year are eligible for the district contest. Eight issues are required for a Society-level award. Without competing, any editor may submit bulletins for judges' comments no matter how few issues they publish; no score will be published if so requested.

To enter the contest, submit three copies each of three consecutive issues. (Save extra issues in case you are eligible to enter the Society-wide contest.)

Your bulletins must be received by Jan. 15, 2000. Mail to:

Jim Styer

72 Allison Drive

Battle Creek MI 49017

E-mail any questions to him at

jimstyer@voyager.net

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The district also runs a contest for Public Relations Officer of the Year (PROTY). The winner can be entered in a Society-wide contest.

There are three categories: Promotion of one chapter activity; a year-long public relations program; and entries for evaluation and comment only, which will not be entered in a contest.

Include biographical information on the nominee; commentary on planning, execution and follow-up; and copies of pertinent documents (news releases, newspaper clippings, correspondence, printed programs, thank-you letters, etc.)

The PR effect does not necessarily depend on the success of the events themselves; rather, it is judged on the amount of actual PR (spreading the Gospel) that was accomplished. ■

Sing ... for life!

Woodshedding Corner**New AHSOW members inducted at Harmony College**

By Toban Dvoretzky, AHSOW International President

During auditioning opportunities at Harmony College '99, the Ancient Harmonious Society of Woodshedders, Inc., inducted 24 fine new members. Please welcome these three new members from the Pioneer District: Loyal Beggs, Thessalon, Ont., Sault Ste. Marie Chapter; James K. Hall, Alma, Mich., Gratiot County Chapter; and Tracy Ulrich, Petoskey, Mich., Petoskey Chapter.

Tracy qualified on all three harmony parts and can sing melody in a manner that permits good ear-singing when thus called upon. (Note: Some men who qualify on fewer than all four parts simply lack a bass or tenor range in their voices. These men may be outstanding woodshedders on the voice-parts that lie within their vocal ranges.)

Please be sure to extend your congratulations to these fellows on their abilities to harmonize by ear without reference to familiar Barbershop arrangements.

AHSOW offers Barbershoppers the chance to utilize a broader spectrum of their musical abilities. When introduced to authentic woodshedding, men routinely discover that they are not merely "a tenor" or "a bari" or "a bass" or "a lead," but rather a BARBERSHOP MUSICIAN WITH AN EAR. Just think how your chapter's member retention and overall level of interest will rise when YOUR members discover the same about themselves. A regular program of authentic woodshedding is just the ticket, and AHSOW can help.

Please refer to <http://www.ahsow.org> for more information,

and be sure to contact your PIO AHSOW representative:

John Smith, AHSOW Chief
2380 Fairport
Waterford MI 48329-3934
(248) 674-1539
JSmith2380@aol.com

There's everything wonderful about singing a few in the way that O. C. Cash and the boys did 61 years ago. Stay alert for word about an AHSOW room at your upcoming District convention!

ANCIENT HARMONIOUS SOCIETY OF WOODSHEDDERS, INC., <http://www.ahsow.org>.

Toban Dvoretzky, President
14531 Ella Blvd., #3806
Houston TX 77014-2558
TBone@selec.net (H)
TBone@jetson.uh.edu (O)

Join PROBE this month

You do not have to be a PROBE member to enter district BETY and PROTY contests, but it is encouraged. Membership is a requirement for Society-wide contests.

This month, your chapter secretary is sending Kenosha a list of officers for 2000. If you wish PROBE membership, have this so marked on the submission to Kenosha. It is a legitimate chapter expense.

Or you can sign yourself up by sending \$5.00 annual dues to:

Brian Lynch
PROBE Secretary-Treasurer
6315 Third Avenue
Kenosha WI 53143

Membership brings you, among other things, a quarterly bulletin, *PROBE* *moter*, which has news and tips for public relations officers and bulletin editors.

PROBE is a self-supporting, all-volunteer organization. Although it is associated with SPEBSQSA, you don't have to be an officer or even a Society member to join. ■

A barbershop memory

From *The Harmonizer*,
May/June 1982

At the Grand Rapids SPEBSQSA convention in 1942, history records that an Episcopalian Rector was called upon to give the blessing. He said, "Boys, you can do it better than I can. Just sing the Doxology." Whereupon, and without hesitation, 500 voices sang it in good old barbershop harmony. A newspaper reporter wrote about the incident: "It was one of the most stirring things I've ever heard." ■

Conventional wisdom

(Continued from page 4)

tion Saturday at McCamly Place, the shops area adjacent to the headquarters hotel.

A chapter presidents' meeting will be held at 7:00 a.m. Saturday at Porter's Steak House at McCamly Plaza Hotel. Battle Creek President Dick Campbell is in charge.

The convention is to conclude with a Gospel sing at 9:00 a.m. Sunday in the Branson Ballroom at the headquarters hotel.

A 27-inch TV will be the first prize in the Heartspring/SingAmerica drawing. The TV was donated to the host Muskegon Chapter, which will sell tickets throughout the convention. Winners will be drawn at the Saturday night competition. Two other prizes are free registration to the next con-

vention.

Downtown Battle Creek also has a new feature for conventioners: a deli with 42 take-out sandwiches, perfect for stoking up during trips between the hotel and the competition auditorium. It's Pierre Lamborghinistein's on Michigan Avenue just west of McCamly Street.

For the family, Kellogg's Cereal City USA will open "A Bowl Full of Fright" on convention Saturday. It will feature cobwebs, graveyards, cornstalks, pumpkin painting, sinister music, storytelling, magic, a giant maze, and costumed characters. Conventioners will get reduced rates.

This is the first convention hosted by the Muskegon Chapter. Chapter convention chairman is Mike O'Donnell. Roger Lewis (rjlewiscmc@aol.com) will be district convention chair for the final time.

For updated convention details, watch the PioNet, the district's e-mail list. To sign up at no charge, e-mail your name and chapter to:

jimstyer@voyager.net.

Also check the district's web site at <http://www.harmonize.com/Pioneer/pio.htm>. ■

Youth Outreach

(Continued from page 12)

veloping and maintaining a YO program. It's called "Young Men in Harmony Resource Guide," catalog #4074 and selling for \$11.95. I have read it and it has some great ideas and tips for maintaining a successful program.

But to get started, quoting from the manual, "Just do it!" ■

A peek at some of the competitors

We often don't know what to expect at a competition. So this time, we thought we'd ask in advance. We put the question out to all of the choruses and quartets on PioNet, our district e-mail list. We got several answers. Next spring, we may get more.

FOUR MAN FISHIN' TACKLE CHOIR.

Tracy Ulrich wrote: "We are definitely competing this fall, and are fine-tuning our show package. We all attended Harmony College and received a wealth of knowledge from our outstanding coaches: Jim Debusman, singing; Rob Hopkins, music; Reid Stewart, performance; and Steve Plumb, presentation. In addition, we received a full coaching

session from Royce Ferguson, tenor of international champ REVIVAL. We're ready to show what we've learned.

"I hate to say this, but I can't really tell you about our show package without 'spilling the beans.' Let's just say that we've got a couple of surprises up our sleeves, and we hope the audience enjoys the show (package).

"We're going to appear on the Pontiac-Waterford show on Nov. 6, and on two shows for the Macomb Chapter of Sweet Adelines on Oct. 23.

"Kurtis Busman, Bill Woodbeck and I are from the Petoskey Chapter; Neil Nugent is from the Traverse City Chapter, but he lives in Beulah. I would daresay that he probably is in the running for the

guy who drives the farthest to meet with his quartet every week, not counting practices. His regular drive is about 1-3/4 hours."

WINDMILL CHORUS

Steve Foster, Holland Chapter president, wrote: "We will be competing in October with Myke Lucas as our director and a brand-new package. We are trying something new this fall and are hoping to improve on our scores from April."

Art Lane, chapter PR man, wrote: "The WINDMILL CHORUS used a novel system for learning the music. Director Myke Lucas passed out sheet music and part-predominant tapes and asked chorus members to learn the music at

(Continued on page 23)

In Memory of Merle Clayton

Pioneer Hall of Fame member Merle Clayton died on Tuesday, August 24, 1999, in Sarasota, Florida, due to complications from diabetes and Alzheimer's disease. He was cremated in Sarasota.

The following are remembrances of Merle as told by his daughter, Margie Kruse, to Jim Styer a few weeks before Merle's death.

Merle Clayton was a member of the Battle Creek chorus and sometime director for a number of years. He also directed the Battle Creek Sweet Adelines for a period of time and my mother, Svea, sang with that chorus and then with the Kalamazoo Sweet Adelines.

Merle was chairman of judges in Pioneer in the 70s and headed up many a convention. Prior to that, he was a harmony accuracy judge (old categories, of course) and traveled nationwide judging contests. I don't remember when, but one year he judged the chorus contest at international.

Many Pioneer quartet members will remember him as a coach as he worked with many quartets throughout the district over a period that spanned many years. I always admired his determination to refuse any monetary compensation for sharing the "gift that was given freely" to him. He even coached my high school quartet in the early 60s (Lowell Wolfe's daughter, Debby, sang in it, too.) and instilled in us a love of barbershop. To this day, I consider myself a "barbershop brat," having grown



up with it, and having a 29-year Sweet Adeline membership behind me.

I also inherited my dad's love for good solid barbershop and his guarded loathing for "modern barbershop," which is any song you want, roughly arranged in a four-part harmony style.

For a period of time, Merle and Svea maintained a membership at Sandy Pines near Grand Rapids. After selling their home in Urbandale in Battle Creek, they would spend the winters in Florida and the summers at Sandy Pines.

Following the Claytons' move to Florida in the late 70s, Merle served the Sunshine District as chairman of judges for a period of time, remaining an active member of the Sarasota Chapter. For a number of years he directed a group from within the Sarasota chapter that could do daytime performances. They called themselves the SENTIMENTAL SENIORS.

Merle was also an avid arranger and had quite a knack for squeezing the "juicy stuff" out of a song with-

out becoming downright syrupy. Some of his arrangements are still floating around today. He also wrote and arranged the Alma Mater for Battle Creek Central High School in the early 60s when my sister, Barb, and I were members and Giff Richards was still directing the a cappella choir. I don't know if it's still in use, but I would like to think so.

I was always amazed at Merle's grasp of music theory to the extent that he could sit at the table and write out an arrangement and THEN go to the piano and play it.

Merle is 86 years old and has probably forgotten more than I'll ever know. My mom always said that living with him is like living with a walking, talking encyclopedia. They have been married for 55 years!

Whatever he might have lacked in voice quality was more than compensated for by his flawless ear.

Dad is also a member of the Pioneer District Hall of Fame. Seems to me that happened some time in the 80s after they had moved to Florida, but I remember he returned to Battle Creek for the fall convention at which he was inducted. ■

Merle's family is asking that memorials be made to the music department at the Vamo United Methodist Church, 8521 Vamo Road, Sarasota FL 34231, or the Talking Book Service (at almost any library). Please ask that acknowledgements be sent to:

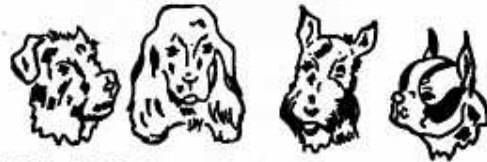
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Competitors

(Continued from page 20)

home. On Sept. 7, for the first time we stood on the risers and sang our first contest song."

HARMONY HERITAGE CHORUS

Macomb's Gary Washburn wrote: "We are all deeply disappointed that Jack Slamka will not be directing us at the district convention in Oct. Jack's creative skills will not be lost, however. He continues to work with us as coach and mentor, although work obligations keep him from our Tuesday rehearsals.

"Our new director is no slouch himself. Al Fisk of THE DETROIT SOUND COMPANY and long-time director of the Rochester chorus, has consented to take over the reigns and lead us to the fall convention and on to Kansas City. Al is full of energy, drive, and desire. With his 20-plus years of barber-shop expertise and his unparalleled

technical musical skills, he has already begun to make a positive impact on the chorus.

"Be forewarned: Not only have we not seen any mass defections upon Jack's resignation, we have added a significant number of new members since our return from Anaheim. We have been blessed with a steady stream of visitors, both newbies and seasoned 'shoppers. This fall's version of the HARMONY HERITAGE CHORUS is as enthusiastic, as dedicated, and as hungry to appear (again) on the international stage as was last year's. (And a whole lot wiser about what it takes to move up the ladder.) Beyond all doubt, under Al's leadership, we are in the hunt.

"We look forward to the thrill of competing with all the outstanding Pioneer District choruses in Battle Creek. Together we make each one stronger as we strive to sing at a new level and from the heart."

TAKE IV

Don Bazely wrote: "TAKE IV is one of three registered quartets from the Sault chapter. The quartet has been organized a little over three years and decided to make its district contest debut at the fall convention 1999.


The quartetters got the taste for competition while participating in the 1998 Bush League. They were coached during special weekend visits north by Gene Hanover and Al Fisk, and planned to try again for the Bush League Gaboon this year. Members are tenor Tom Lehman, lead Al Murray, bari Bob Shami, and bass Don Bazely."

BORDER CROSSING

Roy Gurney wrote: "The BORDER CROSSING quartet will be competing for the second time, representing the Macomb County and Windsor chapters. We are looking forward to trying the show package if we can make the cut; otherwise, we will entertain everybody who wants to listen anyway." ■



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Chapters in Action

Pontiac-Waterford

By Bob Woodward

On a recent evening, the Pontiac-Waterford Chapter's BIG CHIEF CHORUS met for our annual picnic. This year we met at the Watkins Lake home of Bruce Brede. As we stood in the yard singing, first one, then another, then another, boat pulled up as passersby stopped to listen. It was a memorable evening singing to our audience on the water.

Our annual show, "Fun In Just One Lifetime," will be held on November 6 at the Central United Methodist Church in Waterford. In addition to our own SUNNY SIDE, featured quartets will be the UPSTAGE SOUND and THE FOUR MAN FISHIN' TACKLE CHOIR.

Our annual Christmas Chorus will begin rehearsals on November 9. This is a time when we invite any male singer in the area to join us and experience Barbershop singing. While there is no pressure applied for membership, it is not unusual for singers to enjoy the experience and eventually become members of the chapter (an effective soft-sell technique).

Speaking of membership campaigns, we will have a guest night on November 16, details to be announced.

In addition, we remain available for other performances as they arise.

Our director, Chris Miller, brought back a wealth of information from Harmony College, which he is sharing with the chorus.

With all of this, along with

preparation for the spring contest, it is safe to say that the Pontiac-Waterford Chapter is back!

Traverse City

By Elbert Ford

Greetings to everyone from the Cherry Capital Of the World. We have had a very busy summer, as I'm sure many of you have had also, but permit me to bring you up to date on the CHERRY CAPITAL CHORUS.

Going back to the beginning of summer, we enjoyed putting on a great show at Interlochen, June 5-6. We featured FANFARE along with four chapter quartets and the Sweet Adelines. We received many compliments on our performances.

Our afterglow was held at the Interlochen Arts Academy cafeteria. There was no charge for the facility, no head count to guarantee and NO BOOZE! Yet I never heard one complaint; in fact, we have chosen the same location next year.

We also sang on Saturday, July 10, during the National Cherry Festival. Since we live in the vacationland of Northern Michigan, a majority of our members are busy with play, taking care of company or just plain relaxing, yet we seem to gather the troops for these performances. The NCF decided at the last moment to work out a spot to slip us into, so we received no advance publicity. Still there was a fair amount of people attending. Next year we'll be included in the flyers.

We sang at the Leelanau Sands Entertainment Showroom at the Casino toward the end of July (I forgot the date). They want us to return at least once a month on Senior's Night, which is a feature each Tuesday.

As you may have already heard, we had 19 guys attend Harmony College! They really enjoyed themselves as well as lifting their barbershop knowledge a few notches. They returned all fired up and infected quite a few other guys, so I'm looking for us to break the 20-mark next year.

We had a great coaching session on August 21 with Barry Towner. We have another with him before competition and two with Joel Mills as well. So watch out, you downstaters!

The CCC also sang for the resorters outdoor Church In The Park on August 22, followed by the now famous "Betsy's Brunch" at the home of Maurie and Betsy Allen. It was held in their backyard and the day was gorgeous. There was lots of fellowship along with the food and song, truly one of the highlights of the summer.

Right now we're working on our two contest songs during the competition chorus section of our Tuesday evenings, with a general chorus rehearsal taking place during the first half of our meetings. Hope to see you all in Battle Creek.

If you stray up this way, by all means stop in and sing with us on Tuesday evenings at The Presbyterian Church on Airport Access Road at 7:00 p.m.

Calling all chapters

Is your chapter represented in Chapters in Action? If not, why not?

Let your chapter board of directors know that you'd like to spread the news of your chapter throughout the district.

Chapters in Action

Holland

By Art Lane

Holland Chapter readies shows to raise theater renovation funds

Dates have been selected and a director named for the series of shows aimed at raising money to renovate the Park Theater. Bill McAndrew, quartet enthusiast, tag singer, and veteran of community theater, will direct three nights of "Preservation Through Performance" Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, October 21-23, at the theater.

He has invited members who would like to perform in the train scene from "The Music Man" to volunteer. In addition to several barbershop segments, the show will feature music out of the past — both vocal and instrumental — of many kinds. Auditions have been held, inviting the public to participate.

Meanwhile, Carl Bos is assembling a list of potential donors to be invited to the three shows. Each member is asked to invite three couples. As outlined in Jack W. Oonk's PTP plan, the inviter explains that the show is free, but a substantial donation for the theater is expected.

Sale of theater seats at \$500.00 each is progressing under Jim Esenberg and Jim Wojahn.

New approach to contest music announced by Director Lucas

Harold Hill had the "think system" for the River City Boys' Band, and now Myke Lucas, director of the Holland's WINDMILL CHORUS,

has come up with a revolutionary new method of learning music for the October 16 district contest. It's called "Instant Contest Chorus."

Here's how it works: Myke sent out packets with sheet music and learning tapes for one of the contest songs. He asked chapter members to learn the song on their own, at home, "and then show up at the Park on September 7 and sing it." When the chorus has learned the music, "just add director and away we go," he said. The aim is to get everyone involved in the contest without using all summer to do it.

Bill McAndrew opens Holland web site

Bill McAndrew spread the word by e-mail: "I'm happy to announce that the Holland Chapter now has its own web page at <http://members.aol.com/hollandwmc/>. On it you'll find information on our own chapter meetings, directions to our hall, upcoming events, and rosters of both our chapter officers and chorus members. In addition, you can find a report on our 1998 Netherlands tour and our current project of renovating the Park Theater in downtown Holland."

An e-mail response feature allows visitors to send questions and updates to the webmaster at hollandwmc@aol.com. Check us out!"

Barbershoppers named

Karl Klomparens, who has spent countless hours sanding and painting the walls of the Park Theater, was named Barbershopper of the Month for June.

Chosen as Barbershopper of the Month for July was Paul Bekker, treasurer. Paul has put the chapter's books on computer and has created a balance sheet that shows the chapter's assets and liabilities. In addition, he has been working on re-

modeling the floor at the theater.

New tag contest format rewards audience with complete songs

As in the days of radio's Hit Parade, the 14th annual Chester P. Oonk Memorial Tag Contest paused between contestants several times to offer a Lucky Strike Extra — a complete song or two by one of the quartets in attendance. The new format was suggested by Tom Zuidema, our host at Saugatuck RV Resort and Campground, and was designed to enhance the entertainment value of the evening.

The July 31 contest featured 18 quartets and produced winners in novice and pro categories. The winning novice quartet was MIGHTY GRAND, composed of singers from both the West Shore and Grand Rapids Sweet Adelines: Merry Lu Jordan, Tammie Milligen, Linda Rozema, and Leah McAndrew. Runners up were EASY LISTENERS, formed by Henry and Al Plantenga and Steve and Shawn Foster, and DANNY BOY AND THE JUNIORS, composed of Jim Hall from the Gratiot County Chapter, his son, James Hall, and Mark Andrew and Bill McAndrew.

The winning professional quartet was LAST CALL, made up of Nancy Lucas, Mary Lucas, Kirk Wood, and Dan Doctor. Runners-up were BORDER CROSSING, Myke Lucas, Dan Doctor, Kirk Wood, and Mike Oonk, and THE TAGAMETS, made up of Mary Lucas, Nancy Lucas, Sue Lucas, and Myke Lucas.

The Bob Von Ins Gut Bucket Award for the best bass went to Dan Doctor. The Bart Tillitt Tag Hog Trophy for the person singing in the most quartets was won by Myke Lucas.

(Continued on page 26)

Chapters in Action

Holland

(Continued from page 25)

Golf marathon a winner

Thirteen chapter members and seven guests risked heat stroke and blisters to play up to 100 holes of golf for the benefit of the Holland Chapter. Seven of the hardy golfers went the distance and almost everyone shot more than 50 holes. Golfers sought pledges on a per-hole basis. The event raised about \$5,000.00 for renovation of the Park Theater.

Despite the good return for a day on the links, Chapter President Steve Foster said he doesn't think he will try the 100-hole format again. The seven who spent the morning 'til dusk shooting 100 holes were Myke Lucas, Dick Johnson, James Hall, Brian Cutshall, Paul Bekker, Karl Klomparens, and Steve Foster.

Detroit-Oakland

By Tom Uicker

As I write this article at the beginning of September, I hope it gets to you, the reader, before the beginning of November because the first Friday in November is "Canada Night" at DOC. We want to invite all of the Detroit-area barbershoppers, especially the Windsor Chapter, out for a party.

We will hold the event at the Southfield K of C Hall, 25228 W 12 Mile Road (west of Telegraph), in Southfield. We haven't worked out

the food and the admission price yet, but we expect to have fliers available at the district fall convention.

We do want to repeat the mini-chorus competition. A mini-chorus is made up of 10 to 16 singers (with or without a director), all from the same chapter. Each mini-chorus will be judged on two songs for the contest, and the winners will receive and be able to display the coveted "Old Oakland Bucket" for the next year. This treasured trophy was won by the Lansing Chapter several years in a row. More recently it was claimed twice by Motor City Metro Chapter and once by Windsor. The current defending champs are from Detroit-Oakland.

So mark November 5, 1999, on your calendar and start working on your mini-choruses for the big day.

Until then, good luck to all of the competing quartets and choruses in the fall competition. THE GENTLEMEN SONGSTERS will be there with you. And, if you have time some Monday night, stop by the Starr Presbyterian Church on the corner of Crooks Road and 13 Mile Road in Royal Oak. We would love to sing one with you.

Rochester

By George Schmidt

The Heart of the Hills Chapter is alive and well! We spent the summer learning new songs for our upcoming annual show on October 23 under the able leadership of our new director, Andy Brenz. It's been an interesting summer, one in which we sponsored a revival of the old monthly "fun night." We called it an Old Fashioned Night and invited all barbershoppers in our area with THE DETROIT SOUND COMPANY as the featured quartet. This

event was well attended with lots of pick-up quartetting and gang singing.

The most memorable performance of the summer happened on July 20 when our chorus was featured at the Lake Orion Concert in the Park series. Just as the chorus was giving its rendition of "Sweet and Lovely," Andy stopped the music, called his sweetheart, Kelly Hope, on stage and on bended knee offered her an exquisite diamond engagement ring. A surprised Kelly, after a momentary pause, accepted to the delight of the audience and the chorus. This was one occasion when the CHORD REALLY HAD A RING TO IT!

The chorus is looking forward to our next performance at the Rochester Art & Apples Festival on September 12. The show committee, spearheaded by Chairman Ross Ensign, is hard at work promoting our annual show featuring bronze medallist quartet MICHIGAN JAKE and New England's favorite female comedy quartet, THE NON-PAREILS.

Wayne

By Gary Simon

Our RENAISSANCE CHORUS has had a busy summer, highlighted by singing and answering phones at Channel 56's presentation of "Can't Stop Singing" on Saturday, August 7.

We're now working on our two songs for the fall competition, with the goal of finishing a quantum leap higher than in recent years.

We rehearse every Tuesday evening at Newburg United Methodist Church in Livonia.

Please join us if you're in the area. "We'll leave the light on for you!" ■

"Irish Blessing"

Arranged by Don Gray

Tenor Lead

May the road rise to meet you, May the wind be al-ways at your

Bari Bass

back, May the sun shine warm u-pon your face. May the rain fall

soft u-pon your fields, And un - til we meet a - gain, may He hold you in His

hand. May God hold you in the palm of His, Hold you in the palm of His hand.

hand.

hand.

The musical score is written for Tenor Lead and Bari Bass. It consists of four systems of music. The first system covers measures 1-3, the second covers measures 4-9, the third covers measures 10-15, and the fourth covers measures 16-20. The Tenor Lead part is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The Bari Bass part is written in a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The lyrics are placed between the two staves. Measure numbers 1 through 20 are indicated above the Tenor Lead staff. There are some performance markings such as 'x' above measure 4 and 'hand.' above measures 19 and 20. The score ends with a double bar line at the end of measure 20.

Upcoming Events

1999

- Oct. 9 Gratiot County Show
 Oct. 15-17 District Fall Convention
 Oct. 23 Rochester Show
 Nov. 6 Pontiac-Waterford Show
 Dec. 10 & 12 Grand Rapids Show

2000

- Feb. 18-19 Detroit-Oakland Show
 March 3-4 Huron Valley Show
 March 4 Lansing Show
 March 11 Kalamazoo Show
 March 11 Monroe North Show
 April 15 Grand Rapids Show
 April 28-30 District Spring Convention
 June 2-3 Traverse City Show
 June 9 Windsor Send-Off
 Oct. 20-22 District Fall Convention
 Dec. 1-3 Grand Rapids Show

Note: All chapter show activities must be cleared through the district secretary.

Please notify:

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Fall convention schedule (Tentative)

FRIDAY, April 23

9:00 a.m. - District board meeting, McCamly Plaza Hotel.

11:00 a.m. - Registration begins, McCamly Plaza Hotel lobby.

Noon - Barbershop Shop opens, McCamly Plaza Hotel. Open through Saturday night at any time competitions are not in progress.

2:00 p.m. - House of Delegates meeting, McCamly Plaza Hotel.

2:00 p.m. - Ladies Hospitality Room opens, McCamly Plaza Hotel. Generally open when competitions are not in progress.

6:30 p.m. - Registration moves from hotel to W. K. Kellogg Auditorium.

7:30 p.m. - Quartet competition semi-finals, W.K. Kellogg Auditorium.

Half hour after competition - Pioneer Quartet Champions Association show, \$5.00 admission, McCamly Plaza Branson Ball-room.

SATURDAY, Oct. 16

7:00 a.m. - Chapter Presidents' Breakfast, Porter's Steak House at McCamly Plaza Hotel.

8:30 a.m. - "How to Be a Great Lead" by Presentation Judge David Krause, Montgomery Room, McCamly Plaza Hotel.

9:00 a.m. - Registration continues, McCamly Plaza Hotel lobby.

9:00 a.m. - Ladies Hospitality Room opens.

10:00 a.m. - Joe Barbershop Chorus rehearsal.

10:45 a.m. - Registration moves from hotel to W. K. Kellogg Auditorium.

Noon - Chorus international prelims, W. K. Kellogg Auditorium.

Half hour after competition - Mass sing, McCamly Place

4:00 p.m. - Seniors' Quartet Contest, Branson Ballroom, McCamly Plaza Hotel.

7:30 p.m. - Quartet competition finals, W. K. Kellogg Auditorium.

After competition - Hospitality rooms at McCamly Plaza and other hotels.

SUNDAY, Oct. 17

9:00 a.m. - Gospel service, Branson Ballroom, McCamly Plaza Hotel.