



Pioneer Troubadour

Official Publication of the Pioneer District November/December 2005 Volume 56, Number 5

The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc.

How Glenn Van Tassell inspired all of us

Twice Gold, three times Silver, the legend of Pioneer was champion above all

By Matthew Seely

I'm a barbershop brat. Which means I was raised on barbershop and literally came into this world knowing barbershop as "music." Not Top 40 hits or 50's music, Elvis, Sinatra, classical or jazz... music was barbershop. I loved it and still do.

Growing up I hung on every word my father, **Russ Seely**, sang with the **Four Fits** quartet. So somewhere around 1974/1975 when **Thom Hine** joined the Four Fits, I was allowed to go to my first big time show. I was 10-years-old and the **Detroit #1 Chapter** had booked Ford

Auditorium. Sold Out!

What a thrill to see my dad on the stage in that huge auditorium. **Clay Hine** and I sat side-by-side and as his dad directed the chorus and took it all in. What I didn't count on was hearing and meeting a legendary group, with legendary singers I would take on

as idols.

My friends all traded baseball cards and loved sports heroes but to me, the real heroes were these men who sang so effortlessly and made music just with their voices harmonizing. The group was the **Gentleman's Agreement**. Please see **LEGEND**, page 8.

Everything we need to know in life, we learned from barbershop

By Ralph Brown

In the vestibule of a church I know stands a large brass church bell cast in the late 1800s. It was rescued from an old church building that was replaced in the mid-1900s.

The new church doesn't have a bell tower but each Sunday morning, every child that enters the church and many of the adults smack that old bell with an open hand, just to hear it ring.

At first, the sound is harsh, containing the sound of the slap of flesh against metal. But soon after, as the vibration works its way around and then through the cone of the bell, the tone mellows. Finally, there is the faint ring of an overtone, higher than all the other sounds.

Each of us is like that bell.

Even while you sit there quietly listening to the sound of my voice, each of your atoms is vibrating with the energy
Please see
EVERYTHING, Page 3.

2004:1 point... 2005: 2!



Party of Four is Number 1

Fermata Nowhere sets record for 2nd place, 2 points from 1st

By Joe Serwach

Nearly 14 years after three of the four first walked across a Pioneer stage, **Party of Four** was back on the same Battle Creek stage to win the District Quartet Champion trophy.

The young quartet scored 1,758 points or 73.2 percent, narrowly besting **Fermata Nowhere**, which won 1,756 points or 73.2 percent. This was the fourth contest in a row and the sixth contest since 2001 where **Fermata** finished second, a district record. In 1997 and 1998, three of the four **Fermata** members sang in **Resolution**, which finished 2nd both years.

In total: eight second place trophies narrowly losing to seven different Pioneer District Champion quartets.

Antiques Roadshow finished in third and won Seniors
Please see **WINNERS**, page 10.



(Top) The young members of **Party of Four** win their first District Championship.

(Middle) **Fermata Nowhere** was just 2 points behind, winning 2nd for the fourth straight contest.

(Bottom) **Macomb Harmony Heritage Chorus** will once again represent Pioneer at Internationals. Photos by Joe Serwach



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Editor: Joe Serwach, 7511 Hamburg Road, Brighton, MI 48116

810-231-2717 (R) 734-647-1844 (B) — E-mail: Jserwach@umich.edu

<http://www.harmonize.com/Pioneer/pio.htm>



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PRESIDENT

Bruce Smith
208 Beech St.
Charlotte, MI 48813-1004
517-541-1104 (R)
BASmith1104@sbcglobal.net

EXECUTIVE VP

Raleigh Bloch
2033 Wild Cherry Lane
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
269-375-6849 (R) 269-375-6849 (B)
RBloch@compuserve.com

SOCIETY BOARD MEMBER

Bob Brutsman
2000 Orkla Drive
Golden Valley, MN 55427-3430
763-546-7795 (R) 763-764-4015 (B)
bob.brutsman@genmills.com

CONTEST & JUDGING

Al Fisk
1018 River Mist Drive
Rochester, MI 48307
248-651-3796
alfisk@comcast.net

MARKETING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

James Ryan
308 Harvard St.
Canton, MI 48188
jameslryan@sbcglobal.net

SECRETARY

Marvin Skupski
34430 Spring Valley
Westland, MI 48185
734-525-2968 (R)
Mskupski@comcast.net

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Al Bonney
12660 Sundown Lane
Traverse City, MI 49686
231-223-4064 (R)
AlBonney@pentel.net

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Brian Dunkel
5872 Green Road
Haslett, MI 48840-9783
517-339-3422 (R) 517-625-3143 (B)
MSUDunk@aol.com

EVENTS

Jerry Ditto
753 72nd Ave.
Lawton, MI 49065-8600
(269) 387-6016 (R)
(269) 624-6735 (B)
jerry.ditto@wmich.edu

CHAPTER SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Doran McTaggart
890 Buckingham
Windsor, ON N8S 2C8
519-948-0637 (R)
DoranMcT@aol.com

MUSIC & PERFORMANCE VP

Dan Bezaire
354 East Puce Road, RR #1
Belle River, ON N0R 1A0
519-727-5842 (R) 519-728-1212 (B)
DBezaire@wincom.net

FINANCE VP

Robb Smith
46210 Copper Lock Lane
Macomb, MI 48044-6202
586-307-8007 (B)
rising10or@barbershop.net

CHORUS DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Ron Eubank
4272 Browning Drive
St. Joseph, MI 49085
269-429-8515 (R)
269-470-2088 (B)
roneubank@aol.com

YOUNG MEN IN HARMONY VP

David Anderson
39043 Cadborough Dr.
Clinton Twp., MI 48038
586-286-4860 (R)
PDSing@peoplepc.com

DISTRICT HISTORIAN

Mike Drouillard
2882 Front Rd.
La Salle, ON, N9J 2N7
Phone 519-734-6873
E-mail: miche@emporium.on.ca

Address changes

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EVERYTHING

Continued from Page 1

of the moment when God created all things. If our ears were tuned to it, the rocks themselves would sing for us the sound of creation.

We cannot stop from singing. All of life is music.

Several years ago, **Robert Fulghum** wrote a book titled, "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten." The lessons he learned applied to all of life.

Well, the truth is all I really need to know I learned while singing barbershop harmony.

Here is what I've learned about life from this wonderful music we share:

- All of life is music.
 - We have two ears and one mouth for a reason – listening is essential in harmony.
 - A lead won't win a championship without the support of three good friends.
 - No one else can learn your part for you. Know your part and sing it well.
 - When you miss a note, smile and carry on.
 - Practice. Practice. Practice.
 - If I don't enjoy singing, no one will enjoy my singing. Have fun!
 - Life is breath – breathe deep.
 - Life is tough – take your quartet with you.
 - When the music requires, share the melody.
 - The composer wrote it that way for a reason, but the small stuff is up for interpretation.
 - Drink lots of water – it helps everything work better.
 - Don't step on the bari's cherry and don't interrupt your wife while she is speaking either.
 - Keep your uniform clean and pressed. A good performance is pleasing to the eye as well as the ear – besides, looking good makes you feel good.
 - Every good song, just like every life, should have a great tag and finish strong. Sing it well.
 - Love the song. It takes love to bind a song together in perfect harmony, just as it's love that makes life worth living.
- Ralph Brown is a minister and member of Grosse Pointe Chapter. This sermon was recited at the close of the fall 2005 District Convention.*

The show from backstage

By Joe Serwach

If you ever get the chance to host a District Convention, take it.

Because often times, you can learn more about life from standing backstage with the stage crew than you can by sitting in the front row.

This fall was the first time **Grosse Pointe** hosted a convention in a decade so I found myself backstage holding a walkie talkie and clipboard escorting people to the stage.

Watching quartets and choruses get ready to go on said more about who they were than actually seeing them perform.

Seeing how they prepared, what they did and didn't do, often said who they were and how they'd score.

I saw one group thrown off and fazed because they thought they had more time, didn't realize it was time to go on.

I watched **Fermata Nowhere**, who has amassed more points over the past four contests, than anyone, warm up by

relaxing, stopping at a pub, then forgoing the customary practice in rehearsal rooms to stand near the stage. I saw **Party of Four** clench hands like a united football team in a huddle before they went on to win, after 14 years of craving it. You could feel their emotion 20 feet away, their joy, confidence, enthusiasm and heart. It's how they won.

I felt the power of **Detroit-Oakland's** sound by standing in their rehearsal room. Feeling a song shake the walls is so much more powerful than just listening. Watched **Macomb's** glitter sparkle, sensing their energy.

And heard **Grosse Pointers** say "hey guys, let's go sing with them" when they heard Joe Barbershopper Chorus only had eight men. With zero rehearsal time and scarcely a minute to think it over, they said "the show must go on" and hit the stage, acting rather than just talking. Thrilled to get the chance to sing a couple more songs.

Rehearsals? That's for Tuesday. Fridays and Saturdays are about the rhythm and the flow of the show...



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Pioneer District President:

Some parting thoughts

By **Bruce Smith**

Pioneer District President



As I complete my time as District President I find myself looking back to the first district function facing all incoming district president's: **COTS**.

The District President makes both opening and closing remarks at this function. Two years ago when I was preparing my remarks

I thought about my barbershop life, about what kept me renewing my membership, and kept me looking forward to my next barbershop meeting.

What I saw was ever repeating and growing personal rewards that came from being a barbershopper. I think all barbershoppers experience these rewards, but we rarely talk about them.

These rewards are at the core of barbershop, and their existence can never be mentioned often enough. Those rewards drive our organization year after year. They arise from the people and music, and these rewards are as present today as they were two years ago.

I would like to share them with you and ask you to determine if they don't speak as true of your experience as they do to me of mine.

My reward begins with the belief that barbershoppers have been given a special gift, a musical style that brings harmony, joy, and laughter into our lives and the lives of others.

We awaken memories and dreams that bring forth tears and smiles. I doubt that there is a barbershopper who hasn't experienced the impact of our musical style.

We see it as we sing to children or seniors, deliver a valentine or perform for a community group.

We feel it in ourselves each time we tell a story

in song. I think our Society captured the essence of this gift as well as the reward when it stated that the mission of the Barbershop Harmony Society, the reason we exist is to "Enrich Lives Through Singing."

Having been given this mission and this special gift produces special obligations. An obligation to preserve the style and to encourage its growth and development.

An obligation to ensure that every coming generation can enjoy our music and participate in this great hobby, an obligation to enrich the lives of all those touched by our music.

You and I are stewards, the keepers and promoters of the barbershop style. We must do our utmost to perform the style to the best of our ability. We must inform others of the joys and benefits of joining with us and in so doing enriching their own lives and the lives of others.

Thank you for permitting me to serve you these last two years.

COTS is for more than officers

Speaking of COTS, it isn't just for Chapter Officers.

The Jan. 7-8 COTS in Lansing includes an amazing Joe Barbershopper Class open to all members of the district. Enrollment information is available at the District Web Page under COTS or through your chapter officers.

Bruce Odell is returning with the class that Joe Barbershop class that produced comments like "GREAT - FANTASTIC EXPERIENCE - BRING HIM BACK."

Open to all district barbershoppers, Bruce's fun filled class brings together every aspect of musical performance and vocal skill.

A fun-filled participation class, Bruce will teach, challenge, and involve every student. He promises that you will go away a better singer and major contributor to your chapter.

If you can attend only one class in all of 2006 this is the one that should be on your list.

Bush League

By **Al Bonney**

Bush League started with a whimper this year when the Harmonie Meister organizing Chapter President, **Erv Erickson**, realized about three weeks out that he only had two quartets signed up.

Bush League has a long and glorious history, having begun in Boyne City in 1947 by **Lorton Wilson** who stole a spittoon (Gaboon) from a local hotel and made it into a trophy. (The original Bush League contests were, for years, held at the same hotel that lost the spittoon!) Anyway, Bush League has been presented every year since 1947 (except 1995). So the old girl has a long and colorful history – just ask any of the old timers who used to go every year.

In 1996, the **Gaylord Chapter** revived this great barbershop weekend and in 2002 they joined hands with the district to expand the original contest and show format to include an afternoon of coaching for all quartets who participated. Together with two afterglows, the weekend became a full fledged barbershop experience.

Well, back to this year and the slow start. The district, the chapter and the featured quartet/coaches huddled and agreed we must continue the program even with only two quartets. A contest with two did not make any sense so we cancelled that but the rest of the weekend stayed whole. Ultimately another quartet signed up and a Sweet Adeline quartet (from Traverse City) also indicated interest so they rounded out the four coaching slots. Gaylord fashioned an adjudication arrangement for the three male quartets and the weekend was on.

Border Crossing took top honors followed closely by **Outburst** and **Keeper of the Keys**. Congratulations, guys. Everyone sang
Please see BUSH LEAGUE, page 15.

Frank Fortier(Lead)

Tom Smeltzer (Bass)

ENTERTAINMENT IN FOUR PART HARMONY



A Barbershop Quartet (SPEBSQSA)

Jim Grogan (Tenor)

Mike Proffitt (Baritone)

(313) 881-1465

Tom Conner

Steve Pauling

fermata Nowhere

A Barbershop Quartet

Jeff Gougeon
(586) 212-1972

Pete Burns
(248) 689-0026

QCA Profile:

The Detroit Sound Company

The Detroit Sound Co. formed in August of 1997 (eight weeks prior to the Pioneer District Quartet Competition).

We were surprised, yet delighted, to finish first in the contest. We were actively visiting various chapters, singing on shows, and participating in district functions. We have had the pleasure of singing the National Anthem for the Detroit Pistons, the Detroit Tigers, the Detroit Vipers (minor league hockey), and the Detroit Shock (WNBA).

Other performances have included: WJR Radio 760 in Detroit, Fox 2 Television News in Detroit, the Buckeye Invitational in Ohio, Birmingham First Night Festivities on New Year's Eve, Michigan



International Speedway, the Detroit Institute of Arts, Alcoholics for Christ, and a homeless shelter in Detroit. TDSC chapter show appearances have included Rochester, Grosse Pointe, Huron Valley, Windsor,

Muskegon, Wayne, Macomb, and the Southgate Sweet Adelines.

The Detroit Sound Co. sang a wide variety of songs that catered to all ages. Our repertoire included Broadway, ballads, up-tunes, comedy, commercials, Christmas, spirituals, and patriotic.

We truly believed that it was our responsibility, as district champs, to spread the gospel of barbershop wherever we go. Not only did we enjoy singing with each other, but we also had a lot of just plain fun when we are together.

We disbanded in 2000 due to Al's vocal problems. Jeff (who joined us soon after we won the championship) now sings with Fermata Nowhere.

Jim's job has him traveling the south much of the time. Sadly, Kelly recently passed away. Our loss is God's gain.

How we grow is the REAL issue

In support of **Doran McTaggart's** "Grow now –or Die!" piece in the September/October Troubadour, I would like to add some encouragement and opinion concerning where the emphasis affecting our barbershop future should be directed.

After almost 30 years of Pioneer District chorus and quartet membership it is my long-term observation that the problem of our declining membership equates closely to the growing mediocrity of barbershop.

This situation can only be properly corrected long term by creating better chapter environments that promote higher levels of singing and performing expertise not necessarily related to an immediate increase in the membership count. It took the society a long time to get into this declining position and simply fixing the short-term symptom may not be the best fix.

The district's challenge is to figure out how best to obtain/develop better directors/singers instead of soliciting just any male off the street that "likes" to sing and enjoys the social fraternity we have become. I've actually heard recent barbershop radio ads soliciting men whether they can sing well or not. In my opinion, this is not the best long-term direction toward rebuilding a singing society back to prominence.

Each chapter in the Pioneer district today, including our elite that still finish near the bottom at the yearly international chorus competition, needs to upgrade directorship talent and understanding how to sufficiently attract, retain, motivate, challenge, teach, and discipline a higher caliber of singer that is necessary to rebuild and grow chapter environments.

It is interesting how better singers generally don't sing long for inadequate directors and inadequate singers generally don't sing very long for better directors, so you do the math. The challenge is how we upgrade our Pioneer directorships before barbershop becomes so mediocre that no one really cares if it dies. In a nutshell, it is the quality of chapter singers not the quantity that need to improve through better directorship if we are to survive.

John E. Peterson
Pioneer District Member
Elk Rapids, MI

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Tipton, LeRoy and Bezaire to take new district management roles

By Bruce Smith

Pioneer District President

Pioneer Barbershoppers: I am pleased to inform you that the following individuals have accepted appointment to serve on the Pioneer District Management Team.

Matt Tipton – Director of Music and Performance. Contact at (586) 838 4138, email: mftipton@wideopenwest.com

Matt is a member and Music and performance vice-president of the Macomb County chapter, and an assistant director for their Harmony Heritage Chorus and also sings lead in Border Crossing. He has a music degree from Ball State University, but makes his living as a self-employed computer programmer. He is married to Josie, a Sweet

Adeline, and has three daughters - the four of whom plan to start their own quartet someday. Matt has been singing barbershop most of his life and received his society membership from his barbershopper-father for his twelfth birthday.

Ralph LeRoy – Director of Marketing/Public Relations. Contact at (810) 227 0780, email: wizardpmb@provide.net.

Ralph is a printing veteran in the digital and commercial print industries. He has sold, managed and trained sales forces for two large national printing companies.

He now leads his company, Printer's Helper, in providing outsourcing services for local printers and printing distributors.

A barbershopper for seven years,

he has attended Harmony College/Directors College for directing and also with his former quartet, **By Appointment Only**. He has been director of the Lamplighters and has been in charge of public relations and chorus development since his beginnings with the chorus. He has been marketing the Lamplighter Chorus through their selected sing outs, their dynamite OPEN HOUSES and their work with the local community chambers of commerce. He has developed a fill-in the blanks chorus brochure template and he is available to help you grow your chorus through his experience and promotional expertise.

Dan Bezaire – Director Chapter Support & Chorus Director Development. Contact at (519) 727 5842, email:

DBezaire@wincom.net

Dan is moving over from Director Music and Performance to take this vital district position.

Dan directs Windsor's Sun Parlour chorus. He has a degree in music from the University of Windsor, and recently retired from 31 years of teaching in Belle River District High School. I know these men will be welcomed as supported by all of you as they take on these vital positions.

They are dedicated barbershoppers and are committed to moving the Pioneer district forward. I wish to thank the district nominating committee, **Al Bonney** (chairman), **Raleigh Bloch**, and **Clay Jones**, for recommending these men.

Judge's Corner

Make sure music you're singing is legitimate

By Al Fisk

Wow, what a great weekend: splendid QCA show, tight quartet contest, many fine choruses, an outstanding panel, fun/fellowship/singing in the hospitality rooms, etc. Hopefully, we'll get more choruses next time!



Not much to report on in the judging world except that the Society is making a much needed push to have all of us sing "legitimate" music.

In this day and age, we need to make sure we're not risking lawsuits against individuals, chapters, or the BHS.

Hopefully, most of us are already on the straight and narrow path, as we should be.

Don't forget to make use of the many

options available to improve our singing: conventions, coaching, Bush League, Harmony Roundup, CDWI, Harmony College, etc.

We're in the process of brain-storming and doing things differently to increase the interest in these opportunities. Feel free to send me input. I'll make sure it gets to the right people.

Cool? Peace.

Bruce Scott Mike Craig

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New Year – New start – New growth!!

By Doran McTaggart

By the time you read this article, your chapter elections will have taken place. Hopefully you



have elected the best men for each job.

Some offices need leaders who are creative and imaginative, while

others need men who are sticklers for detail. Get the right people in the right jobs and voila.....you'll have a successful year!

These nominees have stood for office and have been elected.

The next important step is to have them attend **COTS** for excellent training by a world-class faculty. Your officers will get the tools to do the job. Make sure that your 2006 Chapter Leadership Team is reported to Kenosha so each officer can benefit by receiving future information and materials sent out from the Society Headquarters.

Now that **UCANSING2** is over, how successful were we in our chapter, district and Society in increasing our membership? Did we turn around the membership losses and turn them into membership gains? Each chapter received lots of materials from the Society. Most of these materials can be used time and time again and will be a good usable resource for your chapter.

A great deal of planning and money was expended to this recruitment drive so it would have a good chance for success. At the end of August 2005, Society membership was 29,737 which represented a loss of 930 members since August 2004. Our goal is to reach 31,500 members by December 2005. With each chapter on board and doing its part, this goal is possible.

My tenure as Director of Chapter Support and Leadership Training (CSLT) is drawing to a close. Our Pioneer District EVP **Jim Kunz** will also assume the role of Director of CSLT. All Chapter Counselors will be under Jim's leadership and report to him.

I attended the first training session for CSLT and have been involved with it for the past six

years. This program has had its ups and downs through the years. Some chapters have used the expertise of their Chapter Counselor extensively. They asked him to assist in many ways.....guest nights, chapter installations, director searches, membership drives, problem solving, answering a variety of questions and using him as a sounding board for numerous chapter situations.

Other chapters have said that they were doing OK at the present time and they would call their CC when they needed some assistance. Your Chapter Counselor is still the conduit that can help your chapter be the best it can be. He is as close as your telephone and the price is right. It's FREE!!

Think young!

By Dave Anderson

Director YMIH

As we plan ahead for 2006 in regards to our barbershop hobby, let's not remember that recent birthday that we celebrated, but let's reverse the clock by THINKING YOUNG.



You can get much more fun and satisfaction out of your hobby (and life) by becoming involved with the youth programs that are available through your

chapter, district, and at the international level.

Now that your chapter has had its election of officers, do you have a YMIH vice president or have you appointed a YMIH chairman? If not, then you new presidents had better get one, for we have much planned for 2006.

The next step is to make sure that this person attends **COTS**. Your YMIH COTS faculty has been working hard at revising and up-dating the program to make this weekend of training the most useful to you on a chapter level. Please remember that for these programs to work, it **MUST** happen in your chapter.

New (and old) chapter presidents; as you are planning your budget for 2006, I would ask you to include a donation from your chapter to the Pioneer Youth Fund. We all just heard that the District did not receive any grant monies this year from our biggest benefactor, **MACACA**, so we will need some donations from chapters, quartets, and individuals to support our

youth programs. Just make out a check to "Pioneer District" and send it to **Robb Smith** with a note designating it to the youth fund. It's tax deductible and is going for a really great cause.

Our first big event of the new year is the Pioneer YMIH Booth at the Michigan Music Educators National Convention in Grand Rapids on January 20-21. This year it has been moved from Ann Arbor to Grand Rapids to a more expensive venue, but we feel that we must maintain a presence here with the music teachers and the college music majors.

We also have a new handout to college students that includes a great CD plus information on the college quartet contest. We are also hoping to have some of our top Pioneer quartets stop by and do a little singing at our booth.

The next big event will be **Harony Happening '06** to be held March 10-11 in Lansing and the high school-aged chorus will once again have the opportunity to perform on the stage of the Wharton Center along with the **Capitol City Chordsmen**.

We need each and every one of you to help spread the word to teachers, sons, and grandsons to get them to attend this wonderful weekend. Last year, we had 57 potential barbershoppers of the future attend. Let's see if we can beat that number this year. More details on this will be in the next Troubadour.

So as we look forward to 2006 in this creative hobby of ours, don't think of yourself as a year older, but just keep thinking young!



Night Shift

A BARBERSHOP QUARTET



Jay Jim Herb Steve

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LEGEND: Champion of champions

Continued from Page 1.

They opened with "One of those Songs" and my skin literally stood on end for the first time in my life. They sang "Cottage Small" and I got teary-eyed.

The power of music and how it could make people emotive was like a magical spell a singer could cast over me. That night at the afterglow, my dad introduced me to the "G.A." and I asked for their autographs. It was the first time I met **Glenn Van Tassell**.

He asked me if I liked to sing and I nodded. My dad said "Sing 'Old Routine' son" and blew a pitch.

Glenn picked me up and stood me on a chair and I sang the highest version of "Old Routine" those three men probably ever sang.

Afterwards Glenn gave me a hug and said "Just what we need-- another Seely in the Society," (at one time, there were eight Seely members of **Grosse Pointe Chapter**). Clay Hine said, "You're so lucky, I want to sing with them too". Who would have guessed one day Clay would have a gold medal of his own with **FRED**?

Later, I would learn that Glenn was one of only three men who won two gold medals singing two different parts and one of the quickest to double-medal. In 1966, he sang lead with the **Auto Towners** and in 1971, (19 months

after forming), he sang baritone with the Gentleman's Agreement. Then in the 1980s, he won the silver medal three times in a row (which may be harder to do than winning a gold once) with **Center Stage**. Which makes him one of two men to medal with three different quartets. He even made the top 20 in the 1990s. No doubt

Al Rehkop, AutoTowners and Gentleman's Agreement Tenor

It is said it takes a minute to find a special person, an hour to appreciate them, a day to love them, but an entire life to forget them. And so be it.

My friend, Glenn, was no doubt and will always be amongst my fondest of memories. This friendship that I so proudly speak of has surpassed a period of five decades. A friendship that was filled with harmony--both of a personal nature and of, course, throughout our many years of singing together in various foursomes.

With Glenn, I witnessed a constant spirit of optimism always shining thru when times & conditions perhaps didn't always warrant such. I witnessed an individual who knew



what he wanted out of life and how he persevered to obtain it. I witnessed a person who was never a stranger to anyone and would offer assistance in anyway he could.

I must admit, however, there was one thing about Glenn I could never quite agree with. He most always insisted he have a rather substantial meal prior before going on stage. He said that would give him maximum strength and control.

Obviously it worked for him. For me, it was total disaster because I could barely breathe and to this day--nothing has changed. Glenn will be greatly missed but his legacy and accomplishments will be long remembered. Farewell, my friend and keep a tenor spot open when we meet again.

Glenn had an amazing voice and presence on the stage that spanned over five decades.

But he gave a lot back too. One week after winning the gold, the G.A. accepted an invitation to make a 17-day tour of South Vietnam. From the decks of ships to forward-area bases to hospitals they entertained U.S. servicemen, singing 41 shows in a little over two weeks. Glenn was also a category specialist interpretation judge. Which meant flying all over the country

decades. It was a landmark show that raised enough awareness in the arts community that a full restoration of that facility started. Soon, the Fox Theatre, Music Hall, Masonic Temple and the Detroit Opera Theatre followed suit and all restored themselves to their original luster.

Years later, Glenn once again was on Grosse Pointe's show with his new quartet Center Stage and by the time they hit the International stage in Detroit they were championship caliber.

The interesting thing is, the year before the Auto Towners won the gold; they finished as fourth place bronze medallists. The Gentleman's Agreement coincidentally came in fourth the year before they won. So when Center Stage, on its first attempt, came in fourth place at the Detroit International Contest

EVERYONE was sure it was Glenn's mark that the next year would bring gold.

Which would have given Glenn a Society unprecedented third gold medal. We all sat on the edge of our seats for the next three years to watch amazing performances so consistent and precise that Center Stage silver medalled every time.

A lot of people felt the Society was discouraging the mega-talented from forming high-powered quartets for the sake of winning gold medals. Others were just amazed that over three decades of time someone could keep his voice in that kind of shape.

My last contact with Glenn was on the Pionet about three years ago when I had found some old cassettes with a live recording of the G.A. The next day I posted how great they were and encouraged everyone to go home. Please see Glenn, page 9.

Antiques Roadshow

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GLENN:

Continued from Page 8

that night and give them a listen.

Within an hour Glenn, who was now pretty ill, posted on the Pionet how much it pleased

him that the music was still appreciated. I asked him if he ever stopped to think that while he was going about his normal life, that I and many others were in our homes, offices and cars still being touched by his quartets'

music. He wrote; "I hadn't ever thought about it Matthew, but thank you for that".

No...thank *you* Glenn!

That is *my* story of Glenn, but please know

I am not qualified to speak of this man or his life.

However, I have contacted some of the great singers who sang with Glenn and asked them for their stories, which appear on these pages. We would like to share with you these stories we have been told since his passing.

Hopefully, these stories will help shed more light and memories on the life of a true barbershop legend.

Lee Hanson, Center Stage Bass

Glenn was one of the finest barbershoppers and gentlemen with whom I've sung. He never believed in "colds"; it was only in your mind. He worked hard at his singing craft and the results show it. He always had a positive attitude.

Glenn spoke about using his "radar" to "scan" what he was doing as he was performing on stage, to make sure what he was doing was planned (pitches, vowel matching, precision of attacks and releases, stage presence, etc.)

How's that for knowing the words and music well enough to concentrate on what else you're doing in front of an audience; real multi-tasking!

Jan and I called on Glenn and Donna numerous times when we were in Florida. We were in the audience during his last concert directing the Sarasota Chorus and attended that after-glow. We also visited them in their home after it became difficult for him to travel.

He was always "up" and carried on conversations as well as possible. We saw him this last February when he was spending a planned week in hospice so Donna and Alyce could get a little rest and he was delighted to hear about the Antiques Roadshow performance at the "Seniors Contest" in Jacksonville the end of January.



found in the same individual.

The first—genuine empathy. Glenn had a special knack for putting himself in the other person's shoes before reacting or deciding upon an action; it undoubtedly added to his unending list of friends and admirers, and garnered no enemies of which I am aware.

The second trait is unfaltering optimism. I have never met a more optimistic man. No matter what negatives were encountered, there was always a bright tomorrow, a better day ahead, a ship coming in. No one did a better job of lifting the spirits of those around him.

Even as he experienced the last two years of deterioration brought on by a terrible, incurable disease, my visits with him were full of positive memories, jokes, and light-hearted, optimistic conversation. We miss you greatly, my wonderful and much loved friend.

Drayton Justus, Gentleman's Agreement Lead

Many wonderful things will be said and wonderful stories told about our friend and loved one, Glenn Van Tassell- - and that's because he was a wonderful person by any measurement.

I could dwell at length on the accolades and stories, but will be content with just a few brief comments. Glenn's musical talent was extraordinary and his understanding of our special art form very keen. He was an outstanding and highly successful performer.

He loved barbershopping deeply, was a gifted communicator, and a man of action, as evidenced by his involvement in many chapter, district, and Society programs for change and improvement. But most of all, I will remember Glenn Van Tassell for two personal traits he had in abundance—traits to be envied, greatly admired, and truly remarkable when both are



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Muskegon entry honors Pioneer in PROBE Contest

A poster entered by **George Doyle** of the **Muskegon Chapter** won Best of Contest in the first – and so far only – poster contest held by **PROBE**, the Society's organization of **Public Relations Officers and Bulletin Editors**. Results were announced during the International convention in July in Salt Lake City.

The poster said to the world: "Wanted: Men of All Ages Who Love to Sing! Join the Shoreline Chorus." It included a photo of the chorus and directions to the meeting place. The poster won Best Recruiting Poster and Best of Contest.

Grant Carson of Gainesville, Texas, judge of the contest, wrote of the poster: "The theme wasn't new...but the poster delivered a sincere and appealing message attractively and graciously. If you were a non-barbershopping Muskegonite who loved to sing, you would have been sorely tempted to investigate." Carson said. "If there were a poster like that in the storefront windows of all the towns where there are barbershop chapters, then membership would be much less of a problem."

Another Pioneer District entry won Best Recruiting Flier. It was submitted by **James Hall** of the **Lansing Chapter**. Hall also entered a show flier and a quartet flier.

There were two other Pioneer entries among the 39 contestants. **Richard Walendowski** of the **Traverse City Chapter** offered a show flier and **Jack W. Oonk** of the **Holland Chapter** a show poster.

Bulletin contests, PR Awards

PROBE's International Bulletin Contest was won, for the third time, by **Dick Cote** of Fullerton, Calif., with his "Barbershop Clippin's." For the Pioneer entrants, **Bob Rancilio's Grosse Pointe Pitch-Pipe** placed 13th and **Art Lane's Holland Windmill Blade** placed 23rd.

The On Line Bulletin Contest was won by **Daniel Bartholomew's InCider Press** of the **Central States District**.

Jack Gardner of Flemington, N.J., won the Public Relations Officer of the Year award for a single event. **Darby Vannier** of Lincoln, Nebraska, won PR Officer of the Year for a year-long effort.

WINNERS

Continued from Page 1

honors with 1,634 or 68.1 percent followed by **Journey** with 1,581 or 65.9 percent and **Moxy** with 1,546 or 64.4 percent.

Rounding out the quartets that made the finals were **Keepers of the Key** with 1,477 or 61.5 percent, **Border Crossing** with 1,467 or 61.1 percent and **Shades of Grey** with 1,456 or 60.7 percent.

In the chorus contest, **Macomb Harmony Heritage** will again represent **Pioneer District** at the International convention in Indiana next summer. Macomb scored 893 or 74.4 percent with 57 men on stage followed by **Detroit-Oakland** which scored 822 or 68.5 percent with 47 men on stage.

Third place went to the smallest and youngest chorus, **Motor City Metro**, which scored 789 or 65.8 percent with just 20 men on stage. The most improved chorus award went to **Grand Rapids**, which scored 778 or 64.8 percent with 26 men.

Two points behind was **Lansing**, which scored 776 or 64.8 percent with 40 men on stage. Kalamazoo scored 737 or 61.4 percent while convention hosts **Grosse Pointe** sang with the Joe Barbershop Chorus then sang their own set, scoring 727 or 60.6 percent with 40 men on stage.

The rest of the chorus competitors were **Hillsdale**, **Michiana Metro**, **Holland** and **Windsor**.

Below: Party of Four joins the Quartet Champions Chorus.



Holland has busy time in new home

By **Art Lane**

Fresh from moving to a spacious new Harmony Hall with a view of a small lake, Dutch buildings and a bridge straight from Van Gogh, the **Holland Windmill Chapter** launched a busy fall and winter schedule.

As Chapter Historian **Dale Bekker** finished putting up hundreds of pictures of Pioneer District quartets and choruses, the chapter in September held its 60th anniversary celebration.

A chapter quartet, **Generation Gap**, won the Old Songs Contest. Groups performing during the anniversary included reigning district champs **Wild Card**, 1994 champs **Genuine Blend**,

the **West Shore Sweet Adelines** from Spring Lake and the **Windmill Chorus** itself.

In October the chapter held a "Go Like Sixty" 60th anniversary membership party, aimed at increasing membership to 60 men. The event, masterminded by **Jack W. Oonk**, bass of the 1956 district champs **Chord Counts**, and the chapter's longtime promoter, introduced plans for a chapter quartet with perhaps a dozen interchangeable parts.

This quartet, available on short notice, could sing for sick people and those who need cheering up. The group would don clown suits when singing for

kids.

In the run-up to Christmas, the Holland Windmill Chorus plans two Christmas concerts in the Avalon Theater near its Harmony Hall. Meanwhile, the Park Theater downtown is the recipient of a \$100,000 Cool Cities award from the State of Michigan. The chapter, which started the Park Theater on the way to renovation, has been asked to perform at the Cool Cities ceremonies in December.

Our weekly chapter meetings have a new touch: A half-hour music class, taught by Director **Kirk Wood**, begins each meeting. Kirk aims to make us singers, for sure, but he also aims

to make us musicians.

So we are learning the names of the notes, where each note resides amid the lines and spaces, the significance of keys and the various kinds of chords you can make with three notes. If we master all that, Kirk says he will tell us about barbershop chords.

Our shiny new Harmony Hall is at C40 Holland Town Center, 12330 James St., at the corner of U.S. 31 and James street, Holland. It is just across the parking lot from Holland's Star Theater.



**2006 PIONEER DISTRICT
SPRING CONVENTION**

April 28-30th

**Kalamazoo Radisson Hotel
CONVENTION REGISTRATION**



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All event passes may be purchased at the convention registration desk located in the Kalamazoo Radisson Hotel Also, single event registrations can be purchased at the convention registration desk located in the Headquarters Hotel. Single events tickets are \$15 each. Children 12 and under are admitted FREE! Each member of a competing quartet or chorus MUST be registered for an all-events pass. Failure to do so will disqualify the quartet or chorus from the contest.

**REFUND POLICY: REGISTRATION FEES WILL BE REFUNDED TO PERSONS CANCELING IN WRITING PRIOR TO THE 11:00am
OPENING ON FRIDAY**

Windsor Report

By Bill Strong

The year 2006 is almost upon us and we look back at 2005 and yes, it was a very good year.

Congratulations go out to **Mike Drouillard** as he has now completed his work on the history of the Windsor Chapter. Those of us who have had a sneak preview were delighted to be able to go back in time and relive a very rich era of our chapter.

Good work Mike. **Andy McCann** has been putting together the details for our spring show and it looks like another winner. Mark your calendars for April 22 and come over to Windsor and have a great time.

Belated kudos to **Roy Gurney** as his daughter's Sweet Adeline Quartet **Spotlight** took top honours at the 2005 International Quartet Competition. It must be in the genes as Roy and the rest of **Border Crossing** won the 2005 **Bush League**. Way to go guys.

Our chapter's first endeavour at attempting "roving rehearsals" took place recently and we attracted a reasonable turnout of guests. We will build on the experience and go from there.

Getting the message out into the community is the name of the game.

Our new Board of Directors is firmly in place and President **Bud Leonard** is back for his second term. Bud will attempt to crack the one hour time barrier for our monthly Board meetings.

We know you can do it Bud. Bud has also taken on the task of being our unofficial "stage presence manager" and that's a tough job when dealing with guys who only have left feet and no sense of rhythm. Good luck Bud.

Battle Creek in the fall was a blast as usual and according to the Judges the Windsor chorus needs just a slight amount of "tweaking". Ya right!!

Our membership numbers remain constant but we intend to put out the effort to attract new members into our great hobby. **Ron Gibb** continues to work on our "Young Men in Harmony"

program and looks forward to getting into more school music classes. Keep up the good work Ron.

Historian's corner

By Mike Drouillard

District Historian

Chapters are now voting for their new executives for 2006. This is an opportunity for the in-coming chapter presidents to take an overview of their chapter organization.

Does your chapter have a historian? If not, then take the opportunity to appoint one. Most members you approach will say "no" because they do not know what is involved. Maybe you, as president, do not know what is involved either!

Why have a chapter historian? Who is qualified to be the historian? Do you have a member who can do it? Let's banish some myths!

The qualities of a historian are curiosity, writing skills, collector and the ability to organize chapter facts, events, etc. Do you need a computer whiz with communication skills? No. Such skills would be helpful, however.

The president has found you out and you have accepted the appointment. Where and how do you start? Don't let your imagination work overtime and thus get overwhelmed by the work you see before you! Set yourself a few (two or three) immediate goals and do them.

Familiarize yourself with the chapter archives. If they are well organized, you just got a bonus. Don't expect it! If you have many materials, then you will have a job organizing them. Take your time.

Who is on the current executive committee? Begin the collecting of a brief bio history for each (age, married, children, previous chapter positions, voice, in a quartet?). The chapter secretary can help you with this. Is he uncooperative?

Ask each of the members involved a few questions covering the information you want and record it in an orderly fashion. The president should invite you to the executive meetings so you can keep up on what is going on. Keep a record of events and who the organizers are.

They are some of the activists in your chapter. Find out about them. Add this to your records.

Are you handy with a camera? If so, take pictures of members at events, identifying the people in the pictures on a stickum which you attach to the back of the picture. If not, you will see members taking pictures. Ask them for copies. Most will readily agree. Identify the people in the pictures as stated above.

You have a space of time where you can look into what happened the year before you became historian. Check the materials you have for that year. No materials? Start collecting info from members of that executive.

You're on your way to becoming an effective chapter historian.

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Record crowd for champs



The **Quartet Champions Association** show attracted its largest crowd ever with a star-studded show celebrating anniversaries.

The 4Fits celebrated the 40th anniversary of their winning the district quartet trophy with a reunion that brought together original members **Marv Burke**, **Russ Seely** and **John Wearing** joining with 1966 Gold Medalist **Carl Dahlke**.

The show also reunited 1995 District champs **Fire Power** as well as 1985 champs **Ivy League**.

It was the first time the four had sung together in years. Two quartet members, **Bob Hartley** and **Brian Philbin** later became members of bronze medalist quartet **Metropolis**.

The members of Ivy League, continuing their comic ways, received standing ovations.

Photos by Joe Serwach



Bush League 2005: Four quartets learn from Gold-winning Power Play

Continued from page 4.

the Gaylord show that night and Power Play (the coaches and adjudicators for the weekend) told me they thought it was one of the most fun barbershop weekends they had experienced.

So thanks, once again, to the Gaylord guys who always step forward to help out the district – and of course to Power Play who were absolutely fabulous coaches. Boy did those quartets get some good stuff that day!!

Bush League is not dead yet, but it does need some support. It is hard to imagine with Power Play as the featured coaches why the weekend was not over subscribed. Perhaps somebody out there knows why? Certainly the district and the Gaylord Harmonie Meisters would like to know so they can do it right next year to a packed house! As it was, four quartets had a great time.



Photos by Al Bonney

Pontiac-Waterford seeking director

By John Cowlshaw

By the time you read this, you may have enjoyed our November 5 show. Entitled **Jukebox Classics**, the chorus sang "Goodnight Sweetheart, Goodnight," "Hello Mary Lou," "In My Room," "In The Still Of The Night," "Something," and "Under The Boardwalk."

Guest quartet was **Three Men and a Tenor**.

Young directors are energetic, but also busy raising a family and climbing up the corporate ladder. The impact on his directorship has led the Executive Board to relieve **Jim Troeger** of those responsibilities.

"As we search for a new director, **Dick Johnson** will be the leader of a Team of In-House Directors."

We all owe Jim a tremendous debt of gratitude for his leadership over the past two years. His crisp directing, his knowledge of and experience in barbershop, his vocal skills, his vision for our future – these contributions will be forever remembered.

Thanks to **Wayne Chene** and all the members of the **Big Chief Chorus**, we had 11 guests on **UCanSingToo Night**, many of whom are considered potential new members.

The Kenosha-sponsored radio and print media blitz was impressive, but did not increase our guest count.

Barbershoppers of the month have included: **Tom Jackson** (July), **Al Monroe** (August), and **Ross Ensign** and **Ted Prueter** (September).



Half Century Men

Society CEO Roger Lewis gives John Wearing (left) and Russ Seely their 50 year pins.

2005 CALENDAR: Upcoming events

November 5

Pontiac-Waterford Chapter Show

November 12

Macomb Chapter Show

Kalamazoo Show

December 17

Grosse Pointe Chapter 60th Anniversary Show

2006

January 7-8

COTS

February 24-25

Detroit-Oakland Show

March 11

Lansing Chapter Show

March 18

Kalamazoo Chapter Show

April 28-30

District Convention, Kalamazoo

May 6

Wayne Chapter Show

Chapter Locations

