

The Bulletune



A Monthly Publication of The Mall City Barbershop Chorus
... a chapter of SPEBSQSA

Keep the Whole World Singing!

Dan Crampton, Editor

The Mall City Chorus meets Tuesday Evenings at 7:00 p.m. at the Wesley Foundation on the WMU Campus

January 2000

AL'S Season's Greetings and a Happy Y2K New Year! As
C we begin a New 2000 year, one of biggest challenges will
U be to broaden our influence in the community. Our first
I Annual Christmas show was a success and we should
T capitalize on this. Even though the new year holds new
I promise, membership growth must be number one on our
E goal list. As membership grows, retention also becomes
S very critical, and questions come to mind.

Is there any reason we cannot dress 50 men to be on risers for the spring contest; or 60 for fall? 100 Singing Valentines? Two Annual shows – one spring and one Christmas? (one for our benefit and one for the community) Of course, various grants for members to attend Harmony College would be a pretty feather in the Madd Hat! Throw in 6 retreats to polish our performances, as well as 10-12 community sing-outs, and top it off with the Very, Very, Best of the Fests 12-31-2000.

These goals may seem a bit lofty, but I firmly believe, with everyone pulling in the same direction, that they are all attainable...or my name ain't. . . .

Al Grieser, your chapter president

From the Director

When Dan first asked me to put down a few words for the Bulletune, I was unsure of what I would say. Oh, there isn't a shortage of subjects, it's choosing the one that needs to be written at this time. So here is what I have to say.

THANK YOU!

Yes, Thank you to each and every member of the Mall City Chorus and your spouse for helping to make our chorus a successful one. Did you know that it takes at least 15 years to be an overnight success and it takes more than one to be a team. I have been directing here in Kalamazoo since July 1991 and I have had the support and the guidance of so many people throughout all of those years. And it has been a terrific 8 years.

When I need help, you are there. When I needed to go to Harmony Round Up or Harmony College to hone or pick up new skills, you've sent me. When I need a "pick me up", you give it to me.
(continued – p.3)

John VanWestrienen

- Barbershopper of the Year!

To properly start this article I should say, "go to page 2 first", but more on that later. On Dec 17th, at the annual Christmas Party, the Kalamazoo Chapter of SPEBSQSA took care of some long overdue business when they named John VanWestrienen Barbershopper of the Year. John is Mr. Do It All. He has been an excellent Chapter Treasurer for what seems like forever. As Treasurer he kept us legal by filing, on a timely basis, all the necessary reports and has always been a guardian of the chapter's funds. Reports are always ready for board meetings and bills paid promptly.

For those who have attended a board meeting, you know he always starts his report by saying go to page 2 first! What is it with this page 2? Can't it be made page 1? Incidentally, page 2 covers expenses that John can track to the penny. Anyway, this year he took on the additional duties of Secretary. So he now is Secretary/Treasurer. Again, John did an excellent job, which is one of John's trademarks.

As if being Treasurer/Secretary isn't enough, John really does it all! If the risers need to be transported or setup, or the sound system needs to be at a performance, 9 times out of 10, John is the guy that gets it done. When he says he will do something you can count on it getting done. He was a major contributor in time-spent getting the trailer built and he always volunteers for helping with the annual show. For those of you who have attended COTS, you've also noted that John is right there helping John Gillespie make COTS successful. Like I said he is Mr. Do It All!

John also loves singing Bass in his quartet, "Under New Management". His quartet is active as well, and at the last contest, received the Great Lakes Express Logopedics Traveling Trophy for contributing more to Heart Spring than any other quartet in the district. (See Dec 1999/Jan 2000 Troubadour, p. 16)

John VanWestrienen is truly deserving of the Barbershopper of the Year award. Our chapter and barbershopping are better because of him. Thank you John, we love you!

(Written by Raleigh Block)

BARBERSHOPPERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

This Barbershopper's version of the famous Karl Marx's appeal is amazingly true now - in the Internet age. There is a lot of fun exploring and searching and surfing with all the www's and dot-com's!

Being a great enthusiast of the Internet, I can tell you - it is a great help and a source of vast new knowledge, especially to me as a new Barbershopper! And since Internet is universal and international by its very nature, it does connect ALL the Barbershoppers of the World (with Internet access) into a World-Wide Community.

First of all, as Net citizens, we have two basic choices - be a surfer or an active participant with our own web site. Either way is not terribly difficult thing to do, especially now when a state-of-the-art computer is available at less than \$25 a month and Internet access is available for free.

Couple of basic concepts, especially for the uninitiated. Internet is a worldwide (literally!) network of computers connected with each other. In most of the cases connection is physical through the ordinary phone lines. Each computer either acts as a server (information depot) or a vehicle. Like on the road each of the participants has its own DNS (a domain address that identifies each computer in the net). The page is developed using a special programming language called HTML. Microsoft Word allows developing pages using regular word-processing techniques and the program does HTML coding. There are also servers that offer pre-structured pages with several sections already built-in, all you need to do is print in or scan in (for pictures) the content.

Kalamazoo Mall City Chorus has had its own web page since the times Raleigh Bloch mastered HTML - the programming language that is used to build a web page. We had this rather ordinary looking page until Gene discovered a way to quickly set up a professional looking page in just a matter of hours. Our current page - (<http://community.mlive.com/cc/MallCityChorus>) is hosted by the company that publishes "Kalamazoo Gazette". Any group can open and maintain a page for free. Our quartet did it (<http://community.mlive.com/cc/soundsclose>).

OK, so you're now online - where do you need to go? Let me your guide. I'd suggest starting at SPEBSQSA page at <http://www.spebsqsa.org/>. There we can look up almost all the information you need - history of the Society, of barbershop singing, you can look up all the chapters and quartets there, you can find tags and links to arrangers. By the way, "links" is the way web pages are interconnected. There are marked with blue color underlined and called hyperlinks. Clicking on them will bring you to the place it refers to. Just as easy as that! There are not too many links on the Society web page but luckily there are few very useful sites that offer a variety of links. I would recommend www.padrino.org/bbshop, www.webring.org/cgi-bin/webring?ring=bbshop:list, <http://arneberg.com/harmonet>, and www.ms.uky.edu/~sills/bsq.html. The latter has links to Barbershoppers outside the United States. All the districts and quite a few chapters have their own web sites that are interesting to visit. Let's start with our own Pioneer District (www.harmonize.com/Pioneer/pio.htm). All the quartets listed here are linked to their web sites. The most recent addition is a copy of Troubadour that will be published there every other month (we will still get a hard copy, but web copy is always the fastest). At Pioneer District page you can subscribe to a very informative Internet-based way of communication - so-called listservs or BBS. Society has it (called Harmonet), so do we. Ours is called Pionet. It currently has close to 400 subscribers, who are exchanging e-mails on different subjects related to the activities in the Districts primarily. Harmonet boasts over 1800 subscribers and covers all the big (and minor!) topics worldwide. These listservs are like a huge stage where everyone can come to the mike and immediately everybody hears what you have to say. One has to be careful! Instructions for subscription are simple and can be found for Harmonet at <http://timc.pop.upenn.edu/harmrepo/howtosub.htm>, for Pionet at <http://www.harmonize.com/Pioneer/PioNet/pionet.htm>. PioNet administrator is Jim Styer, his link is at the main page of Pioneer District. For lovers of parodies there is a chat group, information can be found at www.egroups.com/list/barberparodies/info.html. Some Chapters have their own chat/discussion groups but an easier alternative will just do fine. Gene sends out messages to all Kalamazoo chapter members who made their e-mail addresses known to the group.

There are couples of sites that can help you improve your singing techniques. I'd recommend visiting Dave Shroud's page at http://www.connectingvoices.com/current/9801/technical/9801t3_Vocal/9801t3_1.htm. There is a page on "trills", as he called them, Gene calls them "bubbling".

I will continue searching and reviewing sites that are of interest to us and I can share the results once in a while.

(written by Alexander Boltenko (aboltenko@hotmail.com))

Editor's note: In my experience, the Pionet listserv generates about 15 - 25 e-mails per day which is very manageable. I just subscribed to the Harmonet listserv a week ago, and so have limited experience. I did receive over 100 e-mails one day, and understand that this is not uncommon. If you don't look at your e-mail for a week, you might have well over 500 e-mails waiting for you if you subscribe to the Harmonet listserv! Keep this in mind. You can, of course, try it out and easily unsubscribe if you find it to be unmanageable.

Director's Comments (con't from p.1)

The support and the outpouring of love that I feel from the Mall City Chorus members is at times overwhelming. It makes me want to do more and more every week. You make my job easy and a true labor of love.

The people that I run into at conventions ask me, "How do you do it? You direct two choruses and sing in a top quartet. How do you handle it all?" That is an easy one for me to answer. I simply say, "If you really love doing something, you find the time and the energy to do it. It also helps to have the support group that we have here in Kalamazoo."

It does take a lot of people to run a successful chapter and chorus. At the risk of leaving someone out, here are some of the things and the people that have made 1999 a success.

Music team stuff: Gerry Ditto, Rev. Brian Hall, David Dolph, Ed Fritzen, Raleigh Bloch, Kerry Foley, Jan-Ake Westin, Chris Fenner, Al Grieser.

Annual Show Stuff: Bob and Les Ramlow, Ed Fritzen, Kerry Foley, Raleigh Bloch, John Fair, Herm Dykema, Steve Root, John VanWestrienen, Alex Boltenko, Al Grieser, Lee Derksen, Larry Flegal, Ray Zantello.

Membership stuff: Warren Royer, Jon Mollison.

Spaghetti Dinner stuff: Jan and John VanWestrienen, John Fair, Rusty and Frank Sebastian, Con Van Tol, Clair and Joyce Branch, Ed Fritzen, Herm Dykema, David Dolph, Al Grieser, Steve, Matt, and Mike Root, Gary Nitz, Dennis Perry, Raleigh Bloch, Ed Fritzen, Jan-Ake Westin, Brian and Kate Hall, (and all of the others that I have forgotten to mention.)

Contest stuff: Ed Fritzen, Kerry Foley, Raleigh Bloch, Gary Nitz, David and Deb Dolph, Jan_Ake Westin, Toby Shaver, Bob Squires, Jerry Ditto, John VanWestrienen, Al Grieser, Steve Root, Lee Derksen.

Christmas Show stuff: John Fair, Herm Dykema, Claire Branch, Raleigh Bloch, Con Van Tol, John VanWestrienen, Toby Shaver, Al Grieser, Jon Mollison, Warren Royer, Larry Flegal, Lee Derksen, Dan Crampton.

Christmas Party stuff: Raleigh and Jean Bloch, John VanWestrienen, Tonya Boltenko, Clair Branch, Dennis Perry.

New Years Fest stuff: Al Grieser, Herm Dykema, Raleigh Bloch, John Fair, John VanWestrienen.

The Quartets and the Octet that have performed throughout the year both with and separately from the chorus: Sounds Close, 4 Part Digital Surround Sound, Under New Management, Philatoga Township, Mad Hatters, Rudolph Octet, Upstage Sound.

As you can see, the team is extensive. I know that there are several of you that I have forgotten to mention and I apologize to you. It was not my intention to forget you - after all, I don't think that there is a man or a spouse that has not been active at one time or another in 1999. That is why we are a success. Not because of the guy up front.

So, as I said at the beginning of this litany of the "Who's Who of Kalamazoo," THANK YOU for your support! Let's make Y2K even better!

(written by Gene Hanover, director)

Kalamazoo Gospel Mission Benefit Show

Early this year Gene Hanover came up with an idea to raise money for the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission, by putting on a Christmas Show. The plan was to combine with South Bend and do the same for their mission. Unfortunately South Bend didn't follow through, but we felt it was a worthy cause and went on any way.

So on Dec 11th the Kalamazoo Mall City Barbershop Chorus put on two Christmas Benefit Shows and raised \$8,000 for the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission.

Whoa! Wait a minute. That sounds awfully easy! Maybe I should tell you what went into making it a success. Well first of all we had to decide on a date. Then we had to see if the auditorium was available. Fortunately, it was, and we booked it. Ok, so now what? Well what are we going to do? It was decided to do the show called "What the Dickens". Ok, then the music and learning tapes were ordered. The script was reviewed and speaking parts were assigned.

Kerry Foley was given the part of Ernie (hmmm Scrooge maybe?) and what a job he did. That was an Academy Award winning performance. We owe a big thank you to Kerry! He drove 164 miles round trip, for the rehearsal, and had by far, the largest part in the show. If he missed a line, it sure didn't show. He was really into the part. Jon Mollison played Spirit of the Past (well actually last Tuesday) and he too was excellent in his portrayal in this parody. Raleigh Bloch played Spirit of Ammonia, oops, I mean the Spirit of the Present. David Dolph absolutely did not miss a line as he plated the Spirit of Time Yet To Come. Steve Root did a wonderful job of portraying Jack Murley, Ernie's old high school chorus director (chains and all).

What about the singing, what about the singing you ask. The chorus did a great job under the direction of Ed Fritzen, Jan-Ake Westin and Gene Hanover. Then there were five, count them, five chapter quartets and octet. Four Part Digital Surround Sound (Matt Root, David Dolph, Chris Fenner and Jon Mollison) just keep getting better and proved it on Santa Claus Is Coming To Town. Under New Management (Jerry Ditto, Curt Amundson, Bob Shafer and John VanWestrienen) gave the crowd a treat with All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth. The Madd Hatters (Dennis Perry, Brian Hall, Al Grieser and Jan-Ake Westin hit them with a barbershoppers parody of The Twelve Days of Christmas. Sounds Close (Lee Derksen, Larry Flegal, Ramon Zantello and Al Grieser) Sang Frosty the Snowman to delight the audience. Rounding out the quartets was our own District Champs Upstage Sound singing The Little Boy That Santa Claus Forgot and then their short package on the second half of the show. The octet was made up of, you guessed it eight guys (Herm Dykema, Chris Fenner, Dan Crampton, David Dolph, Jan-Ake Westin, Ed Fritzen, Brian Hall, and Lee Derksen).

The second half of the show featured the Mid Lakes Sweet Adeline Chorus, Upstage Sound and the combined choruses, quartets and octet singing a musical piece from Music Man and an old fashion sing-along. People love the fast-paced show that lasted one hour and forty-five minutes. So how did we get the money? Well the majority came from donations made by local companies that were solicited by you the members. Conley VanTol was our ticket Chairman. Al Grieser was the Show Chairman and many others helped with PR, Staging, props etc.

We got coverage before and after the show on Channel 3. We had coverage on WKZO leading up to the show and we got articles before and after the show in the Kalamazoo Gazette.

(written by Raleigh Bloch)

Kalamazoo Gospel Mission Gets \$8,000

Thursday noon, December 23rd, in a brief but meaningful ceremony, President John Fair presented Mr. Richard Michel, director of The Kalamazoo Gospel Mission with a check for \$8,000 representing monies raised by Mall City Chorus members with ticket sales for two Christmas shows by the chorus, quartets and Sweet Adelines at Chenery Auditorium on December 11th.

Thirteen chorus members were present for the noon-time occasion which took place at the North Burdick Street facility dining room. The Four Part Digital Surround Sound quartet gave an excellent performance of a well-selected holiday package to a large appreciative audience. You should have heard the cheers when they heard how much we raised. It warmed your heart on a cold day just before Christmas.

The quartet is to be commended for committing the remainder of the day to caroling at a number of nursing homes.

The Kalamazoo Chapter is doing "good things" in the community!
(written by Herm Dykema)

Happy Birthday!

Gerry Ditto	1/1
Bill West	1/6
Herm Dykema	1/9
Joe Freeman	1/12
Dorothy Smith	1/19
Richard Kelly	1/23
Karen Bower	1/30

Happy Anniversary!

Jim and Evie Sell	1/2
Raleigh and Jean Bloch	1/8
Joe and Betty Jane Freeman	1/19
Dan and Nancy Crampton	1/23
Ken and Mary Rysenga	1/31

Hanover Serves up Tasty Harmony!

Well it all started about a year ago. We had our Chapter Christmas Party and it was very nice. Then Gene Hanover, our Director, said rather nonchalantly, "if you guys get 12 new members, I'll cook for next years Christmas Party". Many of us knew that Gene used to run a restaurant but never tasted his cooking. He said it would be a dinner that we would not forget, cause it would be great. We wondered, if we accepted and met this challenge, would he be able to handle such a large group. Well we took him up on his challenge. It became a rallying cry for the year. A membership drive was started early on and we picked up a few more members. We thought, hey! We can do this. To make a long story short, we wound up with 13 new members and along the way we were judged the best chorus in the district in the Singing category and the Most Improved Chorus.

It became evident that we were going to meet the challenge and around the beginning of December each member of the chapter received a very colorful invitation mailed to their home, announcing that they were invited, along with their guests, to attend the annual Christmas and Officer Installation Dinner. It also said that our special guests would be none-other than Don and Mary Basley, 2000 Pioneer District President. The menu was shown, which included French Onion Soup, Salad Bar, Various Breads, Saucy Chicken or Teriyaki Beef served on a bed of Basmati Rice with vegetables. The dessert was Bananas Foster served on Vanilla Ice Cream. WOW! He's going to do that!!! I've got to be there to see this.

The invitations came in and the day drew near.... is this really going to happen? Gene asked for some help in setting up the rented hall and some kitchen help and got it. The dinner was on Friday Dec. 17th. Gene took the day off from work and was at the hall at 9:00am. Raleigh Bloch and John VanWestrienen were there as well. Throughout the day other members dropped in to help. Gene had done most of the shopping the night before. After picking up a few more things, like the decorations for the hall, the work began. Gene made the seasoned croutons for the soup and salad. Wow, were they good. If this was an example of what that meal was to be like it was going to be great. Then the soup was made. It too was great. By the time the Attitude Adjustment Hour started (5:30pm) the smells wafting out of the kitchen were absolutely wonderful. People were greeted with fruit punch and hors d'oeuvres. At 6:30pm, Gene announced that the men had to serve their spouses. As they filed into the kitchen they were given a plate garnished with parsley, tangerine sections and grapes. Generous portions saucy chicken or the skewered Teriyaki beef were placed on a bed of rice, baby carrots were added and the appropriate sauce spooned over the meat and rice. Soon the raves were heard. The meat was tender and very tasty. Everything not only looked good, but was wonderful. The meal was excellent.

So how is Gene going to top this? Out came a huge pan of Bananas Foster to the center of the room. The room was lit only with the table decoration lights and the Christmas Tree. Gene then flamed the Bananas Foster. Each man then dished out the ice cream and spooned on the Bananas Foster for his spouse. It was great!!! The singing then began. First was Four Part Digital Surround Sound. They are getting better every time we hear them. Next was our own District Champions Upstage Sound. Gene changed roles from chef to lead and they did a wonderful job.

Don Basley then gave us a little pep talk about singing better each day, each performance and each rehearsal. He then installed the officers and congratulated Gene on the fine dinner, to which there was great applause. Gene then stepped to the mike and said if we wanted to have him cook again next year, the challenge would be 50 men on the risers for the next fall contest. Whoa! After a meal like we just had we couldn't resist. **So there you have it, we need to get 50 men on the risers!**

The evening ended with lots of singing all over the place as members pitched in to get the dishes cleaned up and put away. What a great night and great time was had by all who attended.

(Written by Raleigh Bloch)

Happy New Year, Brothers!

New Years Fest is now history as is the Y2K scare, but it will not soon be forgotten. The performances were fan-tastic and very well received.

We sold tapes, show tickets, valentines and Upstage Sound sold CD's. This was the first day of sales for the CD and we thank you all for allowing us to have them available.

Brian Hall's solo debut went very well. He was a little nerves at first but as the night and his experience moved on, he get better and better. Great job Brian! Keep up the good work.

Steve Root also had his debut as our chorus spokesman. What a wonderful job. Steve was calm and focused. Sooooo Smmmoooth! Thanks Steve for being a big part of our great success.

The chorus and the quartets were well received and the audiences were wonderful. As the night went on the singing got better and better. Congratulations to you all for a job well done.

C YA Tuesday when we take on the March 11 show and the Singing Valentines!

Gene

(e-mailed 1/1/2000 to members with e-mail addresses on the roster)

Update from.....

Four Part Digital Surround Sound

Despite a limited first year repertoire, Four Part Digital Surround Sound had a busy holiday season. The benefit concert was just the beginning of the fun for us. We sang at a few holiday parties for businesses and organizations and have now made enough money to reimburse David for the quartet's startup money! We spent some time at several local hospitals singing for old friends (and making new ones.) A few days before Christmas we dropped in on the Ministry With Community as they served Christmas meals. While there, we entertained the diners and crew and even held an impromptu sing along.

The day before Christmas Eve we sang at the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission's afternoon meal. John Fair and several chapter members were there as well to present a large check (literally and figuratively) to the director of the Mission. You may have seen us on Channel 3's six o'clock news that night for just over three seconds. We'd like to thank the other members of the chorus who attended for their support.

After the presentation we stopped by the mall to entertain all of the last minute shoppers who might be waiting in the long lines. The longest line was waiting to see Santa where the parents in the line seemed grateful for break in the day. From there we wandered around the mall and sang for anyone who didn't seem likely to wander away in the middle of a song; in long lines, at benches, and at the food court. Not only didn't they wander away, we drew small crowds all day and even fulfilled a requested love song to one of the ladies working that day. At the end of the day we felt that our goal of brightening the holiday season for the shoppers was a success.

On Sunday following Christmas we were invited to sing at a special service for Glendale Baptist church, of which Chris Fenner is a member. A small but responsive crowd was there to welcome us and we stayed to enjoy the singing of traditional African hymns, and Lynelle Pierce, a talented vocalist. Afterwards we were treated to soup and sandwiches. Four Part Digital Surround Sound is now looking forward to the busy holidays in 2000 - we have already started planning for St. Patrick's Day, Valentine's Day, and the barbershopper holiday known as Spring Contest.

(written by Jon Mollison)



Four Part Digital Surround Sound holding their Pioneer District Novice Championship trophy

We've Got Something Special

Yes, we do have something special. We've got men of all ages, young and old, from all walks of life that enjoy being with each other to sing. *That's special!!!* So we sing regularly and guess what, *we're very good at it.* Contest scores are proof. *That's special!!!*

One of the reasons we're good at it is because we have something else that is special. We have a director, Gene Hanover, who loves doing what he does. In addition he is very good at being a director. In fact, other choruses seek him out to help them. He regularly is asked to be on the staff of Harmony College North. Hardly a week goes by, that he is not involved with coaching another quartet or chorus. He enjoys directing so much, he travels 124 miles to direct us just for rehearsals. *That's special!!!* Then he is here also for performances. Up until a few years ago he did this for nothing. Now we give him \$100.00 a month. I would say that's special.

This year he challenged us to grow our chorus by 12 men. We met that challenge, and got 13 new men who love to sing. *That's special!!!* Then Gene took a day off from work, drove to Kalamazoo and proceeded to cook for us, and our guest's one heck of a fine meal. *That's special!!!* We had numerous guys jump in and help, just so others could enjoy the fine evening. *That's special!!!*

We just finished a great show and raised \$8,000 for the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission. *That's special!!!*

Well, I think you get the idea. A lot goes on that is special. Those efforts, whether it's selling tickets, holding a chapter office or setting up risers, putting together a Bulletune etc., it all goes to making this chapter and chorus special. You know what? You are special!!! Thanks for singing with me.

(written by Raleigh Bloch)

Board Meeting Highlights

Present: Brian Hall, Clair Branch, Al Grieser, Ron Bower, Dan Crampton, John Fair, Warren Royer and John VanWestrienen.

The Treasurer reported receipts of \$532.03 and expenses of \$2114.48 with a balance on hand of \$4774.50 of which \$410.14 is unallocated. The Board authorized the Treasurer to transfer funds as necessary to eliminate a negative balance in the Operating Fund.

The initial report on the Gospel Mission Show has receipts of approximately \$7,000.

Dan Crampton has taken over the duties as Bulletune Editor.

President-elect Al Grieser passed out a Vision & Mission statement, Goals/Objectives form to all board members to have them fill out and return to him at the next chapter meeting. He has a goal that every member bring in one new member.

Lost & Found

**A very nice water bottle left at Chenery following the Christmas Show.
See Al Grieser.**

Your Board for year 2000

President	Al Grieser
Secretary/Treasurer	John VanWestrienen
Immediate Past President	John Fair
VP - Music & Performance	Brian Hall
VP – Membership	Warren Royer
VP – PR	Toby Shaver
Bulletune Editor	Dan Crampton
Music Librarian	Ron Bower

Upcoming Events!

February 4-6	Sat	Second Annual Show Retreat
February 14	Mon	Valentine's Day
March 11	Sat	Annual Show
July 2-9		Kansas City Convention