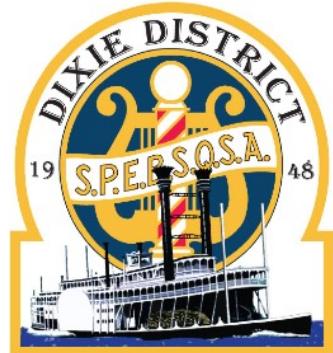




Dixie Town Crier

Dixie District's monthly chapter newsletter
dedicated to the original Town Crier,
Chuck Witherspoon



SEPTEMBER 2021

dixiedistrict.org

Volume 13 - Issue 2



Nashville Music Medics Providing Smiles All Around



How much fun can the Nashville Music Medics have? At least this much during our warm-up session recently at The Children's Hospital at Tri-Star Centennial, when we were visited by Devin Bradford, BHS Community Development Manager. Devin hung out with us while we performed for some very special patients. We'll let Devin tell you how much fun we have, especially after she saw the smiles on the children's faces. We're going to make Devin an honorary Music Medic.

The Nashville Music Medics serve as the community outreach program of The Music City Chorus, with a goal of bringing joy through our music to the children as well as their parents who are staying in the children's hospitals in and around Nashville. The Medics like to think of ourselves as Music Therapists, providing the best possible medicine there is - a smile and a song.

This BHS sponsored program is designed to be an ongoing, permanent project, as well as being easy to manage. Music Medics is loads of fun and incredibly rewarding for many people on *(continued)*



many levels. First and foremost, it's great for the young patients and their parents. The last thing they expect is to see people walk into their hospital room in scrubs and start singing them a fun and uplifting song, when all they are experiencing is the drudgery of hospitalization.

This BHS sponsored program is open to any one whether you're a member of BHS or not.

Recently, two more Dixie Chapters have come forward and expressed an interest in starting a Music Medics Program in their

chapters - The Big Chicken Chorus, and The Sound Of Tennessee.



The CHOO CHOO CHORUS, under their new director, Jimmy Tompkins, performed for the residents of Garden Plaza in Ooltewah, TN on July 3rd. The residents enjoyed the 35 minute concert and Chorus plans to return in December for another concert.

AN UPDATE FROM DIXIE

Brothers and Sisters in Harmony,

There's a lot of news to cover, and there's good and bad involved, so let's get started. First of all, your Board of Directors voted to cancel the Fall Convention (and accompanying contest(s)) at the last meeting. It was not something we wanted to do, but when we looked at the data concerning COVID-19 in the two counties that contain the city of Oxford, Alabama, and the rest of our District, we did not see a way to safely hold our Convention.

While the percentages of fully-vaccinated residents of our states (aged 65+) vary from 69% to 74% across our District, the percentages of fully-vaccinated residents (total population) are in the range of 35% to 40%, meaning that about two-thirds of the population in our states are at risk. Combine that with the extreme transmissibility of the Delta variant and the fact that we are superspreaders due to our wonderful hobby/lifestyle/obsession (take your pick), and we have a recipe for disaster.

Personally, I don't want to have any member of our District (or our families and friends) risk contracting the virus by being at a District function. From a business standpoint, we don't have (and can't get) insurance against liability related to COVID-19, so our potential liability is HUGE. There's a lot more that we could say, but we're just not willing to risk losing any member of our barbershop family to COVID if it could be prevented. If you have questions or comments, please email me president@dixiedistrict.org. I'll do my best to address them.

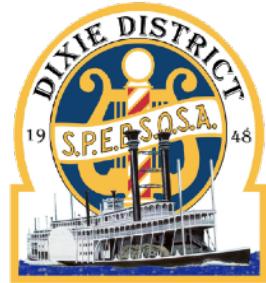
On to more pleasant topics. There has been some reshuffling of the BOD this year, and the Nominating Committee has proposed a slate of officers for next year, but we currently have two Board Member

At Large (BMAL) positions with no nominees. BMALs do not have defined roles on the Board - they are assigned duties by the President to fill various needs. It's a great place to start if you feel that you have talents or abilities that could benefit our District. You could even wind up as District President - I started as a BMAL back in 2007. If you are interested, drop me an email (once again, president@dixiedistrict.org) and I'll pass the info along to our Nominating Committee. There's no guarantee that we're going to fill the spots, so find an area that you perceive as a need and express how you could help fulfill it. We also use BMAL positions as a way to bring a person onto the Board between elections if there is a specific need, so we might wait until next year.

So what are you going to be doing during the vacated weekend of September 24th-26th? We're working on something to fill the gap, and hopefully we'll have some exciting information to share soon. In the meantime, stay safe and healthy and sing whenever you can.

On August 29th, family and friends gathered to celebrate the life of Freeman Groat, longtime director (and then Director Emeritus) of the Music City Chorus, and dear friend who passed away in February of 2020. Freeman was the first Lifetime Member of SPEBSQSA, a kind and generous soul who was directly responsible for me being a Barbershopper, a director, and a better person. Be a positive force through barbershopping, as Freeman was. Stay safe and healthy and sing whenever you can, until we meet again.

Chordially,
Paul Blazek
Dixie District President



WHAT DOES THE EVP DO?

The district Executive Vice President (EVP) does not have a set, definable job. I sit on many committees, look for ways to improve our district, help the president, and help the other district officers do their jobs as needed. Part of my role is finding the right person to do a particular job. We have needs in the following areas. Please let me know if you are available to serve in any of these positions.

TOWN CRIER EDITOR

Our district webmaster, David Murphree, has gone over and above in keeping our website fresh and current, and temporarily editing the Town Crier. David would like to concentrate on just the website. We need someone who is willing to take over as editor. This is not a writing position - you are not required to come up with content. We need someone who can take the content that is sent to him/her and distribute it to the members. Chapter bulletin editors are ideal for this job, but anyone with a little time on their hands can do it.

DISTRICT HISTORIAN

The district historian position is currently vacant. We need someone who can document our rich history. This documentation comes in many forms. Please help us reserve our awesome history!

MARKETPLACE MANAGER

This position is also vacant at this time. The Dixie Marketplace is a valuable service to our members. Conventions are just not the same without it.

I will provide more specific information to those who show an interest in any of these positions.

Harmoniously,
Jack

Jack Donaldson
Dixie District EVP
865-607-7681
jdevents@hotmail.com



Dixie District Board of Directors 2021

L-R: Jack Donaldson - Executive Vice President, Frank Hrach - VP Financial Development, James Donaldson - VP Events, Mike Brunson - VP Marketing & PR, Lee Franks - VP Youth In Harmony, Paul Blazek - President, Paul Wietlisbach - Immediate Past President, Luis Morales - Treasurer, Russell Bell - Secretary, David Murphree - Member-At-Large, Jimmy Tompkins - VP Music & Performance. Not pictured: Bob Davenport - VP Chapter Support & Leadership Training, DC Nash - VP Chorus Director Development, Jim Sams - VP Contest & Judging, and Steve Callahan - VP Membership Development.

SUPPORT DIXIE DISTRICT THROUGH AMAZON USING SMILE.

In a time when we are asked by seemingly everybody to donate to this or help that group with support there is a different way to make a difference and it is easy as a smile. What am I talking about? I am talking about Amazon Smile, the easy way to make a difference for the district. What does it cost? It costs nothing, that's right nothing. All you do is shop on Amazon as you normally would. The price of Amazon's products does not change with Smile, Amazon donates a small portion of their profits to the district.

Support BHS - Dixie District.

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates.

[Go to smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

amazon smile

So, how does it work? The district registered with Amazon Smile as eligible charity. Usually you go to amazon by typing amazon.com. With this link <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/56-1207179> you will be taken to smile.amazon.com with the district as your selected charity. And that is all there is to it.

Once you select the district as your charity each time you go to smile.amazon.com and purchase an item you will be helping us provide programs for you. Happy shopping.



The ROCKET CITY CHORUS, under the direction of Norm Myers (left), performed the National Anthem for the Rocket City Trash Pandas on July 7th. The Trash Pandas are the AA affiliate of the Los Angeles Angels, located in Madison, Alabama.

Celebrating A Barbershop Legend - Freeman Groat

From Bob Davenport, VP-CSLT.

On August 29, the family of Freeman Groat and the Music City Chorus finally observed the memorial service for Freeman, a Nashville and Dixie District legend. Freeman passed away on Feb. 21, 2020 at the age of 90, but the service to honor Freeman was postponed on March 9, 2020 due to the rise of Covid-19.

The service was held at Murfreesboro Seventh Day Adventist Church, where Freeman had been a member for several years. A quartet composed of Music City Chorus members sang "The Lord's Prayer" and the chorus sang "I'll Walk With God" at the end of the service. I was honored to deliver the eulogy to pay tribute to our beloved brother who had given of himself in countless ways to MCC, Dixie, and the Society.

Freeman, who grew up in Fort Dodge, Iowa, fell in love with barbershop as a teenager in 1943. One day as he was walking to school, he passed a barbershop where he heard men singing. He soon started visiting that barbershop on a regular basis. We found in Freeman's archives a note that on some occasions "it took two whole hours to get a haircut." It is my understanding that he joined SPEBSQSA, Inc. in 1945. If my calculations are correct, if Freeman were still alive, he would be in his 77th year of membership! One of his proudest moments occurred in 1968 when he became the Society's first Life Member!



Even while he was in the Air Force, he formed quartets on base and persuaded some fellow military men to attend rehearsals with him in Biloxi, MS. He loved to tell stories about "sneaking" men off the base so they could go to rehearsal.

After working as a Purchasing Agent for a company in Fort Dodge, his company moved him to Nashville in 1972. Freeman joined the Music City Chorus and became their director in 1975 where he directed them to three consecutive International Chorus competitions from 1976-1978. The chorus finished as high as 8th with their renowned "Bums" set, which some Dixie District members will probably remember.

When his directing and singing days were over, Freeman unselfishly volunteered to help the Nashville chapter in any way he could. He helped greet and register visitors each week, kept our rehearsal venues clean, and stored much of our chapter memorabilia at his residence as we moved from venue to venue.

When BHS moved to Nashville in 2007, he immediately volunteered to help at BHS Headquarters. He worked in the Old Songs Library, meticulously organizing sheet music in alphabetical order into the proper boxes, etc. He treated all of that music with the greatest care and respect.

Freeman freely donated to the chapter's Helping Hands Fund to help financially strapped MCC members pay for chapter expenses so that they could participate in the chorus' activities. As his final act of unselfish service to the Music City Chorus, he bequeathed a substantial amount of money to the Chorus. To help his fellow man, he also donated his body to Vanderbilt University for medical research.

(continued on page 7)



Freeman Groat's Memorial Service

(Continued from 6)

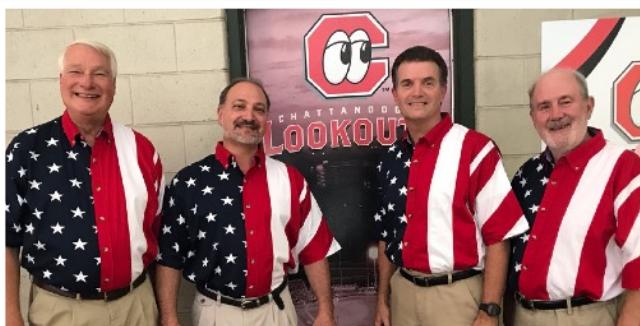
To put it mildly, Freeman Groat lived a full and happy life. He was a friend, coach, and mentor to so many of us. He has been gone for about 19 months now, but his legacy of love, humor, and pursuit of excellence will live forever in our hearts. He embodied the Music City Chorus' mantra of "Passion, Excellence, Brotherhood." As I stated at the end of the eulogy, he was truly the "Groat-est!"



The Heart of Georgia Barbershop Chorus has begun performing. Macon Harmony (left) is entertaining residents and staff at Summer's Landing Healthcare in Warner Robins, GA. Our newest baritone member, Anthony (right), is singing for his first time in a quartet.



QUARTETS AT THE BALLPARKS



Silver Ring sang the National Anthem at the Chattanooga Lookouts game on July 9th. Pictured are members, Paul Wietlisbach - Bari, Nick Daly - Bass, Jimmy Tompkins - Lead, and Bob Davenport - Tenor.



cityScape had a great time singing the National Anthem for the Rocket City Trash Pandas on August 18th. Pictured are Alan Reynolds - Tenor, Howard McAdory - Lead, Sprocket, Paul Wietlisbach - Bass (filling in for Tony Clifton), and Jay Hawkins - Bari.



Big Chicken Chorus & Classic Cuts Quartet Delivers

In July, Marlene, a patron of the Big Chicken Chorus, who no longer lives in our area, wanted to send a “thank you” gift to her mother, Vanessa, who does. In the past, Marlene had sent Edible Arrangements and the like, but she



wanted to do something different. And as someone noted, “So she sent men, instead.”

The call went out to the Chorus for a quartet to fulfill Marlene’s request, and

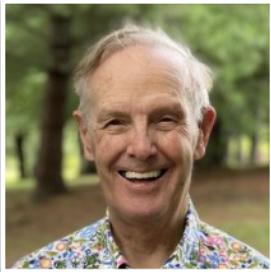
Classic Cuts (Gordon Angles, Chris Wittreich, Bruce McCown, and Harv Hobson) stepped up. Vanessa’s neighbor, Jo, helped coordinate the surprise, ensuring that Vanessa and Darlene (another daughter that lives with Vanessa) were home when the quartet arrived. Somehow, Jo “got the memo” and was dressed in the same colors as the quartet was.

Classic Cuts performed a four-song set for the ladies, consisting of “When I’m 64”, “Shenandoah”, “Just A Cottage Small” and “Everybody Loves A Lover”. They were so well received that they added a fifth “encore” song, “Silhouettes”.

Vanessa lives right around the corner from Big Chicken Chorus’ rehearsal space, so any time she wants us back, she just needs to say the word. We love an appreciative audience!



The screenshot shows the Dixie District website homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for HOME, ABOUT, GROUPS, NEWS & EVENTS, DOCUMENT & MEDIA, and ADMIN. Below the navigation is a banner featuring four men singing. To the right of the banner is a sidebar with the heading "SUPPORT DIXIE DISTRICT BHS". It includes a message about donations, a text input field for "Amount" set to "\$0.00", and a "DONATE" button.



Recently a member of the Dixie District caught me by surprise when he asked me, “Where’s the Donate Button on the Dixie District website?” It’s not a question you hear every day, but if someone asks the question it’s a safe bet there are others who have the same question in mind but were too shy to ask. We all know how shy barbershoppers are.

But think about it, Donate Buttons are ubiquitous. BHS has a Donate Button, HFI has a Donate Button, heck, my Chapter has a Donate Button, so why not the Dixie District?

I mentioned this to the District Board of Directors. Their first question was, OK, but what would we do with the thousands and tens of thousands of donated dollars flowing in annually?

Among the ideas being considered are:

- Scholarships for District Youth-In-Harmony (Y-I-H) events
- Greater financial support for choruses and quartets representing the District in International Contests
- Support for top Y-I-H quartets to visit schools in Chapter areas to promote Barbershop Harmony and Chapter events
- Grants for Chapters

So, working with our webmaster, David Murphree, we’ve added a Donate Button on the Dixie District website. The donate button is located in the footer of every page on the site and also on the sidebar, for those pages that have a sidebar. Rest assured that your donations will redound to the benefit of Dixie District, its Chapters, and its members.

Thanks in advance for your support.

Frank Hrach
VP of Financial Development



A dear friend and fellow Contest Administrator DRCJ-NSC, Warren Fuson, sent me an invitation to send out to all barbershoppers and fans to attend and be involved in a weekend NSC Convention. All of the details are listed below. It sounds like they are wanting to have a weekend similar to our convention, so you should feel right at home. Please take time to read his message below. I hope there will be some of you who will take advantage of this opportunity. Our District is always open to those districts and fellow barbershoppers outside our boundaries to be guests of our convention weekends. I am very pleased that Warren took time to invite us to come over. I hope some of you will give it a shot! Be safe and continue to ring those chords every chance you get!!

Harmoniously yours,
Jim Sams-Dixie DRCJ
(901) 488-3128



We would like to invite all DIX choruses and quartets who wish to come join us at the **NSC Fall Convention and Contest in Hendersonville, NC, on November 12-13, 2021**. Anyone who wishes to compete in our International Chorus Prelim for Charlotte 2022 (Score of 78 to qualify) or for the Senior Quartet International Prelims for Mid-Winter 2022 is invited to attend and compete.

We will also welcome any quartet or chorus who just wants to sing for scores or evals or just hang out and sing with your brothers from the Carolinas.

LOCATION

The convention will be held at the Thomas Auditorium - Blue Ridge Community College, 49 E. Campus Drive, Flat Rock, NC. The HQ Hotel, the Cascades Mountain Resort in Hendersonville, is fully booked by barbershoppers so there will be no civilians in the hotel during the weekend to complain about

[REGISTER HERE](#)

tag singing at all hours or other festivities. We have secured rooms less than two miles from the venue at the Mountain Inn and Suites, 755 Upward Road, Flat Rock, NC 28731. Phone: 828-692-7772. King rooms are available for \$119/night and Double Queens are available for \$109/night, plus tax. To reserve, call the hotel directly and tell the desk you are with the Carolinas District BHS Convention on November 12-13, 2021 to get the special rate.

COVID PRECAUTIONS:

We are currently requiring that all attendees be fully masked at all INDOOR activities. This includes competitors while performing on stage.

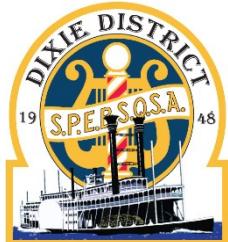
Masks are not required for outdoor activities. This is our stand right now, but if we have learned anything during this pandemic, it's that situations and recommendations change as conditions change.

We are hopeful that full FDA approval of the Pfizer vaccine will result in increased vaccination rates. In addition, some epidemiologists are forecasting that the Delta variant is cresting or about to crest and we are going to see the numbers falling off rapidly very soon. We will continue to monitor the situation and CDC recommendations, and if we believe we can safely loosen the mask rule, we will.

REGISTRATION:

Anyone wanting to attend the convention can register [HERE](#). Quartets and choruses must register in Barberscore under the Carolinas District Convention. The NE Tennessee and Knoxville chapters have already expressed their desire to participate. We welcome all our Dixie District brothers and sisters and look forward to singing a tag with you.

In Harmony,
Warren Fuson
VP Contests and Judging
Carolinas District
919-523-4500
vp-contests@carolinasdistrict.org



THE DIXIE TOWN CRIER

An electronic publication of the Dixie District of the
Barbershop Harmony Society

Paul Blazek, President

Mike Brunson, VP of Marketing and Public Relations

David Murphree, Editor

SEPTEMBER 2021

dixiedistrict.org

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- September 19, 2021 Dixie District Fall House of Delegates Meeting, Virtual, Invites will be sent by Russell Bell to Chapter leadership.
- November 20, 2021 Dixie Leadership Academy, details available in the coming month.
- January 2022 Dixie Winter Board Meeting, date and location pending.
- January 11-16, 2022 BHS Mid-Winter, Pasadena, CA.
- March 20, 2022 Dixie District Spring House of Delegates Meeting, Virtual.
- March 25-27, 2022 Dixie District Spring Convention, The Performing Arts Center at Thompson High School, Alabaster, AL.
- July 3-10, 2022 BHS International, Charlotte, NC.
- August 2022 Dixie Summer Board Meeting, date and location pending.
- September 18, 2022 Dixie District Fall House of Delegates Meeting, Virtual.
- September 23-25, 2022 Dixie District Fall Convention, Oxford Performing Arts Center, Oxford, AL.

Eight Feet Wide performed the National Anthem for the Rocket City Trash Pandas on June 1st. Pictured are Jerry Wilhoite - Bass, Ralph Cobb - Bass, Joshua Pawlik - Lead, Sprocket as Raphael on TMNT Night, and David Murphree - Tenor.



Articles needed for the Town Crier. If your chapter, chorus, or quartet would like to send a photo and article or event flyer for publishing, please send it to towncrier@dixiedistrict.org.