



Dixie Town Crier

Dixie's monthly chapter newsletter dedicated to the original town crier, Chuck Witherspoon

Volume 1, Issue 5

August 31, 2009

The Dixie Town Crier by Dwain Chambers

Before the days of mass printing and newspapers in the country's early days, communication was vested with the Town Crier who would come to the town square or stroll to another appropriate place in the city several times each day and announce "Hear Ye, Hear Ye" and commence to read the news of the day from his written scroll. It doesn't take much of an imagination to relate all of the chapter authors and submitters to the role of Town Crier in this monthly newsletter.

Many of the old time Dixie barbershoppers fondly recall one of our members, **Chuck Witherspoon**, as the Savannah, GA Town Crier. I remember a couple of Savannah conventions where he opened the convention in town crier costume with "Hear Ye, Hear Ye" and proceeded to welcome the conventioners on behalf of the Savannah Mayor to the wonderful and historic city of Savannah. Chuck served as the Savannah Chapter President three different times and directed the **Savannah Chapter**, was editor of the Rebel Rouser for eight years, served two years as Dixie Vice President for Marketing & Public Relations, was an excellent Master of Ceremonies, and was the 1992 Dixie District Barbershopper of the Year. We take great pleasure in dedicating The Dixie Town Crier as a tribute in memory of Chuck Witherspoon and his photo is a part of the heading for the new Dixie Town Crier monthly chapter newsletter!

We especially want to thank all of the 16 individuals who submitted the 48 names that the district board considered. There were several really good names and ultimately the choice came down to the relationship of the town crier role to the goal of the newsletter – reporting chapter news to other chapters in the district!

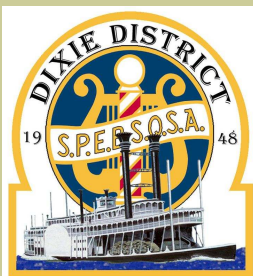
Fully Invested Quartet from Savannah, GA by Joe Ryan

The Savannah Scottish Games was held at the Bethesda Home for Boys on May 9, 2009. The **Fully Invested Quartet** from the **Savannah Chapter** sang the Nation Anthems of Great Britain, Canada, and the United States during the Welcoming Ceremony.

Members of the quartet are Gene Cannon, bari; Joe Ryan, lead; Art Marble, bass; and Bob Proctor, tenor.

Joe Ryan is the Master of Ceremonies at the Scottish Games. **Fully Invested** has performed the anthems at the games for three years.

Several years ago, the **Savannah Chorus**, the **13th Colony Sound**, performed the anthems two years in a row.



Notes from Anaheim Convention by Dwain Chambers

WOW! Those of you that decided to not go to Anaheim missed the best convention and competition that I have personally experienced and I have been to every one of them beginning with the 1984 convention!

Attendance was down with about 6200+ in attendance. However, it was historic in many ways so let me just mention a few of them.

- For the first time ever, DIX had two choruses in the chorus contest and **Atlanta Vocal Project** finished 12th with their highest score ever at 87.4 and the **Nashville Music City** finished 18th with 82.8. Congratulations to all the CHB Generals and Colonels competing in these choruses that represented us well!
- Two quartets from SUN (Lucky Day and On Demand) had A-level 81+ scores in the quarter finals and did not make the semi-finals.
- For the first time ever, two affiliate quartets (Ringmasters from SNOBS and Musical Island Boys from NZABS) made both the semi-finals and the finals.
- For the first time ever, an affiliate quartet (Ringmasters) medaled with a tie with our own **State Line Grocery** for 4th place.
- For the first time ever, nine of the top ten quartets finished with 90+ scores.
- A new award sponsored by the 1973 Champions, The Dealer's Choice, was awarded to the highest ranked new quartet competing at INTL for the first time, Musical Island Boys.
- For the first time ever, an affiliate chorus (Zero 8 from SNOBS and Vocal FX from NZABS) made the top ten in the chorus contest.
- The 11 time gold medal chorus champions from Dallas, The Vocal Majority, scored their highest score ever averaging 96.3 in this judging system (implemented in 1993) in the Friday afternoon chorus session.
- The record only lasted a few hours as the St. Charles Ambassadors of Harmony scored 97.5 winning the gold medal for the second time and sending the VM to the silver medal for the first time since 1978.
- Dixie's Brandon Guyton earned his second quartet gold medal as the baritone of Crossroads.

All I can say is you really had to be there to fully appreciate the level of these performances!

***“best
convention and
competition”***

Main Street Harmonizers from Lexington County, SC by Randy Miller

**“Joe Connelly
in Lexington,
SC”**

Well Saturday, August 15th, found Joe Connelly (Interstate Rivals, Keepsake, and Platinum, gold medalist) in Lexington, SC. Joe was to have arrived early in the morning, but US Air saw fit to delay his flight for 2 1/2 hours, so we only had his talents for Saturday afternoon. The 30 members who participated in this session left there, after 3-4 hours with Joe, excited about their workout and ready to put all of this to good use in Chattanooga.

Joe also worked with **Grandstand Quartet** and **Sound Center Quartet**. After a long return trip back to the Charlotte airport, Joe said he would look forward to returning again. So will we.

Palmetto Statesmen Chorus from Spartanburg, SC by Jim Fannin

**“Big League
World Series
baseball
playoffs ”**

The **Palmetto Statesmen Chorus** of Spartanburg, SC performed the National Anthem at the championship game of the Big League World Series baseball playoffs in Easley, SC on August 5, 2009. Joining a Marine Color Guard on the field, some 21 Statesmen under the direction of **Dr. Don Campbell** filled the stadium with their singing and respect.

The Chorus welcomed fans at the main entrance with several of their favorites including I'm Sittin' On Top Of The World and Coney Island Baby. During preliminary activities on the diamond, the Chorus sang Carolina In The Morning. The Statesmen were proud to contribute their support for this youth sporting event.



Triad Harmony Express from Kernersville, NC by Roland Moy

Please pass the word about the Barbershop Show on September 19 in Boone, NC and the workshop for high school singers that afternoon.

Hey, if you bring some students to the workshop you get in free to the show that night. What a deal!

28th Annual Barbershop Show

Featuring



LET'S SING!

International Competitors July, 2009
In Anaheim, California



FINDERS KEEPERS

Sweet Adeline Regional Medalists
2009

**“barbershop
show and high
school singers
workshop”**

And



Featuring **Triad Harmony Express** chorus and quartets
Winston-Salem, NC

Saturday, September 19, 2009 7:30 pm Rosen Concert Hall on ASU Campus
Boone, NC

All seats Reserved: \$15 advance, \$18 at the door – Students and children free at the door
On sale at Rydell Music Center, Hwy. 105 S. – Check or cash only.
Internet orders through **Watauga Arts Council** www.watauga-arts.org

Net proceeds benefit music scholarships

Land of the Sky Chorus from Asheville, NC by Bob Burns

Asheville's Bele Chere (pronounced Bell Cher) Festival (www.belecherefestival.com) is the largest free street festival in the Southeast. The event, always held the last full weekend in July, fills downtown Asheville with art and artists of all kinds. Visitors from all over the country, and locals, fill the streets for the noisy, amusing, tasty, entertaining three day run.

Several years ago the **Asheville Chapter** Board decided that this event was perfect for the promotion of our Chapter, our Chorus, our annual Fall shows, and barbershop in general, so we applied (\$10) for a non-profit information booth permit. We got one of the coveted spots and have been accepted back ever since.



“...for \$60 of Chapter funds, we got our chapter exposed to thousands of people”

We staff the booth from set-up on Friday until teardown on Sunday with at least four guys, hopefully a quartet. We have literature about our Chapter...membership, upcoming performances, our annual Fall shows (we do three), how to hire us, info about our quartets, music education, and our charitable giving. We also have Society literature for out-of-towners...“Harmonizer” issues, “You Can Sing Too” flyers, etc. With Wi-Fi access, we can tell anyone where their local chapter is and how to reach them.

We also have several CD-players in the booth (with earphones), and a collection of favorite barbershop quartet and chorus CD's so that people can easily experience this unique American art form. And, we perform! Throughout the weekend we have quartets and VLQ's performing on the street in front of our booth or strolling and singing around the festival passing out our business cards and directing people to our booth. We didn't this year, but we usually even have a schedule of when we will perform at the booth. And, of course, people step up and ask us to sing a love song to their sweetie who is usually standing there blushing...

This year, for \$60 of Chapter funds, we got our chapter exposed to thousands of people. We didn't see all of the 300,000 attendees, but we spoke to a lot of them. We already have several potential members, a number of performance leads, and many additions to our mailing lists from this year.

A very big return from a little monetary outlay. Just some donations, mainly of members' time...AND A LOT OF FUN!!! If your area has a festival, check it out.



Music City Chorus from Nashville, TN by David Belden

The work did not stop for the men of the **Music City Chorus** after their first appearance on the international stage in more than 30 years. Following the July trip to Anaheim, where the Nashville chorus finished 18th, the men have been back on the risers and are working hard to take their individual and group skills to the next level.

The Music City Chorus will return to the contest stage in Chattanooga in October, eager to once more test their skills in front of a panel of judges and an appreciative audience of fellow barbershoppers. In preparation for the fall contest, the chorus and its quartets will present a district sendoff show on September 10 in Mt. Juliet.

Just two weeks after the fall contest, the men of MCC will showcase their talents with a guest performance on October 18 at Nashville's Acuff Theater. Sponsored by the Tune Town Chorus, one of the two Nashville Sweet Adeline choruses who will be competing in the women's international contest in their hometown the following week, "Encore" will include the host Tune Town Chorus, the Texas Harmony Chorus, the 2009 Dixie District champion Music City Chorus, and Realtime, the 2005 international quartet champions.

The busy fall will quickly be followed by the Music City Chorus Holiday Show on December 12.

While much attention has gone to the Nashville chapter's growing chorus reputation, there is also a renewed interest in and expansion of the chapter's quartet development program. Time is set aside at every chorus rehearsal for presentations by both established and pickup quartets. Guests are always invited to join veteran members in a quartet experience before an audience of supportive chorus members. On August 24, for example, eight different quartets presented songs during the quartet spotlight time!

Dixie District fall convention participants will get to view the Nashville chapter's expanded quartet development program firsthand as many of the new quartets will make their contest debut in Chattanooga in October. We are certainly proud of our continually growing roster of registered quartets!

**"eight different
quartets
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quartet
spotlight time!"**



Golf Capital Chorus from Pinehurst, NC by Fred Wolferman

The **Golf Capital Chorus** continues to prepare for its 2009 show, to be held Saturday, November 7, at the Pinecrest High School auditorium.

The show will feature the music of Harry Warren, the most prolific composer you never heard of. Warren wrote over 800 songs, won the first ever Gold Record, and had 42 songs on "Your Hit Parade." He was nominated for eleven Academy Awards and won three.

Some of his hits to be featured in the show are: "Lullaby of Broadway," "Forty-second Street," "September in the Rain," "Chattanooga Choo-Choo," and the show's title song, "That's Amore."

The traditional guest quartet will be Max Q, 2007 International Champions.

Tickets are available from any Chorus member, or call **Preston Smith** at 215-0682. The cost is \$15 for adults and \$10 for students.

The Golf Capital Chorus is a charitable organization made up of local men who enjoy good singing and good company. In addition to its annual show, the Chorus, various quartets and ensembles, perform at civic events and private functions. All money raised goes to local charities.

The Chorus also conducts a very active Singing Valentine program, with quartets traveling throughout the area delivering love songs, candy and roses.

The Chorus practices at the Community Presbyterian Church in Pinehurst Monday Nights at 7:00, and visitors are always welcome.

**"The Golf
Capital Chorus
continues to
prepare for its
2009 show...
'That's Amore'"**



Appalachian Express Chorus from Kingsport, TN by Mark Kettner

Northeast Tennessee Chapter finds New Home!!

If the **Appalachian Express Chorus** (NE Tennessee Chapter) were to make a list of items that it must have, near the top would be a suitable place to rehearse. Unfortunately, this need had not been satisfied over the last several years. The chapter had often used the best place available at the time, be it a school choral room, church, or other venues that could accommodate the group. With the long term goal of establishing a better "home" in the Tri-Cities (Kingsport, Bristol, Johnson City), the chapter began to search for a permanent location in late 2007.

A committee began to find alternative locations in the area, but each option fell short when considering the important factors like cost, location, storage space and size. The chapter was beginning to feel like they were running out of options. What happened next was a result of good singing and building great relationships in the area.

**"Northeast
Tennessee
Chapter finds
New Home!!"**

One of the chapter quartets, **AppleJack**, had been entertaining at Mountain States Health Alliance (MSHA) hospitals for several years, singing for patients, nurses, and other health care professionals. During this time, the quartet had developed a relationship with Barbara Sanders, Supervisor of Volunteer Music Programs at MSHA. During a conversation with Barbara, one of the quartet members (chorus manager Jim Snodgrass) indicated that the chapter was searching for a new home that could accommodate 40+ singers, plus room to store risers and sound equipment, and be suitable for rehearsing and performing. Immediately, Barbara offered up an opportunity; a suite housed in a training facility located on their Indian Path Hospital campus.

Jim gathered **Tony Bowman** (musical director), **Nathan Goodwin** (chapter president), and **Mark Kettner** (music/performance VP) to tour the suite. It consisted of a large room, equipped with tables and chairs, and large enough to set up and utilize risers. A large storage room was attached, along with a large kitchen and serving area. Perhaps the best part of the offer was the fee: free of charge. The committee was in favor, and soon brought the chorus (who also voted to move to this very professional looking location).

Since moving to the new location, the chorus has used it not only for rehearsing, but for public performances and a chapter dinner. New members have been very impressed with the location. The NE Tennessee chapter is proud to have Mountain States Health Alliance as a sponsor, and continues to support their organization with chorus and quartet performances. By building a strong relationship with members of the community, the chapter was able to uncover an opportunity for future successes.

In Memorial: Maurice M. "Chuck" Witherspoon 1929-1994

Maurice M. "Chuck" Witherspoon, 69, died Tuesday, September 27, at home after a two year bout with esophageal cancer. The son of a Navy Chaplain, Witherspoon was born in Walnut Park, California, and attended schools in various countries of the world, where his father was assigned.

**"Chuck
Witherspoon"**

He served four years in the Navy during World War II, after which he attended Dartmouth College, graduating in 1948. He came to Savannah in 1976, to be general manager of the Savannah Golf Club. He retired from that post in 1987, and for the past three years, he had worked as a tour guide at Savannah's Ships of the Sea Museum.

Savannahians will best remember Chuck representing both the city and the county as the official Town Crier, an honorary position he held for ten years from the time of his appointment during the city's 1983 semi-quincentennial (250 year) celebration.

He was a familiar figure at many local events, decked out in his traditional eighteenth-century costume

Maurice M. "Chuck" Witherspoon 1929-1994 (cont.)

and tricorne hat, loudly proclaiming greetings and ceremonial notices. His special flair and sense of humor exhibited during these occasions delighted audiences throughout the Coastal Empire. He and his wife, Pat, also travelled to Canada and Great Britain to represent Savannah in international town crier competitions, serving as ambassadors of goodwill wherever they went.

In 1976, he joined the local chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. (SPEBSQSA), and soon became the lead singer in the "Tybee Lighthouse Quartet." Over the years, the quartet competed in state and regional SPEBSQSA contests, and was named champion quartet in Georgia in 1980 and 1981. The group also performed in many other events, including a local youth theater production of "The Music Man."

Witherspoon was active in barbershopping until shortly before his death. He sang with, and sometimes directed, the Savannah chorus, the "Thirteenth Colony Sound." He served an unprecedented three terms as president of the local chapter, and was twice named the chapter's Barbershopper of the Year. He also was chosen for this award at the district level. He was editor of the Dixie District magazine, the Rebel Rouser, for eight years.

In 1979, he was selected for membership in the Confederate Harmony Brigade, an honorary group of southeastern barbershoppers, and at the group's 1993 annual rally, was given their highest accolade, the "BOAR Award." (Barbershopper of the Annual Rally.)

He was a member of St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, and sang in the church choir.

Surviving are his wife, Patricia B. Witherspoon; three daughters, Bonnie Towle, Margo Martin, and Sandra Stogner of Atlanta; stepchildren, Ralph Terrill of Savannah and Tracy Terrill of Virginia; a sister, Nancy Witherspoon of Brooklyn Heights, New York and seven grandchildren.

"Chuck Witherspoon"

Funeral services were held on Saturday, October 1 at St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church.

Remembrances: St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church Building Fund, 3101 Waters Avenue, Savannah, GA 31404; Hospice, 1352 Eisenhower Avenue, Savannah, 31406; or Heartspring.

Publisher's Note: If you attended the convention in Chattanooga, a very fine tribute was made by the members of the Dixie District. Shortly after the chorus contest, the Stone Mountain Chorus, under the direction of Tim Brooks, led the chorus in two songs for the memorial service in Chuck's honor.

There was also a tribute that was read concerning the contributions of Chuck to the Dixie District.

My appreciation goes to the members of the Stone Mountain Chapter and to Jack Frobose, who volunteered the chorus at the last minute. It is not an easy thing to do, and they did it with grace and talent.

We will all miss you, Chuckie.

[Reprinted from Rebel Rouser, Oct/Nov/Dec 1994 issue.]