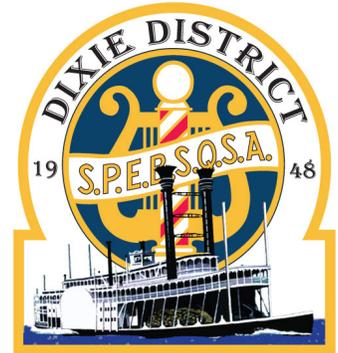




# Dixie Town Crier

Dixie District's Monthly Chapter Newsletter  
Dedicated To The Original Town Crier,  
Chuck Witherspoon



APRIL 2021

[dixiedistrict.org](http://dixiedistrict.org)

Volume 13 - Issue 1

# WE'RE BACK???

**TOWN CRIER:** Welcome to our first edition of the Town Crier for 2021. Sorry for the long break, but with COVID shutting down rehearsals, conventions, and just about everything, we were not receiving much news to publish.

Now that the Town Crier is back, the district board encourages the chapters to send your news articles and show flyers to [towncrier@dixiedistrict.org](mailto:towncrier@dixiedistrict.org). Due date will be the 25th of each month.

**FALL CONVENTION:** The 2021 Dixie District Fall Convention is scheduled for September 24-26, 2021 in Oxford, Alabama, at the Oxford Performing Arts Center. James Donaldson, our VP of Events, is actively planning the convention. If you have any ideas to make this convention spectacular, please contact James at [vp-events@dixiedistrict.org](mailto:vp-events@dixiedistrict.org).

One of our Dixie District arrangers, Clay Hine, has a song for us to sing when we return this fall for our Dixie District Fall Convention, "It's The Music That Brings Us Together." Jimmy Tompkins, our VP of Music and Performance has asked that all choruses go to our [Dixie District Website](http://Dixie District Website) and download the FREE music so that we

can all sing it when we are together again at the Fall Convention this September.



**BOARD MEMBERS:** The Dixie District Board of Directions would like to thank our outgoing officers for their service, George Reynolds - Treasurer, Stan Peppenhorst - VP of Membership and Chapter Development, and Tony Nichols - Member-at-Large. Our incoming officers are Luis Morales - Treasurer, Steve Callahan - VP of Membership and Chapter Development, and David Murphree - Member-at-large. Thank you to all these gentlemen.

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## Interstate Rivals visits Drayton Justus

By Bob Davenport - VP CSLT

Some of you may not know that former Dixie District President Drayton Justus and lead of Gentlemen's Agreement (1971 International Quartet Champions) now lives in the Toledo, Ohio area and is battling cancer. All of us who know Drayton love him for his wonderful personality and his love for all barbershoppers. He has served our District and the Society in so many significant ways during his barbershop career. My wife also revealed to me that the Justus' had provided help to her and our children a couple of times during an International Convention.

Several weeks ago the Interstate Rivals (1987 Quartet Champions) traveled to Ohio at the request of Drayton's son to surprise Drayton and Sue Ann. The son had also arranged for a local TV station to film the event at Drayton's house. It was also filmed on Facebook and can be found on Jay Hawkins' Facebook page. Although it was very cold outside, Drayton and Sue Ann bundled up and listened to the Rivals sing a few songs (and Drayton probably mouthed a few of the



words as well). It was a tremendous tribute to our beloved brother. After watching the video, I spoke to the District Board and gave them Drayton's mailing address that Jay Hawkins had given me in order to encourage Board members to write a card or note of encouragement to him.

Then it occurred to me that several of you who know the Justus' might like to write to Drayton and offer your words of encouragement and support in his fight against cancer. I don't know of a better way for any of us to express our gratitude to our brother who gave so much of himself to all of us. To those who are interested in sending a note to him, here is his address: **602 Orchid Court, Pemberville, OH 43450**. I believe that Drayton would love to hear

from as many of us as possible. Let us show our love for Drayton and Sue Ann and return the love and support that they have always shown us!

Bob Davenport  
District VP of CSLT

## Big Chicken Delivers Valentines!



The annual Singing Valentine's project is a highlight for many barbershoppers. For many singers, it's their first opportunity to sing in a quartet. Others enjoy the camaraderie of spending the day together, bringing (often, unexpectedly) the gift of music to our customers. Still others use their logistical skills to figure out who is going where and when. But what happens when all those plans blow up because of health restrictions necessary for the safety of both the singers and the audience?

Taking a page from the books of the Barbershop Harmony Society and the Association of International Champions, the Big Chicken Chorus (Marietta, GA) decided not to let such restrictions cause a halt to our plans, but simply an adaptation of them. If we couldn't perform live, we could at least perform virtually. Under usual circumstances, our Singing Valentine's performances consist of "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" and "The Story of the Rose (Heart of My Heart)." We decided to stick with those two songs, but how could we present them in a more memorable way than just a simple video recording?

For "Let Me Call You Sweetheart," we assembled a quartet. Each of the guys' vocal parts was recorded separately, then mixed together, and finally video was added. For

"The Story of the Rose," we went a different direction. The audio was taken from a past performance of the chorus performing the song. For the video, we featured a slideshow of members of the chorus with their sweethearts – a celebration of love. Gathering these pictures was quite fun, as some guys who had been in a relationship for many years contributed pictures from days gone by – one member who has been married for over 50 years gave us a picture from when he and his wife were dating in high school! While the slideshow pictures varied for each customer, we wanted to add some more customization.

So, we gave each buyer the opportunity to add their own picture (of them and their sweetheart) to the end of the video. And whether the buyer chose to do so or not (about 75% did), the video ended with a greeting from the buyer to the recipient. An email was sent to each recipient with a link to the video on YouTube, where it will be accessible forever, as well as shareable with friends and family ("Look what Bob bought me!"). The program was a great success! We sold over 60 orders, and with the completely virtual nature, were able to fulfill orders that were hundreds of miles away. Special thanks also go to the Stone Mountain Chorus, who helped us sell orders and contributed some of the pictures for the slideshow.



## The Big Chicken Chorus is proud to announce the hiring of Ben McDaniel

as its Musical Director. Ben holds a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Wichita State University, Wichita, KS as well as an Associate of Arts degree in Music Education from Hutchinson Community College in Hutchinson, KS.



experience with choruses and quartets adjudicated at the "A" level.

Prior to his appointment as our Musical Director, Ben served the Big Chicken Chorus as our Interim Director following service as an Assistant Director and Section Leader. Ben is also the Tenor of the Quadraphonics quartet, a 4<sup>th</sup> place Finalist in the most recent Dixie District

Quartet Contest.

Ben comes to us with 19 years of experience in the practice of Barbershop Harmony that includes Directing, Arranging, Vocal Development, and performing

The members of the Big Chicken Chorus are delighted to be singing under the Direction of Ben McDaniel.

## REMEMBERING BOB PETERS Dixie District Treasurer 2021

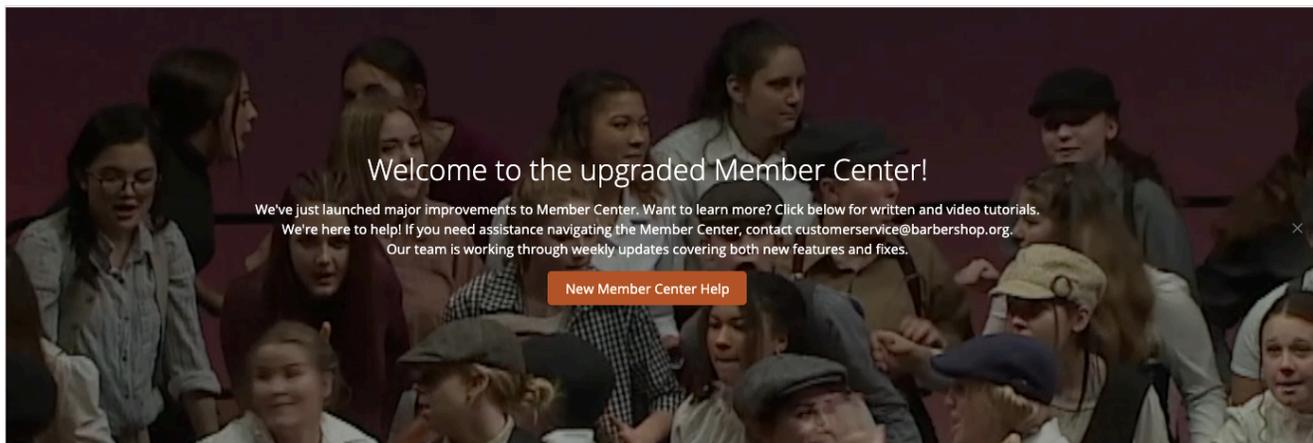
CONDOLENCES - Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Family of Bob Peters, our District Treasurer, who recently passed away in February.

Bob graduated from Florida International University and worked as an accountant and for Youth for Christ. He was also a long-haul truck driver for many years. He served his country proudly in the National Guard and was a member of Liberty Baptist Church. Bob had a faithful servant's heart and served his community of Chelsea as a member of the Citizens Observation Patrol.

Bob was a member of Barbershop Harmony Society, Voices of South Men's Barbershop Chorus, and served as Dixie District Barbershop Treasurer.



He also had served as Board Member and Treasurer of the Thoroughbred Chorus, Louisville, Kentucky.

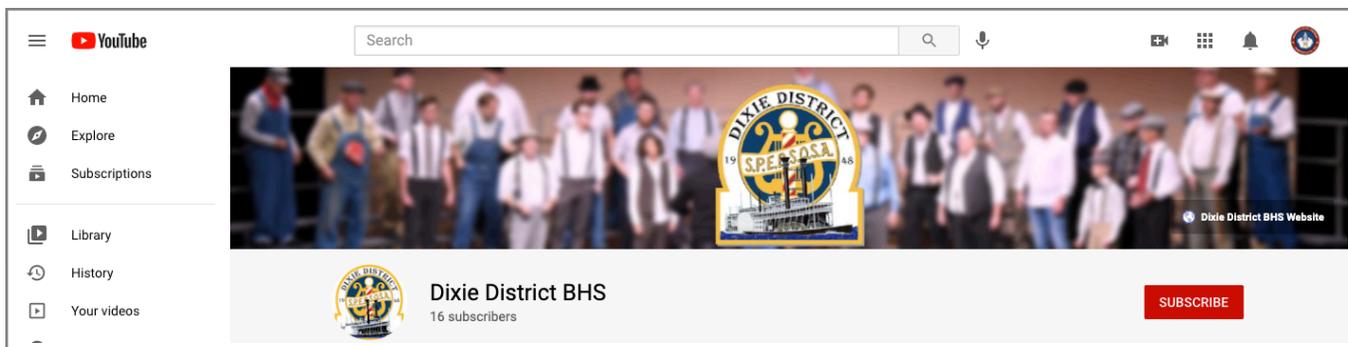


**PLEASE UPDATE YOUR MEMBER PROFILE IN THE MEMBER CENTER AT [BARBERSHOP.ORG](https://members.barbershop.org)**

With the update to the Member Center in January of 2021, several changes have taken place. One of the most important is our ability to find other barbershoppers across the society. By default, every members information is private, items like your email, phone, and address. In order for other members to find you, it is suggested you make the information public that you are comfortable with. A tutorial for making your contact info public can be found at the link below.

<https://members.barbershop.org/s/article/How-to-Update-Your-Personal-Contact-Information>

Please subscribe to our Dixie District BHS YouTube Channel. Chapter officer training videos are available from our 2021 Leadership Academy, District Champions Showcase from 2014 to 2019. More content to be posted.





It's been almost a year and a quarter since Voices of the South met in person.

We haven't traveled to Saint Mark United Methodist Church in Vestavia for a 7 p.m. Voices rehearsal for that long.

No singing together. No harmonizing. No camaraderie. No refreshments. No hugs. No risers. No group singing. No anything that would share Covid 19 with our best friends.

Yes! We are now singing together. For the past month we have been meeting in what we fondly call "car choir."

Voices invested in some new software and hardware, that allows us to travel to First Presbyterian Church of Alabaster to meet in our cars in their parking lot.

Once there we tune our car radios to a predetermined radio station, turn on a microphone and sing — yes, we are pretty well tuned. We can hear all four parts and the 15 to 20 of us who are lined up in cars can and do sing what Matt Powell is directing and Michael Giddens is mixing into our radios.

It isn't shoulder to shoulder on a riser, but we can hear others simultaneously singing our parts as if we were standing side by side.

We had met almost weekly for more than a year using the ZOOM technology. We each sang a solo in the privacy of our own homes, sitting in front of a computer. We couldn't hear each other — ZOOM doesn't sync correctly — although we could, at least see each other.

Thank goodness for new technology and a young music veep (Giddens) and director (Powell), who make the stuff work for our group.

We still wear masks when we are out of our cars. We still count the people who have had their vaccines. We talk with each other at breaks. We are a group.

Voices of the South is practicing our repertoire, so that when we can get back on stage we will be able to hit the ground running. We will sound almost as good as we did before Covid 19 changed our world.





Fellow Songsters,

We can see the light at the end of the tunnel! It's not an oncoming train! After pausing for two years, we're finally going to have a District Convention this fall! There will be quartet and chorus contests and all sorts of fun activities, so make your plans NOW to be in Oxford, AL this September. The pandemic has caused, at least for me, a real need to join with a couple hundred of my closest friends and sing my heart out. I know you feel it, too, so let's plan to sing a tag or two this fall!

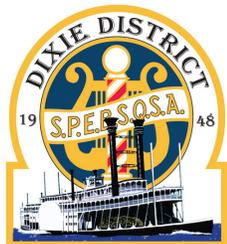
In other news, the composition of the District Name Task Force is almost finalized and we'll be announcing the names of the seven people on or before June 1, 2021. I'll be charging them with providing recommendations for action by the House of Delegates at the Fall meeting in September. The HOD has agreed with the Board recommendation that we move the HOD meeting to the Sunday night before each Spring/Fall

Convention and meet electronically, which should make it easier for Delegates from EVERY chapter to attend.

Please feel free to reach out to me at [president@dixiedistrict.org](mailto:president@dixiedistrict.org) to share good news (or concerns) as our chapters begin the slow restart process. I know a couple of chapters that have started having in-person meetings again and others that have been doing drive-in meetings, along with those using Zoom (or Teams or other electronic means). Whatever is going on with your chapter, stay engaged with your barbershop family until we call all meet up again. I can't wait!

Cordially,  
Paul





## 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

# BIG CHICKEN DRIVE-IN REHEARSALS



The Big Chicken Chorus completed its first, full scale Drive-In Rehearsal Monday, February 1, 2021.

The attraction to Drive-In Choral Rehearsals originated during the COVID-19 pandemic when disease prevention restrictions advised people to avoid gathering in groups singing.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many choral groups, including the Big Chicken Chorus, to revert to gathering in Zoom meetings to continue to stay current with their repertoire and to work on their vocal skills. Although this approach was in concert with the pandemic restrictions, and provided some level of camaraderie, it was entirely inadequate in terms of reproducing a consonant and synchronized choral sound. Many singers preferred to not participate in rehearsals where they could not hear the other voices.

Enter technology, as originated by the Somerset Hills Harmony in conjunction with the Hunterdon Harmonizers in July of 2020. Their setup allows the individual singer to be isolated, in compliance with all disease prevention recommendations, and hear an undelayed, consonant and synchronized sound of the other voices over the radio in their vehicle.

By using personal microphones connected to a Mixer Board, our members can participate in a Drive-In Rehearsal from the safety and protection from others that their car provides, and hear all the other participants' voices, on the car FM radio or an FM Receiver. By using the FM radio technology; there is no delay in the sound of the other voices, so the audio experience is very much like a live chorus rehearsal. Our Director, Ben McDaniel, directs from an elevated, front centered and easily visible location.

Though our first attempt was a little rough from a musical perspective, as we got accustomed to singing into microphones, hearing to all the other voices while watching the director from a car; our second rehearsal produced a sound very much like a rehearsal on the risers, some say even better than being on the risers. Our intention at present is alternate the rehearsal format between the Drive-In and Zoom. The Big Chicken Chorus is now able to rehearse and perform in a technologically enhanced and medically safe environment.

## WANTED: TOWN CRIER EDITOR

Interested in becoming the new Town Crier Editor? Please contact Mike Brunson, VP - Marketing and Public Relations at [vp-marketing@dixiedistrict.com](mailto:vp-marketing@dixiedistrict.com).