



Dixie Town Crier

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

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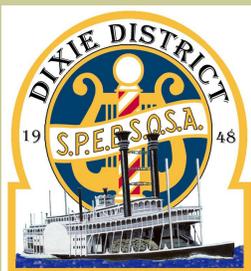
Heart of Georgia Chorus from Macon, GA by Bob Smith

The **Heart of Georgia Chorus** was very busy during the month of December. Between the chorus and quartets, we shared the Christmas Spirit with song on six occasions.

In January, we were privileged once again to sing the National Anthem for the 15th Annual Marathon Run for the Museum of Aviation, Robins AFB, GA.



The 2011 slate of officers was installed and sworn in by **Mr. Arnie Wade**, long-time chorus member, past president and past chorus director. We thank outgoing president, **Don Schall** for his outstanding leadership and look forward to a great year with our new president, **Dave Reiff**. We are presently preparing for a very successful Singing Valentines.



**“International
Seniors Quartet
Contest...
installation
banquet...
awards...and
Singing
Valentines”**

Music City Chorus from Nashville, TN by David Belden

The **Nashville Chapter** is once again beaming as Nashville's own senior quartet **“Sagacity”** finished 12th at the mid-winter convention in Last Vegas last weekend. “Sagacity” earned their way into the contest by finishing first at the Dixie District senior quartet contest last October. Congratulations **Jim DeBusman** (tenor), **Kirk Jordan** (lead), **Larry Deters** (baritone), and **Paul Wietlisbach** (bass)!

January also saw the Nashville Chapter hold its installation banquet. Taking the gavel as chapter president is **Tony Clifton**. **Ken Martin** will serve as executive vice-president, and **Shane Scott** will be the immediate past president. Other officers for 2011 include **Bill Shireman** (secretary), **David Mensel** (treasurer), **Bob Sparrow** (VP – marketing and PR), **Jimmy Hickman** (VP – membership development), **Jim DeBusman** (VP – music/performance), and **David Carden** (VP – youth activities/YIH). Board members are **Steve D’Ambrosio**, **Freeman Groat**, **Sam English**, and **Josh Moore**. We sincerely appreciate these men who serve our chapter, as well as all of the men who assist in other official and unofficial capacities.

At the January banquet a number of chapter awards were also presented. The Frank Christina Spirit Award was presented to Jimmy Hickman by last year's recipient **Clyde Perkins**. Director **Mike O’Neill** presented the Director's Cup (for overall musical growth) to **George Reynolds**. Outgoing president Shane Scott presented the President's Cup (for overall work within the chapter) to **Tommy Mitchell**. The year's top honor, the Barbershopper of the Year Award, was presented to Jimmy Hickman by **Howard McAdory**, last year's recipient.

Looking ahead to February, the Nashville Chapter is deeply involved in its annual Singing Valentine's project. A local television reporter visited the chapter to film a story on the Singing Valentine's project and found herself on the receiving end of a serenade by the chorus ... all caught on film. The segment will air this week.

Frederick Lewin Breedon, Jr. from Jacksonville, FL by Keith Hopkins, President Sunshine District



Following a tough battle with pneumonia complicated by a staph infection and issues with congestive heart failure, "Fred", "Dad", "Pop", "Poppa", "Poppi", "Granddaddy", "GG Daddy" passed peacefully December 19 with his children and many grandchildren at his bedside. He will be remembered as one who loved his family without measure, who was devoted to his friends without hesitation, and who trusted God in all things.

He started his celebration of life April 6, 1925 in Greensboro, NC, and was one of ten children who grew up in the Depression era in the South. He was a "man's man" who learned to take the punches life threw at him in stride. He got an early education on the hard knocks of life as a professional boxer fighting under the name "Jimmy Day." He was also a lover of music and played baritone horn in the Greensboro High School band as well as the family brass quartet. He was also a pioneer in the great American a cappella singing art form of Barbershop Quartet music. After moving to Florida, along with his brothers Sam & Joe, he organized and chartered Barbershop Harmony (formerly known as SPEBSQSA) chapters in Tampa in 1949 and in Jacksonville in 1953, as well as chapters throughout the Florida Panhandle. In 1949 he competed on the International stage singing baritone in the Florida Knights quartet competing against the Buffalo Bills (Music Man). He would later sing with the Florida Keys and Hi-Jacks quartets. He finally returned to the International competition stage in 2006 where he was joined by all four of his sons and grandson Jamie as a member of The Metropolitan Chorus. While serving as President of the Dixie District he was instrumental in the organization of the Sunshine District of the BHS and was the recipient of the first BOTY (Barbershopper of the Year) award in 1958. He is one of a handful of men who have served as President in two Society Districts. He was inducted into the Sunshine District Hall of Fame in 1996 and was a current member of the Sunshine District Championship chorus, The Big Orange. He also served as assistant Troop Leader with Troop 250 and helped both his son James and grandson Fred IV earn Eagle Scout honors.

On Sunday December 26th, a "celebration" of life [was held], officiated by Rev. Nancy Suellau, followed by an "afterglow" party.

Atlanta Vocal Project from Atlanta, GA by Chuck Pettis

Christmas Hijinks and a Chinese Serenade

No, it's not the name of a new quartet or a new app for your iPhone. It just sort of summarizes what **Atlanta Vocal Project** has been up to lately. Yes, that staid, regimented, blue-on-black and uber-serious group called AVP has let its hair down and broadened its horizons.

On Saturday, December 18, audiences surged into the auditorium of Johns Creek High School for two performances of the 2010 edition of *The Sounds of Christmastime*. In the opening act – we called it “Santa Lost His Mojo” – it looked like everything was going wrong in the Jolly Old Elf's Workshop. **Bill “Santa” Hickman** had the blues and complained that he lacked the energy and drive needed to make his annual trek. Ennui certainly ruled the roost at the NP. (For those of you in the Carolina District, that's short for North Pole.) Here comes to the rescue the Head Elf in the person of **Allen Reynolds**, carrying a load of papers which held all the details needed to run the workshop. (And a script, too? Nah!) The rest of the AVP guys were playing *Elves-For-A-Day*, complete with floppy hats and striped socks. Dior, Gucci and



Dig Them Socks!

Armani would have been...well...let's say...amused. In the end it was the music that made the difference. Who could resist *My Night at the Nutcracker* or *The Twelve Days of Christmas Mess*? Or *Diddy Squat* by **Next Wave**? They certainly got Santa out of the house and on his way!



Santa – Livin' the High Life

Tommy Johns - everyone's favorite Marketing guy - has been working with the Marietta arm of the Confucius Institute to have AVP perform for them. And that we did on Saturday, January 22nd. The performance was part of their New Year's Festival, this year held in the Bailey Performance Center at Kennesaw State University.

Although AVP's presentation was limited to four songs, the largely Chinese audience responded enthusiastically to the performance. AVP opened the set with two Chinese folk songs...sung in Chinese! *Moon Song* is slightly up-tempo and tells the story of a boy calling to a young lady: “If you like my music come down and spend some time with me.” *Shepherd's Song* is a traditional ballad. Ms. Huishan He, an accomplished opera performer in her own right and member of the Institute, attended several rehearsals to



A Dragon for a New Year

help with pronunciation and inflection. Mr. Ken Jin, Director of the Institute, also attended rehearsals and was instrumental in bringing AVP to the program.

Lars Grevstad arranged the two Chinese folk songs with the words spelled out phonetically, produced learning tracks and taught the songs to the Chorus. To top it all off, Lars directed the entire four-song program.

The Chorus closed its performance with *Sweet Georgia Brown* and *What a Wonderful World*. Following the performance, AVP members eagerly mingled with the audience, accepting compliments from old and young alike. And there may be more to this story. We'll keep you posted.

A Mighty Wind opened the second half of the show, demonstrating once again why they are a solid top ten quartet. As always, AVP closed out the program by telling the Christmas Story in song, assisted by **The Zamboni Brothers** (*Mary Did You Know*), **Lighthouse** (*To Bethlehem*), Michelle Shoemaker (*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*) and some gals from *Song of Atlanta* (*Hallelujah Chorus*).

The Chorus owes a big, Large, HUGE “Thank You” to Ms. Rhonda Fossum, choral director at Johns Creek High School and Assistant Principal, Michael Inseher. Their energy and interest ensured AVP a successful show.



Who doesn't Like Applause?

AVP Sponsors HarmonyFest 2011 by Jim Moore

It all began when Kim Watters, the choral music teacher at Gordon Central High School in Calhoun Georgia and enthusiastic supporter of Harmony Explosion Camps for several years, asked if there was anything that could be done for her boys at the local level. Calhoun happens to be 70 miles from Atlanta and 50 miles from Chattanooga. Well the **Atlanta Vocal Project** was not taking a youth chorus to Las Vegas this year due to travel costs and lack of funding sources, so decided that they might support a one-day Festival in Calhoun. **Clay Hine** was interested and available, and his wife Becki, was too. So it was decided to make this a co-ed event.

Lunch Break quartet agreed to be the teaching quartet when no AVP quartet was available. Becki convinced Last Minute Quartet to be the girls teaching quartet. Kim was willing to get her fellow teachers from three other high schools involved, and started signing up the expected 150 students. She arranged for the facility – the First Baptist Church of Calhoun.

Then came the snow and ice in Calhoun. School was in a state of suspense for an entire week. No one could register or pickup music. Other make-up activities were re-scheduled that conflicted with the festival plans. AVP was scheduled to perform on the same day for the Chinese New Year celebration, a performance that was very important. Things were beginning to look questionable. But then, the 22nd of January came, and the sun came out and the temperature rose, and over 100 high school singers showed up to learn about the barbershop style of singing. There was not a single participant that did not rave about the experience. I'm told that the Facebook comments the next few day were exploding with praise for the event and telling of the fun that was had.

The evening show featured the teaching quartets and the choruses, and was enjoyed by over 250 local townspeople. It looks like this may become an annual event. Many thanks to the Dixie District and Harmony Foundation, and the Hines, and AVP and those wonderful and beautiful students with the glorious voices.

2011
HarmonyFest

AtlantaVocalProject.com

