

Barbershop Quartet Preservation Association
Quartet Festival, 10-12 September, 2009
Chicago, Illinois

Another Barbershop Quartet Preservation Association (BQPA) Quartet Festival is history and has proven to be a great success. Over the weekend of 10-12 September, 2009, one hundred and twenty six Quartet Singers and BQPA supporters attended the semi-annual BQPA/Pioneer Quartet Festival in Elk Grove Village, a suburb of Chicago IL. People came from the four corners of North America, to include the US and our fellow barbershoppers from Canada. There were representatives from the Phoenix and Orange County quartet chapters, large contingents from the Twin Cities and Milwaukee, and folks representing over a dozen states and provinces. Thursday evening, attendance reached 25 or 30, and several newly formed quartets were sharing fellowship and singing the old songs.

Friday morning there was a golf outing scheduled by Gerry Carroll. Several of the early arrivals enjoyed this activity. I am not sure of how good the scores were but I hear the singing on every tee was a lot of fun. By early afternoon, another 60-70 members and guests arrived generating even more excitement.

BQPA board member, Jim Gallagher, brought a supply of recently acquired BQPA logo golf shirts that sold out by Friday evening. The shirts may be obtained from our online store by following the "links" icon at www.bqpa.com. BQPA logo pins are available from our treasurer, Herb Langthorp [3 Hits and a Miss]. The shirts and BQPA pins being worn by our members and supporters will begin to catch people's eye and who

knows, they might stimulate interest about what we are doing and the fun we have. We signed up fourteen new members with our membership growing steadily with each passing month.

Hotel accommodations at the Ramada O'Hare were very adequate and the festival hosts, Gerry Carroll and his helpers, did a great job in preparing for the festival. The staff

at the hotel was very accommodating also.

Chicago area guest quartets, "Take Note" and "Tsunami", warmed up the audience for Friday's pickup quartet contest. Both quartets were awarded standing ovation. Sixteen Quartets were selected by randomly pulling names from sacks to determine who sang together. This equated to 64 folks getting involved in this fun activity, with the remainder of the attendees making up the audience. This pick up quartet

contest has been named for the late Jinny Janis, a regular attendee of the BQPA/Pioneers

and one of the founding singers of the Chordettes. Four judges selected the top three quartets who sang the most in tune and entertained best. Gold medals with purple lanyards and individual plaques were presented to the first place winners. After the contest everyone retired to the "woodshed room" to enjoy some refreshments and engage

in more quarteting. Thanks to our convention host Gerry Carroll, the Ramada allows us

to sell our drinks for \$1 and you can ask Bill Meyers, [Citations, Revival], about the great taste of the California red. Not sure when the singing room closed down, as I hit the pad shortly after the witching hour.

Saturday morning found the hotel restaurant overflowing with singers as the hotel had reduced their prices just for us to \$5.00 for a breakfast buffet of eggs, sausage, bacon, potatoes, toast, all kinds of pastries and of course juice, milk and coffee. At 10:00 AM Saturday, the BQPA'S board of directors held our general membership meeting with about 70 members in attendance. It was announced that the Board had adopted a resolution to discontinue annual dues and survive on donations made by the membership

at our semi-annual quartet festivals. There would remain only a \$15.00 BQPA joining fee. This was accepted by the members with no dissent. No surprise here! Other discussions and decisions will be covered in the minutes of the general meeting and disseminated when available.

As Saturday morning passed to mid day another 20 folks joined the festival to enjoy the singing and the fellowship. Most had lunch in the Ramada's excellent restaurant. The Spaghetti Warehouse across the street from the Ramada was a popular spot for the evening meal. Our singing at the Spaghetti Warehouse was well received by the other diners.

Saturday evening, we assembled in the Ramada's theatre for our annual parade of quartets show, MC'd by Ray Henders, [Chicago News]. Lynn Hauldren, [Chordiac Arrest], lined up a wonderful show for our entertainment. First off were Bitsy and Dick Beck singing a duet, with Dick playing the guitar. They were very entertaining and were well received by the 100+ audience. Following was a Minneapolis quartet named "Random Sample" which regaled us with some great music. We then heard from "Juke Box" a Sweet Adeline Inc quartet. These gals were on their way to Nashville to compete in the SAI contest "Good luck ladies, come home with a medal." Next was our perennial Chicago performers, "Gad Zooks." These guys continue to be better entertainers each time they perform for us. Then came our very own "Three Hits and a Miss" from the San Antonio area. All are members and active supporters of the BQPA/Pioneers. They were crowd pleasers as usual. "Chicago Times" was next with some fine singing and several bits of Ray Henders' humor. After the show, everyone headed for the woodshed room to share fellowship and quartet into the wee hours.

Sunday morning found many of the guys in the hotel lobby waiting for the shuttle to O'Hare Airport. There was a lot of hugging and hand shaking going on. Most every one was overheard saying things such as "See ya in Tempe or See ya in April, Great Festival." The smiling faces indicated that they had a good time and were looking forward to our next BQPA quartet festival in the spring of 2010, in Tempe AZ.

In Harmony

Jack Martin, Pres

For the BQPA BOD



