

**SOCIETY BOARD MEMBER  
DON PYPER**



**“The Pype Line”**

**Y**ou are all aware that the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. continues to suffer from its own problems. The fact that our membership has dropped from some 38,000 to around 32,000 over the past several years should be of concern to all of us. There are probably several reasons for this. For what its worth, let me give you an opinion.

We have created for ourselves a many-faceted organization. Our efforts support a variety of programs designed to bring great information to all of us for the purpose of development, both as individuals and groups of various sizes.

We have support programs for members as individual, quartet, octet, VLQ, small and large chorus singers as well as a myriad of offerings for organizational, administrative improvement. Our Society funds the operation of programs of judging, coaching, public relations, advertising, musical education, a field man operation second to none, a central office with staff ready and willing to help in many ways, a complete Barbershopper’s Shop, a regular meeting schedule for purposes of bringing together the leadership teams from all over the continent, a support for the young enthusiastic singers in our schools, charitable activities, a music publication system of consistent excellence, a library of songs old and new which is the envy of many, a strong chapter support activity, an award program to recognize the efforts of contributors to the cause at

all levels of the organization, a sizeable and exciting competition system, as well as a mighty training program for directors of our style. We also produce a great selection of publications, (manuals etc.) with time proven information on all of our projects.

So, what are we missing? Are we enjoying the benefits of these programs? Are we sitting back and wondering or are we involved in the push for a better place to sing in?

There is no thrill on earth like that of ringing a chord or two or many, with two voices, (yes, duetting can be great fun), four voices, eight voices (some octets produce an outstanding sound) and larger groups of a variety of sizes. It doesn’t matter how many, but it does matter how well.

I just wonder how many members have ever seen or learned from the manuals on vocal techniques, performance skills, and just basic barbershop. It seems to me that the information and legislation for use is already in place. We need to use it more successfully.

The activity of singing together in a group of any size is fun in itself, even if we’re just learning how to do it. In fact its more exciting when we are learning something new. You should hear the raving comments of first time, and repeat offender students of harmony and director’s college. The youngsters in the college quartet are ecstatic about their new found celebration of song.

We have one of the best recreational music products in the world. We should stand up and wave the flag. We should be more invitational to potential members when they arrive on our meeting doorsteps. We should get our act together so that they do arrive at our meetings. We must be sure that they participate in the singing immediately and don’t hear a lot of organizational talk on that first night. They must be introduced somehow, to everyone at the meeting and be invited into the circle singing at the end of the meeting. They must be included in the chorus activity. They must learn what a good tag is. They must not leave the meeting without registering for follow-up contact. ✦



*Photo by Waldo Redekop*

At the spring convention, two certificates were presented by **Paul Tamblyn** (C) to recognize **Ken Fisher** (R) and **Rob Arnold** (L) for their successful completion of the requirements for a certified director. For information on how to achieve this, contact **Paul Tamblyn**. ✦

**New Quartet Raises Eyebrows**

**By Jim McDougall**

**A** new quartet called *CROSSFIRE* sure surprised a lot of people in the *Pioneer District* this fall. Nobody had heard tell of them until the Friday night contest in Battle Creek. When they made the cut with a powerhouse sound, every one was buzzing.

In late August, *Sarnia Chapter* member, **Rich Lauzon** and *Strathroy Chapter* member, **Brian McDougall**, teamed together with *Grosse Point Chapter* member, **Robb Smith** and *Macomb Chapter* member, **Scott Risley** to form a mighty fine sounding quartet.

With only ten rehearsals ahead, they placed an astonishing third place bronze in the Pioneer District Quartet Contest. Better still they won the singing category on Saturday night by one point.

I’m sure we’ll hear a lot more from *CROSSFIRE*. ✦