

Mid-Atlantic District Association of Quartet Champions

October 24, 2007

Dear Quartet Champ,

If you were with us in Wildwood two weekends ago then I do not have to tell you how successful the 9th annual reunion of the **MADAQC Chorus** and the Jamboree/Extravaganza performance was ... but I will anyway. As usual, we received “wows” and congratulations from the Mid-Atlantic District leadership and audience, and even from several members of the judging panel who were highly impressed by sound and the numbers we put on stage compared to other districts. We are one of the biggest active district quartet champions associations in the Society. Fifty-two (52) champions were on hand throughout the weekend. In addition to the usual faces, some of whom have never missed a reunion, Ralph Brandt – bass of our 1954 champions the *Playtonics*, joined us for the first time all the way from Hawaii. Noticeable absent this year were a few regulars including our good pal and honorary co-Director, Freddie King who has been tackling some health issues, but is now back on the mend and determined to be with us next year. Kevin King ably took the helm and quickly rehearsed us into shape. This was again a truly wonderful weekend of fellowship and harmony.

Here is a brief recap. I will jump to the end by telling you the quartet contest results ...

- Our **2008 Mid-Atlantic District Quartet Champions** are **NEW RELEASE**. The quartet members are **Shawn Thomas** (L), **Joe Eckert** (Bs), **Noah Morrison** (Br), and **Ryan Griffith** (T). They finished second last year in M-AD and were the 2005 International Collegiate Silver Medalists. We offer our collective congratulations for a job well done and welcome them into our fraternity!
- Now for the start of the weekend ... the MADAQC Chorus assembled as usual on Friday evening immediately after the Quartet Semi-Finals for a quick late night rehearsal. Because this year's contest included a cadre of seniors quartets and ran nearly all day, about 30 bleary-eyed quartet champs lumbered onto the risers late in the evening after a long day of good listening. The crew was soon reinvigorated by Kevin's excitement and the great sound of the guys around them. An enthusiastic crowd gathered out front to listen to the rehearsal. Kevin ran us through our paces – working the words and notes of “*On a Wonderful Day like Today*” then brushing off “*This is the Moment*”.
- The chorus assembled again on Saturday afternoon following the chorus contest, won again by the *Alexandria Harmonizers*, for some more fun and fine-tuning. Several more champs joined in who could not get there on Friday. The excitement was mounting as the chords began to lock and overtones rang overhead. Immediately following the rehearsal, many guys and wives went over to the fourth-annual **MADAQC/M-AD Showcase of Quartet Champions** held in conjunction with the Saturday evening buffet dinner and M-AD Endowment Fund. The Showcase, emceed by Howard Fetterolf, was the most highly attended to date. The featured quartets were *Wheelhouse* (2007 International Finalists and 2003 M-AD champs w/

Rich Gray, Jeff Gray, Brandon Brooks), *Reveille* (2007 International Semifinalists and 2002 M-AD champs w/ John Ward, Mark Paul, and Joe Hunter), and *New Release* (2005 International Collegiate Silver Medalists, 2005 M-AD Collegiate Champs, and later to be crowned the 2008 M-AD Champs). The fundraising event raked in \$590 for the Endowment for a total of nearly \$2,000 over the past four years. Thank you to these quartets for giving of their time and talent in making this Showcase a huge success.

- The Saturday Evening Jamboree/Extravaganza featured a number of special treats for the Mid-Atlantic audience including the debut of a new and exciting quartet called *Old School* (w/ champs Rick Taylor and Jack Pinto ... and some guy named Joe Connelly). *Ringers* (2007 International Semifinalists and 2007 M-AD champs w/ Scott Disney, Al Mazzoni, Mike Pinto, and Rob Seay) gave a beautifully sung performance to bring to a close their championship year.
- Then it was time for the MADAQC Chorus. Yours truly began the introductions as the chorus flooded the stage. The applause was thunderous as the District audience expressed their appreciation for the representation of 36 past championship quartets covering a 53-year span. The audience continued their gratitude as four names were solemnly read to honor the champions who had passed away during the year ... **Bob Royce** (1962 – Main Street Four), **Pat DeNegri** (1963 - Yankees), **Dick Whitehouse** (1968 - NOVA Chords), and **Andy Bain** (1979 - 4 Cracker Jacks). Then after offering the Association's best wishes for good health to Freddie King, Joe Pollio, and Dick Webber, the chorus confidently launched into "*On a Wonderful Day like Today*" keeping the energy churning throughout and then cranked the extended tag right to the end. Oh, yeah ... Kevin was pleased and the audience heard the combined championship sound they had been waiting for. The Chairman of the Judges and District President then came out to give the much-awaited announcement of the contest results ... in third place, *Family Affair* (w/ champ Bob Ramsey)... in second place, *Last Kids Picked* (w/ champs Mike Wallen, Anthony Colosimo, and Bill Colosimo)... and taking the big prize, *New Release*. Shawn, Joe, Noah, and Ryan ran through the Convention Center isles and up onto the stage, jumped and hugged, accepted the pins and trophies, and took their bows. Then, with chins high and huge smiles, they stood motionless as the chorus threw itself into "*This is the Moment*" reliving that special moment when each man on stage won his individual championship(s). Not only did the tag raise goose bumps on everyone's arms, but also the moment emotionally touched our new champions. The audience erupted in a standing ovation led by the entire judging panel. Ya gotta love it!
- In addition, as if this was not enough, the Jamboree continued for another 30 minutes with the superb guest performance of the 2007 International Silver Medalists *OC Times* (w/ former M-AD sprout from Harrisburg, Sean Devine on lead). WOW, what a show!

Well, that about does it for now. Next year may be our last gathering on the New Jersey shores as the convention may relocate to another city within the District, so come on out and join us for

a walk in the sand and down Quartet Memory Lane. Remember that you are forever a part of this District's great legacy and we would really like to see and sing with you again. Until then, stay well.

Yours in close championship harmony,

Steve White

MADAQC President

Bass - Copyright '86 (1988), The Bay Rum Runners (1996), and Phat Cats (2004)

PS: Last year, MADAQC remade the Mid-Atlantic District Championship Quartet trophy in beautiful walnut and engraved all 62 previous quartet champion names. However, it needed a new travel case the size of a small trailer to lug it around. A friend and craftsman named Bill Stewart of the Alexandria Harmonizers has built a case with wheels and a handle that should protect the coveted prize for many years to come. Funds for the trophy, engraving, case, and champion recognition badges come from our small treasury of your donations.

New Release photos (2) attached, courtesy of Bob Demmler.

