

Mid-Atlantic District Association of Quartet Champions

October 8, 2008

Dear Quartet Champ,

WOW, what a weekend in Wildwood! Our 10th annual reunion of MADAQC and the Saturday night Show of Champions performance was just the best. The weather was beautiful and the singing was fantastic. Throughout the weekend, we had in attendance a total of about 65 M-AD champions from 43 quartets spanning 54 years over 6 decades – from the **Playtonics** (1954) represented by Dave Mittelstadt to the newly inducted men in **New Release** (2008).

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

- Our **2009 Mid-Atlantic District Quartet Champions** are **Old School** winning by a whopping international medalist scoring average of 87.5% (3,159 points). The quartet members are **Joe Connelly** (lead), **Joseph Krones** (bass), **Jack Pinto** (baritone), and **Rick Taylor** (tenor). This is Rick's and Jack's second M-AD championship. Joe's C and K have won championships in other districts. We offer our collective congratulations and give them a hardy welcome into our fraternity!

Now starting at the beginning of the weekend ...

- The Friday evening quartet contest was packed with 25 competitors including 7 foursomes containing 12 past District Quartet Champs including Mike Wallen, Gary Plaag, Bob Ramsey, Rick Taylor, Jack Pinto, Ed Cazenias, Nick Aiuto, Steve White, Tony Colosimo, Bill Colosimo, Al Fennell, and Shawn Thomas. There were also several past champs from other districts. Making the Top-10 cut were 11 of these men in 6 quartets. When the dust settled behind Old School, **Last Kids Picked** (T. Colosimo, E. Wallen, B. Colosimo, and M. Wallen) finished in **2nd Place** (78.6%, 2,829 points) and **Full Tilt** (Aiuto, White, Frank, and Cazenias) claimed **3rd Place** (76.7%, 2,761). The M-AD Seniors Champion was **Youth Reclamation Project** (M. Wallen, Owens, Tarpy, and Jones), placing 11th in the contest and mic-testing for the Finals.
- The **Alexandria Harmonizers** under the direction of Joe Cerutti won their 21st Mid-Atlantic District Chorus Championship with a scoring average of 85.0% (1,530 points) and earned a trip to the International Chorus Contest in Anaheim, CA next July. The **Chorus of the Chesapeake** under the direction of Rick Taylor finished in **2nd Place** (78.8%, 1,418 point) and the **Big Apple Chorus** under the direction of Joe Hunter took **3rd Place** (78.6%, 1,414 points). Both choruses will likely garner a wildcard spot for the Big Show.
- The **MADAQC Chorus** assembled for a rehearsal on Saturday afternoon following the chorus contest. **Kevin King** and **Jay Butterfield** were this year's Honorary Co-Directors and they ran us through our paces until it was sounding good.

- The **Chorus of the Chesapeake** and some member of the **DELASUSQUEHUDMAC Honor Chapter** joined the MADAQC Chorus for a joint rehearsal of the finale song, "*Auld Lang Syne*" directed by Rick Taylor and Kevin King.
- The MADAQC sponsored their 5th annual **Showcase of Quartet Champions**, this year on stage in the main auditorium. The Showcase was emceed by Howard Fetterolf and featured **New Release** (2005 International Collegiate Silver Medalists and 2008 M-AD Champs with Shawn Thomas, Joe Eckert, Noah Morrison, and Ryan Griffith), **Ringers** (2008 International Semifinalists and 2007 M-AD champs with Scott Disney, Al Mazzoni, Mike Pinto, and Rob Seay), and **Wheelhouse** (2007 International Finalists and 2003 M-AD champs with Rich Gray, Dan Van Wetering, Jeff Gray, and Brandon Brooks). During the show, contributions for the M-AD Endowment Fund were solicited and the audience was generous. The Showcase was again a success due to the time, talent, and voluntary contributions from these three fantastic quartets. Many thanks!
- The Saturday evening **District Show of Champions** was produced by Gary Plaag and featured New Release who brought to a close their championship year with a brilliant swan song performance and the Alexandria Harmonizers who gave a thrilling performance that brought the crowd to its feet.
- Then it was time for the MADAQC Chorus to take the stage. The applause was thunderous as the District audience expressed their delight for the representation of 42 past championship quartets. Bill Clark (bass, Premiere) was the Emcee and read the names of the quartets as the members proudly took their places on the risers. He then introduced Kevin King who took a few moments to express to the District his personal thanks and appreciation for the thoughts, prayers, and support to his family during the difficult past few months. He then turned and directed the chorus in singing "*Somewhere*", a **Freddie King** arrangement and sung in his honor. The song was beautifully performed with heartfelt emotion and the impact on everyone on stage and in the auditorium was stirring. Before he passed away, Freddie was told that we were going to sing this in honor and tribute to him – he would have been so very proud. This was an appropriate final sendoff to our longtime friend.
- The Chairman of the Judges, Jim Nolan, and the Contest Administrator, Chuck Harner, then gave Bill the much-awaited announcement of the quartet contest results with New Release standing by holding the hardware. After Last Kids Picked and Full Tilt received their new red pins, Old School was announced as the winners and given their individual Jim Grant trophies and the MADAQC traveling trophy along with the 2009 championship pins. Jack Pinto expressed thanks to the audience on behalf of the quartet and then Old School delighted everyone with another brilliantly sung song. For a bunch of guys who have been incredibly successful in the world of barbershopping by winning multiple international medals (including 2 men with gold medals), you would have thought this was their first championship. Their glee and delight in this accomplishment was obvious. With chins held high and smiles ear-to-

ear, they stood proudly as Jay Butterfield directed chorus in what may have been the greatest performance of *“This is the Moment”* ever sung. The quartet joined in, and as we neared the tag the chorus came down off the risers, put their arms around each other’s shoulders, and formed a crescent around Old School who were noticeable touched by this gesture of friendship and welcome. Goose bumps were at full peak to the last crushing chord which had the distinctive sound of an International Chorus Champion. The audience erupted in a standing ovation led by the entire judging panel. Wow, just incredible!

- But the show was not yet over; there was still one more thrilling moment to be shared. The stage crew brought out a projection screen as the Chorus of the Chesapeake and members of DELASUSQUEHUDMAC entered and took the stage with us. There now stood over 175 men flowing over the ends of the 11 risers, each one a friend of Freddie King. The Tribute Committee lead by Bud Laumann put together a slide show montage of Freddie’s lifetime of barbershopping achievement overlaid with a sound track of many of his quartets that Mike Kelly pieced together. The presentation ended with a final still photograph of Freddie with his head up, eyes closed, and hands open towards Heaven. Bill Clark said a few final words in toast and Rick Taylor began to direct the mass in singing Clay Hine’s beautiful arrangement of *“Auld Lang Syne”*. For many on stage, this may have been the most difficult performance of all as we all choked back our tears and emotions. The sound was magnificently glorious as we gave a fond farewell to the greatest barbershopper our District has ever known.
- Kevin then directed the entire Mid-Atlantic audience in *“Keep the Whole World Singing”*, bringing to a close an incredible weekend.

A few final words ... **Kevin King** has been our honorary co-Director for the past 7 years. On behalf of the entire MADAQC membership, let me say that it has been a pleasure working with him each year and we express our deepest gratitude and thanks for his service and contribution to this organization. He would now like to pass the baton to other directors within our Association. If there are anyone who would like to be considered for a director role next year, please let me know of your interest as soon as possible. Among the duties will be to help identify a fun new song/arrangement and assist in preparing learning materials to be distributed by late spring. **Jay Butterfield** came onboard this year as a co-Director and was incredibly prepared for the challenge. Our phenomenal performance under his able hands was a testament to Jay’s talent as a musician, leader, and conductor.

Well, that about does it for now. Next year, the Fall Convention will move to our new home in Lancaster, PA at the brand-new Lancaster Convention Center. So, come on out and join us for some German pork & sauerkraut, Shoo-Fly pie, and apple cider ... oh, yeah, and some great barbershopping in the old Amish and Pennsylvania Dutch country. Remember that you are forever a part of this District’s great legacy and I look forward to seeing and hearing you again very soon. Stay well!

Yours in close championship harmony,

Steve White
MADAQC President

Old School
2009 Mid-Atlantic District Quartet Champions
2008 International 5th Place Medalists



(Rick Taylor, Joe Connelly, Joseph Kronos, and Jack Pinto)