



LASTING FRIENDSHIPS – ENDURING MUSIC
PRESIDENT’S UPDATE
August 2019
IT’S ALL ABOUT BEING INCLUSIVE

It has now been almost 14 months since membership in the Barbershop Harmony Society has become open to all, regardless of gender. Regardless of what your personal feelings were when this took place (see my President’s Letter from July, 2018) it is a fact that BHS is now a fully integrated organization. No amount of posturing, or complaining is going to change that, nor should it.

The implementation of the Everyone in Harmony initiative has been a bumpy road. Whether they will admit it or not, the Society Board, and Harmony Hall staff, have not been able to garner the acceptance of some members. My feeling is, that is because they failed to recognize just how polarizing this initiative would be, and they failed to take the steps necessary to prepare the then membership for the changes, and to listen to the complaints and concerns of the then membership.

I said in my July, 2018 letter that we had choices to make. We could choose to be a part of the problem, or we could choose to be a part of the solution. I indicated that my choice was to be a part of the solution. Many of you (if you read these monthly letters) know the positions I have taken, and stated to the Society Board of Directors. What you should also know is that every time I have raised issues and concerns I have prefaced it with the statement that I am, as is every member of the District President’s Council, fully behind Everyone in Harmony. We may have issues with the HOW of its implementation, but there is no disagreement in the propriety of the WHAT that is being implemented.

The Pioneer District Board is also in agreement that we have an obligation to implement Everyone in Harmony in our District. Each Chapter has been offered the opportunity to “determine its own destiny” regarding including women as members, but the Districts, have not been given that opportunity, and even if we had, there is no doubt in my mind that the Pioneer Board would be close to unanimous in favor of including women.

At our Board Meeting at Spring Convention the Board agreed to implement multiple contests that provide for inclusion. The House of Delegates, also approved the proposal. As a result, at the Fall 2019 Convention the District Quartet Contest portion has been expanded to include a Mixed Quartet District Champion Contest and a Women’s Quartet

District Champion Contest. These contests will be run concurrently with the District Men's Quartet Champion Contest, the Novice Quartet Contest (we will have Novice Champions in each of the three District Champion Contests) as well as the Senior Quartet Mid-Winter Convention Representative Contest.

As with the prior contests, and consistent with the District standard procedures, the top 8 quartets in each of the Men's, Women's and Mixed contests will move on to the Saturday night finals. We do not know how many quartets we will have in any of the three categories, but our standard procedures will be followed for all contests. The Novice Quartet is determined by the highest score from a quartet that meets the criteria for a novice quartet. The Senior Mid-Winter Representative will be determined based on the results of the two songs sung on Friday night's contest stage.

Since I have already had questions on the HOW of the process, I made an inquiry of David Mills, the Chair of the Society Judging Committee. He indicated to me that, in order to qualify to compete in any of these quartet contests, every member of the quartet will have to be a fully dues paid member of the Society and the District. There is no requirement that each member of a quartet be a member of a Chapter. Chapter membership will be required, however, for every contestant who competes in the District Chorus International Qualifier Contest.

You should know that, at this time, there are no plans for a Mixed or Women's Quartet contest to take place at International in July 2020 in Los Angeles. Those contests will likely be running soon, but not for the July 2020 contest. The contests we run in October will be Pioneer District Championship contests only.

All contest registrations are open now. You have to be a registered quartet with the Society, and every member of the quartet has to be a full (not Associate) member of BHS and the District. You register for the contests on Barberscore, just like always. If you have any questions about that process contact Zach Schroeder, the District Director of Contest and Judging at zschroeder16@gmail.com. He will assist you with the process.

We are looking forward a great, new experience in October in Muskegon. It will be my last Convention as your District President. That will be a bittersweet convention for me. I have truly been rewarded by being your District President. It has been a very interesting time to hold the position. I never dreamed there would be the degree of change we have seen since January, 2018. I look forward to continuing to represent the best interest of the Pioneer District through the end of my term on December 31, 2019.

If, at any time, you have anything you want to ask me, or have the Board review or address, feel free to contact me by email at pio.district.pres@gmail.com. I will do my best to get back to you in an appropriate amount of time, or put you in contact with the appropriate member of the District Board.

Dave Montera
2019 President – Pioneer District