



LASTING FRIENDSHIPS – ENDURING MUSIC
PRESIDENT'S UPDATE
December 2019
IT'S ALL ABOUT THE JOY!

Christmas time is here...as the song goes. Regardless of what, if any, holiday you celebrate, this is a time of reflection and joy. Most barbershoppers will tell you this is the busiest month of the year. Many of us, with quartets and chorus gigs, may be out 3-5 times a week for the next few weeks spreading the joy of the season.

My chorus has the opportunity, and privilege of singing at three different local hospitals each year. There is a mutual sharing of joy in singing at hospitals. The staff looks forward to our coming to the hospital. We have often been told that staff specifically ask to work the night that we are going to sing. While we sing at nurse's stations, not in rooms, we seem to accumulate "groupies" and several people follow us around to the various stations on a given floor.

The volunteer staff at the hospitals are equally joyful. We have had the same people walk us around the hospitals for a number of years. They are a part of our Holiday family. We know them by name, and they know many of us by name as well. They dress up in ugly Christmas sweaters and wear Reindeer antler headbands as they walk us around.

Patients and family come to the doors of their rooms while we sing. The smiles on those faces reminds all of us why we give up so many weeknights in December. This is not for our joy...it is for theirs! The fact that we too receive joy just shows that you get back in greater measure than what you give.

We all have those special moments when we perform, and when we perform a service. A few years ago we were at one of our regular hospital gigs, and as we approached a nurse's station we were told to be very quiet (not an unusual request in a hospital). We were then told that a patient had just passed away, and his family was still gathered around him in the room, with the door closed.

We told staff that we would be happy to respect their privacy, and skip that nurse's station. That was when we were told that the family wanted us to sing. They wanted music as a part of this special, and sorrowful time. We acceded to the request, and did several very

quiet, reverent songs, and moved on. It touched many of us that the family wanted music at that time, and that we just happened to be there that night to provide them with that comfort.

There is joy in singing, alone, with a quartet, with a chorus, anywhere and everywhere you can. As Buddy the Elf said in the movie Elf: “The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear.” If you have ever watched the movie Elf you will know that Buddy was the loveable “Elf” who was actually a human child that had managed to be brought back to the North Pole in Santa’s bag, and was raised by the elves. He is a lot of things – but always cheerful!

We can all learn a lot from Buddy the Elf. He was happy. He had no problem breaking out in song himself, but he knew the real secret was that singing so others can hear is how you make other people happy. That was the roll of an elf. To make people happy!

Many of our members have been less than joyful over the past few years. They focus on the negative (and somehow BHS never seems to run out of the negative to toss at us!) What they too often forget is the joy we have in doing what we all love. Never focus on the negative aspects of being a part of BHS. That really has little to do with your enjoyment of that which we provide to each other – the chance to ring chords together!

I know that many of my letters have delved into the aspects of the administration of, or the business of barbershopping. That is where my focus has been for the past four years. It has been there because of the manner in which I saw my responsibility to the District as its EVP and then President. Future presidents will see their roll differently from how I saw my roll, and that is as it should be. New visions and views are always needed. That is why we only serve a two year term.

My joy has come from the support I have received from the members of the District. I took joy in representing all of you over the past four years. I take joy in the many comments I receive from people regarding discussions I have initiated. I can’t begin to express my gratitude to all of you for the support you have shown me. I will always cherish the time I spent as an executive officer of the Pioneer District. For the rest of my life I will look back with joy on these 4 years.

I wish all of you reading this the joy of the season! May you spread Christmas cheer throughout the year by singing loud for all to hear! I end my term as President at the end of this month. But I will always be here for you, because that too, is what brings me joy.

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