



LASTING FRIENDSHIPS – ENDURING MUSIC  
PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

June 2019

**IT'S ALL ABOUT MAKING YOUR VOICE HEARD!**

I first joined the S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc. in 1978. I was then a proud member of the Oakland County Chapter, and the Wolverine Chorus. There was a time when I dropped out due to going back to school for my college degrees, but when I returned to Barbershopping, I went back to the Detroit-Oakland Chapter, and the Gentlemen Songsters Chorus. I have been back with them since 1994.

Like many in our organization, I identify with my Chapter, and my chorus. I always attended the District conventions, but that was because my Chapter and Chorus were participating in the contests. I made many great friends in the Pioneer District because I attended these conventions and competitions.

In all my years of Barbershopping, I had, until I became the District Executive Vice-President, attended only 1 International Convention, and that was 1981, which was held in Detroit. I was a part of the steering committee back then, taking responsibilities in a couple of different areas. I was never interested in the “politics” of the International Society, and never felt that they had any real influence on my experience as a Barbershopper. I could not have told you who the President of the Society was in any given year of my membership. Again, it was not until I was a part of the Pioneer Board, and then EVP that I had any real contact with the Society and its leadership.

My guess is that that is true for many of our members. If I asked you who the Society President is, I am not sure many could tell me who that is, or anything about him. Similarly, even if you know who the Society President is, you likely don't know who the members of the Society Board of Directors are, and what districts they represent. I would venture a guess that you could not tell me the last time Pioneer had a representative on the Society Board.

That was fine over the many years I was a member of S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc. Why was it fine? Well, because we each stayed out of each other's way. Nothing I did as a Pioneer District member, or as Chapter Member affected the Society hierarchy, and, because the Society was stable in its beliefs, and its vision, nothing the Society did affected me as a District and Chapter member. In my now 1 ½ years as the Pioneer

District President, I can tell you that nothing could be any further from the truth anymore, if, in fact, it ever was true.

We can all look at the litany of changes that have been made by the Society Board, and by Society Staff, over the years I have been a member of the Society. Do you remember being asked if you wanted the HQ moved from Kenosha to Nashville? Do you recall being asked if you wanted to end the affiliation with Heartsprings/Logopedics? Do you recall being asked for your input before the name was changed to “Doing Business as the Barbershop Harmony Society”? Did anyone ask you if the Logo of the Society needed to be changed? How about the change to remove the provision that each District have a representative on the Society Board? There are, easily, another half-dozen examples of changes that have been made by fiat and not by consensus over the years.

I want to let you know the newest changes that are coming to the contest format, again, by fiat from the Society to be effective for the International contest to be held in 2020. These are currently “proposed” changes, but, if history is any indicator, these changes will become rules shortly. They will be formally announced to the Society membership on or about June 5.

1. The policy that guarantees a quartet and a chorus representative from every district will be removed. That will allow, according to the Society a “truly open contest with no geographic boundaries”. The competitor will be allowed to enter any available preliminary contest to qualify for International regardless of district affiliation.
2. The qualifying score for a Chorus to compete on the International stage will be increased to 81%+. Just as a point of reference on this change – The only Chorus in Pioneer to have reached that score in history is Motor City in the most recent Spring Contest, where they scored 81.8. Grand Rapids has been close in the past with scores of 80.8 (2016), 80.0 (2017), and 80.6 (2018).
3. The qualifying score for a quartet to compete on the International stage will be increased to 78%+. For a point of reference on this change – Frontier would have qualified with the following scores 81.5 (2019); 80.6 (2018); 79.0 (2017) and Upper Deck would have been close with a score of 77.6 (2017).

The Society has indicated, in the proposal it has sent out to Leaders that “The stakeholders are in agreement that this proposal will help fulfil the Everyone In Harmony vision through simplicity and equality.” I challenge you, as a stakeholder in the Society, to make your voice heard regarding this proposal. It makes no difference to me if you agree with everything contained, disagree with everything proposals, or are somewhere in the middle. It is important that you, as a stakeholder let the Society know how you feel about these changes.

You can reach the members of the Society Board of Directors at the following emails (all of which are included in the Harmonizer):

President Dick Powell • Crofton, MD 410-451-0694 [leadsingerpowell@gmail.com](mailto:leadsingerpowell@gmail.com)

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As the headline states – It is all about being heard – let the Society Board and the Society Staff know what you think – how you feel about the changes that are being scheduled. The stakeholders referenced by the Society are: “Events Team consulted with various stakeholders to get feedback and further refine the proposal. This group includes: Society Contest & Judging Committee, BHS Impact Alignment Team, BHS Women’s Advisory Group, Harmony Hall program managers, Harmony Hall Executive Team, BHS Convention Team, BHS Production Team.” I just know that when they were announced to District Leadership I spent over 4 hours in email/text conversations and several phone calls discussing the changes, and its implications. This will be a big part of the discussions I have with other District Presidents in our monthly phone conference.

There are, again, big changes coming to your Society. Now is the time for you to make your voice heard. Don’t do what I did for many years, and sit on the sidelines. As Kenny Hatton used to say in the Blue Grass Student Union Shows – there are three kinds of people in the world – those that make things happen; those that let things happen; and those that say – WHAT HAPPENED????? Don’t let things happen, and certainly don’t be the one who asks – what happened??

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](mailto: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