

The TROUB



Enriching lives through singing and serving local communities



PIONEER DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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Pioneer District President

A Time for Action

A most important message from President McDonald

As my two-year Pioneer presidency comes to an end, I write with concern for our beloved barbershop world. At the same time, I assure you that together, with creative action, we can create an incredibly vibrant future.

If you want to be singing in a barbershop chapter in five or 10 years, we must open our hearts and take collective stock of where our chapters stand.

If you have children and grandchildren and hope they grow up to live better lives because of barbershop, please, read this column to the end.

The theme for my term was “Let’s Grow Together.” The intent was to help chapter members become better at what they do while also developing new singers and singing communities. A pandemic has kept us from growing much, yet growth remains critical if barbershop is to survive. And friends, I agonize in reminding all of us that growth has been missing a long time.

Pioneer membership when I first became aware of it was 1,135. Today, 12 years later, our district has 425 members following year after year of decline.

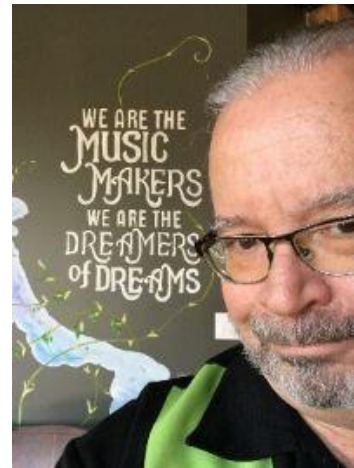
Troubador newsletters from 40 or so years ago show 65 mostly thriving chapters in Pioneer. That number is 23 today, and several of those are struggling. About one chapter a year has turned in its charter in recent times, and I’ve been told the next one will fold early in 2022. The pandemic is not the cause, although COVID will make a thriving comeback more difficult.

To those who advocate for using the same growth models we’ve used since 1938, 1998, 2008 or 2018 — and just work harder — I say, “It ain’t gonna work.”

Having led 10 Harmony Explosion Camps over the last 12 years, I’ve watched how young directors think and interact while teaching quartets and students.

It is clear these young leaders will make barbershop their own. Sure, barbershop will look different. But make no mistake, these future Pioneer members will be just as passionate as we are about their way of barbershopping.

At the end of the day, we can be certain: Barbershop will continue to flourish if we actively grow



our chapters arm in arm with the leaders of tomorrow.

To those who reminisce of joining an all-male singing organization decades ago and pledge their allegiance to never changing, I say, "Our fathers and grandfathers would tell us our fears are almost always unfounded and that advances don't happen without change."

Will we turn our voices away from future generations? Or will we sing our remaining barbershop years with an excited determination to fuel the future?

I, personally, feel immense responsibility to hand off a prosperous, healthy and exciting future.

I share the desire to preserve the traditional barbershop experience. I also believe new experiences, new members, and new types of choruses and quartets will make barbershop better than ever.

The theme of my term evolved into A Path Forward, because simply returning to normal will not solve the steady decline in our ranks. Instead, we need to embrace new opportunities that position us for growth.

The Nov. 7 Pioneer House of Delegates meeting became a fork in that path forward.

A slate of well-qualified, experienced district officers for 2022 was presented in the same fashion as the last 30 years. Because it included a woman for executive office and candidates who believe opportunities should exist for all people to be fully participating members, some delegates moved to table the election.

We rescheduled for Dec. 15, and secured approval from our parent organization, the Barbershop Harmony Society, to have a slate-by-slate election that includes all board positions. Now, a few individuals are protesting this process.

Let me assure you: The Society has approved our slate approach and will recognize the board elected next Wednesday. It also will support us during the Zoom meeting, administering secret ballot voting technology used by the Society Board.

I am 100% confident the slate being proposed, with presidential candidate Paul Ellinger, has the vision, experience and skills to create a fully alive, dynamic, energized future.

Paul and his team will focus on five pillars of growth:

- Improved communication, digitally and through personal connections between board members and chapters.
- Skills and growth development for chapters and new singing communities.
- Expansion of district conventions to include both competitive and showcase events.
- Support of all — all-men, all-women and open-to-all singing groups.
- Engagement of 20 new/additional leaders through district board teams.

I urge all of you to talk with your chapter leaders about needing to develop and grow. If you're a House of Delegates member, please vote to create the most successful barbershop future.

SINGcerely!

Joe
District

McDonald
President

Read previous president updates by [CLICKING HERE](#)

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Pioneer board election set for Dec. 15

House of Delegates voting on slate led by Paul Ellinger

The Pioneer House of Delegates will meet via Zoom Wednesday, Dec. 15 to elect a slate of candidates for its 2022 Board.

One slate has been submitted from the floor:

- **President** - Paul Ellinger
- **EVP** - Sherry Knight
- **Treasurer** - Allen Holmes
- **Secretary** - David Ebersole
- **Director** - Brandon Smith
- **Director** - Joelle Laginess
- **Director** - Roger Lewis
- **Director** - Cody Harrell

Immediate Past President - Joe McDonald (Not on ballot)

The candidates' bios can be found online by clicking [HERE](#).

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HarmonyTown Music Medics don scrubs and masks to cheer patients

Congratulations to the HarmonyTown Music Medics, which were featured in the [Dec. 2 issue of LiveWire](#), the Barbershop Harmony Society's weekly electronic news digest. The group has been visiting St. Mercy Hospital in Livonia to serenade patients with good cheer. Thanks for making a difference!

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City Lights to present its holiday concert Saturday

The last time the City Lights Chorus performed for an audience was at its first holiday show in 2019. After two years of darkness and silence, the chorus is coming back to the light with beautiful music to share with everyone.

The show will feature performances from chapter quartets and the 2019 Pioneer District Champions, Silver Edition.



Bring Us Light

7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11

Hilltop Church of the Nazarene

21260 Haggerty Road in Northville

Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 and are available at www.citylightschorus.com or at the door. If you have a physical ticket from our 2019 show, that will work as well.

Please note our health protocol: Performers and audience members will be masked for the show.

We can't wait to share some wonderful holiday music with you! #BarbershopsBack!

NOTE: With singing and gathering continuing its return in 2022 (fingers crossed!), we will include an events section in each Troub. We'll be adding a form to the website for each submission of your upcoming concerts. In the meantime, please feel free to send your information to pioneerdistrictbhs@gmail.com.

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Logos, bylaws, COVID resources are available on the Pioneer website

Key areas of Pioneer's still relatively new website are shown in its top navigation. Among those, on the right-hand side if you're on a laptop or appearing last if you're on your phone, is a link titled ... "Links."

The first item in its dropdown box is "[PIO Links](#)." This is a good area to check out, as you'll find both district and national-level resources.

For example, you can find Pioneer's new logos and guidelines for using them. You also can find the bylaws that guide the district, and still important to all of us — although we all wish that weren't the case — a link to COVID resources updated regularly by the Barbershop Harmony Society.

Don't see what you're looking for or have suggestions? Shoot an email to pioneerdistrictbhs@gmail.com.

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The U.S. Army Field Band Barbershop Quartet performs White Christmas



Because what's better than barbershop, the holidays and some snow at this time of year??

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