

Steve Sutherland

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The Troub



Enriching lives through singing and serving local communities



PIONEER DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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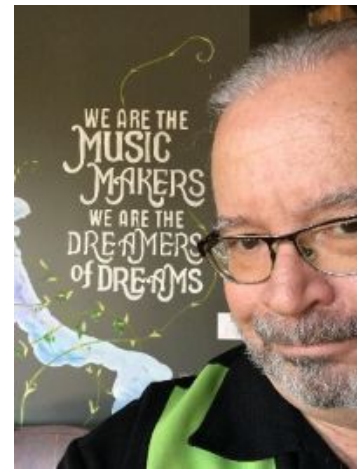
[A Message from Joe McDonald](#)

Pioneer District President

Traveling the New Path Forward

Finish those plans! Our days of singing are coming closer!

These recent messages have centered on planning for a post-COVID-19 world. If you've not completed a plan for moving forward, it's definitely time to do so. The first step forward may be uncertain and a bit uncomfortable, but it will be necessary to get you, your quartet or your chorus where you want to go.



The Barbershop Harmony Society recently updated its [Covid Guidelines](#) as a resource for all chapters. I suggest you consider these along with any other information your group uses.

The evolving world around us may well mean your path might not be straight nor the pace swift. It is certain, however, to require all of us to be flexible. Keep your eyes open, as if there could be a big ol' bear around the next corner. Be smart, pay attention and travel safely my friends.

I know we all look forward to the day when the pandemic is not the lead story in this message.

Planning underway for Harmony Explosion, Bush League

Pioneer's path forward has a couple of traditional destinations on the horizon. Harmony Explosion and Bush League planning is underway. Harmony Explosion, an annual youth event, is likely to be July 28-31 and Bush League, which supports up and coming quartets, is slated for August 13-14. The Mt. Pleasant and Grand Rapids chapters will be planning and navigating all related decisions in the coming weeks. Wish them well and be thinking about how you can support the important work they do to create opportunities for singers in Pioneer. For example, you and/or your chapter could financially support a Harmony Explosion participant or you could pull together the quartet you've been hoping to start and sign up for Bush League!

History lesson or trivia prep?

I'd like to direct you to the updated Pioneer website and take a look at the [History](#) tab this month. I spent time in this section recently, reading about happenings in the early 1970s. I learned Roger Lewis was editor of the Troubador for a few years, then had to hand off the role due to work and life commitments. Fifty years later, we all manage similar issues. Is there

anything Roger hasn't tackled over the years? He's one of my barbershop heroes.

After nearly 40 years, it's time for a visual identity review

My look into history was inspired by Pioneer Board Member Brandon Smith, who did some archival research in preparation to lead a task force working on the district's visual identity. Your board of directors will be making decisions about how we present ourselves to the world and how we want prospective members, supporters and fans to view and think of our beloved organization. Such effort is considered "branding" these days. And a clearly defined brand is as critical for non-profit organizations as it is for commercial enterprises. The district last refreshed its branding nearly 40 years ago, according to Brandon's research. Guess that means it's high time we take another look! Read more information in the story below.

And while I've said it before, I'll say it again: Years of work by Steve Sutherland to collect and organize material on the district's original website is appreciated and so important as we move into the future.

Take a moment to celebrate

I'll close by saying THANK YOU to all the chapter leaders across the district. The past year was not anticipated. It was uncertain, it was challenging, and at times it was downright disheartening. I experienced those feelings and more. And yet, the one certainty throughout it all was perseverance. ***We persevered, my friends!*** And we will continue to do so. By working with vision, creativity and collaboration, all of us and our organizations will be fine in the long term.

SINGcerely!

Joe McDonald
District President

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

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Spring Convention? It's UnConventional, but it's free and you'll love it!

Registration is open; experience includes more than a dozen learning sessions



Let's get together, as best we can! There's a lot to be learned during the Pioneer District's Spring Convention — the virtual UnConventional 2 — from changing chapter culture to finding your best vocal sound and exploring opportunities after COVID.

The free event starts at 7:30 p.m. Friday, April 23 and continues through Saturday afternoon. Participants will have time to interact, connect and learn.

You'll start with a keynote address, "Barbershop in 2021: The Path Forward," by district board member Brandon Smith, who is a Monroe resident, member of Motor City Metro and choir director at Bedford Junior High and High School.

An exciting virtual quartet show, with performances new and old, will highlight Saturday afternoon, starting at 3:15 p.m.

In between, you can learn about topics such as car-bershopping (you'll need to tune in to find out!), hosting a reflective dialogue session, music selection and the appropriateness of songs in our time. Other sessions include wellness and caring for the aging voice, iconic barbershop performances and taking your chorus, quartet or individuals to the next level.

Lunchtime Saturday will allow participants to connect in discussion circles.

The [full schedule can be found online](#).

UnConventional 2 is free, although participants are asked to [register online](#) in advance.

“We’re excited to bring barbershoppers together with a fun, engaging lineup,” said district board member Chris Berry, the mastermind behind UnConventional 2. “The feedback we received on November’s UnConventional was that people ended up feeling energized and inspired.

“One person compared it to sitting in a room with friends,” Berry said. “Another commented that the interaction actually was more personal than being in an auditorium. This is a great opportunity to get fired up for a return to singing. Because those days are coming back!”

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UnConventional 2 to feature special quartet show

More than a dozen Pioneer quartets, plus archived footage, set to awe virtual viewers

More than a dozen Pioneer quartets have signed up to participate in the production of an original, 90-minute quartet show as part of UnConventional 2 — the district’s virtual spring convention, coming to your computer April 23 and 24.

Quartets will submit videos or work with a videographer in a COVID-safe environment to produce their segments, said Pioneer President Joe McDonald.

“We guarantee lots of barbershop energy, fun and great talent,” McDonald said. “We’ll also weave archived footage into the show of quartets from throughout the years.

“We may not be able to sing tags until the wee hours, but we WILL Zoom together to experience some phenomenal, exciting barbershop,” he said.

UnConventional 2 is a free event, although participants are asked to [register online](#) in advance.

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District logo refresh underway

Task force looks to honor legacy, sense of community and variety among chapters

A task force of district board members, led by Brandon Smith, is starting the process of

refreshing the Pioneer logo.



Smith began with research that shows Bill Pascher, a Pontiac chapter member, designed the current logo in 1979. It was used starting in 1984, after a five-year delay. Perhaps some of you remember why?

“As we come out of the pandemic, all of us will be energized and working hard to rebuild and re-engage our chapters, choruses and quartets,” Smith said. “We’ll need our sense of community to shine through more than ever. All of that makes this a perfect time, after nearly 40 years, to consider a logo refresh.”

The task force also includes board members Sherry Knight, who owns a marketing and communications firm, as well as district President Joe McDonald and Executive Vice President Paul Ellinger.



As seen in the [research summary](#), an original logo was used until 1968. It featured a dapper quartet on red and white barbershop stripes in an outline of Michigan. The next 16 years used the words “Pioneer District” and the S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A. logo. (That’s the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, which today is known as the Barbershop Harmony Society.)

Pioneer has a tremendous history, being among the first districts in the country. What would later become chapters started in Michigan in 1939 — less than a year after barbershop singing started on a rooftop in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

“Our logo can honor that legacy,” Knight said. “It can reflect Pioneer’s camaraderie. It can capture our medley of approaches, such as chapters and quartets that prioritize fun, those pioneering new levels of diversity and inclusion, and those focused on national and international championships. All of that equals one incredible, beloved barbershop district.”

Ford Motor Co., The Henry Ford and The U.S. Army Field Band do barbershop!



Did you happen to catch The United States Army Field Band and its barbershop quartet at The Henry Ford? Here's a throwback to 2019 ... and 1942. Enjoy!

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