

# The Troub



Enriching lives through singing and serving local communities



## PIONEER DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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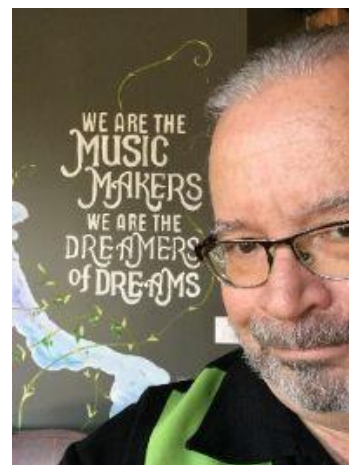
### [A Message from Joe McDonald](#)

Pioneer District President

## Traveling the New Path Forward

*Barbershop is coming back. Are you ready to engage?*

It feels like our Path Forward has reached its connecting flight. Our feet are firmly on the ground, and we are excited for the next leg of our return to singing! It's encouraging to hear that choruses and quartets are beginning to meet or preparing to launch their plan to get back to business and FUN! If your group needs assistance in determining what's next, please let me know. I'd be happy to connect you with other groups like yours to talk about how they are navigating their path.



### Heading for a new logo

We talked about revisiting the Pioneer logo in March. As you'll read in a story below, that process continues with a presentation of ideas to the district board and House of Delegates in the coming weeks.

Our Pioneer predecessors set the tone for our brand over the last 70+ years and our history of "firsts" shall continue, in the communications we share, the endeavors we pursue and the high-quality ways in which we present ourselves to others. How fortunate we are to have a district name that dovetails with our attitude!

Google Dictionary offers the following definition of "pioneer:"

- Develop or be the first to use or apply (a new method, area of knowledge, or activity).  
Synonyms: develop, introduce, evolve, start, begin, launch, instigate, initiate, put in place, take the initiative in, take the lead in, spearhead, institute, establish, found, give birth to, be the father/mother of, originate, set in motion, create ...

I'm looking forward to a new logo and picking up some new Pioneer swag at the fall convention marketplace!

### Speaking of convention: The greatest reunion in Pioneer history?

Planning for the fall 2021 convention in Kalamazoo is underway! Your events team is looking at

traditions and opportunities for our first in-person convention in what will be two years come October. Please watch for the rollout of further information in this newsletter. I predict the energy, camaraderie and excitement as we reunite will exceed anything we've ever experienced. I'm eager to see all of you!

### **A word about UnConventional 2 and the lasting power of virtual gathering**

Thanks to the team that created and managed the second virtual convention last month. Chris Berry led the effort and several others provided planning efforts and/or great presentations. Our learnings from two virtual conventions will certainly be utilized for future events. Even after we're all comfortable coming back together, we've also learned the power of gathering from the comfort of our own homes. Imagine, for example, more cost-effective, periodic virtual training sessions with international vocal experts, and no one has to incur travel or overnight costs.

### **Unconventional raffle report**

Winners of the Unconventional raffle are the young singers who will take part in the 2021 Harmony Explosion. The winning ticket was purchased with "HX" listed as the beneficiary, so the prize money was added to the raffle proceeds to then benefit the youth event. Fifty-six \$20 tickets were purchased, which fell short of the 60-ticket threshold which transitioned the raffle to a 50-50 style drawing. The raffle license noted the prize package would be modified in this case to a single winner of \$300. After expenses for the license fee and card processing charges, just over \$1,000 was awarded to Harmony Explosion for expenses.

### **Become a Communication Agent**

Our district's communication agent initiative that launched last year continues to be a timely and expansive information-sharing event. The monthly program is hosted by Executive Vice President Paul Ellinger. It routinely covers one topic per minute and is followed by an email with associated links to detailed information. Chapter leaders are notified about each upcoming Zoom meeting. This is a great way to learn how your district and the Barbershop Harmony Society are providing resources and ideas that benefit you, your quartet and your chorus. You just need to participate to enjoy the benefits. If you're interested in participating, please email Paul at [ellinger.paul@gmail.com](mailto:ellinger.paul@gmail.com) to join his email list.

## **Rights, responsibility and respect**

I have struggled with this topic for a few months now, knowing it lurked along the Path Forward for most of us. **What do we do when our group doesn't agree on protocols for the return to singing? Or when we don't all agree on vaccines?**

The right to make personal decisions is a treasured standard in America. While asserting a right, we also must recognize that many of our decisions affect others. I hope all of us consider what's right and best for our singing groups, respecting differences and the factors that guide each person's choice and timing for returning to rehearsals or events.

I say all that to show a delicate juggling of perspectives and rights, all for the sake of singing. I truly hope we all help barbershop continue to be a haven of friendship and community.

Please read the story below for further insights.

### **Be well, my friends!**

Joe  
District

McDonald  
President

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

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## **Work continues on new district logo**

*Pioneer Board, House of Delegates to review design in June*



What's in a logo? More than we realize.

Logos often contain an obvious mix of words and images, while closer looks reveal graphic elements that convey purpose, culture and history.

This can be expected with the Pioneer District's new logo, which is in the design stage and will be reviewed by the Pioneer Board and House of Delegates in June.

Here are some of the elements you might see in the final product:

- '4' symbolism to represent four-part harmony. It might be represented as four lines, four trees, four stars or four flags.
- Parallel lines as seen on sheet music and/or a treble clef and bass clef.
- Mountains, trees, a river or path to reflect the pioneering theme and the ["district of firsts."](#)
- Flags to reflect expedition, firsts and pioneering. Think Lewis and Clark.

"We're awaiting a second round of sketches, which will move us toward a design ready for board and delegate review next month," said Sherry Knight, a district board member who's shepherding the design process. "It's exciting to see concepts that reflect the story of the Pioneer District and its singing communities."

District President Joe McDonald, Executive Vice President Paul Ellinger, and Directors Brandon Smith and Joelle Laginess also are part of the logo and branding committee.

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## Barbershop is coming back!

*Respecting differences key when rehearsals resume*

Choruses everywhere are facing the most exciting — and perhaps perplexing — relaunch of in-person rehearsals that Barbershoppers have ever experienced.

Gathering and mask restrictions are easing and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has updated its recommendations to show vaccinated individuals likely are safe to gather again and sing without masks.

Which means we're good to go, right? Warm up the vocal chords and unleash the excitement! Our singing purgatory can come to an end, right?

Well, yes. Maybe. Kind of? Every chapter board needs to figure out its approach, timing and requirements. When, how and "what about vaccinations" are critical questions, Pioneer District President Joe McDonald said.

"State and federal guidelines are helpful. So are the views of chorus members. We'll likely all have members with different opinions and comfort levels. Navigating those waters will take diplomacy," he said.

McDonald urges chapter leaders to continue to poll and talk with members. Patience, respect and the barbershop spirit of camaraderie will be essential as plans to sing again are solidified.

Some chapters, such as City Lights, already are rehearsing again. Others are looking at later this spring, summer or fall.

"Let's welcome every member back when they're ready," McDonald said. "Let's focus on what we can be in several months or in 2022 — maybe even more vibrant or bigger than we were in 2019. Reuniting and sharing joy at the right time will send a vital message.

"Most of us have sung beside someone we have little in common with, yet we love making music together. That's all that matters."

Barbershop legend and District Board Member Roger Lewis has a similar view.

“There will be differences of opinion. Yet, it’s hard to be mad when we’re singing,” Lewis said.  
“It’s hard to disagree when we’re singing. Blow the pitch pipe. Let’s sing!”

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## **Overjoyed. Outdoors. Singing together.**



Check out the smooth four-part harmony in this new video, a Stevie Wonder cover,  
by Midtown.

[Watch the Video Here](#)

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