

Volume 15, October 2021

# The TROUB



Enriching lives through singing and serving local communities



## PIONEER DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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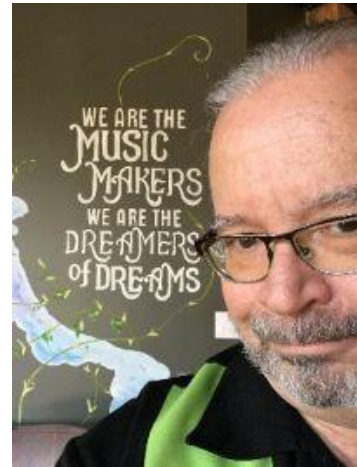
### A Message from Joe McDonald

Pioneer District President

## News of past, present and future

*A bit of reflection and thanks to the district board*

The most difficult consequence of this pandemic is the loss of life and good health among people we know and love. Especially on such a large scale. For me, the next greatest impact is uncertainty — an uncomfortable state, considering I've been certain for most of my life. I can't say I've always been right, but I have been certain!



Solving problems and navigating opportunities is what I do in my work and volunteer world. Experience tells me that aligning with smart and dedicated people is the only surefire way to successfully solve problems and maximize opportunities. Some of my most cherished decisions have come from putting the right people in position to affect positive change.

As we enter the final months of my two-year term as your district president, I am proud to have led the current board of directors. They are the epitome of the “right people.” Each individual has contributed in unique ways, and collectively we have navigated this uncertain era, moving forward despite it all.

A couple of projects are still underway and a couple of events are yet to come. Still, at this point in time, it seems appropriate to say THANK YOU to my fellow board members for their service in one of the most unusual times in the history of barbershop.

Candidates for the next board will be presented to the House of Delegates for approval during its Nov. 7 meeting. The meeting will be held via zoom on Sunday evening. The invitation and agenda will be sent about one week ahead of the meeting.

### **Get ready for interaction and fun!**

Since deciding to call off the fall convention, we have been brainstorming and considering insights from you, the larger barbershop world and health professionals. We have used “The Path Forward” as our guide for many months, and that remains true now. We often have taken paths that were not on the map — that were uncharted, if you will. The path forward now leads

to a group of events and experiences both new and old. A brief description follows.

**Near term:**

- A series of “live” performances and conversations on Nov. 7 using Zoom’s virtual technology. Be sure to read the details below.
- A virtual event that introduces our new district merchandise in a fun way.
- A virtual event that highlights tag singing.

**On the horizon:**

- A re-envisioned edition of our showcase.
- A live-streamed coaching session.

Dates and details are coming. We apologize that many of these events will come out with short notice. That is a product of changing times and an eagerness to engage with you, in the best possible way. Please watch your email for Troub updates and the [district’s Facebook page](#).

**Communications are the foundation of an active district**

If we stay in touch with each other, we can maximize barbershop engagement across the district. Our chapters will be positioned for growth, because we’ll be reminded of how fun barbershop is, discover creative ideas for our own choruses and quartets, and forge new friendships.

Please be sure to follow and connect through these three official vehicles for district news:

1. Troub is our electronic newsletter.
2. Pioneer Lightning Communications sessions are monthly deep dives via Zoom that spotlight barbershop happenings at all levels. Typically, you’ll receive insights on 30 items (or more!) in 30 minutes. Email [Executive Vice President Paul Ellinger](#) if you’d like to participate.
3. The [new Pioneer website](#) is our hub of information past, present and future. We’re working hard to keep it updated!

Thank you, everyone!

**SINGcerely!**

Joe McDonald  
District President

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

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## Save Nov. 7 for a totally creative, totally fun, fall gathering

*When life hands us more lemons, we pivot!*



What do we do when the Pioneer District Fall Convention — also known as The Great Reunion 2021 — gets cancelled because of COVID concerns??

We regroup and orchestrate **a series of Little Reunions.**

“We’ve pivoted,” district President Joe McDonald said. “Because the Pioneer District is filled with people who love to sing, have fun and connect with each other.”

“We got creative and figured out how we can sing and connect,” Executive Vice President Paul Ellinger said. “Because we view a good challenge as just another opportunity to pull together as a district.”

### Here's the plan:

- Throughout the day on Nov. 7, quartets and singing groups will each perform one to three songs of their choice and share it with the world via Zoom. The goal? Making people smile, sing along, and experience that barbershop-style fun and camaraderie.
- In between the performances, we'll have lively, emcee-led Zoom discussions and social gatherings.
- All of us — barbershoppers across all generations as well as our family members, friends, neighbors and coworkers — are invited and encouraged to participate.

Quartets and singing groups will be able to sign up online to reserve their performance time slot. Please do so no later than Nov. 2 to be included in publicity efforts for The Little Reunions.

More information about the Little Reunions will be shared throughout the month. Please be sure to follow the [Pioneer District Facebook page](#) and watch your email for updates.

Questions? Please email them to [pioneerdistrictbhs@gmail.com](mailto:pioneerdistrictbhs@gmail.com) or to any of the [district board members](#).

The district board made the difficult decision in mid-September to cancel the fall convention due to COVID health concerns and the knowledge that a number of quartets, choruses and individual members were not planning to participate due to the pandemic. Over the past month, four of the district's 11 board members have contracted breakthrough cases of COVID. They are doing fine now, yet all had symptoms they don't want others to experience.

The board urges individuals and groups to gather and sing with caution. Vaccines, masks and singing outdoors or in well-ventilated areas can help keep barbershoppers as safe as possible. Remember: It's a personal choice to gather and to sing. Let's stay respectful!

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## Father, son team help lead way back from COVID

*The Lennemans have long history with Capitol City Chordsmen*



Kevin Lenneman was ringing chords in the back of the school bus, “way back in '76.”

When he was 24, barbershoppers at the Westphalia 4th of July picnic saw him watching and invited him to rehearsal. And, after a barbershop show at the Wharton Center in East Lansing, he vowed to be a part of that on-stage experience by age 40. He beat his goal by five years.

Kaleb Lenneman, 28, says he grew up listening to barbershop music in the car during family vacations, and still favors the classics. His favorite? Auld Lang Syne by Platinum.

By 5th grade, Kaleb was singing on stage with Dad, visible to the audience by standing on a milk crate ... or on a picnic table, when the venue was a campground.



Kevin asked Kaleb when he was a music education major in college if he'd like to coach the Capitol City Chordsmen. He declined, saying he'd like to direct the chorus.

"He was full of energy, with all these ideas. Everyone just bought in," Kevin said. "I was so proud standing in front of him."

The Chordsmen pulled second in Traverse City during the next Pioneer District convention, and Kaleb had been directing only four weeks.

That's how it began. Two generations of Lennemans, happy as can be, in the same chorus — Kaleb directing and Kevin serving as treasurer. They also sang in Four Now, although today they're in separate quartets, with Kaleb teasing about "clobbering" Dad on stage.



COVID-19 has been a journey of phases for the chorus: Not singing or meeting. Connecting online. Singing outdoors with masks and then without.

The Chordsmen then gathered in a well-ventilated barn, and today vaccines make it possible for many chorus members to sing in a nearly normal environment.

"Our members attend if they want. They mask if they want. They social distance if they want and stand on risers if they want ... or not," Kaleb said. "It's all about flexibility and respect."

The chorus has even gained three new participants thanks to current members inviting friends.

Kaleb took the opportunity when singing first resumed to teach members how to find their voices again through strategies for healthy singing.

“We’re singing really easy. We’re singing really well,” Kaleb said. “We’re producing a lot of good singing that doesn’t cost the voice a lot.”

And yes, there’s a third generation Lenneman with barbershop promise as well. Almost 2-year-old Kayna is particularly fond of singing nursery rhymes.

Better find that milk crate...

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## **That’s the Pointe wins 2021 Bush League contest**

*75th anniversary Bush League slated for Aug. 12-13, 2022*

It was another great Bush League contest and show several weeks ago on the sunny shores of Lake Cadillac.

More than 50 individuals and 10 quartets participated in the 74th annual event, which featured a golf outing, tag contest, quartet contest, coaching, a grand finale show and afterglow.





**That's the Pointe**, from the City Lights Chorus, was the 2021 contest winner and set a record for having the youngest member ever to win. Congratulations to Gabe LaPointe, Zak Stratton, Carson Greene and William Stutts, Jr.



**Four Patched Parts** from Lansing, with Rich Harlow, Brad Sharlow, Kel Scott and Kevin Lenneman, took the second place trophy by one point. And **Old Rules** rounded out the top three, featuring Denny Babel, Doug Weaver, Al Smith and RT Williams.



Mark Kettner, originally from the Pioneer District and now a presentation category specialist, led the judging panel. Brandon Smith, baritone of the 2018 Next Generation Quartet Champion Frontier, covered the singing category. Julian LaFlore, lead of the 2018 Youth Quartet Champion Quin-tones, judged the singing category. Sincere thanks go to all of these individuals.

A Saturday night show featured 2019 Pioneer District Champions **Silver Edition**. Not only did Aaron and Craig Pollard, Cody Harrell and Bruce LaMarte put on an entertaining show, they offered their talents in the afternoon as coaches. The show also featured **Shoreline** youth quartet, with Catie and Cole Carey, Caleb Downey and Mark Simons, and 2020 Bush League Champion **CHONK**, with Aiden and Luke LaPointe, Kent Kirby and Matt Bidigare. The new Cadillac youth chorus, under the direction of Cole Carey, also won the audience's heart.

More than \$1,800 was raised for the Cadillac High School Choir during the weekend, through a combination of ticket sales, donations and local businesses helping to keep vocal music alive and well.

Next year's **75th Anniversary of Bush League** will be August 12-13 and will include several added events and feature quartets. Please put this event on your calendar!

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**BHS Music Medics adapt to bring joy to patients. You can, too.**



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