

Minutes of the meeting of the House of Delegates of the Pioneer District of SPEBSQSA, Inc. held on October 18, 2013, in the Great Lakes 4/5 Room of the Kalamazoo Radisson Hotel

I. Call to Order:

District President Doug Weaver called the meeting to order at 1:43 p.m. He asked Rob Pettigrew, District Director of CDD, to lead everyone in the singing of "The Old Songs".

II. Quorum:

District Secretary Jim McMahan announced that a quorum (30% of authorized delegates) was present.

**[NOTE: Copies of the sign-in sheets were attached to the original copy of these minutes.]**

III. Memorial to Deceased Members:

Paul Ellinger asked for a brief delay until he was completely ready.

IV. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the meeting of April 19, 2013, had been distributed electronically by the District Secretary Jim McMahan along with other documents sent to the cpres.Yahoo and PioneerBoard.Yahoo groups.

The secretary asked if anyone had difficulty downloading the documents distributed through the Yahoo groups. The distribution to the .cpres.Yahoo group, for example, had seven attached documents. There was a larger distribution through the PioneerBoard.Yahoo group. The distributions were made on October 14. No comments were received in response to the question.

Roger Lewis moved that the minutes be approved. The motion was then seconded by Cliff Dake.  
**Motion approved.**

V. Treasurer's Report:

On each of the tables in the room, Larry Parker had placed a few copies of a Budget Profit & Loss Performance document that covered the period of January 1, 2014, through September 30, 2013, and a Balance Sheet that was current as of September 30, 2014. The latter document showed that the District had a balance of \$90,674.59 in liquid assets, and total assets of \$93,134. He emphasized that the difference represented some monies that were set aside for "future" events, but which may not have been properly allocated when those events occurred. It is Larry's goal to get these discrepancies resolved by the end of the year.

Doug Weaver requested a motion to receive the treasurer's reports. This action was moved by a delegate in attendance, and seconded by another delegate. **Motion approved.**

Before the agenda moved to the next topic, Doug Weaver noted that a bucket was being sent around for the collection of donations toward the District's sponsorship of the Youth Festival Chorus. It was clarified that checks for the "Parade of Checks" would be received later in the meeting.

III. Memorial to Deceased Members (return to item previously delayed):

Paul Ellinger, District VP for Membership, led a memorial service to honor members who had passed away since the last HOD meeting. He began the ceremony with the traditional reading of "Passing of the Bar" by Alfred Lord Tennyson. Then he listed District members who were now known to have joined the "Chapter Eternal":

III. Memorial to Deceased Members (cont.):

Milford (Mel) Parrish (Pontiac-Waterford chapter)  
 Ted Franklin (Gratiot County chapter)  
 Lowell Boyer (Gratiot County chapter; 65 year member)  
 Louis Stark (Detroit-Oakland chapter)  
 Reed Abt (Detroit-Oakland chapter)  
 Floyd Barckley Roach (Kalamazoo chapter)  
 Thomas Pyke (Kalamazoo chapter)  
 David Donelly (Saginaw-Bay chapter)  
 Eric (Rick) Meldrum (Saginaw-Bay chapter)  
 Jack Drennan (Cape Coral chapter—SUN District; former member of Detroit # 1, Wayne, Macomb County, and Motor City Metro chapters)  
 Paul Stotz (Monroe North chapter)  
 Lowell Wolfe (Battle Creek chapter)  
 Thomas Mehlhose (Monroe North chapter)  
 William Shumacher (Grand Rapids chapter)  
 David Percy (Rochester chapter)  
 John Nolte (Macomb County, Detroit-Oakland, Motor City Metro, & Rochester chapters)  
 Lawrence Flegal (Kalamazoo chapter)

Paul concluded the ceremony by quoting a poem written by Linda Jo Jackson entitled "I'm Free". He noted that these members would no longer be on the risers with us. Their voices are silenced. They are friends remembered for the part they played in the history of their chapters and the District. May they sing chords on high, and may their friends and family remember the joy that barbershop music brought to their lives!

VI. President's Comments (back to scheduled agenda):

Doug Weaver reminded the attendees of his role as the District President, and extended a welcome to the delegates. He was confident that it was an exciting time for the District, and the convention participants would feel that during the weekend.

He recognized two special guests that were present for the weekend. The first one is Society Board of Directors member Gary Plaag, who is making his first visit to Pioneer in this capacity. The second person is a representative from Harmony Foundation---K.J. McAleesejergins. Doug mentioned that K.J. sings with the quartet "Lunch Break", and his quartet had just returned from performances in Australia and New Zealand. It was noted that K.J. might be dealing with 18 hours of reverse jet lag!

Doug chose to comment on some of the highlights of the preceding 12 months. He had told the delegates last fall of the plans for almost all of the Pioneer Board of Directors to attend the Forum in Las Vegas in November. Doug felt that much of what has happened in the last year came as a result of the meetings at that event.

He noted that board members have continued to meet in a spirit of cooperation, and their support of each other has been amazing. The Forum led to new offerings at Leadership Academy, and generated improvements and expansions of the quartet boot camp, the quartet Top Gun event, and the chorus Top Gun event. He observed that this trend will continue, since plans have been made to build upon these programs.

Doug pointed out that Pioneer has been a leader in celebrating the Society's 75th anniversary. Events took place around the District of April 11---a Kalamazoo city council meeting, a presentation in the rotunda of the state capital building in Lansing, and a songfest on the top of the McCamly Plaza hotel in Grand Rapids.

VI. President's Comments (cont.):

Moreover, several chapters adopted the package of songs developed by the Society's 75th anniversary committee (chaired by Roger Lewis). Four chapters---Lansing, Grand Rapids, Holland, and Gratiot County---used this package in joint-chapter shows. Members of additional chapters were invited to join with them. Some other chapters used variations of the package, and again, invited individuals from other chapters to join them. Consequently, much larger choruses performed. Doug understood that 30 persons sang on all four of the joint-chapter shows. Those who did not get to see one of the joint-chapter shows will have an opportunity to do so later on. The "Celebrate Harmony" chorus will sing after the quartet contest to be held in the evening following this meeting.

Because of the success and fun of the joint-chapter shows, Doug suggested that we not wait until another significant anniversary to do them again. He acknowledged that it might not be feasible to plan something for 2014, but proposed that we consider the idea for 2015. He urged that the music teams of interested chapters develop a list of songs and a theme.

Doug pointed out that full Forum does not take place every year. In 2013, it will be a mini-Forum ---to be held in Nashville two weeks hence. Pioneer will be represented by Dan Bezaire and four official representatives. The agenda for this event will be different. It has been defined on the basis of the chapter visitation surveys made in 2011. That year, every chapter in Pioneer, for example, was visited by Doug, Brian Dunckel, and Roger Lewis. Surveys made throughout the Society identified the top four needs that will be the focus of the mini-Forum. The attendees will study those needs and develop ways to meet them. Based on the topics to be covered, four District board members have been selected to go to the mini-Forum.

The first topic is strategies to help with recruiting of new members, new musical leadership and new patrons. Paul Ellinger (Pioneer Director of Membership) will be the representative for this area.

The second topic is strategies to provide for more visits from, and more communications with District and Society officers and staff. James O'Dell (Pioneer Director of Marketing & PR) will be our representative.

The third topic is strategies to provide coaching help to chapters. Cliff Dake (Pioneer Director of Music & Performance) will be our representative.

The fourth topic is strategies to help chapters plan and implement shared activities. Joe McDonald (Pioneer Director of CSLT) will be our representative.

Finally, one additional topic will be covered during the weekend---the looking at new music, new arrangements, and new arrangers. All of the attendees will be coming back with some experience with new items.

Doug challenged delegates who have any ideas, questions, or comments about any of the topics to talk with the representatives before they go to the mini-Forum. They'll be reporting on their experience after they return. The District is making a significant investment of funds to send them to this event. Doug is planning to have each representative address the general session at the Leadership Academy next January about his experience, and to describe how he sees the future of these strategies.

As Doug winds down his time as District President, he declared that he was very pleased with the direction that he sees the District is taking. He has had the opportunity to visit almost every chapter---either by going to a meeting, or attending a show or other activity. Two highlights of the past year stood out for him---participating in the joint chapter shows, and seeing the joint meeting of the Huron Valley and Monroe North chapters for the sole purpose of singing together. He knew that events like these used to be commonplace, and he hoped to see more of them.

He was looking forward to another great weekend of singing and camaraderie. His final comment was: "If you want to keep the whole world singing, it's time to let the world know."

VII. Society Representative's Address:

At this point, Doug invited Gary Plaag to come forward and speak about what is happening from the Society Board perspective.

Gary was amazed that our District uses "prime real estate" on the front of its convention program to display a picture of the Society Board representative! The secretary mentioned that all of the words to the national anthems had to be omitted from the program so this could be done!

Gary noted that he had been to Pioneer conventions before as a judge, but this was his first visit as a Society representative.

He commented that he was supposed to have sent Doug a 453-slide presentation. However, he will focus on just the eight slides that deal with the Society's Aims at the end of his remarks.

He did know that a 46-page report was sent out for distribution to chapters. The secretary observed that many recipients could not open the file because of its size. Therefore, Gary indicated that he will focus on some the highlights therein.

He noted that the report begins with a "hello" and a picture of the Society Board of Directors. However, there is a comment that one of the directors in the picture is no longer on the board. Joe Cerutti has become an employee of the Society, so he has stepped down because of an obvious conflict of interest. Joe's position on the Board will be filled during a Board meeting to be held during the mini-Forum weekend. The person chosen to fill the vacancy will be appointed just to complete Joe's term.

Meanwhile, Joe will begin working on chorus director development and YIH things. He will continue to reside in Virginia and work from home on Mondays and Tuesdays. He will travel on Society business on Wednesdays through Fridays.

Gary announced that the International collegiate quartet qualification score has been increased from 71 to 73. The increase was necessary because the quartets were getting better, and we were getting too many that qualified. It is anticipated that the number of qualifying quartets will drop to 20. However, it might happen that the number of quartets may still go up to 30, and then a new qualifying score may become necessary.

Gary referenced Doug's remarks about the four strategies that will be discussed at the mini-Forum, and re-iterated their titles. He reminded everyone that there was a fifth strategy---modernizing our music arrangements. It has been realized that younger singers, or persons who sing other a capella genres are interested in singing our arrangements. If we make our barbershop "umbrella" a little bigger, we may get them involved as members. Arrangers from within and outside of the barbershop world met several months ago, and are creating new arrangements. Consequently, this topic will not be a major focus at the min-Forum, but will be handled by Society staff.

Next, Gary reported that participation in the Youth Chorus Festival---an activity which Pioneer has strongly supported---has being capped at 20 choruses. The cap on the event was necessitated by the costs being incurred by Harmony Foundation and the Society. If more financial support can be found for the event, it may be possible to raise the cap in the future.

The status of the upgrade of the operating system behind the **.ebiz** website was the next topic. Gary indicated that it has been completed. The upgrade was supposed to be finished by the Monday morning just preceding this meeting. The actual completion was accomplished by the next morning. The Contest & Judging folks did find that their area was not functional, but that problem has now been fixed. The upgrade should offer more flexibility in data collection.

Gary then moved to the topic of membership. He noted that the 46-page report includes several graphs that show that we are still declining. A significant finding about the decline is the fact that younger members are not renewing when they begin their second year. This is believed to be related to the big jump in dues that they encounter at that time. Gary suggested that chapter secretaries encourage youth members to pay \$10 a week into a chapter escrow account to help them prepare for this cost.

VII. Society Representative's Address (cont.):

It was reported that the Society has established a new alliance with the American Choral Directors Association. Dr. Tim Sharp (CEO of the ACDA) was the keynote speaker at Harmony University this past summer. He and Marty Monson have really connected. Gary felt that the BHS has acquired a lot more credibility in the choral director's world.

Gary shared a story about a Facebook contact he made with a student he had coached in a high school quartet in 1994. The individual lived in the vicinity of Richmond (VA). Although Gary had not been communicating with this person, Gary noticed that he was looking for a cat sitter, and offered to do so.

Before Gary's offer was received, a sitter was found. However, this prompted Gary to reconnect with the person. He discovered that this person was a mixer of a capella music for CASA. This individual had done the mixing of the first two seasons of "The Singoff". He was a big fan of a capella music, but was not involved in barbershop. He invited Gary to come to a November CASA meeting in Raleigh (NC). The purpose of the invitation was for the a capella world to learn about the things that barbershoppers do better. Specifically, Gary was invited to be involved in a class at an event called "SoJam". The class was titled "What Can We Learn from Barbershop?" Gary was a member of a four-man panel.

Gary urged that we do more of this kind of interaction. "We have something they want. By forging these kinds of relationships, we as an organization can grow. [It] doesn't mean we have to give up barbershop; we do that better than anybody. But some of the things we do in barbershop, we often don't think that anyone could possibly use them."

Gary suggested that conversations with high school teachers who embrace barbershop reveal that it offers great ear training, great performance training, and confidence building. We should "look out the window" for opportunities to help other groups and tell them about what we do. Gary was delighted that these groups are beginning to ask for our help.

A reminder was given about the plan to relocate Harmony University to Belmont College in Nashville. While South West Missouri College was a great location, it was not a music school. We had to cram our program into space not designed for music. Meanwhile, Belmont is a music school. It has the kinds of performance space and technology needed for music. It also has the advantage of being close to the Society headquarters.

Gary also commented about the deadline for requesting funding from Harmony Foundation to support Harmony Explosion camps. That date is November 1, 2013. He noted that the application form is available on-line. Financial help is available for these kinds of events, but will be limited based on the number of requests that H/F receives.

At this point, Gary directed everyone's attention to the eight slides.

**[NOTE: These slides were added as an attachment to these minutes.]**

---Slide 1: This slide identified that the Society operates on an Annual Planning Cycle. The members of the APC committee were shown at the bottom.

---Slide 2: This slide identified the charge that is given to the committee.

Gary asked of the delegates: "How many of your chapters have a plan?" When he got no responses, he suggested that this plan might give chapters some idea of what should be in their plans.

---Slide 3:

This slide listed the AIMS that were established for 2013. The left side of the slide listed the AIMS that were published. The right side displayed the updates, reported by the CEO, of what was actually happening. The top of the left side began with membership goals. The 2014 update on the figure cited for 2013 will appear on a later slide. The goal for number of chapters chartering for each year was set at 8. The actual number so far for 2013 is around 3.

VII. Society Representative's Address (cont.):

---Slide 3 (cont.):

Gary moved down the left side of the slide to point out the four items related to education and training. He then shifted to the right side and observed that we are behind on recruiting. Non-renewals are an important factor.

The next item---the 23K Contact program---was an initiative created by Shannon Elswick that uses volunteers who are attempting to call every Society member. A survey of questions is being used in support of this effort. The project is still in progress, and has been very successful so far. In contrast, the District Contact program is an effort to get Society staff out into the districts for better communications.

One of the purposes behind the .ebiz upgrade was to access a lot of existing data that was previously unusable. Now that data can be used for statistical analyses.

Gary acknowledged that he was not familiar with the topic under "2013 Chapters" identified as "fast-tracking licensing". He knew that it was intended to help chapters get established quicker while the groups still have an interest.

The last section (Education & Training) of the right side of the slide began with a reference to the SubAims to develop new collaborations with groups such as ACDA and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia.

Another concept under Education & Training was the development of on-line training that might eliminate the need for some people to go to Leadership Academies. He even saw this technology being used for board meetings. He noted that the Society Board only has three face-to-face meetings. All of the rest of its meetings are done on Sunday afternoons through electronic means.

Gary emphasized that "branding" will not lead to another change of the Society logo. It will instead be focused on finding ways to market barbershop in other places, and doing it better.

Finally, the emphasis on Community Presence will lead to more connections with conventions such as the Michigan ACDA event that will soon occur. Gary noted that Adam Scott will be there on behalf of the Society, and Pioneer will have a booth.

---Slide 4:

This slide showed the five top needs (or strategies) that were identified in the Chapter Visitation Program. (These items were previously mentioned in Doug Weaver's comments. See page 3.) Because these items were identified, they became the Aims for 2014. Chapter delegates were encouraged to look at these items to see if there are ways that their chapters can help. Most importantly, this list becomes the CEO's task list.

---Slide 5:

Gary identified this slide as a "feel good" slide. It begins with the chapters and members at the top. They are supported by the District, and by the Society Operations Team and volunteers. The Society staff floats in the middle. The CEO holds that up, and coordinates with the District Presidents' Council and the Society AIMS committee which support the whole structure. Gary described the organizational plan as an inverted pyramid. This is the way that the Society's leadership looks at their role.

---Slide 6:

While this slide was described as the 2014 AIMS, Gary acknowledged that it is not fully set yet. That will be done in the next few weeks. The main difference between this slide and Slide 4 is that now the five AIMS are listed as the Focus and Targets. The emphasis on New Collaborations and on-line training are still present. The focuses on Festivals and Branding and on Community Presence are still included.

VII. Society Representative's Address (cont.):

---Slide 7 (cont.):

This slide shows the steps in the Strategic Plan Drive for the years 2014, 2015, and 2016. A key word is the reprioritization that will occur throughout the process. Gary noted that we need input now for the 2015 goals. The 2014 goals are already defined. However, the Society needs the help of members and chapters to develop the 2015 goals.

Gary referred to Marty Monson's speech at the Mid-Winter convention. Marty reiterated then his concept of "looking out the window" with regard to marketing the Society and noting what is happening at the chapter and district level. Gary said to the delegates, "We need you to go listen, come back, and then tell "me" (i.e., a Society or district officer) what's going on. What do we need to do?" If governing boards don't get input, he noted that they just make things up---based on their perspectives. Ideas from the members---even if they are wild and crazy like the Youth Festival Chorus---can sometimes be valuable.

---Slide 8:

The opening line of this slide asked the question, "How do these plans reflect your own chapter needs and expectations?" Gary asked if members feel that something is missing. What results will your chapter see as a result of the actions taken against these changes and strategies?

Gary reiterated his challenge to the delegates to get their chapters to go through a planning process that identifies achievable goals. If they aren't doing that, they should. Knowing what the Society's goals are will help the chapters to develop theirs.

Gary also urged the delegates to talk to members of chapters that are not represented at this HOD meeting and share this information. He felt that all chapters should be doing this kind of planning. He proposed that the AIMS process be taken down to the micro level by asking the members what they want---and then help them get it. He suggested that when the chapter pursues the ideas submitted by its members, the members will support those efforts.

VIII. Consent Calendar Reports:

Doug Weaver noted that the reports from most of the District directors had gone out previously as e-mail attachments, but some recipients may have encountered problems in opening them.

One report that was not received in time to be sent out by e-mail was the report for the CDD function. Therefore, Doug asked Rob Pettigrew, Director of CDD, to give his report verbally.

The first item that Rob mentioned was the fact that Pioneer had five persons who attended Directors College at Harmony University this past summer. They were Paul Cooper (Battle Creek), Charlie Martin (Lansing), Chuck Moerdyk (Griiot County), Paul Keiser (Livingston County) and Rob Pettigrew (Huron Valley). (NOTE: Dan Bezaire injected that he was also there on behalf of the Windsor chapter.) The latter three individuals went on Harmony Foundation scholarships.

Rob wanted to promote some programs that would be beneficial for chorus directors. The first one is CDWI (Chorus Director Workshop Intensive). The other one is called Outstanding in Front (O-I-F).

CDWI is intended for front line directors. Rob was hopeful that a CDWI could be scheduled to be held in the southeast side of the state in the spring. He was also looking at setting up one to be held later in the year in either the southwest or center areas of the state. A CDWI is arranged as an all-day session, but the first half is just for the directors and their trainers. In the second half of the day, a nearby chorus comes in to be the "guinea pigs" on which the directors test their skills.

Rob would like to hold several CDWIs during the year, but recognizes that you can't do too many. However, he encouraged the delegates present to talk to their directors about getting involved.

VIII. Consent Calendar Reports (cont.):

The O-I-F program is focused not just on directors, but all of the members of chapter music teams---the assistant directors, the section leaders, and even those who like to learn how to be an assistant director. Pioneer hasn't offered this program in some time, but there may be some interest now.

Rob has been talking to directors in the District already about these programs. He was hoping that the directors will be encouraged to consider them if they hear about them from today's delegates.

IX. District Director of Events (Roger Lewis):

Doug Weaver mentioned that he wanted to have a few of the directors on the board to talk about their areas. Part of the reason for having Roger Lewis speak was in response to concerns that Doug has heard regarding the increased cost of conventions. He felt that Roger could explain some of the things we do to keep those costs down.

Roger announced that one of the most effective things we do is schedule our conventions well in advance.. He referred to his report wherein it shows that we have several convention locations confirmed out the year 2019. Several of these are due to agreements to go to the same location three years in a row. By doing so, these contracts lock in the rates on hotel rooms, and reduce them by \$10-\$20/night.

In addition, long term contracts will prompt hotels to offer special services. For example, in the Radisson Hotel, we do not pay rental fees on any of the rooms we use (including the auditorium). We only pay for sound and lighting.

Although this amenity couldn't be arranged for this convention, but Roger noted that at some events we have been offered buffets that are quicker and cheaper than restaurants.

Roger moved on the topic of host chapters, and announced that he has gotten agreements from chapters to host conventions through 2015. In his report it is not stated that Hillsdale has agreed to host the fall 2015 event at Kalamazoo.

Non-contest events are activities that the District has attempted to add to conventions in order to attract family members or barbershoppers who might not come otherwise to compete. Roger noted that the wine-tasting tour on Old Mission peninsula during the Traverse City convention was very popular.

For this convention, he tried to organize a "make-your-own-wine" event, but got no response. He concluded that having to wait six weeks for your wine didn't meet people's instant gratification needs.

The planetarium behind the hotel at this convention was also suggested as a non-contest activity for this weekend. Roger was of the belief that some people had gone to see it already. He knew that there would be three shows on the following afternoon. He mentioned that the facility also has a "hands-on" area for children.

In addition to the planetarium, there are some historical things to see---like the location where Checker cabs were made.

Roger threw out an idea for a non-convention event during the Grand Rapids convention. He noted that Grand Rapids is known as "Beer City USA" because it has more micro-breweries than any other city. He was proposing a craft beer pub crawl for that weekend---using a bus. It would last about 2-2.5 hours on Friday or Saturday afternoon. Roger took a straw poll of the delegates regarding potential interest from their chapters.

Another activity that is definitely planned for the G.R. convention is a pizza party by the pool. There is an elevated area near the pool where food and drink can be served. The party would cost about \$5/person.

Roger cited the Meijer Gardens as another place where convention attendees and their families could go. He was hoping that the butterfly exhibit will be open then.



IX. District Director of Events (Roger Lewis) (cont.):

City tours were identified as another option for a possible non-convention event. Roger observed that many cities offer these. He noted that G.R. has many art activities that could be covered in a six-hour bus tour starting on Friday morning. While the District officers and HOD attendees would have to miss this activity, the rest of the convention attendees and their families might enjoy it. It would make G.R. into a "fun convention weekend". It was mentioned that the room rates are \$99/night, so it would not be too expensive to add a Thursday night to the cost of the weekend.

Roger reminded the delegates that the hospitality rooms at G.R. are all in one wing of the hotel. The cost to a chapter for usage of a room is zero. However, no beverages can be brought in; those must be purchased from stands in the hallway. Chapters will also not be allowed to bring in hot food, but Roger is negotiating for an option to bring in cold food. Chapters that want to reserve a hospitality room should contact Roger.

X. District Director of Financial Planning (Brian Dunckel):

Brian begin by reported that \$207 was collected in the bucket that had been circulating around the room. This money will go toward the goal of sponsorship of the Youth Chorus.

Brian reflected on the fact that declining membership in the Society means declining revenues from dues, sales through Harmony Marketplace, and convention registrations. This has resulted in cuts in the support of some programs. Fortunately, Harmony Foundation has been able to step in and offer supplements for some of those cuts.

Brian offered statistics of how H/F monies have helped to support various activities during the past year. He reported that 8770 students and 320 music educators received scholarships to 61 youth camps and workshops. One of those was, of course, the one held in Pioneer, and Brian noted that another one is slated for this year.

Sixty chorus directors attended Directors College at Harmony University on scholarships---including the three from Pioneer that Rob Pettigrew had previously cited. Ten music educators also attended H/U on scholarships. Eleven quartets went to H/U on scholarships. Two persons went to H/U on Lou Perry arranging scholarships. Two quartets went on Larry Ager scholarships. Brian noted that "Chordiology" was a past attendee under that program. One director attended H/U on a Jim Miller scholarship.

In another program area, Brian noted that 23 collegiate quartets received scholarships to enable them to go to the International competition in Toronto. There were 426 students, and 15 choruses that received scholarships to help them go to the Youth Chorus Festival. Brian indicated that there would be an update later on from K.J. McAleesejergins about the upcoming YCF.

Brian reminded the delegates that up to 30% of the money that Pioneer members donate to H/F can be directed back to the District, to their chapters, or a combination thereof. He noted that the donor's choice checks had been mailed to the chapters recently. Normally, they are presented at this meeting. If the treasurer of any chapter has not yet received his chapter's check, he should call H/F.

Brian concluded that 2012 was a banner year for Pioneer's involvement in making donations to H/F. We had 166 individuals who donated, and a record amount of \$141,330 was contributed. Brian pointed out that the total number of donors was up slightly from where it was last spring, but down by about 20 from where it was at the end of 2012. Finally, we are a little over halfway toward our 2013 goal of matching or exceeding the \$141,330 figure.

Brian was optimistic that the District would be able to provide a \$10,000 sponsorship for the YCF, and noted that this would result in the generation of two matching sponsorships.

A new fund-raising activity introduced this year at all Society competitions was the "Best Seat in the House" program. Chris Berry made a bid on an opportunity to be a Presentation scoring judge (not for record) during the chorus contest. The money that is collected is split 50:50 with the District.

XI. Leadership Academy (Joe McDonald):

Doug Weaver indicated that Joe would be talking about this topic and also the Scavenger Hunt.

Joe mentioned that the delegates might have heard at Traverse City that Leadership Academy might be scheduled on a different weekend than normal. That, indeed, has happened. The event will be held on the second weekend in January---January 11.

Joe indicated that a new curriculum is being developed in order to promote some of the 2014 AIMS that both Doug and Gary Plaag have discussed.

Because of the date change, the Okemos facility became unavailable. Therefore, the location for L/A has been moved to the Bovee Center at Central Michigan University. Some previous district events have been held at this site, so good relationships have been established with the site personnel. Also, Joe noted that the prices are really good!

The disadvantage of the site is that it has no on-site lodging. Joe is working with some local hotels to negotiate some deals. He indicated that District members will be getting more info about what will be available. He anticipated that the registration cost for L/A would be announced within a month.

Next, Joe reminded everyone that the Scavenger Hunt is still in operation as a year-long activity. District members can still enroll until the deadline of December 16. He pointed out some yellow flyers on the tables that mentioned an event happening later in the day---for which one point can be acquired. The purpose of the S.H. is to encourage members to get involved in more activities across the District, to support each other, to seek self-improvement, and to develop leadership skills.

When Joe last looked at the scores entered in the S.H. database, he observed that the current leader---with 87 points---was Greg Humbel. Greg has passed the score (75 points) necessary to qualify to be in the drawing for prizes. Joe told the attendees that they can still get a scorebook from him this weekend. The scorebook has an outline of the program, a listing of the rules, and how scoring is done on an honor system. This info is also on the Pioneer website home page. There will be \$250 prizes for the three chapters with the highest total scores, and also individual prizes.

Joe asked how many of those present had signed up. Although many had, he noted that it is not too late, and the scoring is retroactive. He mentioned several things that persons might have done in the last several months that qualify for points. He felt that the program is a fun way to encourage our hobby, and to give recognition to the achievers.

(Extra item)

Before he went on to the next item in the agenda, Doug Weaver noted the exciting re-emergence of the *Troubadour* as an on-line opportunity. He acknowledged the contributions of John Cowlishaw, Greg Humbel, and Tom Ennis in making this happen. Doug had recently acquired a name tag for Greg that identified him as a co-editor, and took a moment to present it to him.

Greg advised the delegates that because the publication is so big, it is being made available through Constant Contact. This means it can be read without having a huge file in one's computer.

XII. Parade of Checks:

Doug Weaver invited K.J. McAleesejergins, Director of Development for Harmony Foundation, and Brian Dunckel to come up for the acceptance of the checks. Brian asked for the chapter reps that had checks to come forward. He described the process by which they would be received. The following amounts were received:

Kalamazoo	\$200
Windsor	200
Detroit-Oakland	750
Grand Rapids	500

XII. Parade of Checks (cont.):

Huron Valley	100
Holland	500
Mt. Pleasant	1000

Roger Lewis reported that the treasurer from the Battle Creek chapter had not yet arrived, but he believed that the B.C. check was for \$450.

Doug Weaver emphasized that checks did not have to be received at this time. As long as they arrive before the end of the year, they can be counted.

Larry Parker noted that the Lansing chapter was hosting this convention, and monies received from a raffle that Lansing was running would be contributed to this cause.

Brian Dunkel observed that donations for this purpose do not have to come from the chapter's account. He knew of one chapter that passes around an envelope each week into which personal donations can be accumulated. Other options mentioned were having a 50:50 drawing, or selling bottles of water.

K.J. McAleesejergins began by remarking that he had never seen a Parade of Checks event. He compared our process with that of the Rocky Mountain District where chapters were merely invited to send in checks.

K.J. wanted to expand on Gary Plaag's earlier remarks about the Youth Chorus Festival. K.J. noted that the YCF event began about 6-7 years ago with just six choruses. It grew to 9, and then 11, and then 16, and then 19, and then over 20. He observed that the growth has not only been in number of choruses, but also in the number of youth participating.

Another interesting contrast has occurred in the number of choruses that register early. As of the start date for registrations for the 2013 Festival, there were none registered. As of that same date for the 2014 Festival, there were 12 that had registered.

There were 19 choruses at the 2013 event. Even though participation in the 2014 event has been capped at 20, there are 7 that are on a waiting list. Of the 20 choruses that have been accepted for the 2014 event, six of them are coming for the first time. Few, if any, of these choruses can be identified as barbershop choruses; they are school groups that have formed barbershop choruses. K.J. was excited about the fact that the YCF concept is happening; we are reaching out to music educators and school music programs.

Early in Marty Monson's tenure as CEO, he suggested that we plan to hold several YCFs. Now the H/F staff has begun to think this could happen!

K.J. felt that the new partnership with the ACDA could also contribute to the growth of YCFs. He reported that the musical director for ACDA came to the Orlando Mid-Winter and was amazed. The musical director asked Marty about how the ACDA did not know that the YCFs were happening. He had never seen so many young men that excited about singing. Getting boys excited about singing is a classic problem for educators. Marty Monson replied with a response that "we don't have that problem".

K.J. envisioned that our alliance with ACDA is going to provide more opportunities than we ever thought we might have. "It is the biggest thing that has ever happened in the 75 years of the Barbershop Harmony Society."

The attendees were asked by K.J. to identify the biggest musical challenge for average chapters. He asserted that it was that many of the directors of those chapters are members who were merely tapped to fill that role. Unfortunately, they are not qualified as musical teachers and choral directors. K.J. suggested that puts a glass ceiling on how much a chapter can accomplish. He felt that the partnership with the ACDA may give us access to 20,000 music educators.

XII. Parade of Checks (cont.):

K.J. is looking forward to the time in a few months when the Westminster Chorus will appear before an ACDA convention and perform two choral works (not barbershop), plus one barbershop number. K.J. expects that Westminster will perform the choral works better than most choral groups would.

K.J. has had the experience of working with chapters that were able to expose music educators to barbershop, get guidance from them, and even get them to serve as directors. When that happened, the chapter was transformed. The educators become aware of the groups within, and resources of the Society, and reached out even further for support of their school programs.

The connection with ACDA is leading to a big shift in how H/F will approach working with youth. Heretofore, the focus has been to work just with youth---and it has been successful. The biggest age group to join the Society has been 19-year-olds. Now the focus is going toward a "top down" approach to connect with "no-strings-attached" services to educators. Defa

Unfortunately, having more YCFs, and adding "top down" programs for educators, costs money. H/F intends to keep funding YCFs. However, the Foundation realizes that to have the most impact and to reach our greatest potential, it must start a music educator initiative. The Foundation has pledged more money for this purpose through the "Diamond Jubilee Challenge" that was unveiled at Toronto. A couple has pledged to match the \$75,000 that would be raised if 10 new Presidents Club donors donated \$7500 each, and thereby create a pool of \$150,000 that would not be touched until that goal is reached.

There is always a general challenge out to the Society membership to add new Presidents Council and Ambassadors of Song members. The D-J-C challenge, however, has prompted others to consider also making \$7500 donations. The H/F staff (K.J. and others) are going to conventions to encourage this to happen. K.J.'s personal goal for this convention is to acquire 10 new P-C members. He did note that H/F had gotten more P-C members during FY 2012/2013 than in any previous year.

He mentioned that when he promoted the P.C. at last fall's Rocky Mountain District convention (in a district that is the most widely dispersed, and which tends to have low convention attendance), there were 40 persons who became new P.C. members! A few weeks later, he went to the Far Western District convention and got 43 who signed up!

K.J. reiterated his challenge of 10 new Presidents Council members to the delegates at the meeting. He noted that an upgrade from Ambassadors of Song to Presidents Council counts. He planned to repeat his challenge to the convention attendees later in the weekend. He was hoping that could announce then that Pioneer was already halfway there.

He acknowledged that promoting philanthropy in Pioneer is like "preaching to the choir". He offered his thanks to the District for what it has done already.

XIII Unfinished Business:

Doug Weaver mentioned that Cliff Dake had informed him of a need to find a new venue for the next Top Gun quartet event. Cliff is hoping to find a location on the west side of the state, so suggestions will be appreciated.

The next thing that Doug shared with the delegates was the Saturday Night Spectacular DVD that was presented at Toronto. **[The DVD was shown.]**

XIV. New Business:

(There were no items for consideration.)

XV. Election of Officers, & Appointment of Directors:

Before he began this portion of the meeting, Brian Dunckel announced that total of the checks and cash donations collected in support of the Youth Chorus Festival was \$3907.

As the chairperson of the Pioneer Nominating committee, Brian entered the following names as nominees for the officers of the District Board:

Dan Bezaire----President (two year term)  
Mike Hanson---Executive Vice President (one year term)  
Jim McMahan---Secretary (one year term)  
Larry Parker---Treasurer (one year term)

Brian noted the Immediate Past President is not an elected office. Doug Weaver will serve in that role until a new District President is elected.

Brian asked for a motion to accept the slate presented. Doran McTaggart moved that this action be taken. Cliff Dake offered the second. **Motion approved.**

Doug Weaver mentioned that there will two changes in the appointments of Directors who serve on the board. Ron Eubank is stepping down as the Director of Contest & Judging. Brian Dunckel will move into that position. Since Brian will therefore be stepping down from the position of Director of Financial Development, Doug Weaver will be doing that job in addition to being the Immediate Past President.

XVI. Adjournment:

At 3:21 p.m., a motion to adjourn the meeting was received from a delegate in attendance, and was seconded by another delegate. **Motion approved.** Dan Bezaire was asked to lead the group in "Keep the Whole World Singing".

Minutes prepared by Jim McMahan, Secretary, Pioneer District of SPEBSQSA, Inc.