

Minutes of the meeting of the House of Delegates of the Pioneer District of SPEBSQSA, Inc. held on October 16, 2015, in the Great Lakes 4/5 Room of the Radisson Hotel in Kalamazoo, MI

I. Call to Order:

District President Dan Bezaire called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. He asked Chris Berry, District Director of Chorus Director Development, to lead everyone in the singing of "The Old Songs".

II. Agenda:

Dan Bezaire asked for a motion for adoption of the agenda. He asked delegates to give their name and chapter whenever they move or second any action. Terry Wegner (Detroit-Oakland) moved that the agenda for the meeting be adopted. Jerry Ditto (Kalamazoo) offered the second. **Motion approved.**

III. Quorum:

District Secretary Jim McMahan announced that a quorum (30% of authorized delegates) was present. **[NOTE: The sign-in sheets were attached to the original copy of these minutes.]**

IV. Memorial to Deceased Members:

Mike Ridenour, District Director for Chapter Support and Leadership Training, 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":

Tom Wing (old Oakland County chapter)  
Duane Roy (Pontiac-Waterford chapter)  
Ron Yahrmatter (Macomb County chapter and old Clinton Valley chapter)  
Martin Bomers (Grand Rapids chapter)  
Larry Wicker (Lansing chapter)  
Paul Kinch (Lansing chapter)  
Dexter Wyse (Pontiac-Waterford chapter)  
Lonny Galbraith (Detroit-Oakland chapter)

Mike concluded the ceremony by quoting a poem written by Linda Jo Jackson entitled "I'm Free". He noted that these eight 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!

V. Harmony Foundation Representative Report:

Before continuing with the agenda, Dan Bezaire took the opportunity to acknowledge the presence of Peter Stephens-Brown, the organizer of the newest Pioneer chapter in Marquette

Dan Bezaire proceeded to introduce J.J. Hawkins, who was serving as a representative for the Harmony Foundation on this occasion.

J.J. noted he had given this same slide show presentation earlier at the BOD meeting. He indicated that it was an overview of the Foundation and how it has evolved.

His first slide asked the question, "How did barbershop look in 1985?" At that time, he noted that popular music, music educators, the media, music publishers, and the general public looked down on barbershop as a musical genre. The leadership of the Society was dreaming of reversing a downward drift in membership. However, there was no unified, long-term plan to change that trend.

He reflected on the appearance of H/F at that time. It used to send a card out with the membership renewal cards that said "Won't you do your part today?" The main effort was to get gifts of \$15, \$20, and \$25. The process didn't have a long-lasting effect.

.V. Harmony Foundation Representative Report (cont.):

Consequently, many things have been instituted in the last few years that have allowed the Society to bring members in at a higher level, and to accomplish a lot.

J.J. first pointed out a partnership developed with the ACDA in 2013. This group is the largest group of music educators in the U.S. In 2013, we invited an ACDA rep to the Mid-Winter convention. We put an ad in every ACDA journal that year. We had a booth at every regional ACDA event. Finally, we gave over 2500 copies of music to educators. The executive director of the ACDA (Dr. Tim Sharp) gave the H/U keynote address. These activities led to partnerships with big-name arrangers in the acapella world like Kirby Shaw, Deke Sharon, et.al. As an aside, J.J. showed a slide of Tim Sharp doing his first tag at Society headquarters a month earlier.

One of the Society's problems is a shortage of qualified directors. This is one of the greatest challenges that chapters face. The largest source of qualified directors may be found among music educators. Hopefully, we can make chapters better by putting educators in front of them. J.J. anticipated that this new relationship with ACDA should help us do that.

Historically, chapters have approached local music educators directly. Now, however, members of ACDA are beginning to see barbershop groups as being growing, viable choral organizations. Educators are being shown that barbershop is an art form that will help their professional development. In the past, this was something that was very hard for chapters and districts to do on their own. Making a connection at a high level should allow us to make significant inroads.

J.J. observed that Tim Sharp's keynote address to thousands of educators at a recent national ACDA convention made reference to the types of choral music that were great for education. He listed such things as madrigal choirs, chamber choirs, barbershop quartets, etc. His inclusion of the last item was very matter-of-fact ---as if that was common knowledge. J.J. contrasted this perspective to 1985--when barbershop was looked down upon by educators. He observed that this represented a huge change.

J.J. moved to another topic by asking if the attendees were familiar with the Hal Leonard Corporation---the world's largest music publishing company. He noted that a partnership with that firm was established in 2014 to sell our charts on its website. Initially, the firm asked for 100 charts, and BHS would get 75 cents for every dollar received. As a result, the Society has seen a year-to-year sales increase of 59%. Hal Leonard reaches 45,000 customers in North America alone. J.J. pointed out that most music educators will go to Hal Leonard if they are looking for charts. If they search for "barbershop", a whole list of selections will appear. Through Hal Leonard, tens of thousands of customers are being reached that BHS cannot access.

J.J. noted that BHS owns 6000+ charts that could be sold, but the licensing process is expensive, and it is grossly under-funded. Nevertheless, this is an ongoing area for potential sales.

J.J. changed to a discussion of the youth barbershop quartet contest. This is the new name for the collegiate quartet contest. "Collegiate" was removed from the title because many high school youth wanted to compete. Those youth would tend to exclude themselves from considering this category. There used to be a low-end age limit on the college contest. However, it was realized that even a twelve-year-old who can sing should be able to compete. The name change infers that the competition is opened up to more people because it is something they can do. J.J. added that, at International competitions, there will be a special category for high school quartets. There will be an award for the overall quartet winner, and also for the top high school quartet and the top novice quartet.

The logical question is, "How does this help with outreach?" He observed that the collegiate quartet program has existed for 24 years, and the demand has grown each year. J.J. emphasized that all qualifying quartets receive a scholarship. In 1992, there were 14 quartets that went to International. In 2015, there were 24 quartets that qualified to go to that International and 57 others that tried to qualify.

Twenty-four collegiate quartets have won since 1992 (i.e., 96 individual champions). Of those 96 individuals, 61 of them (64%) are members today.

V. Harmony Foundation Representative Report (cont.):

J.J. indicated that another big outreach event is the Youth Chorus Festival. He knew that Pioneer has been very active in its support of this program. He also knew that a chorus from the District will be singing at this convention and then at the Mid-Winter in Reno.

Since the inception of the YCF in 2008, 117 choruses (over 3000 youth) have participated. Because of a rule that 66% of the members of each chorus must be non-BHS-members, this means that approximately 2000 individuals are new to barbershop. The annual cost of the YCF is approximately \$250,000. Fortunately, sponsorships have been provided that are restricted dollars. Those dollars can't be spent on such things as chapter equipment or H/U expenses. In passing, J.J. identified that a sponsorship costs \$10,000.

Harmony University was the next item that J.J. discussed. He noted that total attendance at the 2015 H/U was 730. That was a new record. Previously the figure was around 500. There were 54 persons on full scholarships, and 64 on half scholarships. There were also four quartet scholarships. Fourteen countries were represented---including Poland, Brazil, and Sri Lanka. There were also over 100 music educators present, as opposed to the previous year where there were just 29. This increase was attributed largely to the partnership with ACDA. More educators are seeing H/U as an opportunity for training.

Harmony Explosion camps and one-day workshops was the next topic in J.J.'s presentation. In 2013, it was noticed that the number of camps and workshops was dropping. Therefore, a new grant process was invented to get chapters and districts involved. J.J. noted that the number of events in North America in 2013 was 40. In 2014 that figure grew to 56. A 30% demand increase was projected for 2015. Instead, there were 144 funding requests, but it was only possible to fund 107

J.J. reported that there were 7900 youth who attended camps/workshops in 2014. However, in 2015 the number went to 21,000. J.J. concluded that this represents approximately a 50% increase in camps, and a 260% increase in attendees. Unfortunately, there is still not enough funding to support this huge increase and the unexpected demand.

To solve this problem, the Foundation has teamed with 17 donors (individuals or couples) who have offered to contribute \$250,000 if 1000 new donors can be added to the annual giving program before the 2016 International convention. The new donors can be enrolled into either the Ambassadors of Song program or the Presidents Council program. A-O-S is an entry-level program where the donor gives \$10/month, i.e., \$120/year. P-C is a leadership-giving program where the donor gives \$83/month, i.e., \$1000/year.

The campaign has been called the "Every Voice Matters" campaign. The motto of the campaign is "Even the smallest voice, speaking through love, can be heard by the world". This quote came from Ryan Killeen, the H/F Director of Development. J.J. mentioned that Ryan tried to pass it off as being from Aristotle.

J.J. reiterated that the goal of the campaign is to get 1000 new A-O-S or P-C donors. One purpose of the campaign is to get people together to experience the joy of singing, and to connect them with other lifelong singers. He noted that can be done through camps and workshops. He also referred to the 37 YCF choruses that could not be funded this year in spite of a doubling of the budget for the activity.

Another purpose of the campaign is to show music educators, singers, and directors how to build better, bigger, and stronger communities of singers. J.J. noted that 120 music educators went to H/U on scholarships this year, and they represent hundreds of choruses and thousands of singers

Another initiative under development is a plan to bring every front-line director to H/U once every four years. This would also be done with scholarship funds derived from the E-V-M campaign.

Another goal is to create and publish relevant and exciting barbershop music for every major country on earth. J.J. felt that the Hal Leonard firm will help us to do that. However, the creation of arrangements and learning tracks, and the obtaining of clearances will take funding.

The ultimate goal is to reach out to 90,000 students, educators, and music professionals and provide them with the vital help they need to overcome the diminishing prioritization of singing in America. He noted that it is expected that one in five schools will drop their music programs this year.

V. Harmony Foundation Representative Report (cont.):

J.J. felt that we need to let educators and others that help youth to sing to have that opportunity. He asserted that we cannot turn away youth who want to have that experience. He observed that we are on track to assist approximately 100,000 people this year by providing music, contests, financial support, coaching, recording, learning tracks, songbooks, scholarships and merchandise.

J.J. emphasized that we must continue to provide our world-class festivals and contests that showcase the power that singing has on youth. He noted these activities are visible and viable, and prove the relevancy, value, and necessity of barbershop harmony music in educational curriculums. He added that these programs continue to show their value, and have led to the start of dozens of choruses and hundreds of quartets across North America.

There has been recognition that we must bridge the gap between elementary and high school music education. Wayne Grimmer (lead of the "Round Midnight" quartet) is in charge of this program. He has created a curriculum for middle school youth to use for singing barbershop as an after-school elective. J.J. noted that the program was launched a week earlier at a National Association for Music Educators convention. However, the program will be piloted through the Nashville inner-city middle schools. It is focused on youth in high-risk areas. J.J. suggested that it gives them an alternative to being out on the street.

Another gap that must be bridged is the one between the Society and its chapters. J.J. noted that Dr. Duane Gunn had recently been hired as a staff member to handle chapter leadership. His role is help chapters that are beginning to fall behind or die off. Part of his efforts will be to put them in touch with music educators, or create partnerships with the community to get the chapter out singing publicly. J.J. lamented that the members of many chapters will meet, sing some songs, and then go home. With time, they get smaller and smaller. The groups do not perform or improve. J.J. felt that Duane Gunn's role will be vital in getting such chapters to grow again.

With a goal of getting 1000 new donors, the big push will be to go to conventions to find them. J.J.'s goal for this Pioneer convention is to find 20 donors. He declared that the demand for barbershop has never been so high. He observed that we are finally at a point where the Society has so many programs that it is behind in having enough funding. This is a reverse of what has existed in the past.

J.J. noted that the Society raised more money in 2014 than it ever has before. Gifts for camps and workshops were doubled, but with fewer donors than in the last three years. As the opportunities go up and the number of donors goes down, eventually there will be a dip that will make it impossible to fill any requests.

J.J. reiterated that he wanted to get 20 new donors from Pioneer, and he wanted to begin at this meeting. He asked that everyone who was not a current donor, or never has been one, to take one of the pledge cards on the tables. He suggested that potential donors consider making at least an A-O-S (\$10/month) commitment. He urged that persons who could contribute at the P-C level (\$83/month) were needed more than ever. Donations can be done by either credit/debit card or check. He emphasized that, with the match from the "Every Voice Matters" campaign, gifts are worth twice as much. He noted that he would talk after the meeting to anyone who completes one of the pledge cards.

Dan Bezaire announced that he was sending a small pumpkin around the room that could be used to collect donations for the E-V-M campaign. Roger Lewis then announced that the Battle Creek chapter was the host chapter at the spring convention when a H/F raffle was run. With the earnings from that raffle and other fund-raising that the chapter did, he had a check for \$1861.93 to go into the pumpkin.

VI. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the meeting of April 24, 2015, had previously been distributed electronically by the District Secretary Jim McMahan. **[NOTE: Through oversight, approval of the minutes was not done as an item of business.]**

VII. Treasurer's Report:

Because District Treasurer Larry Parker had been called out of the room, this item of business was deferred unto later.

VIII. Society Representative Report:

Dan Bezaire next introduced Ed Bittle, who was returning again as the Society rep to this convention.

Ed indicated he was glad to return. He repeated a comment he made earlier at the BOD meeting that he knew more than he did at the last convention, and he also knew more about what he didn't know. His goal was to share some of the knowledge he had in the first category.

Ed observed that the Small Board Rules of parliamentary procedure were used at the BOD meeting, but not at this meeting. He anticipated that their usage would be extended soon to HOD meetings. Although Ed was not an authorized delegate to this meeting, he made a demonstration motion to show how this change could be adopted.

Ed cited the most recent edition of the Harmonizer which contained excerpts from the annual report. He noted that the latter was also used as a report to H/F donors and potential donors. He also referred to the annual HOD report, and asked if delegates had seen it. Most had not. Ed and J.J. Hawkins had conferred prior to this meeting and had concluded that J.J.'s earlier report would cover most of that document.

Ed felt that one of the most important topics that J.J. discussed was the creation of the Duane Gunn's position of manager of Chapter Leadership and Education. He thought more would be heard at the Forum about the development of this position. Ed mentioned that Duane would be working for Donny Rose within the education department. He saw this new position as being an opportunity for chapters to get more assistance. He added that the position was being funded by H/F. Ed cited this as a confirmation of J.J.'s remarks that more members are needed as donors to H/F. He also offered up the reminder that up to 30% of a donation can come to the donor's chapter and/or district. This feature has made it unnecessary for the Society to have any dues increases in a while.

Ed alluded to a report the Society board received in Pittsburgh that noted that 25% of the monies from H/F goes into grant programs, while the remaining 75% supports operations---such as copyright compliance and the new role that Wayne Grimmer is doing with the curriculum for middle school students. He asserted that the work of H/F supports a lot of what the Society does or can do in the future.

Ed noted that one of the aims in the Society's goals and objectives for next year is the development of a strategic plan for the Society as a whole. He indicated that one does not currently exist. He suspected that districts and chapters will be asked for input on that aim. He hoped that the process of collecting input will help to keep chapters and the Society viable.

Ed displayed a document that is a description of the middle school program that Wayne Grimmer has created. It was identified as "Introduction to Barbershop Singing for Youth". He mentioned that he has been handing it out to middle school teachers in Des Moines, since he is the VP for Youth in Harmony (Community Outreach) in his district. Subsequently, he has found it being used in schools for warm-up techniques. He thought that Wayne's curriculum might be a big tool to help the Society go forward. It has been noted that a problem for high school music educators is that middle school boys aren't signing up when they get to high school. Ed asserted that the curriculum is "fun stuff to sing".

Ed then mentioned a new item being offered at district Harmony Marketplaces---the "Barber Polecat Song Book # 2". He urged the delegates to buy a copy at this convention. He knew that some chapters have bought copies for all of their members. He felt that it would be a good resource for creation of a chapter show.

Another item that was introduced at the last International was the "Stephen Foster Songbook". He noted that he will be promoting the book the next day at Pioneer's H/M. He indicated that he had also told music educators in Des Moines about this item, and many were anxious to acquire copies.

VIII. Society Representative Report (cont.):

After the BOD meeting earlier that morning, Ed learned that many people had not seen the "Music Educator's Guide and Songbook". This is the document that was distributed at ACDA conventions. Ed's Des Moines chapter handed it out during a program at an Iowa ACDA summer symposium where there were 200 directors present. Around 60-70 copies were provided, and there was a demand for more. Ed observed that the document contains several public domain selections. One of those selections is being used for a program in November, and it has a learning track in the back of the book.

Pioneer delegates who want to get copies to give to their local music educators were advised to contact Sherri Lewis. She is now working in the Outreach department at the Society. Ed was asked to restate the title of the document. He did so, and added that the item included a teaching guide, seven royalty-free songs, several barbershop tags, and a learning CD.

Ed referred back to his previous comment about the Iowa ACDA summer symposium. At that event, Sherri Lewis met with a focus group that included several educators. The group was asked, "What can we do to help you?" This was followed by descriptions of some of the materials mentioned above. After learning where some Iowa chapters were located, one educator admitted that they didn't invite those chapters to assist because the chapters were not singing in the way that educators are currently teaching.

Ed observed that anyone who has gone to a recent coaching session, or listened to some of the best barbershop groups currently around (Westminster, Central Standard, or Ambassadors), may have realized that we're beginning to sing differently than we have in the past. Therefore, he felt that continuing education is something we can sell to new members and our communities. He felt that, as we do that, our outreach to younger people through music educators will be enhanced.

He noted that some members will say they have sung a certain way all of their life, and will question the need to make any changes. Ed asserted that if we wish to preserve the barbershop form, we may need to change from our old ways.

Ed moved on to the topic of pending changes in the Standard Chapter Bylaws. He covered this item in more detail earlier at the BOD meeting. He emphasized that the essence of those changes is to provide more flexibility for chapters to operate.

One proposed change is a reduction in the number of VPs that must be elected to a board. Chapters may only need to have a president, a vice-president, a secretary, and "such other officers as you want". For smaller chapters that may already be doing that, it makes them legal again.

Ed observed that one aspect of strategic planning is succession planning. He mentioned that his chapters in Denver and Des Moines encountered some problems when they sought grants. Grant-making organizations were reluctant to provide grants for the next calendar year because the existing board could be completely gone by then. Those organizations were concerned that a new board might not follow through with the original purpose.

Consequently, one of the proposed SCB changes would allow for additional officers to have longer terms of office (up-to-two-years). Ed had discovered that the existing SCBs already allowed for some officers to have longer terms. He had not known that previously. In fact, the last edition he had in his possession didn't have that change in it.

Ed had mentioned at a previous HOD meeting that the Society board was having discussions about limiting membership just to males. He was aware of chapters in Pioneer and elsewhere that do have females singing with them. He also knew of chapters that have joined with mixed choruses in their communities directed by music educators. Unfortunately, such groups have no tax-exempt status or insurance coverage. He noted that allowing Associate members to belong to chapters would extend many privileges to groups like this.

VIII. Society Representative Report (cont.):

Ed acknowledged that there is still a strong sentiment for maintaining the males-only character of the Society. He observed that this is an issue that will be discussed more in the future as the Society looks to where it is going. With the creation of mixed quartets, and the existence of choruses that can't exist without females in some voice parts, he asserted that we must decide how to preserve our art form and serve our communities.

Another change in the SCBs that is under consideration is an option to allow chapters to have quarterly board meetings. This idea was linked to the concept of having an executive committee that would function between quarterly meetings. One more possible change in the SCBs would be the election of a president-elect.

Finally, Ed referred the new program that allows selected chapters to have non-members on their board as community-members-at-large (CMALs). There are at least two Pioneer chapters that are doing this (Mt. Pleasant and Marquette). This program may be formally established in a revision of the SCBs.

Ed mentioned that some other non-profits with which he has been associated have introduced the usage of an advisory board composed of community leaders. Such a group only meets 1-2 times a year. The idea is to let that board know what the organization is doing, and ask for suggestions for new ideas. He felt that these outside groups can help us develop our membership and sell our programs. When we reach out to other resources, we can inform them how we can help them, and ask how they can help us.

Ed concluded that this was a summary of the many questions he has been raising as a new board member. At this point, he invited questions from the delegates. He was asked to repeat the name of the Wayne Grimmer document ("Introduction to Barbershop Singing for Youth"). He noted that Tom Gentry assembled the document. It is actually written for three-part harmony, and costs \$4.95.

Lud Ouzoonian (Kalamazoo) asked for: one, the date when the revised SCBs will take effect; and two, if the materials distributed in Iowa would eventually be distributed elsewhere through chapters or their districts.

Ed indicated that most of the proposed SCB changes were optional, so chapters could adopt them immediately. It has been suggested, however, that a grace period of a year should be afforded to chapter leaders to allow the concepts to be discussed. Some of the changes of officer term periods would not be applicable for the elections currently being done.

Ed noted that his chapter had prepared a grant application to do the distribution of materials to the Iowa ACDA. Then they learned that they were already acquiring materials. Meanwhile, the grant application got rejected. Rather than reapply for another grant, it was decided to utilize the Iowa and Texas ACDA groups as pilot groups for distribution of materials. Sherri Lewis was asked to do a review of the Iowa experience. Ed also prepared a six-page report on what happened.

One thing that was learned was the ACDA group preferred that the Society work on the creation of youth choruses, rather than ACDA coming to the Society for help on doing that task. There was a feeling that this task was out of their reach. There was a desire instead for activities that were closer to local communities. This was largely related to the cost of sending local groups to Mid-Winter conventions versus sending regional groups.

Ed noted that Sherri recommended that we determine the locations of state ACDA meetings, since we are already interacting with their regional meetings. Then we should decide how to integrate the involvement of chapters and districts at that level. He did not know the status of that activity.

It was reported that six states have ACDA gatherings, in addition to the regional gatherings. It was known that "Ambassadors of Harmony" chorus was going soon to a regional meeting in Dallas. Ed believed that similar connections were planned for other regional meetings.

VII. Treasurer's Report (back to):

District Treasurer Larry Parker had distributed copies of two reports on the tables. One of them was a Balance Sheet that showed a total balance of all accounts, as of September 30, 2015, of \$82,388.56.

VII. Treasurer's Report (back to) (cont.):

The second document was a Profit & Loss Statement for the period of January 1 through September 30, 2015, and it indicated the District had a current net income of \$17,538.61

Doran McTaggart (Windsor) wondered if the escrow balance for the Windsor Sendoff shown in the Balance Sheet was \$200 short. He had noticed that the figure shown in the report was \$2427.61. However, Doran believed it should be \$2630.89 because of a check that the Windsor chapter had sent. Both of them became uncertain about which number was correct, so they were going to check their respective records.

Dale Hanson (Gaylord) moved that the treasurer's report be received. Earl Berry (Detroit-Oakland) made the second. **Motion approved.**

IX. Consent Calendar (return to agenda):

Dan Bezaire indicated that the delegates had received a number of written reports prior to the meeting. He moved on to verbal reports for areas not covered in writing.

X. Other Reports:

The area of Youth in Harmony (now renamed as Outreach) was covered by Craig Pollard, who was subbing for his son Aaron, the District Director of Youth in Harmony.

Craig cited the materials previously mentioned by Ed Bittle. He indicated that Aaron had sought to distribute those documents to choral directors in the State of Michigan. Aaron was able to get the e-mail addresses for all 253 high school music directors. This list included all public, private, and parochial schools.

Aaron then developed a presentation that included links to the place where the documents can be ordered from the Society. He added 30-second links to performances by the Pioneer high school quartet "Insignia", by the mixed quartet "Double Date", by the championship Young Women In Harmony quartet "GQ", by the International champion quartet "Instant Classic", and by the Westminster chorus. His intent was to let educators know how to get the materials, and also see images of what young singers are doing.

Craig reported that Aaron got replies from a number of educators, and received several questions. Aaron was pleased that he was able to offer something to every music educator in the state.

Craig changed to a discussion of TVBC. He noted that the group is excited about going to Reno. The group has three new songs that will be debuted during the chorus contest on Saturday. They had a three-hour coaching session during the previous month on their songs. Craig felt that the two BHS-contestable songs are excellent selections. He added that the group also had a new acappella song "Titanium" from the movie "Pitch Perfect". This song will be their non-BHS-contestable number at Reno.

Craig reported that the group has acquired five new members, and will be taking a total of 27 to Reno. He compared this number to the figure of 23 that went last year. Only one person aged out from last year.

Craig indicated that the chorus had a balance of \$4800, but recent expenses have reduced that figure to \$1700. Most of those expenses were applied toward the cost of airfares. The amount that the chorus now needs to complete its trip to Reno will be around \$7800. It is anticipated that the chorus will be receiving some monies during this contest weekend.

Craig reiterated that TVBC is excited about going to Reno. He offered to answer any questions. He knew that the group was singing first on Saturday (for score only) in the chorus competition. Then on Saturday evening, before the quartet finals, they will sing their entire Reno set. Craig finished with an expression of appreciation to the District and its chapter for their support.

**[NOTE: Dan Bezaire reported that the pumpkin circulated during the meeting had returned. He noted that, including the donation from the Battle Creek chapter, a total of \$1975.93 would be given to H/F.]**

X. Other Reports (cont.):

Dan Bezaire invited Chris Berry, the District Director of Chorus Director Development, to give a verbal report on the upcoming Chorus Director Workshop Intensive (CDWI) and Outstanding-in-Front (O-I-F) program.

Chris asked how many delegates would like to be a bit more comfortable talking about music. He then asked how many would like to be better section leaders. He noted that on November 21, 2015, an O-I-F program will be held in Grand Rapids. That chapter will be hosting the event, and the fee is \$30.

It will be an all-day event that Chris likened to a mini-H/U. The program is designed by the Society. It is intended to give an individual the basic skills on how to be a director or assistant director or a section leader, or just be a better singer. The program covers directing skills and rehearsal management and other topics. Chris currently has five persons signed up for the program. He can take up to 35.

During that same day, a CDWI will also be occurring. In the morning, five directors will be learning what skills they need to refine. In the afternoon, they will work with a practice chorus and a coach. Chris already has five directors signed up---the maximum he can take. He emphasized that there is still room for attendees in the O-I-F program. He noted that the time schedule for the event is 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Dan Bezaire threw in that the \$30 registration fee is a legit chapter expense.

XI. Leadership Academy:

Dan Bezaire asked Mike Ridenour, the District Director of Chapter Support and Leadership Training, to report on this specific event.

Mike stated that the next L/A will be held on Saturday, January 9, 2016, at the University Center at Central Michigan University.

Mike asked how many of the delegates remembered Chuck Greene's Compelling Attractive Chapter Meetings program. Mike noted that Paul Ellinger has been working with Chuck's widow Beverly. She has been going around and promoting Chuck's program. She and Paul have created a collaboration of his Supercharging program and Chuck's CACM. They are adding Dave Campbell from Ontario to their combined program. Dave will be introducing some Wavebox refresher techniques.

Mike was excited about this expanded program. He felt the old CACM program was very effective, and noted that the Hillsdale chapter still uses it.

Mike noted that Dave Montera would be teaching the President Track class, Jim McMahan, would be teaching the Secretary Track class, and Larry Parker will handle the Treasurer Track class. He added that Matt Tipton will be offering a class on creating great visuals on posters, templates, etc. Mike indicated there will be some classes available on other topics.

To hold costs down this year, Mike is planning to have everything at one place---rather than going somewhere else for an afterglow. His intent is to go directly from the instruction period to an afterglow with pizza and sub sandwiches. His goal is to allow attendees to be able to leave by 8:00 p.m., and thereby avoid the cost of an overnight stay. Nevertheless, he will be working on getting a housing place for those who need it. He recommended that everyone watch for more details on Pionet.

It was asked if the Society's Secretary Manual would be updated in time for L/A. The question asker noted that the document is a valuable resource. Chris Berry said he would try to get an answer to the question. He asked if the document was available on-line. The District secretary confirmed that it was, but also has not been revised in 3-4 years. Therefore, the secretary does not use it in the Secretary Track class.

XII. "The Voice Barbershop Chorus"

(This topic was covered in the first part of Section X.)

XIII. Financial Planning:

Dan Bezaire asked Doug Weaver, the District Director of Financial Development, to report on this function.

Doug began by noting that the District received a check from H/F in the amount of \$1046.57 that came as a result of the donor choice program---a mechanism whereby donors can direct up to 30% of their donations to their chapter and/or district. He chose to recognize the Pioneer members who directed some or all of their donations to the District: John and Judith Bailey, Roger and Pat Brook, Gene Bulka, John and Laura Davis, George Doyle, Tom and Betty Ennis, David Golden, Dale Hanson, Hylon Heaton, Don Horton, Bruce Jonasz, Mike and Janice Cram, Jim and Sandra Lampkin, Arthur Lane, Michael and Martha Matson, Bill McAndrew, Charles Moerdyk, Dave and Sally Montera, Neil and Linda Nugent, Tim and Marsha Oliver, Jay Peterson, Jeffrey Rayburn, Robert and Lisa Ryan, Joe Serwach, Ray Sturdy, Jim and Terese Whitten, Aaron Wilson, Bob and Kay Winters, and Randy Wright. He extended his thanks to all of these individuals.

Doug reminded the delegates that the District made a decision this year to support TVBC, and not to underwrite a \$10,000 sponsorship of the Youth Chorus Festival. This meant that a tough choice had to be made. For the last several years, the District has been a sponsor of the YCF through a \$10,000 pledge to H/F. Last year, the District was both a sponsor, and provided support to TVBC. Doug noted that fund-raising for TVBC was so successful last year that the District did not have to make a large contribution. However, it was realized that this was not a realistic choice for the District to make this year. Even though it would have been nice to continue being a YCF sponsor, it was felt that our first commitment should be to TVBC. It was deemed important that the chorus had the support it needed to get to Reno. That was why the District did not become a sponsor again.

Doug was encouraged by Craig Pollard's report of the fund-raising done so far by TVBC. Doug knew that the group would have buckets out for donations at the quartet contest on Saturday night. He noted that this technique was hugely successive for the group when they did it at the Muskegon convention. Consequently, Doug felt that the group was going to get to Reno without a lot of direct financial support from the District.

Doug reflected that it was a great pleasure for him to sit at the Mid-Winter in New Orleans and see a chorus from Pioneer. He felt the group did an outstanding job then and made the District proud. He is looking forward to seeing the group appear again in Reno.

XIV. Parade of Checks:

Doug noted that the checks received in this year's P-O-C are being directed this year to direct support of TVBC, and not toward a YCF sponsorship. He was sure that most chapters had been contacted by a District board member, and knew the plan for this event. He asked the delegates who were presenting checks on behalf of their chapters to present them at this time.

Checks were received from:

- Rochester chapter
- Grosse Pointe chapter
- Battle Creek chapter
- Mt. Pleasant chapter
- Huron Valley chapter
- Lansing chapter
- Kalamazoo chapter
- Detroit-Oakland chapter

Doug noted that chapters that had not yet contributed could still do so. The chapter should let a District officer know of its intention.

Dan Bezaire noted that the Pontiac-Waterford chapter had told him in a note that the chapter was having TVBC sing on its November 7 show. The chapter is paying the group \$500 for that appearance, and giving them an afterglow breakfast costing \$4 each. Dan calculated that this represented a donation of about \$920 to the group.

XV. Old Business:

There were no items to consider in this area. However, Doran McTaggart (Windsor) asked if there had been any financial discussion regarding the level of support for quartets and choruses going to International. He wondered if the amounts were going to be increased.

Dan Bezaire indicated the topic was not discussed at the BOD earlier in the day. He knew that it was considered at the BOD meeting in the spring. He could not recall that any decisions were made. The secretary confirmed that the topic was tabled.

Doran pointed out that the amounts being given now are unchanged from what they were when he was the District President 25 years earlier. Meanwhile, he knew that airfare and hotel costs have zoomed in the interim. Therefore, he asked that consideration be given to this topic---especially with regard to choruses. He felt it was less of a problem for quartets because of the return of Jug Nights and other sources of funds. Doran noted that the current contribution is \$50/man. Dan Bezaire observed that figure was the cost of a registration 25 years ago.

XVI New Business:

(There were no items to consider in this area.)

XVII. Nominating Committee:

Dan Bezaire acknowledged that it had been his pleasure to serve as the District President for the last two years. However, he knew it was time to "pass the torch". Therefore, he asked Doug Weaver to return to the podium in his capacity as chair of the Nominating Committee.

Doug began by observing that some at-large board positions had been instituted a few years earlier as part of a goal to get more persons knowledgeable about how the District is run. The thought was that these individuals would then move someday into one of the more defined roles. Doug noted that has really proven to be the case this year. He pointed out that Dave Montera started out as an at-large, and moved into the District Director of Music & Performance position. Dave then subsequently agreed to be nominated as the Executive VP. Doug was thrilled that Dave had accepted the nomination.

Doug indicated that Mike Hansen will now automatically move into the District President role as of January 1, 2016. He added that the other two elected positions are that of District Secretary and District Treasurer. Doug announced that Jim McMahan had agreed to continue in the D.S. role. He then reported that Robb Smith had agreed to return as the D.T. Doug indicated that this was the slate being presented by the Committee.

Dan Bezaire asked there were any nominations from the floor. Roger Lewis (Battle Creek) moved that nominations be closed and that the slate be accepted by acclamation. Terry Wegner (Detroit-Oakland) made the second. **Motion approved**

Dan extended his congratulations to the new officers. He indicated he had one announcement to make before the meeting was adjourned. He had just learned that the convention facility that was to have been used for the 2017 International in Minneapolis will still be under construction. Therefore, the Society will have to find a new location. Hopefully, the new location will be announced by the end of 2015.

XVIII. Adjournment:

At 2:47 p.m., a motion to adjourn the meeting was received from Dave Montera (Detroit-Oakland), and was seconded by James O'Dell (District Director of Marketing & PR). **Motion approved.**

A request was made for a delay in order to distribute some flyers to chapters that are located close to DOC.

James O'Dell was asked to lead the group in "Keep the Whole World Singing".