

The Troub



Enriching lives through singing and serving local communities



PIONEER DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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[A Message from Joe McDonald](#)

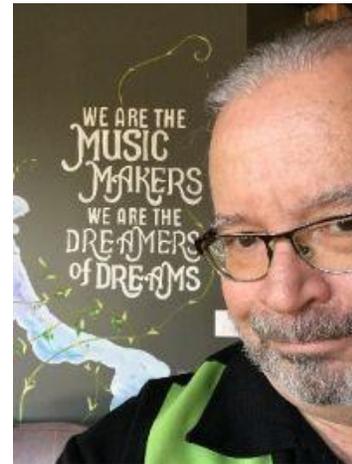
Pioneer District President

Let's Grow Together

Getting out, giving and gaining options

Make a Memory this Summer

Out of curiosity, I recently searched for "Things to do in Michigan in August." The list of canceled events is as long as a Tim Warrick post on those learning tracks he makes. Jenny and I made a quick trip to northern Michigan recently to get out of the house and see the big water at least once this summer. I hope you and yours have been out a bit or plan to in August. Please be safe and use the recommended precautions.



Going the Extra Mile

I do want to give a big *atta-boy* to Chris Berry for his regular Tuesday night Zoom-based "I Miss My Barbershop Rehearsal Support Group" sessions, and to City Lights Chorus for inviting all of Pioneer to join their recent Zoom events.

District Board News

The district board has some Zoom sessions coming up in the next two weeks with Society Board representatives and Harmony Foundation. I predicted last month the process of sorting out the issues would be ongoing throughout July. We'll get an update during the Zoom sessions.

My View

I firmly believe financial giving is a personal decision and that chapters/groups are responsible for their own decisions. Giving to local charities or national organizations should involve due diligence and a clear picture of how effectively the organization delivers to its beneficiaries. I don't believe our district should determine which organizations to support or avoid; those are your decisions at the individual/chapter level.

What's Next

- A month ago, the board discussed the possibility of a face-to-face House of Delegates meeting. COVID-19 trends at the time were hopeful and the outlook was better than it is today. Now, it's likely the meeting will be virtual. We should know soon and announce the date/time.

- An exciting vision of events for the International Convention in Cleveland next July was presented recently to some district leaders. These events should become public soon and will expand convention appeal beyond its typical contest itinerary. Because Cleveland has a unique set of facilities, exceptionally good hotel rates and is an easy drive for many of us, I suggest you pencil Cleveland into your July 2021 calendar. I have!
- Some of the most memorable international quartet performances have been presented by groups that did not take home the gold medal. Lots of those performances have only been seen live. That is about to change. Learn more about a one-of-a-kind event in late August that you can enjoy or participate in. Check out the [BHS Legacy Quartet Championship!](#)

SINGcerely!

Joe
District

McDonald
President

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

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Meet your district board members

Each of several upcoming Troubs will feature two or three of the Pioneer District board members. We hope you enjoy “meeting” them. They’ve all expressed eagerness to meet YOU at future conventions, shows and Zoom meetings!

Note: Read the June and July Troub to meet [Roger Lewis, Joelle Laginess and Zach Schroeder](#), as well as [Aaron Pollard and Paul Ellinger](#).

Brandon Smith



- Monroe resident and member of Motor City Metro
- Choir Director at Bedford Junior High and High School
- 2019 District Chorus Champion; 2018 Next Generation Varsity Youth Quartet Champion; and 2015 District Quartet Champion

How long have you been on the Pioneer District Board?

1 year.

How long have you been involved with barbershop singing?

10 years.

How did you first get involved?

Dale Wells invited me to a Flint Chapter rehearsal and I have been barbershopping ever since!

Favorite barbershop memory:

While there are too many to choose from, one favorite memory was sitting on the floor of an elevator at Midwinter convention in New Orleans and singing tags well into the morning. This tag group would later go on to become Frontier Quartet; singing with them has been one of the greatest joys in my life!

Why you agreed to serve on the board or what you plan to accomplish:

I agreed to serve on the board because I want to give back and serve the district however I can. Everything I do in barbershop is to try to improve the community of singers around me and make a positive change in the musical lives of others. None of this would have been

possible without the incredible support Pioneer has shown me over the years, so I hope to be able to support the district in this position.

Jim McMahan



- Midland resident and member of the Gratiot County and Mount Pleasant chapters
- Retired analytical specialist, quality assurance specialist and records management specialist with the Dow Chemical Company
- 2013 Barbershopper of the Year (Mount Pleasant); 2010 Presidents Award (Mount Pleasant); 2007 Barbershopper of the Year (Gratiot County)

How long have you been on the Pioneer District Board?

In 2013, I decided to relinquish my role as secretary of the Gratiot County chapter. At that time, Doug Weaver asked me to take on the district secretary role a month before the Fall 2013 convention.

How long have you been involved with barbershop singing? How did you first get involved?

I had always wanted to get involved after I saw "Music Man." While working for Dow in Indianapolis, I visited the Indianapolis chapter one May evening in the 1960s. Unfortunately, the chapter met in a non-air-conditioned church, so it did not rehearse in the summer months. I then got sidetracked into other activities by the following fall.

When I moved to Midland in 1967, I discovered the nearest chapters met on nights when I had conflicts with church choir rehearsals and a history reenactment group in which I also participate.

In late 2000, the Gratiot County chapter was seeking a new director who had Sweet Adelines rehearsals on Mondays. She would only take the position if Gratiot County switched to Tuesday rehearsals. Gratiot County switched, and I quickly became a member.

Favorite barbershop memory:

At the 2008 International, I saw the Ambassadors of Harmony chorus (St. Charles, MO) take the stage in what appeared to be rather tacky and bulky outfits. The group's singing of a ballad was excellent, nevertheless. Those outfits quickly disappeared, however, when they revealed their record-shattering, world-famous performance of "Seventy-Six Trombones!"

Why you agreed to serve on the board or what you plan to accomplish:

When I accepted the role of district secretary in 2013, I did so with a commitment of providing transparency to the deliberations of official meetings of the Board of Directors and House of Delegates.

My second goal was to ensure that the official records of the district — for which I am responsible — were as accurate as possible and properly maintained.

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Inside barbershop story: It all began at an ATM



At age 22, Rob Halsey was living in a new community in Metro Detroit's Downriver area for his first real job with the Michigan Department of Corrections. With no hobbies or activities outside of work, he was restless.

"That all changed when I was taking money out of an ATM. No, no; I didn't become a thief, but I did find a handmade sign when I was leaving that read, "Do you like to sing? Come sing with us."

He grabbed a tear-off strip of paper with a phone number and what is now a 25-year barbershop adventure began. Halsey has sung in several choruses in cities such as Wayne, Lansing, and Battle Creek, as he moved for his career and life events. Over time, he was an assistant director, show chairman, and a director.

He also sang in several quartets, and Halsey speculates his next quartet will be one with mixed harmony, as he hasn't done that yet.

Have a favorite barbershop memory? We're always looking for short stories that capture the barbershop world. Please email us at pioneerdistrictbhs@gmail.com.

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Are we listening?



[Listen here](#)

As barbershoppers, we've given voice to each other for generations. We've brought unity in many ways, and stood together through so much. And yet, we also know it's an ongoing journey.

We encourage you to pause and reflect with the members of Signature, our current International Quartet Champion, who say this:

"We believe there are two things we need more of in this world: We need love -- through love we can accomplish anything. As for the second, we need to listen to each other. Are you listening?"

Are we?

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