

# The Troub



Enriching lives through singing and serving local communities



## PIONEER DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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

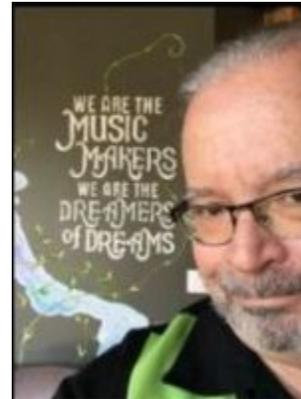
Pioneer District President

# Let's Grow Together

*A Review of 2020 and a Pledge to Move Forward*

## A Little Review

It's been difficult for me to determine what to say about the most unusual year in my six decades on this earth. What a rollercoaster. Amid joyous events like the birth of new family members comes news of the passing of respected friends and acquaintances. DAMN Covid!



The first year of my two year term as your district president has included disappointment and accomplishment. I'm disappointed I did not get to shake your hand at a convention and sing a tag together at some crazy hour in the hotel lobby. And I'm excited about so many accomplishments made by your district board. We've supported each other during the ups and downs of 2020 and advanced the cause of barbershop by completing or starting projects such as these:

- **Update of our District Mission and Vision Statements**
  - The Pioneer District Mission Statement: ***To actively enrich lives through singing and service to local communities***
  - The Pioneer District Vision Statement: ***Everyone in Harmony***
  
- **Launch of the Troub** - Our digital newsletter was relaunched this year and comes out monthly to keep all of us connected and informed. It includes perspectives from the district president, news of events and educational opportunities, links to barbershop videos of interest, insights and stories about our members, and in 2020, updates about the impact of COVID on singing.
  
- **Launch of Pioneer Academy** - Created by Joelle Laginess, Pioneer board member and director of education, the academy is an online umbrella for the district's education efforts. It focuses on tips and resources that support growth in singing and community.
  
- **Launch of Communications Agents Meetings** - These Zoom sessions with chapter representatives are designed to keep members apprised of what's happening in the District. The last session covered 31 topics in 31 minutes. If you're not hearing from your chapter, email [Paul Ellinger](#), the district's executive vice president, and become your

- **Updated Website** - Imagine a website designed with visitors in mind — organized to make it easy to find the information you need, including on your mobile device! We're super excited to see the new site, which is expected to go live in January 2021.
- **Update of the District Policy Manual** - The board is reviewing the policy manual to ensure it reflects our mission and vision, to eliminate redundancies and to update its text to reflect the world in 2021. Exciting updates were approved this fall to the Hall of Fame policy and came to life during November's virtual convention. More revisions will come in 2021.
- **UnConventional Convention** - Our first-ever digital experience was a social and educational success, with more than 105 barbershoppers registered to participate. They Zoomed in from across Michigan and even beyond state boundaries to connect with each other, to celebrate Pioneer's 2020 Hall of Fame inductees and to learn more about harmonizing together.

### **A Path Forward**

2021 will provide our next barbershop experiences, one way or another. I find myself thinking about the coming year and the choices we will make to go backward or forward. The easy approach would be to go back to pre-Covid days, restart the machine and proceed as if nothing has changed.

***But things have changed.*** We've all changed, as have all of the potential new singers in our district. I believe people long for connection and will value personal relationships more than ever, which creates a vast opportunity for us. Yes, singing is our focus, yet barbershop also is a conduit for personal connections and lifelong relationships.

Your district board is working on plans and programs to support you and the district's chapters going forward, including how to identify and connect with new singers. Look for details in January.

### **Ring in 2021 (See what I did there?)**

I've decided to change up my New Year's playlist. Gone is the traditional Auld Lang Syne, which

barbershop. It's good to recall fond memories you've made through barbershop, and it's just as important to look ahead. What's on your playlist?

## **SINGcerely!**

Joe

McDonald

District

President

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

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## **Traditional spring convention cancelled, but UnConventional #2 is in the works**

*Mark your calendars: Virtual convention, possible quartet challenge in store for April 23-25*

Pioneer District leaders have followed suit with many of their counterparts across the country in cancelling the traditional spring convention, at least when it comes to chorus contests. It's hugely disappointing, but they're determined to make the most of what IS still possible.

UnConventional #2, a virtual, Zoom-based mix of social gatherings and dozens of learning sessions, will occur during the April 23-25 weekend. Additionally, District Board members will determine in January whether there's a smart, healthy way to host some sort of quartet challenge.

Stay tuned for more information!

And in the meantime, put a hold on April 23-25!

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## **UnConventional convention makes the most of 2020**

*District's first virtual convention shows the power of community, learning and Zoom*

100 registrants from across Michigan and beyond.

It started on Friday evening, Nov. 13, with a keynote speaker and the 2020 Hall of Fame induction attended by more than 70 individuals at once. It continued with workshops throughout the day Saturday. Participants were able to “chat” during sessions and had time to connect during Zoom breaks.

Before you read the reflections below from some of the participants, be sure to mark your calendars for this spring’s UnConventional, the weekend of April 23-25.



*"Got to see many folks I have not seen in a long time! Learned more things to do with Zoom to support chapter get-togethers."*

**Chuck Murray, Rochester and Pontiac chapters**

*"I can watch videos on my own, but to watch and discuss as a group, with other uber-barbershoppers, is what makes it an engaging event."*

**Ann McAlexander, Northbrook Chapter, Illinois District**

*"It felt like sitting in a room with friends."*

**Tom Ennis, Grand Rapids and Mount Pleasant chapters**

*"The interaction with other participants was actually more personal than I would get in an auditorium."*

*"I learned so much and had questions answered to things I hadn't realized  
I had questions about."*

**Jessica VanBeek, Grand Rapids Sweet Adelines + Mixed Barbershop Harmony Society**

*"Great stories and suggestions for relating to and interpreting the music we love! Coffee and  
cookies next time?"*

**Brion Grant, Desertaires in Sun City, Arizona**

*"Barbershop for me is about singing with others. But since we couldn't do that, this was an excellent  
alternative!"*

**Eddie Tabb, Wayne Chapter, HarmonyTown Chorus**

*"It was wonderful just to hear the chatter in the big room between classes. Y'all done good."*

**David Short, Johnny Appleseed District, Great Lakes Harmony Brigade**

*"Bravo to the District Board and all the individuals who made this event possible."*

**Jeff Rayburn, Mount Pleasant Chapter**

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## **Court suit seeks clarification of BHS and HFI relationship**

*Insights*

*from*

*President*

*McDonald*

The following is a summary of legal action underway to clarify the relationship between the Barbershop Harmony Society and its fundraising arm, Harmony Foundation International. BHS announced the suit on Dec. 2 via social media and an email to members.

- With input from members across the U.S. and Canada, the Barbershop Harmony Society and Harmony Foundation International boards are seeking federal court resolution affirming a close relationship between BHS and HFI.
- BHS established the Foundation 60 years ago as its fundraising arm.
- Dec. 1 meetings to approve this action included a majority of HFI trustees — those elected

by the Society Board of Directors in March, as allowed by a trust agreement between BHS and the Foundation. Some HFI leaders, including trustees in place prior to March, have refused to recognize the new trustees and therefore question the validity of the Dec. 1 Foundation board vote.

- The lawsuit focuses on fundamental governance issues, including the validity of the founding trust agreement and Foundation bylaws, and actions by some HFI leaders, including some of the original nine trustees, to have a fully separate organization.
- Individuals undoubtedly exist on both sides of this who love barbershop and are doing what they believe is in the best interest of barbershoppers. Most all of us know people at the Society and at the Foundation whom we admire and consider friends.
- The Society and its roughly 700 affiliated organizations, including chapters and districts, provide support, educational programs, events and resources to 17,000 members and millions of patrons, music educators, young singers and enthusiasts.
- I encourage you to remain focused on barbershop and to continue to reach out and support each other. We all look forward to the days when we can rehearse and perform together, sing tags and hug all of our friends. That will happen.
- I also urge all of us to remember that respect and a strong sense of community are hallmarks of the barbershop world. Those traits remain vitally important.

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## Featured Videos: PIO members score big in international tag contest

Barbershoptag.com, the world's largest library of barbershop tags (oh how we love and miss them!) recently hosted a virtual contest. Several Pioneer District members participated ... and placed among the top 10 in various categories! Congratulations, all!

Here's the rundown:



**9th place for Category A:**

[One-take recording, one voice per part: \(Joelle Laginess, Will Stutts Jr., Collin Price and Chris Bateson\)](#)

**1st place for Category D:**

[Multitrack, multiple singers, including Pioneer's Kevin Clark and Pioneer visitor and close friend, David Breen](#)

**8th place for Category D:**

[Joelle Laginess and Travis Gidley](#)

**9th place for Category D:**

[The Heights \(Joelle Laginess, Nevaeh Himinn, Chris Psootka, and Harshal Mehta\)](#)

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