

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

Barbershoppers Deemed Essential

Has this pony-tailed old coot finally lost it completely?

Barbershoppers are essential? Really?

It is so.

By Joe McDonald's proclamation, and by science. Allow me to explain and ask you for a commitment that could have an impact on your community for years to come.

As musicians and students of music, we have seen many stories about the value of music. Scientific studies and real life experiences are documented and available in endless sources.

Yet, too many in the general public and among decision makers in education remain unaware or close-minded to the true value of school music programs. Too many are exploring the end of school music programs due to the financial challenges that have been exacerbated by COVID-19.

A recent article in smartmusicteacher.com makes a compelling case for school music programs. Its focus is on instrumental programs, but I believe the concepts are even more deeply integrated into singing. Let's face it: Lyrics are powerful communication tools and the reason so many people turn to music in good times and in bad.

The primary message is that music should be considered ESSENTIAL — not just a benefit — in school settings. [You can read the entire article here.](#)

After 10 years of running MountainTown Harmony Explosion camps, I've seen how skills mentioned in the article manifest themselves. I've had a front-row seat to see how young people mature, how they become effective communicators, how they learn to deal with anxiety and depression, how they grow to support each other, and how they become leaders.

Many campers are now teachers or active in their local music and theatre programs, helping yet another generation find value in the arts. It is gratifying to be asked for a job reference, for



help figuring something out, or my favorite one — doing barbershop in a chorus, quartet, or school ensemble.

Results that stem from musical experiences happen because of the investment of TIME. Time is the secret ingredient, my friends. Relationships must be formed and interaction must happen.

Giving money is easy. Giving TIME is not. It takes me less than a minute to write a check. It feels good, and I'm glad I do it. But it is not enough.

About that “essential” part.

During this window of time when we have limited opportunities to flex our musical muscles, I propose we turn our attention outward to support music in schools and communities. Help our local decision makers understand the value of music. Show them the science, tell them about your personal story. If you have the personal connections to deliver this message, do it. If you don't have the connections, write a well-crafted letter, send it to school administrators and school board members, individually. Invest TIME, in order to support our young people.

Here's my challenge:

Declare yourself ESSENTIAL, commit to investing TIME in your community to support what you love: Singing. Do it with the same emotion you invest in the songs you love and with the same passion in your heart.

Post Script

To those of you upset about the Barbershop Harmony Society/Harmony Foundation International interactions, I share your frustrations. Once again, money has become a problem when it is intended to finance solutions. I accept that money plays a crucial role in attaining a mission. And I remain confident that individuals and the organizations will sort this out over time.

I expect we will have a clearer picture of what all of the giving options will be during the course of July. There will be plenty of time thereafter to make decisions on how to invest in barbershop.

In addition to whatever financial decisions you make, I do hope you decide to make your TIME part of your personal and chapter contributions.

SINGcerely!

Joe McDonald

District President

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

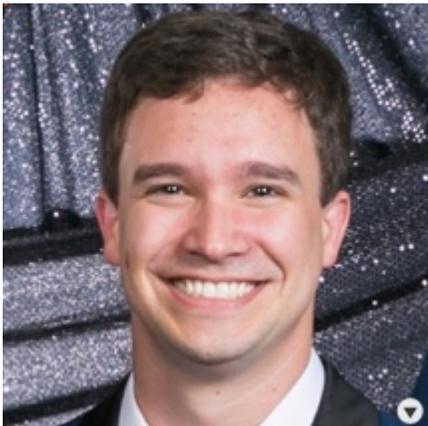
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Meet 2 more district board members

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 June's Troub to meet Roger Lewis, Zach Schroeder, and Joelle Laginess.](#)

Aaron Pollard



- Plymouth resident and member of Motor City Metro
- Band Director at Plymouth Christian Academy
- 2019 District Chorus Champion; 2018 Next Generation Varsity Youth Quartet Champion; 2012 International Chorus Champion; and 3-Time District Quartet Champion

How long have you been on the Pioneer District Board?

4 years.

How long have you been involved with barbershop singing?

Since I was very young, but my first contest was with the Guardians of Harmony in 2007.

How did you first get involved?

Following my dad's and brother's quartets to show and conventions.

Favorite barbershop memory:

I don't think it's possible to put one memory here. My favorite memories are afterglows of chapter shows. I get to meet so many amazing barbershoppers and get to see all of the chapter quartets perform the songs they love singing the most. The barbershop afterglow is where the true joy of barbershop is for me!

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

My strengths as a board member are listening and moving projects forward. I'm most excited to see more events and more people able to enjoy the family that is the Pioneer District. I've always heard from barbershoppers who have been in it for a long time talk about the amazing events this district had in the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s. I want to bring back those events and more to really feel a thriving community in this district that many members today talk about as "the past."

Paul Ellinger



- Ann Arbor resident and member of the Huron Valley Harmonizers and Da Upper Yoopers Barbershop Chorus!
- Owner of the Paulmark Insurance Agency in Ann Arbor
- Lead of Pioneer District champion quartet, Chordiology; creator of Wavebox Singing and The Performance Sphere; 8 consecutive years on Harmony University faculty; coached in all 17 districts and as far as Australia, Singapore, and Indonesia; Pioneer

Hall of Fame member.

How long have you been on the Pioneer District Board?

About 10 years total, as past membership VP, communications VP, chapter chorus development VP, and current executive vice president.

How long have you been involved with barbershop singing?

31 years (30 years continuously with Chordiology).

How did you first get involved?

I heard a quartet at church camp and said to myself, "Man, I want to do that!" There was no Internet in those days, so it took me about 10 years to find a group. I was a sponge and just learned.

Favorite barbershop memory:

I learned to sing so I could propose to my wife. So, I practiced for a year and then surprised her with a song from a balcony in the restaurant where I first told her that I loved her (and all the reasons why). She couldn't see me or the quartet, so she didn't even know it was me until we all came down and sang a second song that her parents used to sing to her when she was young (Once in Love with Amy; made famous by Ray Bolger). The song was arranged by the late J. Kelly Brummett and Rob Pettigrew, both members of Chordiology.

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

So many people have given to me with their time, knowledge and letting me learn with them as I coach. I want to continue to do my part to give back. Additionally, I absolutely love to see people have success and feel like I can help even more people at the district level.

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There's lots to enjoy in July!

A live-streamed concert of champion quartets

This Friday, July 3, you can sing along with live performances from 10 champion quartets! The Association of International Champions presents "This is the Moment," a free, live-streamed event sponsored by The Harmony Foundation. [Registration is required.](#) The performances begin at 6:30 p.m.

Let the learning continue; 50 years of Harmony U

The Barbershop Harmony Society is bringing the 50th anniversary [Harmony University](#) right to your desktop, mobile phone, or tablet — wherever you may be. Events will continue all month, and you can participate live or watch later. Choose from more than 90 electives, five general sessions, core seminar, and a week of the Everyone in Harmony Virtual Choir Experience with Deke Sharon. Music educators can earn CEUs or graduate credits.

[See Full Calendar Here](#)



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