

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

Preparing for the day we sing together again

Under normal circumstances, this column would include comments on multiple topics and information about a batch of upcoming events. Yet, as we continue to remain socially distant, even as the governor has lifted the stay-at-home orders, I feel compelled simply to write an encouraging message.

The time to gather and sing again will come. Our challenge until then is to be ready for the opportunity. There is way more to making good decisions about returning to rehearsal nights than restrictions being lifted. The decision to restart chorus/quartet rehearsals will be complicated and likely not unanimous.

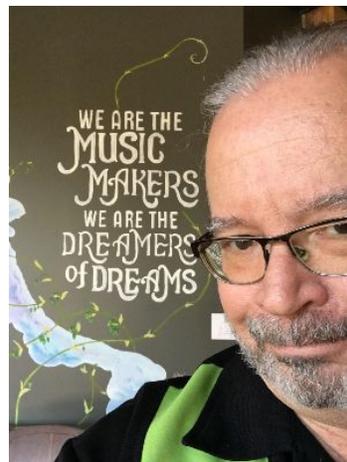
The Pioneer Board is working on a questionnaire for chapters to use if they so choose. It is intended to help measure the thoughts of chapter members, what they are fearful of, and what expectations they have for returning to rehearsals. The Barbershop Harmony Society is working on a resource guide that has similar objectives; it will be published in early June.

While this interruption in our singing is tough, I hope you'll pause to reflect on how we're all working together toward shared goals for a shared passion. What's more, the care and concern I've seen across the district for our members and communities speak volumes about the lasting impact barbershop has on our collective lives. That, my friends, is an incredible reason to smile ...and sing ...every day.

Decisions coming on fall convention, Bush League

Our members are asking about major events on the Pioneer calendar later this year. An announcement regarding the fall convention will be made soon. All 17 BHS districts are working concurrently on fall convention decisions. It is an unprecedented collaboration.

A decision on Bush League is on the horizon as well. As with all of our events, participant safety is the first consideration, and an alternate approach is being considered.



In other news, the first Pioneer District chapter Zoom meeting hosted 43 members from 19 chapters on April 25. The attendance was encouraging and led the district board to decide that Zoom meetings are a useful way to distribute and gather information in the district. It is likely that the next House of Delegates meeting will be hosted via Zoom, on a date to be announced in the next several weeks.

Be kind, stay connected

Enjoy the stories about staying connected in this issue of the Troub. Human connection is an important part of what we do as barbershoppers!

I bumped into a returning snowbird yesterday. I was excited to see him and told him so. His first words to me were, "Boy, you people in Michigan are mad." He made his point with a couple of examples.

We've all had these experiences. What we're observing and pondering tends to push us to anger, one way or the other. Taking sides seems to be the prevailing approach to life these days.

It's hard to live that way, mad all the time. I've made a decision to overcome my own frustration by being kind on a one-to-one level. I've figured out how to smile through a mask and am consciously adopting simple acts like sending nice notes to others via social media.

I hope you'll join me, as kind-hearted barbershoppers, in doing the same. The world needs us.

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!

Roger J. Lewis



- Battle Creek resident and a member of the Battle Creek chapter
- Retired in 1996 from EmploymentGroup, a temporary and permanent staffing company
- Member of the Pioneer District Hall of Fame and Barbershop Harmony Society Hall of Fame. Winner of two third-place senior international quartet medals with Antiques Roadshow

How long have you been on the Pioneer District Board?

Since 2014, this trip. Also 1987 through 1995.

How long have you been involved with barbershop singing?

Since 1954, although I didn't join the Society until 1961, so I'm a 60-year member.

How did you first get involved?

A member of the Grand Rapids Chapter came to my school and said they were holding a high school quartet contest. The prize was a \$200 clothing allowance at a men's store (for suits, hats, shoes, underwear, etc.) All quartets that entered would get tickets to their show the next night. We came in 4th. Oh, wait. There were only three quartets in the contest.

Favorite barbershop memory:

Way too many. A USO tour to Japan, Philippines, and Guam. A tour of England for the first British Barbershop contest. Lots of shows, lots of memories as Society president, lots of time at conventions as chair of the Society events committee.

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

Aha! 2013 was my last year as a presentation judge and also my last year on the Harmony Foundation Board of Trustees. Sue, my wife, said I better find something to do or I wouldn't be as easy to live with. Jerry Ditto, then Pioneer events vice president, turned in his resignation to Doug Weaver at the fall convention; Doug and Jerry had no idea who they could get to replace him. I shared what Sue had said, but they needed to have her approval. That was too easy.

Joelle Laginess



- Ypsilanti resident and member of the Livingston Lamplighters
- Spanish teacher at Belleville High School
- Member of The Heights, the first quartet to win the Pioneer District's Mixed Quartet Contest

How long have you been on the Pioneer District Board?

This is my first year.

How long have you been involved with barbershop singing?

I fell in love with barbershop in 2013, so over 7 years.

How did you first get involved?

I heard "Aladdin Medley" by Vocal Spectrum, met some barbershoppers, sang my first tag a week later, and joined a chorus (Voices in Harmony, Sweet Adelines) immediately. I got involved with the district by going solo to conventions, and now, any barbershop event to which I'm welcomed — I'm there!

Favorite barbershop memory:

Oh, that's so tough... I'll go with all the themed tag parties I've helped host: Tag camping, Halloween Costume tag party, Ugly Sweater holiday tag party, and a Valentine's Day tag

competition. They're so much fun — like having Saturday convention all-night tag singing year-round with the best of friends.

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

I love this district and its people, and I think we have so much potential. It was an honor to be asked to serve our family, and I'm the kind of person who, if I love something, I work hard for it. I hope to connect with and meet more members and help us grow in a way that we all want. As the director of education, one thing I hope to accomplish is providing chapters and potential members easy and useful resources (on our website, in The Troub, at Summits, in person, etc.).

Zach Schroeder



- Clarkston resident and member of The Motor City Metro
- Tier 3 operations support specialist, Chief Financial Credit Union in Rochester Hills

How long have you been on the Pioneer District Board?

2 years

How long have you been involved with barbershop singing?

5 years

How did you first get involved?

I walked into a local chapter rehearsal one day and enjoyed the singing and camaraderie. Then I joined The Voice youth chorus.

Favorite barbershop memory:

Starting a chapter with some of my favorite people in barbershop.

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

I love being at our barbershop contests, as I'm sure most do. The administration of setting up contests and working with the talented people in our great hobby has always appealed to me. I want to continue to grow participation in our contests, and our district has shown that it is something it wants as well. We are off to a great start! More to come...

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What Are PIO Choruses Doing?

They're singing, of course! And connecting.

We all miss singing. We all miss getting together with some of our dearest friends, and choruses still must wait for the right time to gather — even with the governor rescinding her stay-at-home orders. So we asked choruses around the district to share any advice they have for others and what they're doing in lieu of rehearsing in person.

We have been sending weekly resources (such as new songs to learn on our own and summaries of the happenings from BHS). We've had many virtual meetings with the chapter and the board. We've shared instructions on how to use an app to create virtual harmonies individually (then combined via the app) and used those recordings to post on our social media platforms to ensure new content goes to the public. We've been very active via social media so we stay on everyone's radar. We also created an 'if we return to rehearsal' survey for our members to express their feelings with what they would need when we get back together again. We had 95% participation on

this and got some really good feedback. (Pioneer will share a survey tool soon!) Note: We LOVE the new song released by the BHS - "It's the Music That Brings Us Together." It will certainly become a chorus number once we return to rehearsals.

Advice: Reach out to members who are not actively joining virtual events. Many of our members lack the technical resources to do online events, but they'll still answer the phone!

-Eddie Tabb, HarmonyTown Chorus

Chris [Berry, music director] has implemented a Zoom program that meets on Tuesday nights. During these gatherings, we review selected videos and do "roses and thorns" feedback to give us insight into improving our individual skills and stay connected to each other. This has been a great help for keeping the camaraderie and our spirits high.

-Homer Sterner, Floral City Harmonizers

Our chorus is hosting 1- to 2-hour Zoom sessions each Monday night, as it would align with traditional chorus rehearsals. For the last three weeks, we've done a deep dive into our three judging categories with current or formerly-certified judges in BHS. We've also celebrated our two-year anniversary as a chorus with a Zoom "birthday party," featuring former chorus director and two-time international quartet champion Mike Slamka! Moving forward, we are planning more events to bring our membership together and serve them with educational/singing opportunities.

My advice for current choruses or singers: Spend time evaluating others' performances and your own. Spend time working on skills that need to become habits, such as posture, breathing, etc. This also is a great time to re-evaluate chorus culture, trajectory, and branding. How we present ourselves to our community of singers directly impacts our success within that community!

-Cody Harrell, City Lights

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Featured Media

Finding a way to sing ... virtually!

We had a blast making the video! The Livingston Lamplighters are mostly focused on community activities, so we really miss doing sing-outs at community events. This was our first "sing-in" using the Acapella app. We started by loading a learning track so that the first few singers would have a guide. Each of us sang our own track, then passed it on to the next singer.

-Gary LaRoy, Livingston Lamplighters

Featured in the video:
Livingston Lamplighters



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Editor: Sherry Knight

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Photos by Barbershop Harmony Society, Joe McDonald, Joelle Laginess, Roger Lewis, Zach Shroeder,

Livingston Lamplighters

Video Provided by Gary LaRoy