

# THE HARMONIZER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE HARMONY SOCIETY



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**On the Cover**  
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Cover by Roger Motzkus, [www.motzkusart.com](http://www.motzkusart.com)  
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## Membership growth: We've made a good start!

**A**s most of you know, our beloved Society has been losing members pretty steadily since the mid-1980s. There are many reasons for this; some out of our control, like the fracturing and complicating of the larger society. Some factors have been within our control, like complacency and systemic self-absorption. (We just joined to sing, didn't we?)

We can't do much about the ways in which the larger world has changed. These changes have been well documented (see Chuck Greene's masterful treatise at [www.21st7th.com](http://www.21st7th.com)). But we can change—we are changing—the ways in which our Society responds to this critical problem.

Almost two years ago, I started a dialogue with several hundred of you about this problem. That discussion produced several more steps in rapid succession: A "summit meeting": the formation of the Membership Growth Task Force; the formation of four smaller, more focused task forces; and, most recently, a final report of the MGTF to the board at our meeting in



***We can't do much about how the larger world has changed, but we are changing the ways in which our Society responds to this critical problem.***

Philadelphia. (View the complete report at [www.barbershop.org/MGTFfinal](http://www.barbershop.org/MGTFfinal).) Great work by many great people. But we're not finished yet! From the report the board received in Philly, we have determined the next steps.

First, I am appointing a new group, the Strategic Plan Task Force, to take the data generated by the four smaller task forces and find ways we can jump the fence between strategy and tactics; ways we can help the CEO decide what specific changes need to be made in the way we do business so that we can solve this critical problem.

Second, the four smaller task forces will be reformed and recharged to continue their work in more defined ways—to continue to find ways to help the primary task force (and through it, the CEO) discover the solutions we need.

A great many people have labored hard these past couple of years to bring us to this point. Society Immediate Past President Noah Funderburg has done, and continues to do, a masterful job as chair of the MGTF, aided by the members of the four "task specific" task forces and their chairmen. These men, who each brought a disparate group of committed men together and worked with them to achieve critically important results, are Society President-elect Alan

Lamson, Society Executive Vice President-elect Shannon Elswick, and Society Board Members Gary Parker and Alan Wile. These men have the thanks of a grateful Society for the work they have done, and continue to do, on behalf of our members present and future.

So, we have made a start. And we're beginning already to see positive results—we're retaining more members this year than in previous years, and our staff has begun to formulate specific programs to make us even more successful. Increasingly effective work is being done at the district level and many of our chapters have begun to reexamine the quality of life at their meetings to see what they can do to create "compellingly attractive chapter meetings," to use Chuck Greene's very appropriate phrase.

In a few months, my time as your president will be over. But this work will not cease. Every Society leader I know recognizes the critical importance of changing our culture to achieve real long-term growth. Both President-elect Lamson and Society EVP-elect Elswick have been intimately involved with this work from the beginning and are determined to stay the course until success is achieved.

Noah Funderburg will continue his work as the chair of the new Strategic Planning Task Force. Add to these men dozens of other committed, passionate, dedicated barbershoppers who understand the importance of this work and you have the ingredients for certain success. My thanks to all of them for the work to date—and for the work to come, too!

And to those of you who have committed yourselves to reenergizing your chapter meetings—to making the time you spend with your brothers-in-song every week more fun and satisfying—thank you, too! All of our efforts at the Society and district level simply won't work if what goes on every week in all of our chapters isn't sufficiently rewarding to get the men back week after week. If things are sizzling at your chapter, thank the guys who're making it happen. If not, why not get some of the boys together and talk about how to make things better? You can do it! I know you can!

Together we can make this happen, brothers. In Harmony!



[bbiffle@barbershop.org](mailto:bbiffle@barbershop.org)





## “Where Do We Go From Here?” (part 2)

In my previous Straight Talk column we talked a bit about where we are but didn't answer the question, “Where are we going?” The question is about us, and I know I can't answer this question alone. I got some feedback on this section from my last column:

*If we continue to lose members, if we continue to wink at guys singing with us but not paying dues; quartets not registering, and guys who take pride in singing music they did not buy, violating copyrights, not paying bills—doing what is in it for them instead of doing what's right, what's in it for Barbershop—then we will not survive. I don't believe any of us want that.*

A large part of where we must go is to approach this hobby *together*, with a sense of duty. We are preserving a uniquely American art form. We are responsible for getting this right. We have enough challenges in maintaining and growing legitimacy as an art form; can you imagine if we were *not* the world's largest men's singing organization?



**Where must we go? A large part is to approach this hobby together with a sense of duty.**

To stimulate membership growth and create a fun-filled environment for our members, we work hard to keep costs low while delivering as many advantages to our members as we can. Here is a peek at the immediate future in a few areas.

**Dues.** International headquarters collects all dues, then returns chapters and districts their portion every month, minus a small processing fee. We also arrange for liability insurance for the entire Society, to include all chapter activities and predator insurance for our youth programs. This collective approach guarantees the lowest rates possible.

We also field more than 3,500 calls per month through our 800-876-SING phone number, not counting direct calls in this age of free (for you) long distance. For years, we've assessed chapters a small fee for this service; however, some chapters are unhappy with paying for it. In January, 2011 we will discontinue this assessment. Of course, this is a worthwhile expense, and we'll have to pay for those 42,000 annual calls some other way. I will ask the Society Board to approve a dues increase to make up for this lost revenue and to cover small increases in costs across the board. We did not raise dues at all in 2010. I believe we can keep this increase under \$5 and accomplish our goals.

**Merchandise.** Philadelphia was a smashing success on many levels, including Harmony Marketplace sales. We are committed to providing the lowest cost, highest quality merchandise. It is thrilling to see young men wearing barbershop gear as they tag all week. As a non-profit, Marketplace profits help keep dues low and help provide education, adjudication, publication and preservation. We also continue to convert our music

sales to electronic media. We currently sell overseas in this manner, reducing time and costs. It is not an easy conversion, but it is worth the effort.

**Conventions/competitions.** On pages 12-15 of this issue you'll find more on a proposal to take international choruses (not district) from an every-year cycle to a two-year cycle, where they would sit out the year after they have competed on the international stage. Please read it, take the survey and comment via letter, e-mail, or blog. Hundreds of members have so far expressed their opinion, and the results are mildly in favor. The proposal has changed somewhat from its original form, so give it another read and let us know what you think.

Most members loved the schedule changes we made in Philadelphia, especially the extra down time. We doubled attendance at the collegiate contest by moving it to Tuesday, plus many more young singers got a chance to experience the whole week of convention, not just Friday/Saturday. We're interested in your feedback. If you haven't yet told us what you think, take the survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/V27WYMC](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/V27WYMC).

### So, where do we go from here?

We go forward, onward, and upward. We continue to implement new programs to help chapters recruit and retain members, like the Learn to Sing program that has worked so well in BABS; and the Compellingly Attractive Chapter Meetings program ([www.21stn7th.com](http://www.21stn7th.com)), which gets rave reviews. We continue to provide links on our website to help chapters, like President Bill Biffle's “Job One” program guaranteed to grow your chapter ([www.barbershop.org/membershipresources](http://www.barbershop.org/membershipresources)), a page that includes many other chapter tools. We look at the results of the Membership Growth Task Force, (posted at [www.barbershop.org/MGTFfinal](http://www.barbershop.org/MGTFfinal)), to decide what it means to each member, chapter, and district. We continue to have fun or die trying, and continue to examine ways to make chapter meetings better, the chapter experience even more fun, and the chorus and quartet sound as expanded as it can be. Then we can proudly invite others to join us.

I must go—a youth “Rock and Roll” choir is coming for a tour. After they've performed, I'll teach them a tag and expose them to the greatest music they will *ever* experience. Work, work, work ... at the greatest job in the world! Thanks for your help and support. Let's get going.

To all Barbershop Harmony Society members, how am I doing?



[ewatson@barbershop.org](mailto:ewatson@barbershop.org)

# Kudos to Jim Henry, Power Principles series

## Kudos for Jim Henry

Just received my May/June issue. As with every issue, I consume every article and feature. I enjoy Bill Biffle's "President's Page" and Ed Watson's "Straight Talk," along with the featured articles. Jim Henry's article was not only informative, but a great insight into this talented, gifted man.

A number of items stood out, but one of the most important is, "I tend to wince a little when quartets that aren't really interested in singing well still insist on singing in public." I too, have heard quartets sing in public that have difficulty ringing a chord. This does nothing for the image of barbershopping. Dr. Henry discusses the secrets of success as being a process, a long, continual process that cannot be accomplished by one man. It takes a group of men, all dedicated to the same, ultimate goal, with each one willing to put forth the effort necessary to improve their chorus. He adds, "surround yourself with talent by getting coaching from anybody who can teach you some nugget that's new," and "if you do what you've always done, how do you expect to get any better?" How true. It is up to all of us to perpetuate this truly unique art form. With people like Dr. Henry leading the way, not only talking the talk, but walking the walk, this incredible art form will be around for generations to enjoy.

JIM WEBER  
Howard's Grove, Wis.

I want to sincerely thank *The Harmonizer* for the report on Jim Henry. He is able to verbalize the spiritual and religious dimension in Barbershop Harmony that I feel every time I get together with my brothers in harmony! Thank you.

WIRT SKINNER  
Canton, N.C.

Jim Henry's humility, faith and honest-to-goodness concern for his fellow chorus members, and their ability to create musical (ministry) magic with the art of four-part barbershop singing, is powerful. Our Society's greatest days are ahead of us, our finest hour is coming. Some will get there ahead of others, but we will all get to that next level. Believe it. Live it. Plan it. Allow your membership to have some ownership in it. It's a journey, not a destination. We have a gift, product, positive experience that is so powerful it will change people's lives. Not just the male singer, but their families, as well. Very few, if any, civic organizations, clubs, etc. have that same firepower to deliver that. Believe it. We're truly blessed.

MIKE SCOTT  
Central States District VP of membership

## Love the Power Principles

I loved the Power Principles series! It just goes to show that wherever you live on this continent, there are recruitment methods that will work for all of us. Thank you for once again strengthening that bond we share as barbershoppers. My chapter (**Cape Breton, N.S.**) is proud to have been included. And now we feel a special kinship with our fellow chord-ringers in Minnesota and Nevada who were also featured. Your helpful articles should truly make a difference in the months to come as the BHS strives to increase its membership—on both sides of the border.

HAL HIGGINS  
Director, Cape Breton, N.S. Chapter

## Genesis of Rocky Mountain District corrected

The article about the new Carolinas district says that the Rocky Mountain District was split off from the Far Western District. It was a split-off from the Central States District. Sam Aramian was the "Godfather" of RMD and Lindy Levitt was the "Daddy," and they put in many, many hours of love and labor bringing RMD as the 16th district of our beloved Society. I was the very first international board member from RMD.

RICHARD "AL" POTTS  
Summerfield, Fla.

*Thanks, Al! The July 1977 issue of The Harmonizer says that RMD was created in from portions of the Central States, Evergreen, Far Western and Southwestern districts. Looks like we all learned something! ■*



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# 2010 champs take Philadelphia by storm!

The atmosphere at the Philadelphia Convention Center crackled with anticipation as 29 collegiate quartets, 27 choruses and 51 quartets gave their all at the 2010 International Convention. The applause was like thunder as **Storm Front** won the quartet competition with great singing and over-the-top humor, after having placed third in '07 and '09. Their finals set, "We've Grown Accustomed to Third Place," followed by a wild



Last year's collegiate silver medalist **Swedish Match** won gold this year with "Love Walked In" and "Put Your Arms Around Me, Honey," averaging merely a tenth of a point higher than silver medalist **Prestige**. Rasmus Krigström (T), Jakob Stenberg (L), Mattias Larsson (Br), and Mathias Roth (Bs) are all students at Sweden's Stockholm Royal College of Music.

More convention and contest details will follow in the Sept./Oct. 2010 issue of *The Harmonizer*.



"car trip" medley of **Bluegrass Student**

**Union** hits, shattered modern Presentation-category quartet scoring records. Jeff Selano (T) and Syd Libsack (Bs) from Atlanta, and Jim Clark (L) and Darin Drown (Br) from Denver, will have to grow accustomed to first place!

In chorus competition, California's **Westminster Chorus** presented a touching rendition of "It Only Takes a Moment" and jazzed it up New Orleans-style with "Mardi Gras March," winning their second straight gold. They set the all-time chorus scoring record (97.7) while narrowly edging the **Vocal Majority**, who just like last year posted their highest score ever (97.1) on the way to second place.

## Membership Growth Task Force report available on *barbershop.org*

The four task forces of the Membership Growth Task Force presented their research to the Society Board at their June meeting in Philadelphia. In it, they outline a strategic approach (best use of financial and human resources) to guide Society staff and provide members with a unifying approach to retaining present members and reaching out to recruit new members. The task forces continue to work in their respective areas to gather data and help staff develop programs and materials. The full report is available at [www.barbershop.org/MGTFfinal](http://www.barbershop.org/MGTFfinal).

## 30-year barbershopper dies in plane crash during mercy mission, writes final words

Dr. Jim K. Hall, a member of the **Gratiot County, Mich. Chapter**, was on one of his frequent mercy missions, attending a patient on a flight to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., when the plane lost power and crashed into Lake Michigan on July 23. In his last moments before the crash, Dr.



Hall thought not of himself but of those he knew would be left behind. He took pen and paper and wrote a note to the loved ones of all the passengers, saying

"10 a.m. Dear all. We love you. We lost power over mid lake Mich. and turning back. We are praying to God that all will be taken care of. We love you, Jim." He put it in his water-proof medical bag, hoping it would be retrieved. According to family and friends, this was typical of Jim's heart, always thinking of the needs

of others before his own. His service to the Gratiot County chapter included everything from past-president to prop-maker to quartet man.

His son, barbershopper James R. Hall, says, "Really, his is the story of so many other barbershoppers—wonderful, dedicated men who just happen to share a harmonious hobby."

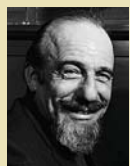
Our hearts go out to Dr. Hall's family and friends.

See *Fox News* video at <http://tinyurl.com/jimhall1>

Read *NPR News* story at <http://tinyurl.com/jimhall2>

Read detailed *Detroit Free Press* story at <http://tinyurl.com/jimhall3>

## Life member Mitch Miller dies at age 99



Society honorary life member Mitchell William "Mitch" Miller, famed conductor, choral director, television performer and recording executive, died July 31, 2010. In his decades as a highly influential producer and then as host of television's "Sing Along with Mitch" in the 1960s, Miller helped establish and extend the cultural relevancy of many of "the old songs" beloved by barbershoppers.

Later in his life, Miller hosted two popular PBS specials focused on barbershop harmony. "Keep America Singing" (1994) featured international champs **Acoustix**, **The Ritz**, **Rural Route 4** and the **Southern Gateway Chorus**. "Voices in Harmony: More Keep America Singing" (1996) featured Society champs **The Gas House Gang** and **Marquis**, plus Sweet Adelines Queens **Showtime!** and **Gem City Sweet Adelines Chorus**.

## Barbershopper preps for Met Opera debut

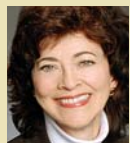


Keith Harris, lead of **Voce** quartet and director of New York's **Westchester Chordsmen**, is making his debut at New York City's Metropolitan Opera House this fall.

"The Met" is the most prestigious opera venue in the Americas, and naturally this will be a great boost to Keith's career. The professional opera baritone will be performing in Italian as a Flemish deputy in Verdi's "Don Carlo," which runs Nov. 22 to Dec. 18. **Voce** placed 9th in international competition in Philadelphia and 11th in 2009. A barbershopper since childhood, Keith also performed at Carnegie Hall this spring. Break a leg, Keith!

[www.keithharris.net](http://www.keithharris.net); [www.metoperafamily.org](http://www.metoperafamily.org)

## Meet new PR Manager Melanie Chapman



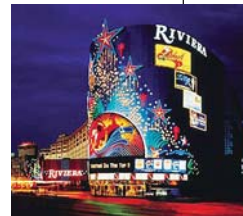
Melanie joined the Society staff in May as Manager of Marketing and Public Relations, where she creates greater Society awareness and helps chapters and districts become more effective in their PR and marketing efforts.

She got to know many staff members while working in marketing for the firm that relocated many of them to Nashville. She has plenty of past marketing experience in the hotel, banking and real estate industries.

Her real reason for living is music! She fell in love with barbershop while playing Marian Paroo in a community theater production of *The Music Man* several years ago. Melanie studied voice at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and received a bachelor's degree at Indiana University. Melanie has performed in many musicals and operas, written and recorded radio jingles and voice-overs, and performed gigs with a group for 18 years in her native Indiana and in Ohio and Kentucky. She plays piano, guitar, hammered dulcimer and autoharp, and directs a church choir. Reach her at [mchapman@barbershop.org](mailto:mchapman@barbershop.org) or at 800-876-7464 x4137.

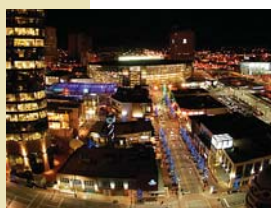
## Make plans for Vegas Midwinter

Enjoy the 4th Annual International Youth Chorus Festival, Seniors Quartet Contest and much more, all under one roof, Jan. 25-30, 2011. The contest/show venues will all be at the newly remodeled Riviera Hotel & Casino. No need to ever leave the building, no smoke-filled casino to deal with unless you choose. All hotel rooms will be in the completely renovated tower for \$99 a night all week (no extra person charges). Register at [www.barbershop.org/vegas](http://www.barbershop.org/vegas).



## Toto, it's like we're not in Kansas (City) anymore!

Everything is new in Kansas City—new Sprint Center Arena, new restaurants, new entertainment venues—all at the fabulous new Power and Light District! If you were there in 2000, it'll be like going from black & white to color for our 2011 International Convention,

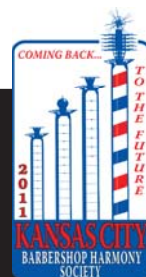


July 3–10, 2011. Early-register by Sept. 30 and get first dibs on hotels, most within easy walking distance of the arena.

The **Heart of America Chorus** is thrilled to be hosting their record sixth international convention, and proud that their city has so much to offer. Register online at [www.barbershop.org/kansascity](http://www.barbershop.org/kansascity) or call 800-595-4849 anytime, 24/7.

## District conventions

CAR	Oct. 1-3	Columbus, IN
CSD	Oct. 8-10	Mason City, IA
DIX	Oct. 1-3	Knoxville, TN
EVG	Sept. 24-26	Portland, OR
FWD	Oct. 8-10	Bakersfield, CA
ILL	Sept. 24-26	Peoria, IL
JAD	Oct. 15-17	Lima, OH
LOL	Oct. 22-24	Fargo, ND
MAD	Oct. 1-3	Milford, DE
NED	Oct. 22-24	Portland, ME
NSC	Oct. 29-31	Myrtle Beach, SC
ONT	Oct. 15-17	Kingston, ON
PIO	Oct. 15-17	Grand Rapids, MI
RMD	Sept. 24-26	Layton, UT
SLD	Sept. 24-26	Rochester, NY
SWD	Oct. 1-3	Plano, TX
SUN	Oct. 1-3	Ocala, FL



### CONVENTIONS

**2011**  
KANSAS CITY  
July 3–10

**2012**  
PORTLAND, ORE.  
July 1–8

**2013**  
TORONTO  
June 30–July 7

**2014**  
LAS VEGAS  
June 29–July 6

**2015**  
PITTSBURGH  
June 28–July 5

**2016**  
NASHVILLE  
July 3–10

**2017**  
MINNEAPOLIS  
July 2–9

**2018**  
ORLANDO  
July 1–8

**2019**  
SALT LAKE CITY  
June 30–July 7

**MIDWINTER**  
[www.barbershop.org/midwinter](http://www.barbershop.org/midwinter)

**2011**  
LAS VEGAS  
Jan. 25–30

**2012**  
TUCSON  
Jan. 17–22

**HARMONY UNIVERSITY 2011**  
St. Joseph, Mo.  
July 31–Aug. 7, 2011

# A 2-year chorus rotation?

## Weighing the pros and cons

The Spirit of Phoenix (shown in 2008) is one of many top choruses that regularly sits out from international competition voluntarily. The Society Contest and Judging Committee has recommended a plan that would mandate a year off after competing in international competition, almost doubling the number of eligible choruses.

At the Society's request, for more than a year, members of the Society Contest & Judging Committee (SCJC) have been investigating an idea that would nearly double the number of choruses eligible to compete on the international stage—dividing the most talented Society choruses into two equal pools to compete on alternating years. The suggestion was proposed by multiple sources, with arguments and anecdotal support compelling enough to request the SCJC research.

There is a precedent for this plan: A two-year rotation model used by Sweet Adelines since the early 1970s is overwhelmingly popular among its members. Of course, we are the Barbershop Harmony Society, with different traditions, desires and expectations. Such a substantial change to the Society's chorus contest structure should not be entered into lightly, and it is by no means certain that the proposed change will go forward. This article:

- summarizes a proposal that has been recommended by the SCJC.
- outlines the major arguments for and against the proposed plan.
- summarizes the research, polling and changes that have occurred so far.
- shows you where to go for more information and where to make your views known.



**Ed Watson**  
CEO,  
Barbershop  
Harmony  
Society  
ewatson@  
barbershop.org

### Highlights of the proposed two-year rotation

The Society Contest and Judging Committee has formulated a transition plan that would create two equivalent "flights" of competitors, one for 2012 (Portland) and one for 2013 (Toronto). Proposed dates are the committee's recommendations and are subject to change.

- Qualification for the 2011 contest in Kansas City will follow current rules, i.e. based on 2010 Fall District Contest scores.
- All choruses scoring 81 or higher during the 2010 district chorus contests (or if they do not compete in fall 2010, based on 2010 international scores) will be divided into two groups based on a set formula.
- One group will receive invitations to qualify for slots in the Portland 2012 International Contest. The other group will receive invitations to qualify for slots in the Toronto 2013 International Contest. (Requests from choruses will be honored to the greatest extent possible.)
- These will only be invitations to qualify for international competition on specific years; invited choruses must still post high enough qualifying scores at their Fall District Contests held 8-9 months prior.
- The remaining international slots for 2012 will be filled based on 2011 Fall District Contest scores. Remaining international slots for 2013 will be based on 2012 Fall District Contest scores.
- Districts are guaranteed at least one representative every year.
- All choruses that compete in an international contest on a given year will be ineligible to qualify for the next year's international contest.
- All choruses are eligible to compete in district contests for score and for district championships in any year, regardless of international eligibility.
- Any chorus that didn't compete at international on a given year—no matter what the reason—will be eligible to qualify for the next year's international contest.
- International champs still sit out two years, effectively switching from A to B rotation.

Go to [www.barbershop.org/2year](http://www.barbershop.org/2year) for a detailed explanation of the proposed transition plan, including a hypothetical A/B rotation based on 2009 district and international scores.

### Just what are we talking about?

Currently, our champion choruses are prohibited from competing in international contests for the ensuing two years, making the third year following their championship their next opportunity to compete. This gives them some breathing room and allows other choruses to "step in" and "step up." For many years, the **Vocal Majority**

and the **Masters of Harmony** would each win in their respective year, and a third chorus (**Westminster Chorus, Ambassadors of Harmony, Alexandria Harmonizers, New Tradition Chorus**) would win when these two choruses were not competing. The proposal being discussed is somewhat similar, but for all competitors, not just the champions.

Simply put, if you were to compete and make it to the international stage, you would not be eligible to compete at international the following year. You may take the year to recover, or to build your war chest for the following year, or to do something different like travel, but you are not permitted to compete at the international level. You may still compete at the district level if you so desire.

Under this proposal, a chorus that competes in Portland in 2012 would not be eligible to compete again until Las Vegas in

2014. Toronto in 2013 would host a different group of choruses, none of which competed in Portland. A proposed formula would ensure the 2012 and 2013 fields were equally strong.

### Potential advantages of a two-year rotation

Proponents of the two-year rotation plan believe it may address many needs among Society chapters and individual barbershoppers:

**Increases district participation in international qualifying contests.** There has been more than a 20% drop since 1996 in the number of choruses appearing in district contests to qualify for international. There is some statistical evidence that choruses capable of achieving international qualifying scores skip these district contests because one or two other higher-scoring district choruses are expected to win any available international berths. Were outcomes no longer perceived as a foregone conclusion, more chapters may be inspired to vie for open slots. If these “on the cusp” chapters believed the price they must pay to improve would now be rewarded, more may be motivated to acquire the resources and recruit the additional members needed to excel at the next level.

**Relieves financial burdens on chapters and individuals.** The time commitment and costs associated with preparing for an international contest can be difficult for active chorus members to meet every year, and could be a deal-breaker for some potential members. A year off would ease financial and scheduling expectations, which could improve member satisfaction, recruiting and retention.

**Creates incentives for a more balanced chapter experience.** A year off may reduce “two-song syndrome” (where chapters constantly refine contest packages at the expense of repertoire) and increase incentives for greater variety during chapter meetings. More time could be devoted to non-contest repertoire, fund-raising, membership growth, and on improving their community profile. The two-year layoffs for international champions may help explain their multi-faceted chapter strengths and long-term staying power. Regular one-year layoff may similarly affect other international competitors.

**Boosts international attendance and revenues.** Those who attend international conventions tend to love the experience and want to return; yet, the pool of potential attendees has been shrinking. Lower convention profits also mean less funding to apply to the Society’s non-contest needs. A broader talent pool at the international contest would equal a broader pool of first-time attendees who can catch the “bug” and return again. A higher number of family and supporters could likely afford to accompany competitors bi-annually than can afford to

### Reactions to the proposal so far

A committee composed of C&J members, judges, district officers and Society Events committee members began studying a two-year plan in 2009. They generated a system by which two alternating pools of roughly equal talent could be created and investigated the potential advantages and disadvantages of such a plan. They then e-mailed details to directors of the Society’s top-scoring choruses and to district officers. Each group was asked nine questions related to the proposal. Each group was presented with an earlier proposed model, in which choruses would have about 20 months to prepare after qualifying for an international contest. (Based on negative feedback, this element was later dropped.) In response to the earlier model:

**Chorus directors:** 24 of 45 responded. When asked whether a two-year rotation would be a positive move for the Society, 58% agreed, 29% were neutral, 13% disagreed. Possibly related, 75% reported financial pressures among members due to attending international every year, 17% were neutral, and 8% reported no financial pressure.

**District leaders:** 32 of 63 responded. When asked whether it would be a good move for the Society, 41% agreed, 25% were neutral, 34% disagreed. However, when asked whether their district would see increased participation due to more openings for international competitors, 28% agreed, 25% were neutral, 47% disagreed.

After reviewing the C&J committee findings (details available at [www.barbershop.org/2year](http://www.barbershop.org/2year)) at their January 2010 meeting, the Society Board of Directors asked the committee to continue investigating the two-year chorus rotation. A brief description of the proposed plan appeared on page 8 of March/April 2010 issue of *The Harmonizer* and pointed readers to details and a poll available on the Society’s blog at [www.barbershophq.com/?p=1310](http://www.barbershophq.com/?p=1310).

**barbershopHQ.com.** By July 2010, the post regarding the plan had generated a lively discussion with 183 comments. The unscientific poll (the self-selected sample was dominated by current international competitors) had logged 547 total votes:

- Overall, 61% were in favor, 39% not in favor
- 304 votes came from members of currently competitive international choruses, 51% were in favor, 49% against
- Among 89 polled who believe a rule change could put international competition within their chapter’s reach, 87% were in favor, 13% against.

do so annually, possibly boosting overall crowd sizes.

**Increases member enjoyment at international conventions.** International chorus competitors typically have limited time to enjoy the week due to extra rehearsals, mandated curfews and other constraints. Off years will give these proudly fanatical barbershoppers the rare opportunity to attend all contest sessions, enjoy more tagging on more evenings, and generally savor the casual pleasures at and around international conventions. Chorus contest fans may also enjoy seeing new groups each year and may be less inclined to skip years because “it is mostly the same groups every year.”


**Multiplies creativity.** Competitive choruses that are in an off year may find that watching all the other choruses (currently impossible for most competitors) may give them a better sense of creative possibilities and help spur them to greater heights.

### Potential disadvantages of a two-year rotation

Of course, not all Society members are in favor of a two-year rotation. Current international competitors and district officers in particular have expressed concerns that they want to see resolved.

**Lowers attendance at district competitions?** Not all District leaders are convinced that the proposal will increase participation enough at fall contests. They worry that their biggest and best chorus may skip their fall contest every other year, harming atten-

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dance and district finances. The core of the concern is whether “off-year” chorus members will have enough incentives to participate. For example, could districts allow an “off-year” chorus to compete in the fall for the district championship?

Could an “off-year” chorus host the fall contest, give a headliner performance, sing away the trophy, put on master classes, or all of the above? Many additional options are still available for exploration, but this concern remains a major item on the table. In any case, a feared drop in fall contest attendance may be avoidable.

**Why mandate what can be done voluntarily?** While many top choruses already skip years voluntarily, many of their members don’t want rules changed to mandate a year off. In the end, this becomes a question of balancing their concerns against those of “on the cusp” choruses, who always have a mandated year off because current rules restrict the number of open slots.

**Loss of momentum?** Some members of top choruses suggest that momentum may be lost if they skip every other year, or question why medalist choruses are not exempt from this proposal. All options are still on the table, but this concern must be weighed against concerns of choruses seeking to start whatever momentum could be generated by a realistic shot at international competition. Again, note that international champions typically come back in improved form after their longer two-year contest layoffs.

**Watering down the field?** Today’s “on the cusp” choruses indeed average slightly lower scores and fewer members than the current field. Some contend this proposal would reduce the number of A-level choruses performing on a given year by half, backfilling their numbers with current B-level choruses and thereby lowering contest quality and prestige. This is a valid concern, as long as it doesn’t include potentially

### Tell us what you think

A link to a detailed survey regarding the plan is available at [www.barbershop.org/2year](http://www.barbershop.org/2year). Shortly after this article is published, the survey link will also be sent to all members/Associates who have an e-mail address registered with the Society. (Non-Internet connected members can request a printed copy from their chapter secretaries, who can input answers on their behalf.) You must be a Society member or Associate to take the survey. Public discussion of the latest proposal will take place at [www.barbershopHQ.com/p=1491](http://www.barbershopHQ.com/p=1491). Survey closes on October 15, 2010.

misleading math and assumptions. For example, any given year’s line-up already excludes many top groups that sit out voluntarily—“cutting that number in half” is not wholly accurate. More importantly, the hope is that the small gap between today’s present and

“on the cusp” international competitors will close once the incentives of international competition take effect on newly motivated choruses.

There may be precedent in looking back on when the Sweet Adelines instituted their two-year plan by placing all “second tier” choruses in the same rotation. Our sisters report that within a few years, the weaker choruses had closed the gap and that both rotations are now strong. While our Society’s proposed plan creates equivalently weighted rotations from the outset, we could likewise soon forget which groups once were “second tier.” If more choruses have incentives to reach for higher performance goals, wouldn’t that increase the number of high-level choruses at the district and international levels?

### What’s next?

Based on its study and feedback, the SCJC has recommended transition to a two-year plan. Their recommendation requires Society Board approval, which will consider member feedback. A decision will likely take place in less than a year:

- If the Society Board accepts this plan at or before its Jan. 2011 meeting, rotations will be based on Fall 2010 district scores, or choruses averaging an 81 score or higher in Philadelphia.
- If the Society Board accepts this plan at its June 2011 meeting, rotations will be based on Fall 2011 district scores, or choruses averaging an 81 score or higher in Kansas City.

The sooner the decision is made, the more the affected chapters can begin planning their calendar for whichever flight they are placed. ■

# Harmony Foundation at its 50th anniversary

Harmony Foundation President/CEO Clarke Caldwell discusses how the Foundation's future is now intertwined with the Society's future

## Part 1 in a 2-part series



### What percentage of Society members are currently contributors to Harmony Foundation?

It's about 7%. I'm surprised it is that low. When I tell people, most respond the same way. I think the disconnect is the overwhelming passion about the impact barbershop has on people's lives, and yet that has not translated into "giving back" through charitable contributions. Can you imagine what could happen if everyone invested just the cost of one trip to McDonalds each month? This is the level where our youth programs need tremendous growth in support.

The bright spot, however, is the very generous level of support and commitment that is growing rapidly from a group of caring and visionary individuals. Fifty-two percent of these went from non-contributors to members of the President's Council [annual donations of \$1,000 or more]. The pace of this program is record-setting. We've actually had less success in asking for smaller gifts.

### That's remarkable! Why are those who give to the Foundation starting off at the major gift level?

With larger gifts, we need to sit down and explain—the contributors have to understand the shifts in Harmony Foundation and the Society. We have greater success with those we've been looking in the eye, helping them become part of that dream. They've been pleased to give and to become difference makers. The people who contribute financially are often the the most solid members of the Society. They enjoy and have invested in it so much that they are getting more out of it than just what they are getting from their chapter on a weekly basis. They're the least likely to say, "I quit, I don't like barbershop anymore."



Lorin May  
Editor,  
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### You mentioned shifts in the Foundation and the Society. Could you clarify?

Well, 50 years ago, the Foundation started out as a way for the Society to hold real estate tax free. Then after a few years, with the Institute of Logopedics (Heartspring), we were raising money for an outside entity. With changes to Heartspring, a decision was made to change the relationship. Small grants were made to chapters and districts and to other outside organizations.

Seven years ago, we took a sharp turn. The focus is now the charitable activities the Barbershop Harmony Society needs for growth, to respond to unmet need within our own organization. That need has been growing consistently for the last 20 years.

### What are these unmet needs within the Society?

The former Society financial model was unsustainable. We're not able to support the Society on an annual basis based on dues, profit from convention, Harmony Marketplace. Members didn't used to think the Society had to act like a charitable organization—they thought dues

**If people keep getting fewer services, we'll keep getting fewer people.**

would pay for everything. But membership has declined steadily for 25 years, so the Society has had shrinking resources while the cost of everything has been going up. The Society's ability to act in a healthy and vibrant way has gone down year after year. If people keep getting fewer services, we'll keep getting fewer people.

We need to reverse that spiral. Charitable giving will have to fill that gap. Culturally, most Society members and Associates don't understand the need or the benefits to giving charitably to their own organization—investing in the growth, the preservation that we speak of so passionately. And yet, we fail to realize that this preservation takes money, it takes intent, it takes funds, it takes



Seattle's Northwest Vocal Project is a great example of how donations bear fruit over time. With Harmony Foundation assistance, the small group attended the Society's first Youth Chorus Festival in 2008, won the second festival in 2009, and after becoming a chapter, won the 2009 Evergreen District Championship. A magnet for young leaders and a breeding ground for great quartets, the chorus placed 12th in Philadelphia with 46 men on stage. Other younger groups are popping up all over, getting their first taste of barbershop harmony thanks to Harmony Foundation.

LORIN MAY

Of course, many know that Harmony Foundation underwrites the Society's entire youth program, including indirect expenses. I would call that an "outreach and growth" program—the next level we're hoping to fund—except that Youth in Harmony is not a recruiting program. Although we believe YiH will help the Society's long-term prospects, the vision is to get more youth

singing, and singing more barbershop harmony. professional people who can lead the preservation in a very strategic way in the future. In the past seven years, we have raised and have given to the Society a little more than \$2.5 million toward underwriting their youth programs and externally-focused programs. In the past, that would have gone to someone else.

singing, and singing more barbershop harmony.

**Did the Barbershop Harmony Society give up its charitable mission after Heartspring?**

**Specifically, how is the Foundation helping youth?**

I think it's transferred its charitable mission to the core business of the Society by supporting singing in schools—we also want youth to learn barbershop harmony both in schools and in programs sponsored by the Society. Additionally, we've helped hundreds of chapters improve by sending their directors to a week of Directors College.

Last year, we helped fund the 39 YiH Workshops for more than 7,000 students, the 16 Harmony Explosion camps for 1,500 students, helped fund the international collegiate contest, and brought 11 choruses with approximately 300 youth to the last Youth Chorus Festival—we paid for the hotel and registration of every participant. That financial help seems to be the catalyst to getting many of these choruses to form and to plan to come to Midwinter.

For a non-recruiting program, Youth in Harmony is bringing in a lot of young, new members. I understand that 625 of the Society's new members last year [22%] were under age 25! Some of these youth choruses

**THE CAPENOS CHALLENGE**

This Challenge was created through the generosity and farsightedness of one man, a man who wants to give back to the organization that means so much to him.

The President's Council is the flagship program of annual giving to Harmony Foundation International. Formed more than six years ago, it has been the catalyst for record breaking fundraising goals and has completely funded all the Society's youth programs, as well as:

- Brought a focus and emphasis to major gifts for annual support
- Cast vision and raised the sights of members showing what a major donor program can accomplish

Warren Capenos has provided \$250,000 and challenges everyone else to come together to match it. He's counting either donations by new President's Council members or increased donations by current President's Council members. The challenge started in Philadelphia, and as of this writing, just five weeks later, we are at \$57,591.



**JOIN US**



Culturally, most Society members and Associates don't understand the need or benefits of giving charitably to their own organization—investing in the growth, the preservation.

from Midwinter have become permanent Society choruses, one of them is already a district champion. These groups are attracting young, high-quality singers who are crazy about barbershop harmony. This is just three years into the Festival. When we look to the future with youth, we're not having to wait too long for results.

**You said something about the "outreach and growth" level of giving—**

—that level doesn't exist yet, where we're expanding the organization horizontally to the public. We're looking to fund the Society's "Four on the Road" program, where a young, full-time quartet will spend a year singing at schools and colleges, a cappella festivals and other big events, exposing tens of thousands of a cappella singers and fans to quality barbershop harmony. The "TAG Team" will consist of full-time Society employees who live in the field to strengthen existing chapters and start new ones.

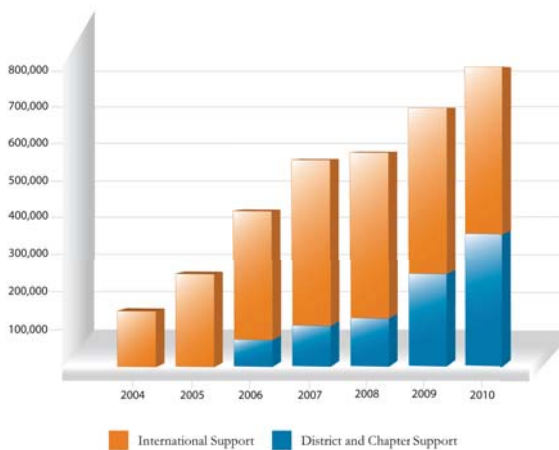
Those will need to be funded 100 percent by the Foundation, over and above the current level of giving. Those programs will together cost \$750,000 a year.

It's one thing to start them, but they'll need to be funded year after year, sustained in the future and likely grown. That will be part of the Foundation's annual fundraising program, as well as all of the current program. Once we do that, we can look to capital asset improvement.

**Those sound like great programs, but we've got so many more questions we'll have to go to a part 2.**

Looking forward to it. I believe that what the Society and the Foundation have to offer in our society, in the world, is something that no one else can offer. These dreams are made a reality because of the generosity and vision of many contributors. ■

[www.harmonyfoundation.org](http://www.harmonyfoundation.org)



In 2009, Harmony Foundation gave \$450,000 to the Barbershop Harmony Society, part of the \$2.5 million total projected to be given between 2004-2010. Funds have covered the Society's youth program in its entirety and boosted the musical level in hundreds of So-

**ciety chapters via Director's College scholarships. In 2009, Harmony Foundation gave an additional \$178,000 to Society chapters and districts as part of a projected \$790,000 projected be given between 2006-2010, thanks to the Foundation's Donor's Choice program. Donors can earmark up to 30% of their donation to be given to a chosen district or chapter.**

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*Scipio Garling is the Alexandria Harmonizers' Vice-President for Marketing, and recipient of a 2010 Outstanding Achievement Award from PROBE "for his use of new technology*

*and social networking tools to strengthen and improve the chapter administratively, musically, and in its outreach to many audiences."*

*Want to know how about how to market your chorus? Go to Harmocast.com and listen to Episode #10 of the Harmonizers podcast, "Marketing 101 for your Barbershop Chorus."*



# Social NET

**Get bigger audiences, find more potential**

It's not what you know, it's who you know ... at least, when it comes to becoming a barbershopper.

Most men don't become barbershoppers through research or even direct exposure to the style but through knowing a friend in barbershop. I was familiar with barbershop as a lad; my father used to get the recordings of the International Quartet Contest and we'd often enjoy them together. Still, even when looking to join a singing group as an adult, I never thought to seek out barbershop. No, I didn't think to join barbershop until I took my visiting father to a local barbershop show ... and ran into an old friend who was performing on stage.

My friend insisted I join him at rehearsal,

**The Alexandria Harmonizers added 23 new members this year, largely thanks to social networking initiatives that have brought many previously unknown potential members into their chapter's orbit.**

# WORKING

members—and effective ads are cheap

and sure enough, the fun and friendliness of the men I met convinced me to join. I liked barbershop, sure; but I liked being a barbershopper even more. It wasn't simply an artistic connection, it was a social one.

Personal connections—who you know—is the mostly likely hook for someone to get involved in barbershop. That's the power of social networking, and there are new Internet tools you can use to harness its power to grow your chapter.

## Create a Fan Page for your group on Facebook

The most popular social networking site on the Internet is Facebook. It's like a giant bulletin board where you can update people on what you're doing through notices, messages, photos, and invitations. Many chapters—such as the **Alexandria Harmonizers**, the **Ambassadors of Harmony**,

## Dos and Don'ts for Facebook Fan Pages

### Do

- Post regularly. As a general rule of thumb, post at least weekly but not daily. It depends on the level of activity of your chorus.
- Post multi-media. Links to relevant websites, photos, and videos are a must to break up the monotony of prose-only posts.
- Post positively. Save the grouching for the Board meeting, and be consistently upbeat in your posting.
- Befriend other groups. You lose nothing by supporting other barbershoppers and you gain much.



### Don't

- Don't be too serious. On occasional wacky status update or slyly amusing caption to a chorus photo helps humanize your group and gives it character.
- Don't be all about you. Unless you have an overwhelming number of your activities to post about, take the time to congratulate and praise other groups when appropriate.
- Don't talk to yourself. Remember that the goal is reach fans, new friends, and potential patrons and members. Don't think of social networking as an in-house newsletter, it's your free air-time with the public.
- Don't forget to advertise. To keep growing, remember to regularly encourage your friends to promote your fanpage among their friends as well. That's the power of social networking!

the **Masters of Harmony**, **Toronto Northern Lights**, **Voices of Gotham**, and the **Westminster Chorus**—are on Facebook. Their Fan Pages serve as an adjunct to their regular websites, and allow other Facebook users to become fans and follow their activities, generating buzz among potential patrons and members.

If you visit the Alexandria Harmonizers Fan Page on Facebook, for example, you'll see that we use:

- “status updates” to communicate with our fans

