

July/August 2016

THE HARMONIZER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY

OR THE JO

that comes from joining together

We come from different places and different backgrounds. Yet when we join together, we share something that is bigger than any of us alone. So that is making a difference in people's lives. That's what really matters makes us sing with joy.

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

INSIDE: How and why to sing for the public • Have your say in the Society's strategic plan • Fathers Day yields big gigs



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THE HARMONIZER

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July/August
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VOLUME
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NUMBER
4



20 Looking 60 years ahead

The Society's biggest strategic planning effort since 1954 is underway, and it will affect Barbershoppers and the choral music world for decades to come. All Society members are strongly encouraged to participate in the feedback process.

LORIN MAY, EDITOR, THE HARMONIZER

9 2015 Annual Report

Stapled into the center of this issue is a copy of the 2015 Annual Report of the Barbershop Harmony Society. It was created to serve as an overview of last year's activity for the benefit of not only Society members and Associates, but to introduce ourselves to interested outside parties. Download an electronic copy at bit.ly/bhs2015ar.

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Photos from 2015 and beyond
COVER BY EDDIE HOLT

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Nashville showed how to get new audiences

Friends at Nashville Convention

I was very tired after the Nashville Convention, from which I returned a few days ago. There were many *great* singing sessions, and more optional activities than I could get to. Add on the expected duties of the Society Board, extra chorus rehearsals (yes, I was in the mike-testing chorus), and just greeting friends ... sleep was at a premium.

So now *exhale*. For those who make the trip to the International Conventions, I really don't know how to describe the friendships that are made, re-made, and just ooze out on every street corner.

Nashvillians visit—do your locals visit, too?

I thought the efforts of our headquarters staff and event/PR planners was stellar this year! We had close to 2,000 Nashville locals at our Saturday Night Spectacular and Quartet Finals. According to 2/3 of them, this was their first-ever barbershop show. What an introduction! There are so many potential singers out in the world, and we need to “bring them in” to hear our harmonies. We need to perform in new areas where people can (obviously) *see* our joy!

There are a lot of things that each member in each chapter can borrow or steal from the outreach that was on display in Nashville. Are you working to fill your show seats with potential new singers and new audience members? Do a favor for your community (and yourself) and connect with some groups you have never contacted before. Build a relationship! The potential to get new interested audience members is too great to pass up!

Your thoughts wanted

Your Society Board is undertaking several channels to hear from the members. The input from 3,000 of you for the recent member satisfaction survey is being reviewed and tabulated. There was an open listening session on Saturday during the Nashville schedule so that many board members could hear the specific thoughts and concerns *you* had. You gave us some excellent thoughts for consideration.

Does your chapter have an equivalent “all chapter member” session, where everyone is given a piece of paper, and everyone is allowed to write down “something” in the way of chapter direction?

There are no wrong ideas when you gather a lot

of ideas for the chapter board to consider.

Perform, and perform

Any time (which would be now!) is a great time to plan to have your next performance in a new place, with a new audience, potentially showing new singers what the joy of singing in your chorus looks like.

How often is too often to plan a performance? Well, it must start with what the members want to support, adding a few new songs to keep the repertoire alive, and making the community contacts who can give your chorus the opportunities you need to give back to the community.

What does your calendar look like for the fall of 2016 and into the first half of 2017? Perhaps there is room for another performance after an upcoming chapter show. (I bet most of your guys do want to sing and perform again.)

Looking down the road

Your Society elected some excellent men (Steve Denino and David Haedtler) to join the Board and take new leadership roles into 2017.

This convention gave me some small bits of time to welcome our international affiliates and recognize their contributions to continuing to expand our harmonies around the world. I also had many people come up and introduce themselves, and many wanted to share one or two things that are going well at their local chapters.

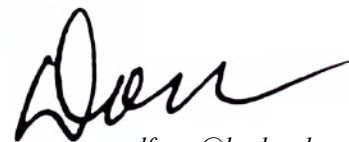
I so enjoyed hearing those successful stories about what you are doing for your communities. As you described your efforts and results, I could see the “proud gleam” in your eyes.

Everyone has his Gold Medal Moment

Everyone has that great story of an experience that was too good for words. It may be a story you told or one that you are yet to tell. It may be less of a single moment and more culmination of learning our songs, our craft, and the execution of our planned performances.

Enjoy them. Create more of them. Share the opportunities with new singers. Come back and tell me more about them at our upcoming Midwinter Convention in San Antonio.

I'll have even more time to listen to you.



dfuson@barbershop.org



Do a favor for your community (and for yourself) and connect with some groups you have never contacted before. Build a relationship!



The big picture: to see more is to love it more!

This issue's guest columnist is Donny Rose, Director of Harmony University.

I've spent decades as a Barbershopper with many opinions about what headquarters *should have* been working on! After almost two years here, I have learned so much about the bigger picture, but my gut tells me not all are aware of our progress. As with the Indian proverb of the blind men and the elephant, we might touch one part of the "beast" and mistakenly believe we see the whole picture. I still may not see the whole elephant, but I see a lot more of it than I used to—and I like what I see!

Outreach. We're partnering with the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) and the National Association For Music Education (NAfME) in hundreds of big and little ways, both in your town and on Capitol Hill. The educational community is quickly learning that the BHS is their friend and ally! With the help of Harmony



Foundation, BHS is granting hundreds of thousands of dollars to chapters, harmony camps, districts, and organizations. We see a surge of interest in our youth events like never before!

Print music. Hal Leonard, the world's largest sheet music publisher, publishes and markets

versions of our music. Why does this matter? Until recently, the *only* way to discover barbershop sheet music was to know about our website and purchase directly from the BHS. (No wonder it was difficult to make a dent in our schools!) Because of Hal Leonard, educators and community choir leaders regularly see our sheet music alongside all of the other genres they use. They're buying and performing our music, too, and getting to know us in the process.

YouTube strategy. For most of our history, new members only discovered barbershop by being invited to a chapter meeting. That's still how most of us join, but many now discover barbershop harmony via YouTube videos. We just began releasing most of the quartet and chorus content from the Nashville convention on YouTube. We couldn't do this even a year ago. How many more thousands will fall in love with four-part harmony now that every member can share our performances?

Social media. Beyond sharing our music, you have more opportunity than ever to show all your friends that you are having fun in a community of singers. Share your warm up! Share your oldest guy singing with your youngest guy. Post phone video of singing at a park for a bunch of skaters and joggers. Show content that will make people think "I could do that!" Share your group singing on an airplane, bus at McDonalds, at your county fair. And remember ... your contest ballad is indeed

lovely, but not as strong to share with the outside world. Share songs people know, like "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," "The Longest Time," or "Happy." Get close-ups of people smiling and singing along. And remember: the audience doesn't care about your singing score when you're touching their hearts!

Education. A few years ago, I was one of four professional music educators attending Harmony U. For 2016, the number is nearly 100! Many are scholarship recipients, but many pay their own way—and four of these students already have doctorates in music. They will share what they have learned with their young singers, and many have expressed an interest in singing with or directing our local chapters. These music teachers then attend conferences and share how wonderful barbershop music is for their programs—and why their groups are singing so much better than last year!

Our first big Harmony U online project just wrapped up: David Wright's "History of Barbershop." These 10 classes include old recordings, videos, pictures, and preserve our history for future generations! We'll give this wide distribution.

Leadership. Our Healthy Chapter Initiative is cooking with Antonio Lombardi and his team of leaders creating tutorials, better chapter and district communication, new leadership materials, certified facilitators, and even chapter and district advocacy and training. We acknowledge that while the old CSLT and COTS programs were poorly attended and hemorrhaging money, they should have been improved rather than cut. However, we are now committed to full and effective leadership training and resources.

We are the envy of just about every choral organization in the world—their words, not mine—and we have no plans to slow down!

DRose@barbershop.org

What's on Marty's daytimer?

- July 20-24, Category School, Nashville
- July 22-24, Leadership Forum, Nashville
- July 24-3, Harmony U
- Aug 13-16 - ASAE National Convention, Salt Lake City
- Aug 23, BHS & HFI strategic planning
- Aug 24, National Museum African American Music Meeting, Nashville
- Sept 9-11 - Harmony Foundation Int'l Annual Meeting, Nashville



What's Marty reading?

- Book of Musical Americana, Deac C.T. Martin



What's Marty listening to?

- Harmony! - Great Western Chorus of Bristol, UK



Follow Marty's social media

bit.ly/martyfacebook
twitter.com/Marty_Monson

We are the envy of just about every choral organization in the world, and we have no plans to slow down!

Reading blind, and remembering another Deke

I'm totally blind and live in Britt, Iowa, 30 miles west of Mason City: home of *The Music Man* and the **River City Barbershop Chorus**.

Last Saturday, it was a joy finding *The Harmonizer* in a way where I would be able to hear about happenings in the Society. Being blind, I have special software on my computer that allows me to hear everything that's on the screen verbally. To type this message to you, the software is saying the letters as I type. Once I'm finished, I'm able to do my own spell-check.

I have had a love for barbershop music for many years. When I attended a school for the blind in Iowa, we had a barbershop quartet. We called ourselves, "The Four Blind Mice." In the early '70s, I became a part of the River City Chapter. Ron Philips was director at the time. A move to southern Minnesota, where I played with a dance band for 25 years, took me away from that activity, though I would make an occasional visit. I then spent 14 years in Mesa, Ariz.

Returning to Britt, I wanted to rejoin River City. I did so, shortly before our spring show. To be with guys who have a passion for music, and the friendships that have come about as a result, that's a perfect combination.

I wanted to let you know what a pleasure to hear news of things happening in the society. For me, it's so special hearing it on the computer because of the independence this gives me. I don't have to rely on someone to read it to me; especially when I'm not going to always have that option. I just wanted to let you know how much this is appreciated.

GARY GJERSTAD
Mason City, Iowa

In praise of another "Deke"—Deac Martin

When I saw that last cover featuring Deke Sharon—who I don't know at all—I think about putting a guy there that was directly responsible for the job you now have that had a similar moniker as well as the formation of the SPEBSQSA. His name was C.T. "Deac" Martin, often credited as being the "silent" third founder of the SPEBSQSA.

Deac was a great man who contributed "The Way I See It" column in *The Harmonizer* from the beginnings of the early Society. It helped define the great growth of the Society's early days. He was a humble man who had the wisdom of the ages. He worked behind the scenes, and expected no praise for his monumental efforts.

Deac was hardly a prude, but he was also known as the "conscience" of the Society. He held that we should only allow men of good character in. There

were really chapter membership committees in the early days. No off-color jokes or offensive material was allowed in our performances.

Born in 1890 in Hannibal, Mo., he was anything but a racist or elitist. He also insisted that our performances be void anything that may offend anyone in the audience ... and keep it barbershop! Although he played a mean mandolin, he was reluctant to hire the 1949 champ **Midstates Four** with their act featuring the virtuoso guitar man, Forry Haynes, and Marty Mendro playing a standup bass. Their immense popularity finally caused him to recant that earlier call.

Most importantly, he was the first historian of the SPEBSQSA. His book, "Keep America Singing," published in 1948, told the story of the first 10 years of the SPEBSQSA that was described in great and authentic detail. Every member should read it so they may learn what their real roots are. [download at bit.ly/deac10years] It is a beautiful leather covered book that is a real collector's item. Deac would cringe if he knew what some of the modern "historians" are saying about the early Society. They often take liberties with the truth when they try to rationalize the immense changes instituted by the BHS, mainly abandoning the "Preservation of the Art" that we were all dedicated to in the early days.

Deac Martin should be on that cover some day.

TOM NEAL (MEMBER SINCE 1951)
Boulder City, Nev.

Rumors of his passing have been exaggerated

Due to a system error, member Ron Higgins of Springfield, Vt. was wrongly listed in the Chapter Eternal section of *The Harmonizer*. He is very much alive! ■



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Forefront, Ambassadors take Nashville gold

Pratt Street Power takes first in Youth Contest in a week that saw 8,000+ peak attendance

Forefront quartet snagged gold at the 2016 international contest after two years as silver medalist, becoming the second consecutive champion from the Cardinal District and third consecutive champion quartet featuring brothers. The moment was particularly sweet as the medals were placed around their necks by retiring champions **Instant Classic**, their close friends and contest rivals who beat them to the gold last year.

Forefront mixed American songbook classics such as "Georgia On My Mind," powerful ballads such as "It Only Takes



PHOTOS THIS PAGE: LORIN MAY

of **Harmony** captured their fourth gold medals in the chorus contest. Singing "Something Good" from The Sound Of Music and a "Top of the World" medley. Choruses performed songs ranging from pure traditional close harmony to parodies of "Uptown Funk," a mad scientist medley, a

traditional New Zealand Maori war dance, and the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band." **Central Standard** (Kansas City) earned

its first silver medal

with an amazing sound, while past champs the **Masters of Harmony** and **Toronto Northern Lights** took third and fourth place bronze.

Sound of the Rockies, in its first international contest with Mark Hale at the baton, earned yet another bronze medal, placing fifth. More than 1,800 singers crossed the stage in the chorus contest

Youth contest. New Mid-Atlantic District youth quartet **Pratt Street Power** took first place in the recently re-named Youth



Pratt Street Power



Ambassadors of Harmony

A Moment," and intricate jazz charts such as "I Got Rhythm." The members are Drew Wheaton (T), Kevin Hughes (L), Brian O'Dell (Bs), Aaron Hughes (Br). Sweden's **Lemon Squeezy** took silver, while **Main Street** quartet entertained its way to a record seventh consecutive bronze. In fact, all three bronze medalists were from the Sunshine District, with **Signature** making a huge splash at fourth place and **Throwback** taking fifth.

Chorus contest. The 133 men of the **Ambassadors**

Barbershop Quartet Contest, sponsored by Harmony Foundation International. **Flightline** quartet (FWD) took silver, with **The Mission** (BHNZ), **Ohana Means Family** (DIX) and **Frontier** (PIO) taking bronze.

Although youth quartets can no longer compete in both the youth and open quartet contest during the same year, 13 of the 30 competing youth quartets posted scoring averages of at least 76%, the qualifying score for the open contest.



New Society/Foundation employees, new resources for leaders & quartets



Antonio Lombardi is the Society's new Manager of Chapter Leadership and Education, where he will direct day-to-day activities for the Healthy Chapter Initiative, in a staff position funded completely by Harmony Foundation. He has significant leadership experience at the district and chapter level in the Northeastern District (NED), Outside of the barbershop community, he worked for the Community College of Rhode Island in student affairs.



Robert Rund has joined Harmony Foundation as Director of Development for the Western Region. He is a skilled development professional with extensive experience in arts management and financial development to sustain enterprise. Having been a member of the Barbershop Harmony Society since age seven as a singer, director, and arranger, he has been a direct beneficiary of the organization. As a President's Council member,

he embodies the role and mission of the Foundation.

Updated guide for BHS leaders. As a part of the Healthy Chapter Initiative, the Society has published and updated the *BHS Business Guide: The Business of Barbershop*, which serves as an "at-a-glance" overview of the major tasks and responsibilities of chapter presidents, secretaries, and treasurers. This document also be found by visiting our BHS Document Center. Please discard any old copies of this guide that you might have. Direct your questions to customerservice@barbershop.org.

- Shortcut to The Business Guide: bit.ly/bhsbusiness
- Shortcut to the Document Center: bit.ly/bhsdocs

One-stop shopping for your quartet. You can now find everything you need to know about quartetting in one convenient location on www.barbershop.org. Quartet contest and judging manuals, renewal and registration links, video examples, free music links ... and so much more! Visit: www.barbershop.org/quartets. ■

CONVENTIONS

2016
NASHVILLE
July 3-10

2017
LAS VEGAS
July 2-9

2018
ORLANDO
July 1-8

2019
SALT LAKE CITY
June 30-July 7

2020
LOS ANGELES

HARMONY UNIVERSITY
NASHVILLE
July 23-30, 2017
July 21-29, 2018

MIDWINTER
SAN ANTONIO
Jan. 17-22, 2017



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Tips for singing among the “(non)vulgar public”

Within their 1938 letter of invitation to what turned out to be our first Society meeting, Rupert Hall and O.C. Cash wrote, “We will have a private room and so will not be embarrassed by the curiosity of the vulgar public.” Perhaps some of us do not realize that their letter (like this article) was often tongue-in-cheek. Why should we limit ourselves mostly to audiences we already know? May I suggest rules for public singing?

1. Sing in public. The best place to meet the public is in public. (Studies prove it!) Chapter meetings, conventions, and in some cases, chapter shows may not be as fruitful for encountering the elusive public as approaching them in their natural habitat.

2. The public loves songs they recognize. A song to which they can mouth the words or sing along trumps a well-sung unfamiliar song, according to the public.

3. The public has different ears than we do. Anatomically, the public looks similar; yet, they don’t seem to hear, process or consume our music like we do. In general, they appear to be more impressed with our music than we are, and have less concern for where each of us currently stands in our musical journey. Interestingly, the public somehow feels uniquely qualified to declare what it likes to see, hear and experience—perhaps even more qualified than we may be.

4. The public is more sympathetic than previously believed. Serious question: “How do we handle the ‘We shall refrain from forcing our songs upon unsympathetic ears’ ethic?” Serious reply: *Since when does this ethic tell us to assume most audiences will be unsympathetic?* Count the times you’ve spontaneously sung for someone in a restaurant. How often did the crowd yell, “Shut up!” instead of applauding enthusiastically? For most of us, never. Don’t deny happiness to the general public for fear that there might be a killjoy nearby. In the off chance that someone does reveal themselves as unsympathetic, honor the request of the individual with great dispatch—in the middle of a phrase if necessary—and let the rest of the public choose whether to defend your honor. When in doubt, sing.

5. The public does have listening limits. Performing one unexpected song is like saying, “*Surprise!*” Adding a second song is like saying, “*Surprise ... again!*” Here is a highly successful approach employed by entertainers the world over: always leave the public wanting more. Even if they are going crazy and clamoring for more. *Especially* if they’re clamoring for more. Then when you talk with the public after your one song, they will actually pursue you to learn more about what we do.

6. The public responds well to the right invitation.

When standing before the public wearing everyday clothes and singing familiar songs, something amazing happens: the public feels like we, and they, are more alike than different. They enjoy the music, fun and excitement as much as we do, and in this moment the only difference between us and them is the direction we are facing. When you notice such a connection, introduce them to the director afterward and garner their information. (This is very different from giving them your information or sending them to a website). Warmly accept them and suggest they might enjoy turning 180 degrees and try taking in the view from a new vantage point, even if just for an evening. Watch how often the answer is “Yes!”

7. Singing for the public is fun, even if you’re nervous before it starts. Watching the public’s real-time reaction is possibly the best coaching you can get for your group. Their facial expressions are not so imperceptible if you look closely. Use this feedback to your full advantage.

8. Physical presence matters more than online presence. It’s best to have both, but it is typically the off-screen experiences that change lives. While an online presence can open doors, what has sealed the deal for 95% of us has been when we physically encountered the most amazing and giving people on the planet who welcomed us into a lifelong hobby of fun, camaraderie, singing and giving, with no strings attached.

9. The public is looking for something different. We have the ability to stand out like never before, so there are fewer reasons to try to become like everyone and everything else. We are different in a really good way, and we have what people want. The public wants fun, camaraderie, and they love our brand of music. Some of the most watched musical performances on YouTube are called *mashups*. It’s basically taking a song and mashing it together with another song of a different style or genre and playing them at the same time; simply familiar songs with a new twist. (Jimmy Fallon racks up the views with mashups, and not only with barbershop.) For example, look for “Thunder Busters,” a mash-up of AC/DC’s “Thunder” and Ray Parker Jr.’s “Ghostbusters.” Every time we sing a familiar song, we actually may be performing a form of mashup, and the public loves it! Enjoy!

10. The public loves it when we don’t take ourselves too seriously. This doesn’t give us an excuse not to do our best, but it does give us the right to enjoy the journey as we work to improve while engaging the “vulgar public.” ■



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Fathers Day = big corporate gigs for 2 quartets

What does a New York-based TV channel dedicated to delicious food have in common with a large, British-based provider of electronic greeting cards? Two things: impeccable taste in music, and a marketing staff that deserves a raise.

When both the Food Network and *jacquielawson.com* made their programming plans for Father's Day, both decided that this was an occasion that called for four-part harmony. In New York, **Quatrain** quartet spent a couple of hours on the set of *The Kitchen*, singing on camera for the five chefs and a staff of about 75. Celebrity chefs Geoffrey Zakarian and Jeff Mauro even joined in on a tag at the end of the show, which first aired on June 16.

At about the same time, a designer at Jaquie Lawson sought out one of Great Britain's top quartets to record the audio track for an animated Father's Day scene. **Tagline**, the 2015 BABS champion that just missed out on winning a medal when they took sixth the Youth Quartet contest in Nashville, sang a modified arrangement of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," with silly lyrics written specifically for the card.

"Words that rhyme with 'fellow' are a little thin on the ground so we took a few liberties!" said a representative from the quartet. "But I also had to mug up on the somewhat esoteric technicalities of barbershop style: I hope I gave them enough of



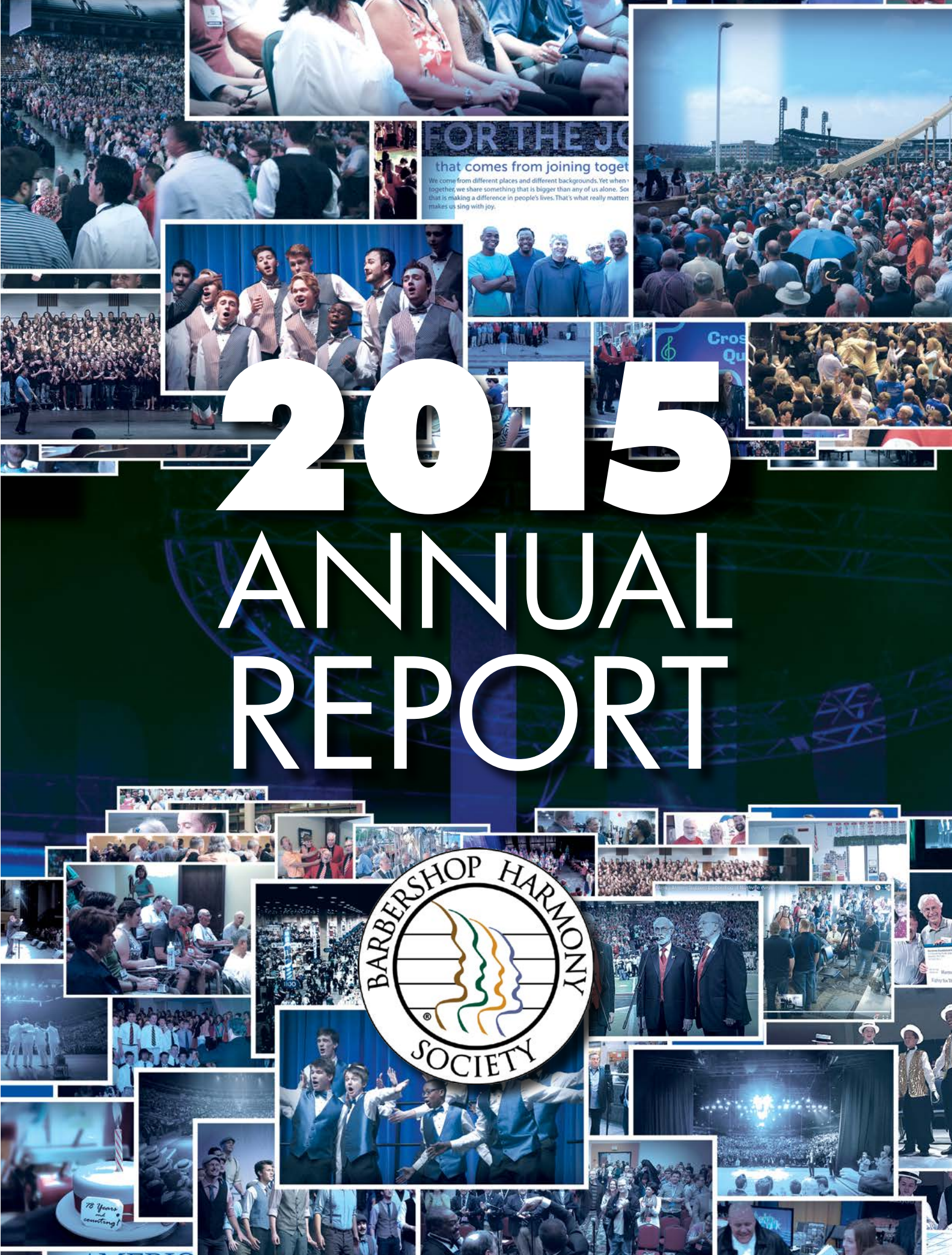
those ringing sevenths."

Quatrain, meanwhile, hasn't been competing over the past several years, although the quartet competed plenty in the 40 years they've sung together on and off. They've instead concentrated on getting gigs, and this isn't the first time the quartet has been broadcast nationwide. Last year they performed in a wide-spread radio spot for Wendy's restaurants, and keep getting asked back for regular gigs at some prestigious New York Metro locations.

Great work, men!

Tagline competing in the 2016 Youth Barbershop Quartet Contest





FOR THE JOY
that comes from joining together
We come from different places and different backgrounds. Yet when we
together we share something that is bigger than any of us alone. So
that is making a difference in people's lives. That's what really matters.
makes us sing with joy.

2015 ANNUAL REPORT





"THE SOCIETY ASPIRES TO PRESERVE FOR ITS MEMBERS AND FOR ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS OF PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS THE SACRED RIGHT OF MEN TO SEEK HAVEN FROM THE BURDEN OF THEIR DAILY CARES THROUGH INDULGENCE IN OLD-FASHIONED VOCAL QUARTET HARMONY."

— BHS CODE OF ETHICS, 1948



With 22,000 members, the Barbershop Harmony Society is a major arts organization that has a \$30 million annual impact across all business units. We leave a far larger impact throughout North America, where nearly 800 chapters and thousands of quartets freely give to their communities, and are often cherished as valuable community assets.

We are far more than hobbyists. We are working with music educators and arts advocates to change lives through singing.



So many of the world's social problems are rare among the world's singers. Ensemble singing connects us with others and with our own emotions. Singing makes us better parents, better employees and better friends. Better citizens.

Entire communities are transitioning from being singers to becoming mere spectators. This is more than a sad scene. It's a true crisis.



"IN A WORLD THAT HAS SO MUCH TURBULENCE AND SO MUCH TROUBLE RIGHT NOW, IF EVERYONE JUST SANG, THE WORLD WOULD BE A BEAUTIFUL PLACE."

— MATTHEW GIFFORD, BASS, MUSICAL ISLAND BOYS QUARTET



LETTER FROM THE CEO ...

In every direction you look, you see proof that NOW is the best time to be associated with the Barbershop Harmony Society. Why now? The world is taking notice and yearning to partner with organizations that have the knowledge and capacity to create authentic experiences and harmony. Consider:

- People are crazy about a cappella singing right now, and the attraction is still growing.
- Youth interest in singing is surging, and educators are discovering our approaches spark delight in their students.
- Barbershop is getting more meaningful media coverage than ever before.
- The Barbershop Harmony Society is financially stable, with strong cash reserves that allow us to invest even more to support the growth of our mission.

We are reaching a tipping point. This is the moment when we are ready to leverage our rich musical history, geographic reach, organizational infrastructure, and dedicated corps of passionate artists to make an impact that was previously the stuff of dreams. We are a group of intergenerational singers who demonstrate every day how singing together in harmony transcends background, race, and socio-economic status. We do this FOR THE JOY that comes from singing. FOR THE JOY that comes from genuine friendships. FOR THE JOY that comes from joining together. FOR THE JOY that comes from making a difference in people's lives.

And ... all of these joys are worth preserving and encouraging for future generations.

Let's answer the call and make a difference!



A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read "Walter L. ...".

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT ...



A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read "Don Fuson".

2015 was a year in which the impact of the Barbershop Harmony Society reached into the broader music world. We continued to give every member a renewed sense of community. We encouraged everyone to generate opportunities to (re)engage new appreciative audience members and potential singers. Each of our geographically diverse chapters and choruses can find "Gold Medal" occasions to change lives through singing.

Our many volunteers are the key to local engagement and success, right in our own back yards! Continue to challenge each chapter and chorus member to reach out with the JOY of singing.

The experiences that each of us build, share, and enjoy can be life-fulfilling dreams. Giving away our harmonies and helping others improve their own talents, though singing and leadership, is the true basis the mission of our Society. SHARE YOUR MUSIC and make a difference where you live.

How very fortunate each of us is to have this hobby in our lives. Through the joys of singing we are able to reach new friends and build our memories through song! That is a great combination of things to "share freely" as we reflect on the Society's 2015 year.

IN PURSUIT OF **THE FOUR**

2015 BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT



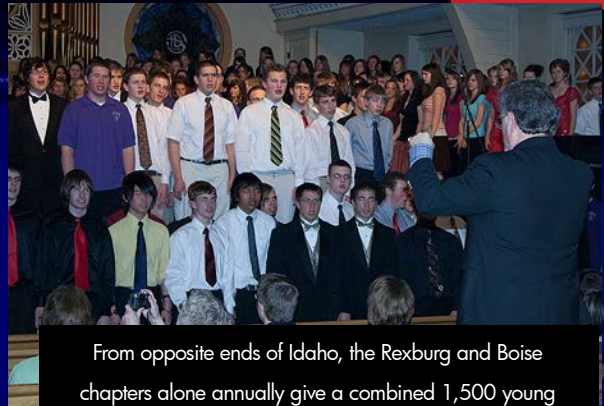
District leaders from throughout the United States and Canada gather at a Leadership Forum event. Society members are famously noted for a universal sense of fraternity that transcends titles, geography, age, social class, race, tenure, or skill level.

Barbershop harmony has persisted in part due to a strong organizational backbone. The Society provides essential services to committed artists, including mundane but essential services like insurance, group non-profit exemption for chapters, copyright and show clearance services, convention planning services and tools, communication and marketing resources, and leadership training that eliminates barriers to successful community impact.

Through the medium of Barbershop harmony, we **MAINTAIN AND EXPAND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES** for a global community of artists.



Through the medium of Barbershop harmony, we **ESTABLISH LIFELONG SINGING** as a core community asset.

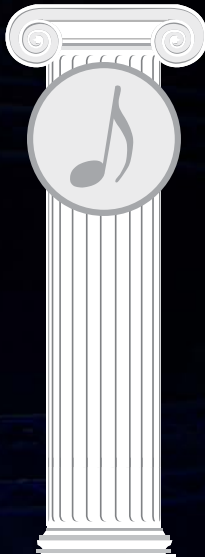


From opposite ends of Idaho, the Rexburg and Boise chapters alone annually give a combined 1,500 young singers one of the highlights of their school careers—and at no cost to them or their schools. High school and university choral teachers buzz with inspiration while watching their singers' voices and spirits soar in four-part harmony under the instruction of high-end quartets and clinicians. Young singers float home, high on the ovations they earned alongside Barbershoppers who are living proof that the joy of singing can last a lifetime. Similar events, large and small, take place across North America throughout the year.



LOOK ▶

PILLARS



Through the medium of Barbershop harmony, we **ELEVATE ARTISTIC AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS** through education and best practices.



From free chapter-sponsored community "Learn to Sing" programs, to district schools, to our week-long Harmony University, the pool of knowledge we've acquired over the past 78 years is wide and deep: "I'VE BEEN A CHORAL CONDUCTOR FOR 30 YEARS, AND I HAVE LEARNED THINGS THIS WEEK THAT HAVE ESCAPED THE BEST OF THE BEST MUSIC SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTRY. I'M TAKING BACK THINGS THAT WILL MAKE MY CHOIRS JUMP LIGHT YEARS!"

— DR. MARK AUSTIN



Music Educators Seminar at Harmony University

More than a fifth of the Society's 22,000 members support Harmony Foundation International and Sing Canada Harmony, the two major BHS-affiliated charities dedicated to changing the world by promoting singing in all its forms. As the world's largest distributor of barbershop music, our new partnership with the world's largest sheet music distributor (Hal Leonard) is bringing our music to new audiences and helping us sustain and grow our operations.



On top of their singing outreach efforts and charitable contributions, many chapters contribute to local hospitals, food banks, seniors centers, school music programs, and other community causes.

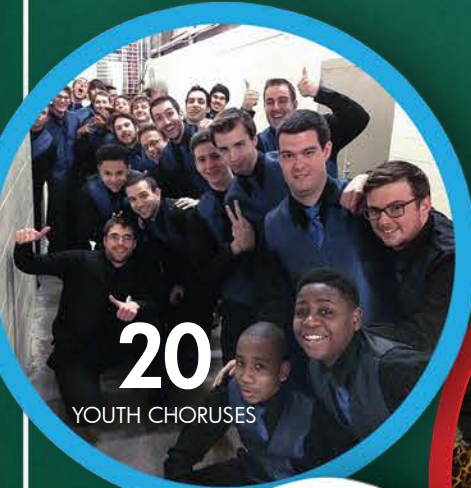


We scale our impact by growing **SOCIAL ENTERPRISES, INDIVIDUAL PHILANTHROPY, AND INSTITUTIONAL PHILANTHROPY.**

INSIDE

JANUARY

In New Orleans, where Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton and other future jazz legends helped establish the barbershop sound a century ago, Dr. David Wright delivered a major presentation on "The African-American Roots of Barbershop Harmony"; Lynn Abbott became an Honorary Lifetime Member to honor his definitive research on the topic. Throughout the Midwinter Convention, top seniors quartet competitors and international medalists mixed with hundreds of young first-time barbershop singers who performed in the Youth Chorus Festival. Famed arranger, songwriter and clinician Dr. Kirby Shaw emceed the event.



Whatever you think about **The Ragtime Gals** from *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, they attract a lot of young viewers (35 million+ online views alone) and help keep barbershop harmony in the public consciousness. But Maine's **Port City Sound** quartet proved that it doesn't take a Justin Timberlake solo to go viral. When bad weather kept their January flight grounded, the seniors quartet passed the time singing. A fellow passenger's phone capture of "Under the Boardwalk" soon had six million views! See it at bit.ly/PCSyoutube.

GOLD MEDAL MOMENTS

Leaders of the Society's 17 districts were asked to provide some of their best moments of 2015. Here are a select few.

JOHNNY APPLESEED: Five non-competing chapters in the Melrose Division started learning common songs and performed them at each of their shows as a large chorus.

CENTRAL STATES: After a long hiatus, the district restarted the Harmony Education Program. At least 120 men, women and young adult singers attended.

LAND O' LAKES: Six Youth in Harmony festivals hosted more than 300 youth. 200 men attended their Leadership Academy.



MARCH

At the national convention for the American Choral Directors Association, (ACDA), joint presentations and performances by 2009 International champion quartet **Crossroads** and Grammy Award-winning gospel quartet **The Fairfield Four** highlighted a busy outreach season. In several of the largest music educator gatherings, it was standing-room-only at barbershop harmony music reading sessions. A constant flow of traffic to Society booths resulted in thousands of copies of free sheet music being distributed to music educators who are eager to learn how barbershop harmony—and Barbershoppers themselves—can help them gain more male singers and strengthen their choral programs.



FEBRUARY

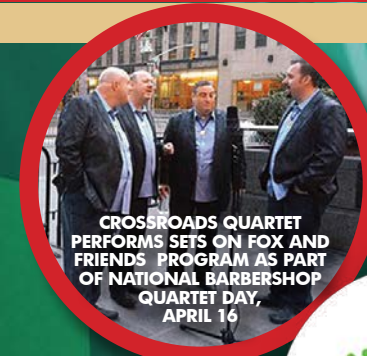
Hundreds of Singing Valentines quartets spread out across North America in a decades-old tradition that started out as an effective chapter fundraiser but has since become much more. Never failing to garner extensive local media coverage, these quartets become the highlight of the day for both the recipients and the thousands of onlookers who learn the tear-jerk power of an authentic four-part serenade.

97 GRANT APPLICATIONS
TOTALING
\$324,000

AWARDED BY THE
BARBERSHOP HARMONY
SOCIETY

MAY

The second largest convention season of the year wrapped up for most of the Society's 17 districts and for many of the smaller district divisions. Thousands of chorus and quartet competitors in at least 30 cities vied for inclusion in fall contests, district or division championships, and (for quartets) scores that could qualify them for the international convention in July. Competitors receive more than scores to track their musical progress—they receive valuable evaluations and coaching to ensure continued artistic growth.



CROSSROADS QUARTET PERFORMS SETS ON FOX AND FRIENDS PROGRAM AS PART OF NATIONAL BARBERSHOP QUARTET DAY, APRIL 16



APRIL

The Society's rapidly maturing Outreach efforts attracted record applications from Society-affiliated groups who were looking to build an awareness of the intrinsic value of singing and provide inclusive opportunities to participate in the joy of harmony. A new professional-standard application and review process, together with grant-writing specific educational resources, ensured that Society groups would have greater success in applying for grants through local funding sources as well.

JUNE

Nashville's Choral Arts Link began working on an innovative Society-branded method and skills. With ambitions for wide-spread presentation of the program received rave convention for the National Association for

JULY

With the coming attendees at the found that Harmon up from the 10 H offerings exploded offerings, the ave

A great convention week in Pittsburgh was capped off by a tribute to the music of area native Stephen Foster, the culminating event in a new era of increased outreach and collaboration among communities that host our conventions. Featuring barbershop legends and a variety of Pittsburgh's top talents, most acts represented aspects of the Society's mission. Among other acts, the Saturday Night Spectacular at the Consil Energy Center featured intergenerational singing, a super-chorus of Pittsburgh Barbershoppers, a sax quartet playing barbershop, Pittsburgh icon "Mr. McFeeley" from Pittsburgh-product "Mr. Rogers Neighborhood," a mass sing directed by Jim Clancy, and plenty of Stephen Foster gems.



Barberpole Ca Songbook Vol. II



8,700 UNITS SOLD



Initiated July 2015, the Legacy of Harmony campaign gives donors the option of estate planning to enrich lives through singing through an enduring legacy. Contributions support the Foundation's endowment, providing perpetual support to educators, students and community members alike.

2015 YEAR

week-long Harmony University event already sold out, Society's 2015 International Convention in Pittsburgh. Harmony University was coming to them. In a huge leap, Harmony University classes offered the year before, led to 101 classes in Pittsburgh. Even with the growth in average class attendance increased 28% as well.



\$80,000
IN SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING



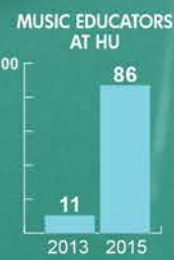
628
HARMONY U STUDENTS
(HIGHEST IN HISTORY)



200
ATTENDEES



OUTREACH EFFORTS DURING SPRING MUSIC EDUCATOR CONVENTIONS LED TO HARMONY UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS TO DOZENS OF MUSIC EDUCATORS, MOST OF WHICH WERE NEW TO BARBERSHOP HARMONY. (NOTE: TWO ATTENDED IN 2012, 28 IN 2014.)



Viral Success

Main Street quartet exploded in total views after all international performances were posted online for the first time.

YouTube
Total barbershop content views were **12 million** in 2015, up from **8.1 million** in 2014



na f me
National Association for Music Education

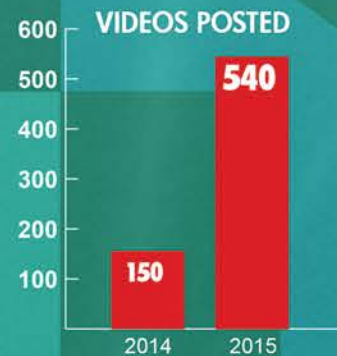
GOLD MEDAL MOMENT
EVERGREEN

HARMONY COLLEGE NORTHWEST
400 ATTENDEES AND

50 FACULTY WITH

67 CLASSES WAS MOST ATTENDED, HIGHLY RATED, DIVERSE HCNW EVER

INCLUDED MORE THAN 40% SWEET ADELINES STUDENTS AND FACULTY. THREE CHORUSES & 25 QUARTETS WERE COACHED, 87 RECEIVED PERSONAL VOICE INSTRUCTION SESSIONS



OCTOBER

Crossroads Quartet and The Fairfield Four reprised their March ACDA presentation at the national convention for the National Association for Music Educators (NAfME), as well as headlining the main concert event. NAfME officials are so impressed that they invite Crossroads to be the face of music education to Washington, D.C. lawmakers the following June.

SEPTEMBER

Without fanfare, as part of a larger long-term strategy, the Society dropped the requirement that members must belong to a Society chapter and district. By the end of the year, more than 50 new members signed up via the unpublicized new membership portal on barbershop.org, and many went on to join Society chapters. This was the first small step among many to come that recognizes the realities of an ever-changing consumer landscape. Today's singers and fans encounter the Society through a variety of new channels, and increasingly demand means and terms that meet their individual needs.



FOR THE JOY
that comes from joining together.
We come from different places and different backgrounds. Yet when we come together, we share something that is bigger than any of us alone. Something that is making a difference in people's lives. That's what really matters. And what makes us sing with joy.



NOVEMBER

While extensive member surveys showed general satisfaction with the direction of the Society, polling also revealed that our small, aging, or isolated chapters need more attention and resources. **The Healthy Chapter Initiative**, underwritten by a major Harmony Foundation grant, is an effort led by a dedicated full-time staff member and a committee of experienced Society leaders. It will transform the ways we define and deliver chapter leadership education, with efforts to connect chapters with the resources that will help them thrive.



In the busiest season of the year for chapters and quartets, Barbershoppers filled hundreds of theaters for holiday performances, then took their songs on the road to under-served areas of their communities. Many chapters donated a large portion of their concert proceeds to local food banks, children's hospitals, and other charities.



Initiated in the summer of 2015, the Every Voice Matters campaign brings donors together to have a collective impact through giving. The goal is to bring 1,000 new donors into the BHS community to make a difference, and have them understand how their contributions combine to fund education and outreach, just as their singular voices come together in harmony.

DECEMBER (end of year summary)

0%
DUES INCREASE FOR PAST TWO YEARS

22,788
EMAIL INQUIRIES ANSWERED BY CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM (EXCLUDING ALL OTHER SOCIETY STAFF EMAIL COMMUNICATION)

44,916
CUSTOMER SERVICE PHONE CALLS (EXCLUDING ALL OTHER STAFF CALLS)

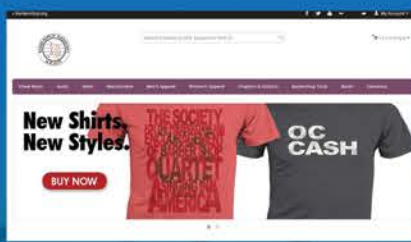
\$145,000
MEMBER DISCOUNT SAVINGS FOR HARMONY MARKETPLACE ONLINE ORDERS (JUNE 12-DEC 31)

6

NEW CHAPTERS:
HERSHEY, PA (MAD)
SOUTH TEXAS ALAMO REGIONAL (SWD)
CALDWELL, NJ (MAD)
GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (SWD)
DOVER, NH (NED)
NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS, ON (ONT)



New Society website



New Marketplace website

WEBSITE SESSIONS, NEW USERS, AND UNIQUE PAGE VIEWS ALL INCREASED FROM 2014 TO 2015 (FOR THE SAME PERIOD) WITH THE LAUNCH OF THE NEW FEATURE-RICH MOBILE-FRIENDLY SOCIETY WEBSITE

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, UNPUBLISHED MUSIC OUTSOLD PUBLISHED MUSIC, THANKS TO THE NEW HARMONY MARKETPLACE WEBSITE THAT MADE BUYING MUSIC ONLINE EASIER AND FASTER

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP WITH



41,000
UNITS SOLD

DIGITAL MEDIA DISTRIBUTION

106
LEARNING TRACK ALBUMS

12
CONVENTION CDS DOWNLOAD & STREAMING

YEAR IN REVIEW



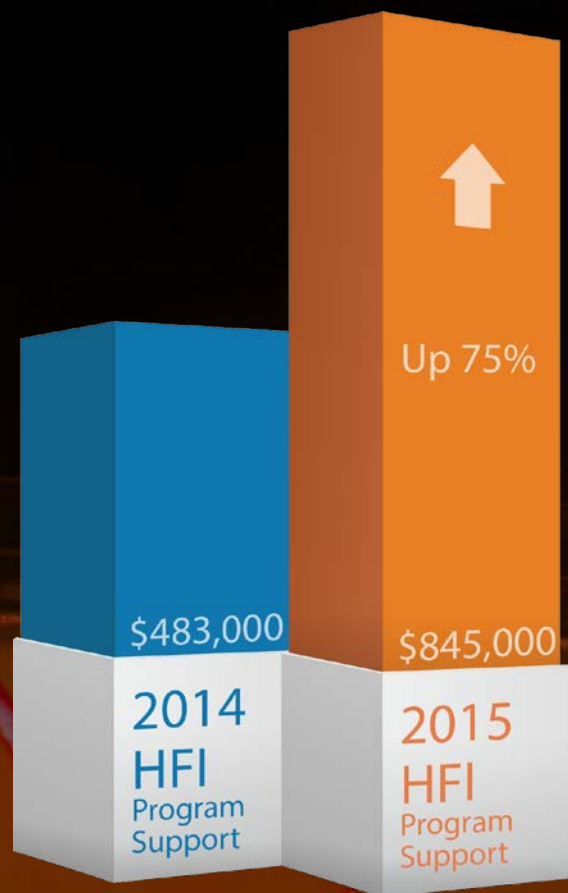
FINANC

"THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMS INSTITUTED BY THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY ILLUSTRATES THE REAL-LIFE EVIDENCE OF THE NEED FOR CHARITABLE SUPPORT. SIMPLY SAID, THESE PROGRAMS SHOW THE DIFFERENCE THAT CAN BE MADE BY DONORS WITH A REAL PASSION."

— SHARON MILLER, CHAIR, HARMONY FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

While 2015 was a financially successful year for the Barbershop Harmony Society, accumulating cash was not an option. Our priority was to invest in the resources needed to be in a position of strength for the Society's next 75 years—an effective 21st Century organization. A chief strategy officer joined the headquarters staff to direct what is already the most thorough and far-reaching long-term strategy effort undertaken by the Society since the 1950s.

2015 also saw unprecedented ties between the Society and Harmony Foundation International. Never before has there been such great alignment between Society program priorities and the areas that generous donors want to promote. Far greater outreach and chapter support efforts were made possible largely through the generosity of donors to Harmony Foundation.



FUNDS GRANTED BY HARMONY FOUNDATION

In addition to this program support in 2015, HFI also provided more than \$796,000 in support to chapters, districts and their programs, for a total of more than \$1.6 million in funding.

HARMONY FOUNDATION'S 2015

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY PROGRAMS

Outreach Grants Program	\$324,803
Youth Chorus Festival	\$200,000
Harmony U Scholarships & Support	\$86,480
Healthy Chapter Initiative	\$80,000
Youth Barbershop Quartet Contest	\$42,500
Educational Tours	\$42,000
Harmony University Online	\$41,000
Community Engagement & Other	\$28,258
Total HF Contribution	\$845,041

"YOU GET KIDS IN A ROOM RINGING A CHORD, AND THEY'RE HOOKED FOREVER. IF WE HAD ISSUES, IT WAS FROM THEIR TEACHERS. BUT PEOPLE WHO NEVER USED TO GET BARBERSHOP ARE FINALLY SAYING, 'NO, THIS IS VERY BENEFICIAL TO MY CHORAL PROGRAM.' THIS IS NOT ACCIDENTAL. THE BHS HAS BEEN VERY INTENTIONAL AND MADE THIS A MAJOR PART OF THE SOCIETY'S MISSION."

—DR. JAMES HENRY, BASS, CROSSROADS QUARTET



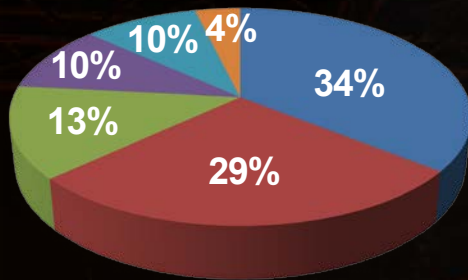
"BARBERSHOP HAS DONE NOTHING BUT GET GUYS INTO MY PROGRAM. THE BOYS LEARN VERY QUICKLY THAT SINGING BARBERSHOP IS A 'CHICK MAGNET'—WHEN THEY PERFORM ANYTHING, THE GIRLS ARE ALL OVER IT. AS PART OF MY VOCAL PROGRAM, IT HAS BEEN MORE THAN I DREAMED. THE BARBERSHOPPERS TEACH GREAT VOCAL TECHNIQUE, BREATHING, EAR-TRAINING, AND THE REPERTOIRE IS TO-DIE-FOR FUN!"

—DIANE CASPERSON, SNAKE RIVER HIGH SCHOOL (BLACKFOOT, ID)

IAL HIGHLIGHTS

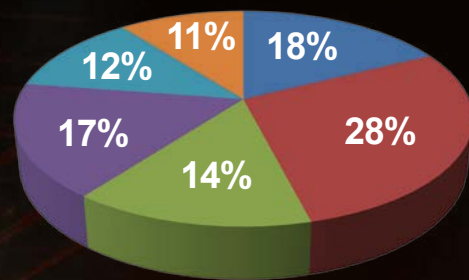
Revenue: \$6,628,455

\$6,172,525 (2014)



Expenses: \$6,589,051

\$5,748,653 (2014)



	2015	2014	Change
Membership	\$2,290,921	\$2,250,377	+1.8%
Events	\$1,902,889	\$2,006,145	-5.1%
Harmony Marketplace	\$862,094	\$848,326	+1.6%
Outreach	\$635,893	\$261,219	+143.4%
Harmony University	\$695,973	\$480,583	+44.8%
Shared Services	\$240,685	\$325,875	-26.1%

	2015	2014	Change
Membership	\$1,158,757	\$1,237,680	-6.4%
Events	\$1,872,868	\$1,401,021	+33.7%
Harmony Marketplace	\$942,091	\$931,882	+1.1%
Outreach	\$1,124,930	\$865,262	+30.0%
Harmony University	\$796,736	\$644,158	+23.7%
Shared Services	\$693,669	\$668,650	+3.7%

NOTES

The financial results highlighted above reflect the ongoing operations of the Society and are before a one-time gift from the Society to Harmony Foundation in 2015, to help strengthen the Foundation's endowment and leverage philanthropic capacity for the future.

Membership: Dues revenue remained stable and growing with no membership dues increase for the second straight year. Stable membership trends, new membership programs and focused expense management efforts will continue to provide critical support for the Society's Education, Outreach and Events areas.

Events: Revenue dropped significantly in 2015 driven primarily by venue selection (and associated costs) and lower-than-planned attendance. Efforts to continuously improve the offerings at the Society's conventions, including increased education and outreach activities, combined with improved venue selection discipline, will help drive increased contributions from Events and scaled impact in the communities hosting our conventions.

Harmony Marketplace: The operation is shifting focus to our core competencies: musical arrangements (sheet music, digital downloads), learning media, and new music. Other product lines are decreasing in quantity but increasing in quality. Marketplace costs primarily revolve around the maintenance, expansion and modernization of our music library, while improving access and availability of our arrangements to members, music educators, and the general public.

Outreach: Programs received a 140%+ increase in funding from Harmony Foundation that has allowed the Society to both increase Outreach staffing and programming while concurrently reducing the funding demands from other BHS program areas.

Harmony University: The Society benefited from increased attendance and scale for the weeklong Harmony University program. Coupled with increased financial support from Harmony Foundation, we have boosted educational offerings and program support, including the launch of the Society's Healthy Chapter Initiative. Similar to Outreach, the Society's

educational programs' reliance on funding from other BHS program areas decreased in 2015.

Shared Services: This includes governance (Board) expenditures and other necessary operational expenses needed to operate the Society that are not allocated to the Society's programs. In 2015, the Shared Services costs increased year over year due to increased investment in marketing, social media and technology spending to scale operations. Concurrently, reduced investment returns and unrealized translation losses on the Society's Canadian-dollar denominated accounts (due to the stronger U.S. dollar) further impacted Shared Services in 2015.

Personnel Costs. Built into 2015 program costs was a \$263,000 overall increase (+12%) in personnel expenses. This represented six new full-time positions dedicated to expanded Society programming and activities, primarily in Outreach and Education. The Society continues to rely on these passionate and committed staff to scale Society impact in our communities.



Nearly every major music educator convention now has a significant BHS presence. The long-term strategy is to arm music educators with the music and tools they need to get more singers—especially male singers—with the side benefit of a new generation that knows the joy of singing four-part harmony.

The community impact before, during and after our international convention in Pittsburgh was unprecedented—and the model of things to come in major Society events and beyond. Top Society groups performed multiple educational tours months in advance and helped Society representatives build ties with city leaders. Later, Pittsburgh groups and local Barbershoppers performed together on our stages. Post-convention, Pittsburgh-area chapters report that community ties, morale, and member participation are the healthiest in many years.





FOR THE JOY

Every type of performer can be found within the Barbershop Harmony Society. We range from casual singers who simply want to relax every week to professional-grade singers who attract massive ovations on the world's most prestigious stages—and everything in between. What we all share is a love of singing and a brotherhood unlike any other. We share a desire to spread the joy of singing throughout the world.

To be bold: Barbershoppers are some of the happiest people in the world. It's simply because of what we do every week. Why? For the joy that comes from genuine friendships. The joy that comes from joining together. It's more than the joy that comes from singing. We're Barbershoppers because of the joy that comes from making a difference in people's lives.

We start off as singers, but then we become more—we become Barbershoppers. Join us in our mission to make a better world through singing!





Vocal Revolution takes New England television by storm and wins Sing That Thing!

The second season of *Sing That Thing!*, a regional television series showcasing New England's best amateur singing ensembles, was won by NED Chorus Champion **Vocal Revolution** this past May. Hosted by superstation WGBH of Boston, the chorus topped a field of 80 participating ensembles in a well-watched series of shows.

It was quite a move up for the group, which hadn't even been among the qualified 24 ensembles in the first season.

But in this January's qualifying round, Greg Volk's arrangement of "Keep Your Sunny Side Up" and Diane Coates' choreography earned both a qualification and the show's first-ever standing ovation.

After reaching the semifinals, the

chorus was asked by the judges to create a two-minute mashup that combined "Happy" by Pharrell Williams (2013) and "Ode To Joy" from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (1824). Two very different songs, but luckily, arranger Eric Ruthenberg was able to combine a two-minute slice of Adam Scott's BHS arrangement of "Happy" with a discreet sextet performing "Ode to Joy" from within the chorus, with a total of 52 men on the risers.

It was enough to win the Adult category of the contest and reach the final round, where we performed the straight-up barbershop piece "Almost Like Being In Love," arranged by Eric King.

That Feb. 25 performance won the contest ... a fact we were not allowed to reveal to anyone before the last of eight episodes aired on May 20th! That was a real challenge.

My hero of the whole event was our director, Dan Costello. He was truly spectacular in his leadership, determined to show our best in a non-Barbershop world. As wit-

nessed, the rewards were evident ... this experience showed the character, spirit, and determination of Vocal Revolution. It was a great ride. ■

— David Patterson,
Asst. Director, Vocal Revolution



CHAPTER ETERNAL

Society members reported as deceased between May 1 and July 1, 2016. Email updates to customerservice@barbershop.org.

Cardinal

Paul Minning
Greensburg, IN

Central States

Charles Buehrle
St Charles, MO
Peter Cooper
Manhattan, KS
Sy Rodgers
Sioux City, IA

Evergreen

James Farrens
Canby, OR

David Mural

Tualatin Valley, OR
Denny Stiers
Anacortes, WA
Bellingham, WA
Bellevue, WA

Far Western

Robert Clark
Central California,
Edward Graff
Walnut Creek, CA
Davis-Vacaville, CA
Bay Area, CA
Fremont-Hay-

ward, CA

John Johansen
Santa Monica, CA
Russell Le Blanc
Carson City, NV
David Lyman
Mesa, AZ
Central Arizona, AZ

Johnny Appleseed

George Dille
Huntington Tri-
State, WV
Ashland, KY

Howard Graham

Alle Kiski, PA
Bruce Martin
Cincinnati, OH
James Stoecklin
Western Hills, OH
Greater Central
Ohio, OH

Land O' Lakes

Arnold Charles
Winnipeg, MB

Mid-Atlantic

Ben Blankenship

Fredericksburg, VA

Mt. Vernon, VA
Warren Boin
Montclair, NJ
Mike Ferguson
Norfolk, VA
Philip Tuhy
Wilkes Barre, PA

Northeastern

Bruce Barnett
Nashua, NH
Thomas Parker
Dover, NH
James Powers

Dover, NH

Charles E Ryan
Nashua, NH

Carolinas

Robert Feistel
Cape Coral, FL
Grand Strand, SC

Pioneer

Robert Feistel
Muskegon, MI
Henry Hedges
Gaylord, MI
Steve Hesse, Jr.
Flint, MI

Livingston County, MI

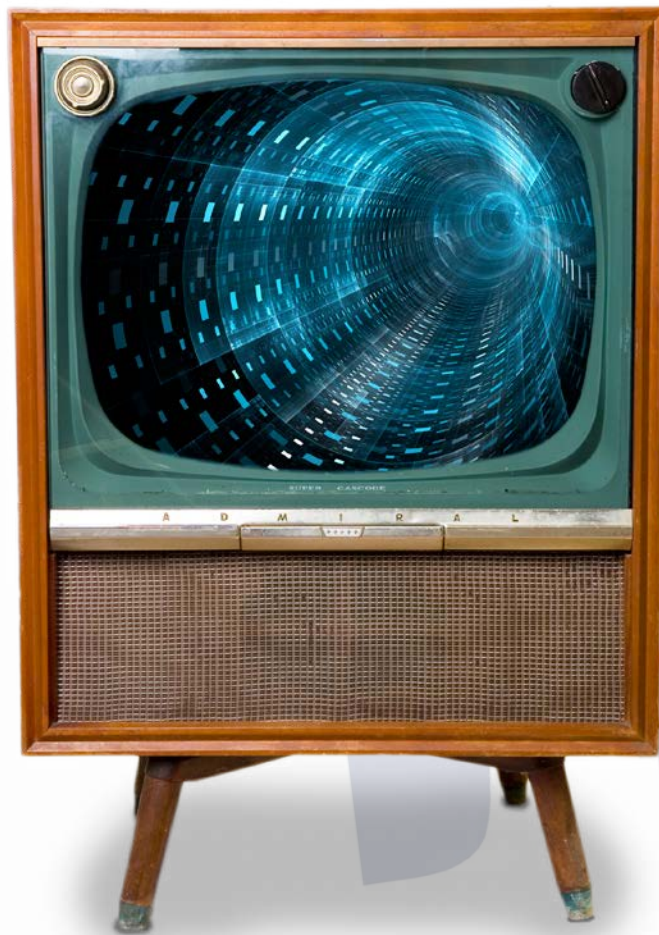
Sunshine

Robert Aagard
Palm Harbor, FL
William Borden
Orlando, FL
Robert Bridgman
Tampa, FL
Ned Hoffman
Orlando, FL
Freeman Morrison
Central Florida, FL
William Sipple
Tampa, FL

Southwestern

Kenneth McKee
Dallas Metro, TX
Gary Nelson
Big "D", TX
Town North Plano, TX
Chuck Shelton
Dallas Metro, TX
Barry Smith
Fort Worth, TX
Dallas Metro, TX
Craig Walker
New Braunfels, TX
San Antonio, TX

Looking 60 years back ...



& looking 60 years ahead

The most extensive strategic planning effort in more than 60 years is under way, and it will impact Barbershoppers and harmony lovers for decades to come. Make sure your voice is heard!

The last time the Barbershop Harmony Society dove deeply into long-term strategic planning, the median wage was \$4,000 a year and a 19-year-old truck driver named Elvis Presley was struggling to find singing gigs.

In the early 1950s, leaders saw that the enthusiasm and loose organization that had helped the Society explode since forming in 1938 could only carry the Society so far. To grow into the future would require a conscious determination of our own destiny. A thorough strategic planning process yielded 20 recommendations in 1954 (see sidebar), many of which were eventually implemented. The legacy of many of these strategies remains with us today. The effort of 2016-17 follows in the same spirit—looking ahead not only by years, but by decades.

Strategic planning and knowing the “whys”

“If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will take you there.”

— George Harrison, paraphrasing Lewis Carroll

Lorin May
Editor, The
Harmonizer
lmay@barbershop.org

Society CEO Marty Monson explains that a strategic plan provides the rudder that the organization uses to make day-to-day decisions. “A strategic plan identifies why we exist, and is the core to how (singing) and

what (barbershop),” he said. “We have 78 years of wonderful results that have produced real outcomes and impact within our communities. But with the rate of change in our world, without this ‘why’ rudder, the Society ship will be powerless to chart its own destiny going forward.”

Kevin Lynch, hired in 2015 as the Society’s Chief Strategy Officer, organizes BHS’ strategic planning processes, with Society Executive Vice President Skipp Kropp, chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). The committee’s charge is to help BHS staff assess today’s challenges and opportunities and develop strategies that will strengthen the Society’s members, chapters, and overall organization in coming years and decades.

“Our founders had a vision of what they wanted the Society to be, and they acted on it,” said Lynch. “I’m confident that we’re going to build a thoughtful, relevant and exciting strategic plan that takes us way beyond our current imagination.”

Today’s challenges and opportunities

Obviously, we face a landscape far different from 1954—for example, different attitudes about race and gender, different attitudes toward recreational time, and less support for community singing and for arts in

All members are asked to participate in the Future Directions Survey, which will be coming to mailboxes in mid-August.

the schools. Barbershop harmony is no longer a purely North American phenomenon, and millions of viewers are first exposed to four-part harmony via a computer or smartphone.

Additionally, today's consumers (including Society members) expect to have more options and far more control in their purchasing decisions. Barbershoppers also communicate very differently among themselves and with their local communities, and those differences are more fundamental than the rise of instant communication via the internet.

"The Society was developed by men who grew up in a more militaristic command and control environment," said Skipp Kropp, who in addition to being SPC chairman will also be Society president when the coming plan begins its implementation in 2017. "Many baby boomers [born 1946-1964] may still be comfortable with this, but each of the younger generations responds differently to various leadership styles and structures."

Kropp said that current strategic planning will also take a more expansive view of the yet-untapped opportunities afforded through relationships with other organizations. "In the past, Society planning has often been internally focused," he said. While even the 1954 plan outlined the need for relationships with other musical organizations, until recently these relationships were limited.

"We are going to be looking at our relationships with other singing groups, especially in light of the renaissance of a cappella singing," he said.

The SPC will examine the Society at a deep, fundamental level. It will determine strategies that address pressing and looming concerns, while seeking opportunities to enhance our fundamental capabilities, strengths and missions. All options will be on the table. Areas that will be addressed include but are not limited to:

- What is the Society's basic "DNA"—what makes us who we are?
- What do we hope to accomplish in our communities?



- How can we together make the world a better place?
- How can we grow and thrive in light of present and future demographic and social realities?
- What kind of barbershop experiences do current and potential

members want? How can these needs be supported or created?

- What does it mean to be a chapter?
- What are the critical needs of a chapter, and how can they best be supported?
- What does it mean to be a member of the Barbershop Harmony Society?
- How do you pay for your barbershop experience?
- Do we celebrate only great performances, or do we also celebrate great community service?
- What is our relationship to other arts organizations?
- What is our relationship to the educational system?
- What is barbershop singing?

Information gathering phase

The first and most critical step is to

capture the viewpoints and ideas of all BHS members. The SPC will also seek input from external organizations and expert strategic planners who may have special insight into future trends and opportunities. Many members are already participating in this phase, with the next big opportunity for input coming in August of 2016:

Member Satisfaction Survey. Nearly 3,000 members responded to the survey sent out this spring to assess

The Four Pillars

Every Society quartet or chapter is encouraged to organize its goals and activities around an articulated vision; the Society organization has done the same. Over the past year, Society leaders have adopted a framework called the Four Pillars—a new restatement of long-standing, fundamental Society priorities that have stood the test of time. These pillars both support the goals and missions of individual chapters and quartets and inform the priorities of all operating entities.

1. Through the medium of barbershop harmony, we maintain and expand supportive services for a global community of artists.
2. Through the medium of barbershop harmony, we establish lifelong singing as a core community asset.
3. Through the medium of barbershop harmony, we elevate artistic and leadership skills through education and best practices.
4. We scale our impact by growing social enterprises, individual philanthropy and institutional philanthropy.

Kropp said that the pillars represent the filter through which every current organizational goal or priority should be viewed. While the coming 2017 plan is expected to offer specifics that may take years to execute, the plan is expected to be a living document.

It can be challenging to predict what barbershop will look like in the future. The object of strategic planning, however, is to not only predict the future but to develop a roadmap that charts our own future.

All members are asked to participate in the Future Directions Survey, which will be coming to mailboxes in mid-August.

the “current state” of the Society. Results were presented to the Society Board in its July 2016 meetings.

Key internal constituencies. More than 100 key “influentials” within the Society have been consulted.

Their answers to a variety of open-ended questions have laid the foundation for future surveys and planning.

Town Hall Meeting. At the International Convention in July, Society leaders and strategic planning members spent two hours listening to anything any Society member had to say about strategic planning and the Society’s future.

Future Directions Survey. All members are asked to participate in this survey, which will be coming to mailboxes in mid-August. Please take the survey and share your thoughts, ideas and perceptions.

Fall District House of Delegates meetings. SPC members will travel to fall conventions to host strategic listening sessions with chapter leaders and members in attendance.

External feedback. Leaving no stone unturned, experts from a variety of arts, membership, non-profit and other organizations will provide input. Professional strategic planners will also provide ideas, reactions and future-looking knowledge that may be unavailable among current Society members.

“The questions we’re asking aren’t all that different from what they were asking in 1954, but perhaps the answers are different,” Lynch said. “That’s why we’re bending over backwards to listen to people. Our intention is that there will be no members of the Barbershop Harmony Society who feel that they didn’t have a chance to provide input.”

Synthesis and design phase

Once the Gathering Stage is complete in fall, 2016, the Society staff will begin developing the construct of

the strategic plan itself. Several design principles will guide this work:

- The plan will not necessarily make every Barbershopper happy, but it will reflect an understanding and respect for all opinions.

- The plan will reflect the realities of the external environment in the worlds of choral music, community arts organizations, the education system, and association management.

- The plan will integrate 5 strategic “Ms”: Music, Membership, Marketing, Money and Mystique.

- Most importantly, the plan will reflect the most expansive possible approach to the broad aim of the Society to enrich lives through singing.

The first draft of this work is expected to be released to the Society Board at the winter, 2017, meeting.

Approval and communication. By May of 2017, it is expected that the Society Board will sign off on a final plan.

Implementation. “This isn’t going to be a study that goes on a shelf,” said Monson regarding the long-term strategic plan. “We’re actually going to implement this beginning in the second half of 2017. And we will keep working it for as long as it takes to realize the powerful vision of a better world, singing. So it is critical that every Barbershopper be a part of this process.”

He stated that a pipeline of \$5 million in futuristic projects have already been identified, and the number is steadily growing. A strategic road map will ensure that we use our limited human and financial resources to ensure the highest impact on investment.

“We have to understand that our product isn’t just the music we sing and call barbershop. Our product is also the Barbershopper himself,” he said. “We strive to change Barbershoppers’ lives, too, and in turn we can go out in our communities and make a better world through singing.” ■

20 Proposals from the 1954 Strategic Plan (rephrased for space)

Download a PDF of the original proposals and their rationale at bit.ly/bhs1954strategy.

The Society should:

1. widely circulate a restatement of its basic purposes and aims
2. develop closer bonds between members Society as a whole
3. ask chapters to align with Society aims
4. create a leadership training program
5. improve and expand member communication
6. enlarge the opportunities of individual

- members for growth in barbershop craft
7. expand programs for the training and recognition of expert ability
8. expand categories of officially recognized competition
9. strengthen and enlarge its headquarters staff
10. develop indicators that would quickly reveal ailing chapters and districts
11. seek increased sources of operating revenue
12. improve its district organization
13. plan a renewed program of chapter extension
14. improve its external public relations

15. develop closer relationships with external music and recreational groups
16. develop outreach programs for high school and college groups
17. formally explain harmony concepts and arranging principles
18. include barbershop singing in the rapidly growing field of industrial recreation
19. develop a permanent international headquarters
20. undertake future programs while utilizing the experience of past officers

Swipes 'n' Swaps

"New director" ads are free in *The Harmonizer* (first 50 words) to Society chapters. Send to harmonizer@barbershop.org.

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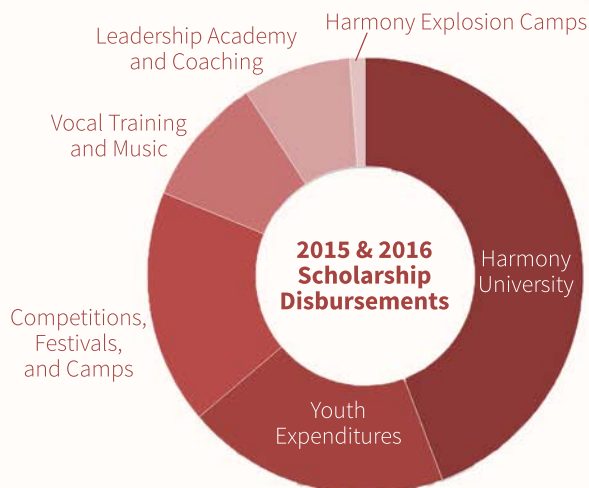
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Mission: The Barbershop Harmony Society brings men together in harmony and fellowship to enrich lives through singing.

Vision: To be the premier membership organization for men who love to sing.



THE TAG

Joe Liles, Tagmaster



Copyrighted song—but sing it within the law

When I was reminded that it was time to produce another tag for the magazine, I had just completed an arrangement of a copyrighted song. So, I “borrowed” the tag from it to use for this page. However, since the lyrics were copyright-protected, I replaced them with new ones, as shown here. Otherwise we would have had to negotiate a fee with the copyright owner for use in the

magazine—a time-consuming and potentially expensive process.

Behold, we have a fresh new tag for you, never baptized by a human voice, male and female versions. Sing it free-style and enjoy the chromatically moving parts. Both settings are now part of the large collection of free tags at www.barbershop.org/tags. ■

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