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WESTUNES

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Far Western District Association of Chapters in the Barbershop Harmony Society



2017 Far Western District President Gordon "Mongo" Bergthold

Editor: Ray S. Rhymer (in 16th year)

Contents

FWD Harmony Camp	3	NorthEast Division Digest	23
Far Western District Chorus Champions	5	Arizona Division Digest	25
District President	7		
Executive Vice President	7		
District Vice President 1 SouthWest Division	8	Acronyms	
District Vice President 2 SouthEast Division	11	BOTM	Barbershopper of the Month
District Vice President 3 NorthWest Division	12	BOTY	Barbershopper of the Year
District Vice President 4 NorthEast Division	12	DP	District President
District Vice President 5 Arizona Division	13	DRCJ	District Representative Contest & Judging
District Vice President DRCJ	14	DVP	District Vice President
District Vice President Mu&P	14	CSLT	Chapter Support & Leadership Training
Chairman CSLT	15	CDD	Chorus Director Development
Chairman CDD	15	C&J	Contest & Judging
Chairman Events	17	E	Events
Chairman Marketing & Public Relations	17	EVP	Executive Vice President
Chairman Membership	18	M&PR	Marketing & Public Relations
Chairman Quartet Activities	19	Mem Ser	Member Services
Chairman YIH [OPEN]	20	Mu&P	Music & Performance
District Historian	20	QA	Quartet Actlvities
Director Wanted	20		
Southwest Division Digest	21		
SouthEast Division Digest	22		
Northwest Division Digest [Editor: OPEN]	23		

FWD Sunshine Chairman

[OPEN]



FWD Harmony Camp

I am taking this opportunity to lay out some realities regarding Harmony Camp 2017.

Harmony Foundation and BHS have a grant process that we engage in every year to finance a significant portion of the funding for Camp. This funding from Harmony Foundation has been in place since 2006. Prior to 2006, we funded the entire cost through your generous contributions. So we have been applying for and receiving significant funding from Harmony Foundation for eleven years.

Last September, shortly after Harmony Camp 2016, we completed our Grant Application for Harmony Camp 2017. Writing these applications is a challenging, grueling, and time consuming process.

We recently learned that our 2017 application was denied.

Ok, so how do we deal with this kind of situation? First I need to share some of my own feelings about Harmony Camp. Nearly all of you know that my feelings toward Harmony Camp are on the passionate side of the scale. So when this kind of thing comes up, I always need to check my underlying core beliefs and make sure that I am being true to my beliefs. Let me share a revelation that we uncovered recently.

We always believed that Harmony Camp makes barbershoppers for life. It's a catchy phrase that allows us to talk easily about Camp. Although we always believed in the concept, I don't think we've ever actually seen the closing of the circle by seeing so many young men "come back" to barbershop after graduation from high school and college --- until recently.

Ben, Joe, Austin, Brandon, Jason, Chris, Chris, Kevin, Blake, Adam, Brandon, Chase, John, Adam, and let's not forget James Morgan and Cory Hunt, all Harmony Camp alumni from some years ago are now singing on the risers with various choruses as deeply committed barbershoppers or have made significant impacts in the barbershop world! Wow! They are taking on jobs in their choruses, helping with the risers, and doing lots of good, no great, singing with the chorus. There are even a couple of them who took on jobs as staff at Harmony Camp!

It's working! The whole idea of providing a weekend experience that changes a young man's life and instills a love of music, particularly in the barbershop style, is real and is happening! This "old" barbershopper has tears in his eyes as he writes this!

But now I've got to get back to the point of this message:

There is a second round of grant applications that we can and will participate in. We will likely tone down our dollar request in hopes that a portion of our request will be funded. We are only partially optimistic about our chances because we just learned that the large Harmony Camp that is run by the Singing Buckeyes out of Columbus Ohio was also denied funding in this first round of grant applications. They cancelled their 2017 camp.

This emerging pattern and our belief that this is not "accidental" requires a bit more background that I learned several years ago almost by accident.

About four years ago I was perusing some of the materials put out by BHS, and happened upon the "2013 HOD Bulletin" that is put out by BHS for the Society House of Delegates, and found a statement that essentially said that the goal of the Foundation /BHS is to fund start up camps and fast growing camps. I was alarmed that established, successful camps were missing from the statement.

Upon further investigation, I learned that that statement meant exactly what it said, i.e., successful camps will sometime soon be cut off from the Foundation and encouraged to provide their own funding!

No longer. That day is NOW.

Because we saw that Bulletin and that statement, we saw this day coming and two years ago set up and provided seed funding for the Lloyd Steinkamp Endowment Fund for FWD Harmony Camps. That fund is established and is growing (approximately \$35,000 to date), but will not be able to provide any funding for our Camp until it reaches \$200,000. So our foresight is laudable, but not actionable – yet.

More facts for you: Over the years that we have been fund raising, we were very careful in our use of your funds to the extent that we built up a fairly significant reserve fund. That reserve fund will allow us to proceed with Harmony Camp 2017 completely.

It is Harmony Camp 2018 that is in some jeopardy – today.

Though we believe that this "decision" by the Foundation is misguided, and ignores the fact that camps like ours are currently producing lifelong barbershoppers each and every year, it is a fact that somewhat abruptly, the future of our FWD Harmony Camp is in jeopardy.

We need your help!

One more reason why we believe that the decision is misguided is illustrated by the following. Nearly all of you who participate in the Harmony Foundation giving programs believe, as was true for eleven years, that a significant portion of your money came back to the FWD in the form of support for the FWD Harmony Camp.

It did.

Now and for the foreseeable future it will not.

You and your chapter provided financial support directly to Harmony Camp for all these many years. When the Harmony Foundation became a real force in our barbershop lives back in about 2006 or so, some of that monetary support that you and your chapter were providing at that time was, quite literally, diverted to the Harmony Foundation. Our direct support from Northern California chapters gradually diminished as the effectiveness of the Foundation's message increased.

We all thought that the Harmony Foundation believed, as we do by our giving, that they had and would continue to have our best interests at heart by providing continued support for the FWD Harmony Camp. So much for that thought.

We need your support!

Please contact me, Richard Lund, for more information on how you can bring your dollars back to the FWD in the form of direct support for the FWD Harmony Camp.

Richard Lund

Director, FWD Harmony Camp 530-621-1904 or rwlund92@gmail.com



Far Western District Chorus Champions

Santa Fe Springs Chapter by Ron Larson

In the second half of 2016, the **Masters of Harmony** took part in two memorable 75th anniversary events. The first was the 2016 Far Western District competition at the Fox Performing Arts Center in Riverside in mid-October. It was the Masters' first opportunity to put on display vocal techniques taught by coaches **Greg Clancy** and **Tony DeRosa**. The result was a noticeably improved sound and a first-place finish that propelled the Masters to an eagerly anticipated rematch with choruses that recently bested them – **The Vocal Majority** in 2015 and **Central Standard** in Nashville in 2016, as well as several other medalist-caliber choruses. In addition, convention planners chose **Bill Rosica** as the Convention Honoree. Bill, who has been president of the Santa Fe Springs and Bakersfield chapters and has received Barbershopper of the Year honors at both chapters, has served as a Far Western District officer and chaired conventions at Division, District and International levels. Thank you, Bill, for enriching the barbershop experience for so many of us!

The second memorable 75th anniversary celebration involving the Masters of Harmony took place in Hawaii with ceremonies commemorating the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. The chorus was invited to participate as the official representative of the USS California, one of the ships sunk that day but repaired and put back in service later in the war. After months of planning by **Skip Farrar** and **Ed Churchill**, the Masters met in Honolulu on Monday, December 5. On December 7, the chorus appeared at the Opening Ceremonies and marched in the parade down Kalakaua Avenue to enthusiastic applause from the massive crowd lining both sides of the street. We closed the ceremonies with a performance at the world-famous Waikiki Shell. The audience included a number of Pearl Harbor survivors who stood proudly when the Masters sang their service anthems. The following day, the Masters performed in light rain at the USS Missouri, not far from the place where the surrender ceremonies

ending World War II took place. It was such a great honor to represent the State of California and the Barbershop Harmony Society at this momentous event.

In December, the Masters performed several duties that repay the City of Santa Fe Springs for the generous support it has given us over the years. On December 3, the Masters took part in the city's annual tree-lighting ceremony and entertained the audience with a mini-Christmas concert. Then, with some of the more experienced Christmas Float singers in Hawaii, **Bill Niemand** skillfully organized other Masters members to sing on the float that precedes the float carrying Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus. Once again, children and parents of Santa Fe Springs got to hear wonderful holiday season songs before the kids got their pictures taken with Santa. The Christmas Floats program has been a highly praised part of the Santa Fe Springs Christmas season for over 25 years.

Once again, the Masters presented Christmas shows in two venues. The first was at a new site, Colony High School in Ontario, with **Alan Gordon** directing in the job-related absence of **Justin Miller**. The second was at the Carpenter Performing Arts Center in Long Beach. The theme of this show was "Christmas Cards." In addition to the chorus, the show featured the introduction of a smaller group of singers called the **Masters Ensemble**. The group of about 24 was created out of a desire to take the Masters experience to places not suitable for the entire chorus while adding needed revenue to chorus coffers. Quartets featured on the show included **Masterpiece (Rob Menaker, Patrick Haedtler, Alan Gordon, Brett Littlefield)** and **The Newfangled Four (Joey Buss, Jackson Niebrugge, Ryan Wisniewski, Jake Tickner)**. Special kudos go to the **Jessica Ragsdale Trio (Jessica Ragsdale, Mina Choi, John Urban)** that entertained the audience before the curtain, at intermission, and accompanied several chorus songs. The well-paced show was rewarded with enthusiastic applause throughout.

The Masters started off their quest for Las Vegas Gold with the chapter's Annual Awards and Installation of Officers Banquet, held at the Yorba Linda Country Club on January 7. **Joey Buss** was the emcee and **Brian Philbin** was the keynote speaker. The following members were installed as the 2017 Board: President – **Jackson Niebrugge**; Secretary – **Maurice Freleaux**; Treasurer – **Bernard Priceman**; VP-Chapter Development – **Cody Littlefield**; VP-Marketing – **Bob Czubiak**; VP-Music & Performance – **Patrick Haedtler**; VP-Operations – **Tom Christman**; VP-Public Relations – **Michael Van Schoonhoven**; Board Members-at-Large – **Charles Carothers, Bart Halberstadt, Ed Schackman, Brent Schultz, Walter Tang, and Dave Tautkus**. **Jim Ernsberger** was named Barbershopper of the Year for the countless hours he has devoted to making the Masters organization run more smoothly. In one of the most unusual honors ever bestowed at a Masters of Harmony banquet, the Quartet of the Year Award was given to four men who have never competed together in a barbershop contest and are not even a registered quartet! **The Marshfellows (Kirt Thiesmeyer, Jack Peters, Ron Larson, Ron Van Winkle)** has participated in the Christmas Floats program for more than 10 consecutive years, sometimes singing on two different days of the nine-day program. They epitomize the Joe Barbershopper aspect of our unique hobby, men who just love to sing and do so regardless of any reward other than the enjoyment they bring to their audiences and themselves.

On January 15, the Masters made their fourth appearance at the Sun Lakes Country Club in Banning. The first Masters performance there was the result of a club resident touting the high quality of his chorus, one whose rehearsals were located 78 miles away. The club leadership decided to test his commitment by inviting the Masters to perform at one of their Sunday afternoon concerts. Each time, the audience has responded with sustained applause throughout the performance.

Since the last edition of Westunes, **Shaquille Dobson** and **David Vorobyov** were welcomed into membership.



Gordon Bergthold

District President

District President

By the time you receive this report the International Midwinter Convention will have been completed in San Antonio, Texas. Once more Craig Hughes, our FWD EVP, represented the Board as I was recovering from yet another 2016 medical event with blood clots in my lungs following the second back surgery in September. I'm now on my way to full recovery and plan on being in attendance during the 2017 FWD events.

It has been said that the leadership is about being a servant first and that leaders serve their followers by providing direction, coaching, and helping to remove obstacles. I feel that the FWD leadership strives to do that for its Chapters and members although many times it's not recognized by those to which the help is directed. Case in point are the two leadership academies that were cancelled recently in southern California and Arizona for lack of interest; or at least the registrations indicated that the interest wasn't there for these events. Harmony College West which was planned in conjunction with the SoCal event was also cancelled for the same reason.

The northern California Leadership Academy was held in November in Sacramento and was deemed successful by District VP Richard Lund. It was followed by another mini-leadership academy on February 4, 2017. The Board of Directors and Management Team are discussing alternatives to these events such as online training with programs designed by the Barbershop Harmony Society personnel in Nashville. This would eliminate cost of travel and lodging and could replace the leadership academies in all of our divisions if that is determined to be the best alternative for the District's Chapters. However, this method of coaching and

teaching would eliminate the opportunity to learn from your peers in face to face discussions which has proven very fruitful in the past to those in attendance.

Our District VP's in the five divisions would like your input as to what you'd like to see in the way of leadership training. Please contact them and let them hear your requests and suggestions. We're here to communicate and communication is 95% listening. If you don't let us know what you're thinking we have no way of knowing how to plan for the future. Your FWD leadership is listed on the FWD website so that you can contact any of us very easily. Take advantage of the tools available to you as a member.

To those of you who have contacted me, thank you and know that I'm working hard to get back to the presidential post to which I have been elected. I'm tired of being a *Remote President* and I want to be in attendance at future meetings to meet face to face with each and every one of you.

Let's not hear, "we've always done it that way", but try doing something different in your Chapter and don't be afraid to fail. In fact, be afraid not to try.



Craig Hughes

Executive Vice President

Executive Vice President

Today is my first day back to reality. I have been in San Antonio at our Midwinter Convention in a Barbershop Bubble of Harmony and Love. It is truly remarkable and something that everyone should experience. International is a mega-sensation - the greatest show on earth! Midwinter is a family reunion with extraordinary performances.

Speaking of performances: **The Velvet Frogs** were outstanding and gave the tremendous performance we

all expect at the Senior Quartet Contest. They always entertain and perform with a style and wit that never disappoints. On a side note: *My wife loves the Frogs.*

Midwinter is the venue for the International Youth Chorus Festival. Twenty Choruses and 599 singers performed in three plateaus. The Far West was represented by:

Plateau A (Average age < 17): **Chandler High School Men's Choir & Chandler High School Treblemakers** (Chandler, Arizona)

Plateau AA (Average age 17 < 20): **Sounds of the Mouth Women's Ensemble** (Mesa, Arizona)

Plateau AAA (Average age 20 < 25): **Boomtown Chorus** (Sponsored by the Santa Fe Springs & Westminster Chapters) & **Carol and the Belles** (University of La Verne, CA)

All five were wonderful. This was the first year to include men's, women's and mixed ensembles. The performances were paired with a Seniors Chorus Contest. The Treblemakers won the Plateau A award and were the audience favorites. The Boomtown Chorus won the Plateau AAA award. You can see their performances at: <http://www.barbershop.org/sanantonio/youth-chorus-festival/>

Our fall 2012 House of Delegates approved a *motion to sponsor (\$10,000) Youth Chorus Festival through donations by the Chapters or by the District through an amended budget should Chapter donations fall short.* This year's commitment was filled by generous donations from 24 Chapters, 1 Quartet, and 3 individuals with the support of our own John and Sharon Miller. The generosity of the men and women of the District was recognized by the young singers. There were more than a few tears as the almost 600 young performers joined in song to "*make the music that makes a difference*".

The next Midwinter is in Costa Mesa, CA and promises to be even better than this year. Please start "passing the hat" at your Chapter meetings so we can meet and exceed our commitment. Let's shoot for a larger number of participating Chapters. Note: It is very important that the individual and family donations

continue. Dropping your spare change in a bucket every week adds up as well.

President Bergthold discusses the status of our Leadership Academies this year. We are aware of our mission to help train your Chapter leaders and will continue to find the best way to work with you. Don't hesitate reaching out to your Division Vice-President or any of the other District Officers. We are here to help.

Our special extended Barbershop family was evident at Midwinter. I was impacted in a very personal way. I tripped over a curb and took a spectacular tumble on my way back from the Saturday Night Show. I did my best plf (parachute landing fall) and was ready to hop up and say "I'm alright!" I was surrounded by "family" telling me to take it slow and helping me to my feet. The only injury was to my pride and that was soothed by the good natured jokes. I have helped others but being on the receiving end brought home the love and support we give each other. It's hard to imagine another group of "strangers" rushing to support a fallen comrade. I guess that's the point. We are not "strangers". We have many friends around the world ready to help any way they can. I am proud to be a Barbershopper.

Thank you for everything you do for your Chapter and the District.

In Harmony,



District Vice President 1 SouthWest Division

Charismatic Musical Directors Wanted:

In general, most of the Chapters in the division are doing well, having finished a fun holiday season peppered with performances and many smiles, optimistically

celebrating new leadership and participating in Singing Valentines. Despite the Society's fantastic Youth Outreach efforts, it seems everyday life has many attractive options and all Chapters are struggling to attract new members. A couple of the Chapters have membership that is dropping below the minimum the Society allows and I've been in contact with those Chapters asking what I and the FWD can do to help, and most have responded they need help with a charismatic chorus director.

A merger of neighboring Chapters may also be a solution. A great example of that is the recent merger of **Conejo Valley Chapter** and **The Channel Islands Clippers Chorus of Ventura**. The two Chapters have officially merged and I was privileged to be their installing officer in January. They are still a "mature" group in search of some younger singers but the combined 25-30 of them sang well and were enthusiastic about the merger and enjoying singing under the capable direction of **Jim Browne**. The larger group has more opportunities to perform in public and singing well in public is a good way to get exposure and gain new members...

Jim is assistant director of **Rincon Beach**, and a couple of the Conejo members are also auditioning with Rincon to be dual members. Several Rincon members are dual with Conejo/Ventura already. The increased vocal work is a help to both Chapters.

Longtime member of the Ventura Clippers Chorus, **Jim Sumstine**, passed away suddenly in December. A memorial in his honor was held in January and a fine chorus of 25-30 combined members from several Chapters sang at the service.

As mentioned above, one key to reviving a Chapter is to have a charismatic musical director. So, if you are a charismatic chorus director, or would like to become one, we have some excellent training available and we have a couple of Chapters that would welcome your assistance. Contact me, or contact **Royce Ferguson**, our FWD Chorus Director guru, and let us help you gain the experience necessary to fulfill your chorus directing dreams.

We are entering the competition season and there is a plan for the two Chapters of **San Luis Obispo** and **Santa Maria** to combine and compete in May. They are not

considering a merger but just a combination of voices to provide a better singing experience at contest. This is a great idea...each member will benefit and learn from the experience of singing with a larger chorus, and the feedback from the judges will be valuable. And, the friendly association with their brothers from a neighboring Chapter will enhance the camaraderie that is a benefit of membership. All it takes for dual membership is \$10 and a little paperwork. Maybe some of you other Chapters out there might consider this as a way to have more fun!

Rincon Beach (Pacific Sound Chorus) continues to do well, led by **Kelly Shepard**. As reported in the last Westunes, their Chapter show last September featured 2012 BHS quartet champion, **Ringmasters**, all the way from Sweden, and they were truly outstanding. Barbershoppers from all over the FWD attended the show, as well as other members of their extensive, world-wide Fan Club. One mother brought her daughter (a huge **Ringmasters** fan), from Utah to see the show as an 18th birthday present. **Ringmasters** were joined on the show by a Santa Barbara-based Sweet Adeline Chorus called **Carpe Diem** and I am proud to report they *recently won the SAI Classic Division Chorus Championship of the world!*

The show was a tremendous artistic success, but fell a little short in ticket sales and so was only marginally financially profitable. Luckily, Rincon finished a successful holiday season with *seven* paid performances. **Rincon** installed a new slate of officers in January and **Jim Kline**, legendary Bass of **139th Street Quartet** and gold medal Bass of **Gotcha!** was the guest Installing Officer. Rincon has decided to introduce their Chapter members to Barbershop Heroes and Legends instead of Politicos, and three years ago, invited **Dave Briner**, last year was **Alan Gordon**, and this year **Jim Kline**. These Legends share their history and love of the hobby and the members and spouses all enjoy and benefit from the experience. Think about which heroes and legends are in your area and consider this idea for your next installation banquet.

Bakersfield is losing their chorus director (moving away) in February and the search is on for a new director. However, they had a musically and financially successful 2016, they have an enthusiastic new slate of officers and they are planning a combined show with

Visalia Chapter in late April, early May...one show there and one show in Bakersfield. Bakersfield was on "life support" just over a year ago, however their revival efforts are strong and I remain optimistic they will not only survive, but thrive. *Any charismatic chorus directors available for the Bakersfield area?*

Hawaii greatly enjoyed their visit to the mainland in October and they competed in Riverside, scored well, hosted a great Mai Tai party and returned home happy. Under the very capable direction of **Mark Conching**, they are doing well and all of us in the FWD appreciate the effort, coordination and expense of coming to contest, and always enjoy their enthusiastic, unique and entertaining performances.

South Bay Chapter continues to have fun and present outstandingly entertaining shows. They performed another full production show in February, called "*Beau Jest*" with a cast of zany characters, the **Rockin' Moroccans** band with **Ready Willing and Mabel**, and silliness abounding. You should make it a point to attend their unique, enjoyable shows...

Santa Monica is healthy and growing. Their membership is now 56 and the director, **Ben Lowe**, is taking a short leave for some education, so **Laura Pallus** is directing and everyone is having a good time. We will see them at contest in May.

San Fernando Valley Chapter, under the direction of **Tom Raffety**, is having fun and has attracted a few new members in the last half of the year. They recently had a fun Ice Cream Social and have put together a music team that takes its job seriously. Watch the FWD website for news of their next show.

It is my hope that every Chapter enjoyed a successful **Singing Valentine** season. Did you see this video from **Rincon Beach Chapter**? https://youtu.be/ZCB_faEdPns

Mike McGee, who's a pretty talented video producer, was the brains behind the video, and the quartet is the **FourTune Seekers**, (**Bobby Georges**, **Garth Ratliff**, **Tobias Brown-Heft**, and **Brent Anderson**).

Singing Valentines is such a great opportunity for each Chapter to not only make money and gain positive exposure doing what we do best, but also the opportunity

for many men to get their first quartet experience. Singing in a quartet is the fastest way to become a better singer, which is not only more fun for the singer but also very good for a healthy Chapter chorus.

Speaking of quartets, how about, just for the fun of it, putting one together and entering the SE/SW combined chorus contest in May? You don't have to think about "winning." Do it for the experience. Just get three buddies, buy matching socks, sing the best you can, entertain the audience, and get valuable singing tips from the judges. The opportunity to have three of our best coaches watch your quartet performance and give you direct, instant feedback on how to get better, is invaluable. The cost and paperwork is minimal. Take advantage of this...

The incredible **Masters of Harmony**, with musical mastery by **Justin Miller**, with already eight gold medals, and with renewed enthusiasm and dedication are preparing for the International Chorus competition in Las Vegas this July. If you've not yet got your reservations and tickets, please hurry. This fantastic arena at **Planet Hollywood** was built as only Las Vegas could do it, especially for vocal music, and the first 7000 people are in for an unforgettable listening and viewing treat. Be one of them and help us cheer the **MOH** to their ninth chorus gold!

The March contest and convention in Sacramento will be the combined NE and NW Divisions and joining those divisional quartets will be many other FWD quartets who will be competing for the right to represent our District in the International Quartet Contest this July. I hope to see you all there!

Harmoniously submitted,



District Vice President 2 SouthEast Division

Over the past year I have had the pleasure to visit many Southeast Chapters and their members. I also had the honor of installing the 2017 officers for six of our Chapters. In each instance, I have seen striving Chapters with programs and projects that keep them growing and moving forward to fulfill their Barbershop dreams. Remember that growth and excitement do not just take the motivation and hard work of the Chapter Board. *Every* member must participate in more than just the singing; each member must participate on a committee or program that helps foster the ideals of the Chapter! When *every* member is engaged in **ALL** aspects of the Chapter, there is nothing that can get in the way of the musical and fraternal growth of each Chapter.

Congratulations to the **Inland Empire Chapter** for landing a TV gig! As it turns out, Mary Parks, the Producer/Host of a PBS weekly TV Series entitled “Exploring the American Spirit,” saw them singing at a mall during Christmas. The chorus was singing a Christmas Program at the Canyon Crest Towne Center and she was eating in one of the restaurants. She was mesmerized by the 4-part harmony and Barbershop sound. She asked if they would be interested in being in one of her Shows. The show will air in the first week of April on PBS! See what can happen by singing out in your community? You never know who will be in the audience. Great job to the Inland Sound Chorus for accepting the “sing-out.” Check out: www.American-Spirit.org

Just a few months ago, I had to make the hard decision to cancel our SE/SW Leadership Academy. However, I have since reached out to the Presidents of the Southeast Chapters and have offered my services to bring a mini-leadership academy to them. Already, I have more than half of our Chapters taking me up on my offer. So to those Chapters that have not contacted me, please do so. It's never too late to have a little schooling on what is expected of those of us in a leadership capacity. You owe it to your Chapter!

Also, this is the time that each Chapter board needs to RE-VISIT your Chapter's Mission Statement. At your next Board meeting, bring it out and discuss whether your “Mission” still describes who you are and what you do as a Chapter. Then bring it to the membership to see what they think. If it needs to be changed because

you have grown as a Chapter, then change it. Once you have a Mission Statement for 2017, please send it to me! (If your Chorus does not have a Mission Statement, contact me so that you and I can get the process started).

Our SE/SW Division contest will take place on May 13, 2017. Attending the division conventions is not just a time for competition, but also a time to renew old acquaintances, and acquire new ones. It is a fun time when you get to see other Chapters perform for you, and you get to perform for them! Plus, it's fun to woodshed with, or just hang out with other Barbershoppers. Mark your calendar now – May 13, 2017.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly recognize and thank the **Brea Chapter** for hosting one of the finest District Contest/Conventions ever! Their imaginative thinking, diligent work, and new technologies made for a smooth, fun and exciting weekend. Some of those “new” technologies included online audience seating and payment, competitor contest videos available for play on phones/computers immediately after the placements were announced, and less expensive, competitor-owned photos. A big thanks goes out to all Chapter members, as well as their wives/significant others, who all “worked the convention.” Your efforts in all aspects of the convention and contest were very appreciated by all attendees!

And, of course, the Brea Chapter's choice of the **Riverside Fox Theatre** provided everyone with a beautiful backdrop to our musical hobby. Quartets, Choruses and audience members were provided a very musical venue that enhanced contestant performances and audience enjoyment!

So, **THANK YOU** and **CONGRATULATIONS** go to **John Gaston**, Convention Chairman and **Bryan Forbes**, FWD Events Coordinator for giving all of us the best convention yet! Oh yes, and a big thank you goes to my friend **Russ Young**, who accompanies me on the Contest Management Team, and **Ron Black**, our hard-working District Contest and Judging Chairman, for making the inner-workings of the contest come across the footlights as a large, seamless performance!

Lastly, mark your calendar for the District Convention/Contests in Bakersfield during the weekend of October

19-22, 2017. It is always a great event full of fun, listening, and singing!



Bill Rosica
VP Division 3 Northwest

District Vice President 3 NorthWest Division

Well here I am in Bakersfield (Southwest Division) holding the office of Vice President of the Northwest Division. As I look forward to a great 2017, how about I tell you a little bit about me and what I see as some of our challenges.

I began my Barbershop experience way back in 1960 when I accompanied my dad Joe to his chorus rehearsals. I didn't really like the Society until 1983 when a member of the Bakersfield Chapter, Dave Fletcher called and asked, "Why haven't you joined us?" My answer was simple. "No one has ever asked me." Well the rest is history, as they say and I hit the ground running with the Golden Empire Chorus.

Since those early days I learned quite a bit. I guess one thing I didn't learn was to say no. That's probably why I took this office of NW Division VP. I have been Show Producer, Convention Chairman, and have held every office in the Chapter. Early in 1998, a fellow Bakersfield Chapter Member and I decided to check out a chorus in southern California by the name of Masters of Harmony under the direction of Jeff Oxley. We both joined and are celebrating the beginning of our 20th year with 5 Gold, a silver and a bronze medal for our efforts. Again I jumped in with both feet to help where I could. For my interest I was elected VP of Chapter Development, Administrative Section Leader, President for three years and International Convention Chairman for 2009 in Anaheim. I have also served in the District as Division VP and currently hold the office of Membership Manager.

Jumping into a Division that I don't know very well

will give me the opportunity to introduce myself to a lot of new folks. My main goal for the Chapters in the Northwest is to increase membership with my simple program. Although it is simple, it will only work if you get involved. And as the great Jim Clancy said, "I'm not talking to the chorus, I'm talking to you". Each of us has a job to do to keep this so-called hobby up and running. We must not only recruit men who like to sing, but give them something each week that will keep them coming back. My motto of "Each One Bring One – We Won" will ask each member to bring in one new member during 2017, not a guest or an observer, but a member. If we can each do that, we all will win.

As I close, I'll ask each Chapter to figure out what type of a Chapter you want to be. On one end would be a competitive Chapter like the Masters. On the other is a social Chapter who meets for an hour or so and then hits the local pizza place. I have to think that most Chapters are somewhere in the middle. Let me know where you want to be and need to be and I'll do what I can to help you get there.



Richard Lund
VP Division 4 Northeast

District Vice President 4 NorthEast Division

In December 2016, my quartet, Backroads, was honored to be asked to sing the National Anthem for one of the Sacramento Kings basketball games. This came about as the result of a young autistic boy who sings with the Placerville Gold Rush Chorus representing all those who have autistic spectrum issues. Our quartet was accompanied by a Davis California junior high symphony orchestra, an incredible group of talented young people.

In the four hours before the game and as we all were on the basketball court before the game, we all got to know

each other a little bit, and it was awe inspiring to get to know this young man and his parents. We were able to get a glimpse of the life and challenges of this young man and how this music was impacting his life. I was overwhelmed and humbled at the opportunities we as Barbershop members have to impact the world.

This event was put on by Joey Travolta, brother of John Travolta. Joey runs Inclusion Films, an organization that teaches film making to adults with developmental disabilities.

I often forget about the ability of our music to impact others. I know we have young men with varying degrees of the autistic spectrum of disabilities at Harmony Camp each year, and their love of our music is awe inspiring. I am reminded that one of these campers from a few years ago is now composing his own music.

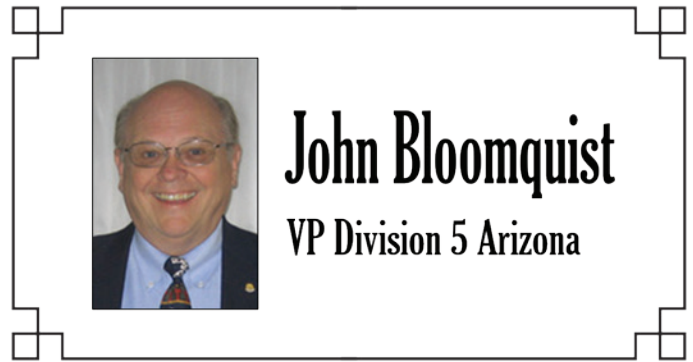
So what is my point in all of this? We have the ability to impact our world with our music but I wonder how many of us ever think about the responsibility that comes along with this ability to use our music to connect with others.

My guess is that 99.99% of the people in the Golden One Center that night didn't even know what we were all about, and that an autistic boy was singing our National Anthem with a Barbershop quartet and a junior high symphony orchestra.

But ... there just may have been one or two folks, perhaps young, perhaps parents of a child with "issues" who "understood" and heard the message. It is for those folks that we were there that night and perhaps "made a difference".

Never forget that there just might be that someone in your audience who is truly touched by your music; who may even have a life-changing experience because they heard and felt your music. We touch people all the time, and of course we never know it.

That's not the point. The point is to give it your all every time you get on that stage. Let your emotions roll out. Let yourself be transformed into the "messenger". You may change a life.



John Bloomquist
VP Division 5 Arizona

District Vice President 5 Arizona Division

This year the Arizona Division was again represented well at the BHS Midwinter Convention and Contest. In the Youth Chorus Festival, which featured female ensembles for the first time in competition, four choruses did VERY well.

Chandler High School Treblemakers Plateau A/
Audience Favorite / Superior

Chandler High School Men's Chorus Plateau A
Outstanding

Sounds Of The Mouth Women's Chorus Mesa CC
Plateau AA Superior

Members of the Sounds Of The Mouth Men's Chorus
sang with Georgia Spirit Plateau AA Superior

All of these groups have ties to Chandler High School and Lori Lyford's vocal program. Barbershop is doing very well there.

In addition to the YCF, our own outgoing Senior Champions High Priority were masterful in their swan song.

I am sad to report that due to lack of attendance registrations, the AZ Div Leadership Academy was cancelled. I am sure that the BOD will be discussing alternatives to satisfy the need to ensure our Chapter leadership is well trained.

This year the Holiday Season was very busy in Arizona. All Chapters performed one or more times and spread the joy of singing to many.

April brings the AZ Div Convention and Contest. The Mesa Chapter will host the event and Convention Chairman Bill Johnson is hard at work alongside Division Events Chairman Randy Bingel to have everything ready. Stay tuned for registration and hotel information.

As always, membership is consistently on the front burner. How many **Man Of Note** awards will YOU get for the year? Do it because you love singing and really just want to share the joy with as many men as possible! Simply ask, “where do you do your singing”? You will be surprised.

As I said before, it is GREAT to be part of this awesome Division!!!



District Vice President DRCJ

If you weren't at the BHS Midwinter Convention in San Antonio, go to the BHS website to see more about it on LiveWire (past issues are in <http://www.barbershop.org/news-events/livewire/>), on the BHS website, and in the Harmonizer.

Hey, have you purchased your registrations for one of the three FWD Conventions this spring? You can do that here: <https://events.farwesterndistrict.org>. And to enter your quartet or chorus in the contest, go to <https://ebiz.barbershop.org>.

The International Quartet Preliminaries is combined with the Northwest and Northeast Division contests on March 10-11 in Sacramento, CA. The venue is McClellan Conference Center, 5411 Luce Ave., McClellan Park, CA 95652. The hotel is the Lions Gate Hotel, 3410 Westover St., McClellan Park, CA 95652, but is **SOLD OUT**. Go to the FWD website in the Events

section to see the additional hotels available. **Deadline for Contest Entry is February 10th.**

The Arizona Division is April 22nd. The contest venue is Mesa High School, 1630 E. Southern Ave. Mesa, AZ, 85204. The hotel is the Holiday Inn Country Club Mesa, 1600 Country Club Dr., Mesa, AZ, 85210, (800) 280-5056. **Deadline for contest entry is March 24th.**

The combined Southeast and Southwest Division contests are on May 13th. **Venue and Hotel are still to be determined. Deadline for contest entry is April 15th.**

Plan to attend your Division Convention, it's a great way to enjoy our hobby and rejuvenate! There are new events and classes being offered, check out the registration pages elsewhere in this issue. And please note, if you plan to compete, here's the four "must do's":

1. **You must be a member of BHS**
2. **You must be a member of your FWD quartet or chorus**
3. **Your quartet or chorus must be registered at the ebiz.barbershop.org site to compete***
4. **You must register for the convention**

*The contest entry form (CJ-20) is filled in by you on the Society ebiz website. It is available for you to enter now. Again, go here:

<https://ebiz.barbershop.org>

Log in and go to Contest Entry. Compete! DO IT!



District Vice President Mu&P

No submittal.



Chairman CSLT

While pondering what little gem I might share with you in this publication I was on the Society Website and right across the top was the word Support. My Title in the District Executive Committee is Chapter SUPPORT & Leadership Training. It was as if O.C. Cash himself was giving me a sign. Well the truth is, there are some great people at Harmony Hall doing their absolute best to provide great resources for us as we enjoy our hobby. As a matter of fact, it's part of the pillars. Pillars? You say... Here you go. <http://www.barbershop.org/about-us/the-four-pillars/>

Pillar one: Through the medium of Barbershop harmony, we maintain and expand supportive services for a global community of artists.

Yep there's that word support again, and what is their why? You are. We are a community of Artists.

Our Chapters are the front line of our Society. Chapters made up of men who love to sing. We come in all shapes and sizes so there is a lot of support. Look and you will find Staff Contacts, The Ever-Improving Document Center, Facts & Questions, and Contest & Judging. (When was the last time you read the Judges Handbook?)

Also, don't miss the Education Tab, especially the part about the Healthy Chapter Initiative. There is so much stuff and it is getting better organized online all the time. Show Harmony Hall your appreciation by spending a little time in our website. There is so much support for you and your Chapter just waiting.

Healthy Chapter Initiative <http://www.barbershop.org/education/healthy-chapter-initiative/>

Music Theory <http://www.barbershop.org/education/music-theory/>

Director Education <http://www.barbershop.org/education/director-education/>

Harmony University online <http://www.barbershop.org/education/harmony-university-online/>

AND SO MUCH MORE <http://www.barbershop.org/>



Chairman CDD

Hello, FWD!

2017 is already well underway with many exciting upcoming opportunities for singing, fellowship, and educational development.

Chorus Directors—Your Far Western District Leadership Team is eager to provide the educational services needed to perpetuate the best quality singing possible among our choruses and quartets. We'd like to hear from you in order to best strengthen these educational offerings and event attendance within the District. How might we best facilitate your Music Team's artistic development and build more compelling successes within your Chapter overall?

Director education is an important cornerstone of our Chapter's successes and we're here and ready to help. There are also scholarships and other assistance assets available for both District and International Educational Events.

Speaking of success, How might one best build a culture for success within our Chapter ensembles? Perhaps more importantly, what is the best measure of this success? Our contest system is simply one wonderful mechanism toward rewarding impactful performances – which are built upon myriad smaller successes.

Core Principles for Success:

Some questions to consider...

Are you and your music team currently crystal clear on what your Chapter's core principles should be?

Are these same principles expressed clearly to the Chapter membership on a weekly basis?

If not, what might be getting in the way? Building upon enthusiastic execution of core principles every week, is fundamental for improvement and Chapter growth.

Educate – yourself and spread the wealth. It is important that a Chapter's musical leadership be continually striving toward achievable goals which will best propel the enthusiasm, membership growth, and musicality forward. Both within the contest system and beyond.

Embrace – all elements of your rehearsals that continually innovate and inspire with strong principle-based singing and performance goals.

Eliminate – distractions. Remove aspects of rehearsal that don't fit the mold of what you and your chorus members hope to achieve each and every rehearsal.

Encourage – Let your singers know that they are capable. Compound successes.

Execute – Be creative. Don't settle. Get to the heart of what is real and deliver.

Remember, execution of core principles beats knowledge alone, every time. Knowledge only represents a potential for success. Do what it takes for your singers to demonstrate mastery of core principles. That is the true measure of achievement.

Synchronization, and Continuity of Vocal Tone:

When it comes to waving our arms, most of the time, a chorus director's role is to concisely demonstrate gestures that (hopefully) encourage the synchronization of vocal attacks – primarily as they relate to strong musical pulses and/or meter.

Unfortunately, one challenge with these gestures of meter alone is that they often don't really convey the true conversational approach that Barbershop harmony requires!

As a director, one may notice that aggressive vertical gestures of meter will often lead to all kinds of unmusical vocal issues: choppy/disconnected vocal lines, pressed tone qualities, and angular, unwanted accents – especially after a breath at the beginning of phrases.

It is helpful to communicate with your singers and for them to recognize that they are primarily responsible for the idling engine of vocal tone and continuity of vocal line.

As a vocal coach I've used many analogies for maintaining this continuity of resonance: from utilizing the sensation of gravity inherent in rollercoasters and fighter jets, to the connection involved with bowing string instruments. More recently, I've suggested an approach to the onset of tone that is much like the easy vibration of one's fingers on a crystal wine glass. It would never be appropriate to aggressively pounce on the glass like a percussion instrument, it simply wouldn't sing. Likewise, as singers, we must be constantly aware to avoid introducing any jarring turbulence into our vocal mechanism and rather simply breathe life into matched vocal resonances.

Exercise:

Direct with a focus upon synchronization and clarity of meter while your singers simultaneously vocalize on a continuous open vowel, Ng, or lip trill. They may also gesture as if they are resonating imaginary wine glasses. Then sing the same vocal line with the lyrics. Ask them if they notice a difference and encourage them to strive for this kind of resonance on every note they sing as they bring more interest into one or two highlighted words in each phrase. Remind them that this ease of resonance will promote a vastly improved musical communication to the listener. Enjoy!



Bryan Forbes

Events

Chairman Events

No Submittal.

AZ Division Contact	Randy Bingel
NE/NW Division Contact	OPEN
SW/SE Division Contact	Paul Sandorff



David Melville

Marketing & Public Relations

Chairman Marketing & Public Relations

First of all, I'd like to thank my predecessor, Jerry McElfresh, for his years of dedicated service to the District. His efforts have not only revitalized Marketing and Public Relations for the district, but have also laid a solid foundation, making it a smooth transition for me to take over this important job, and allowing me to move forward with all of the great things he has started, looking for ways to continually expand and improve.

Jerry and I are great friends, and have worked together for many years at both the District and Chapter levels, and I am happy to report that he has agreed to remain on the team, serving as Advisor.

I am also happy to report that Joe Samora will continue the wonderful job he has been doing to chronicle

the history of this great District. Joe has taken on the arduous task of revitalizing the job of District Historian, which had fallen into relative dormancy since El Wirt retired close to 20 years ago, and we have already enjoyed the fruits of his labor with wonderful historical articles in all four issues of *Westunes* in 2016. Joe was also responsible for the certificate from the Society that officially recognizes our 70th Anniversary. Besides that, he completed interviews with past Hall of Fame inductees Joe Salz and Lynn Brittan and hopes to interview four or six more in 2017. These are all part of his plan to create an Oral History Program to record the thoughts of past HF recipients, and maintain these for future generations.

With regard to *Westunes*, I am pleased to report that Ray Rhymer will continue as Editor in Chief. Established in 1951, *Westunes* is the official publication of the Far Western District, and through the years has become our source of record, reporting on all of the events in the District and our Chapters each quarter. While the current issue is an important resource to keep our members informed of what is going on in the District in the present, the vast library of back issues continue to remain important as an invaluable record of our history.

Ours is a long and proud tradition here in The Far Western District, not only with an amazing roster of talented men, but also with an abundance of groups and individuals who have contributed to making this one of the leading Districts in the Society. It is extremely important that we chronicle all of the great individuals, groups, and events that make the FWD what it is so that future generations will be fully aware of what it takes, and are able to carry on the tradition. And for that reason I pledge to give both Ray Rhymer and Joe Samora my full support to carry on these important jobs.

Another member of the Marketing team includes Paul Girard, who manages the web content for our Youth In Harmony (YIH) programs, including information for students, educators, and Chapter members to get them on board with YIH, as well as Harmony Youth Camp, Youth Chorus Festival, Young Men's Harmony Festival, and the High School Quartet Contest. This is how our future gets started, and Paul's efforts help to make it possible.

We also have four dedicated men serving under Ray Rhymer as Division Editors for the *Westunes* team: Bob Shaffer (Arizona), Roger Perkins (Northeast), Greg Price (Southeast), and Justin McQueen (Southwest). Every quarter these men reach out to all of the Chapters in their respective division to gather information that then gets compiled into their Division Digest. Let's all help these men do a successful job by getting Chapter reports to them on a regular basis!

We are still looking for someone to take on the job of Division Editor for Northwest; if you are interested, or know someone who may be, please contact Ray Rhymer or me as soon as possible, as there are a lot of great things going in Northwest that need to be reported.

Also under Marketing & PR is the District website, www.farwesterndistrict.org. The website has undergone significant changes in the past year, many of them being technical, but also changes to make them more manageable and easier to navigate. Invisibly it has been moved to a state-of-the-art hosting platform, and upgraded to the latest and fully supported version of the back-end software. Outwardly there has also been significant change, most notably the migration to a new, "responsive" platform, which means that it now works well on phones and tablets as well as computers. This new technology also allowed the consolidation of what had once been 25 separate websites. The main FWD site now includes all five division sites, *Westunes*, and YIH as a public site; Events continue to be separate as a public, secured site for events registration; the other sites are all in the process of being consolidated into a new "members only" secured site that is still under construction and will be implemented sometime this year.

I will continue to serve as the District webmaster, with the full understanding that wearing two hats can be a huge undertaking. To that end, I am calling out to individuals who have an interest in honing their artistic and technical skills to serve as Assistant or Associate webmasters, authors, editors, or graphic designers. I know there are men in this District who would be a great benefit to the team, and I encourage you to contact me if you have an interest to serve or learn more.

In years past, nearly every convention had a distinctive logo that captured the essence of the event and the host

city, often with pins, patches, and attire to celebrate the event. Bryan Forbes and I are trying to revive this, and started with the 2016 FWD Fall Convention in Riverside to celebrate the District's 70th Anniversary, carrying the theme forward to the Spring and Divisional events in 2017. It would be great to revive this tradition for all of our future District events, so I'm calling out to graphic artists from around the District to submit ideas for a logo for the 2017 FWD Fall Convention in Bakersfield.

Finally, my vision for the FWD Marketing & Public Relations team going forward really questions the validity of the title given to what we do. I have served as VP of Marketing & PR at the Chapter level on numerous occasions, and that job is all about public outreach; however, at the District level, while there certainly is a public presence, the vast majority of our effort is reaching inward to our members through COMMUNICATION. So call it what you will, I really see the primary responsibility of this job being to facilitate strong and effective communication between the District, Chapters, and members to keep everyone well informed, share ideas, express concerns, and work together to make the FWD better and stronger than ever.



Chairman Membership

No submittal.



be represented in Platoons at AZ Division and SE/SW Division conventions. Just look at all the different Chapters represented by the Platoon champs from last fall's FWD Convention in Riverside.



Chairman Quartet Activities

Congratulations to FWD Tenor Gene Brandwein, part of the newly crowned Platoon Champs at the San Antonio Midwinter. Gene is an active member of the Sun Cities (AZ) Chapter and Secretary of the AZ Quartet Chapter as well. Gene has done quite a number of Platoons and been in a prior Platoon quartet champion here at the FWD convention last fall in Riverside.



2017 SAN ANTONIO MIDWINTER CHAMPIONS: Market Street

Gene Brandwein, Tenor from Sun Cities, AZ
Eric Waninger, Lead from Plano, TX
Andrew Coward, Bass from Hong Kong
Jim Lucey, Bari from Colorado Springs, CO
They sang "This Could Be the Start of Something Big"

When you attend a Platoon at one of the International conventions, or here in FWD, you make new friends singing with guys from many different Chapters all around the District (or all around the world as did Gene with his Bass from Hong Kong). For example, in the upcoming FWD Spring Convention Platoon in Sacramento there are men from over a dozen Chapters singing Platoon. Lots more Chapters will

Repeaters

2016 FWD Fall Platoon Finals Contest Champs
(L to R) (Photo – image1)

Tenor - Gene Brandwein (Sun Cities, AZ Quartet Chapter)
Bass - Allen Smith (Inland Empire)
Lead - Justin McQueen (Rincon Beach)
Bari - Mike Murphy (Rincon Beach)



Confused

2016 FWD Fall Platoon Thursday Evening Champs
(L to R) (Photo-2016-10-13 17.4.19)

Tenor - David Weatherford (Palo Alto-Mt. View)
Lead - Adam Kaufman (Mesa)
Bass - Wally Mees (Santa Monica)
Bari - Scott Suwabe (South Bay)



Whatever

2016 FWD Fall Platoon Thursday Morning Champs
(L to R) (IMG_4926.JPG)

Tenor – Mark Tabry (Palo Alto-Mt. View)

Lead – Rio Score (Coachella Valley)

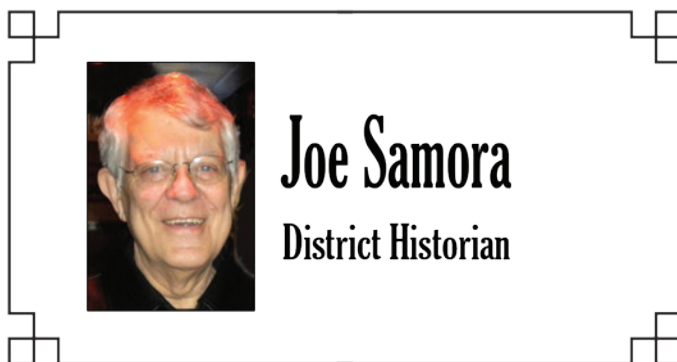
Bass – Fred Vera (Fullerton)

Bari – Dave Menestrina (Palo Alto-Mt. View)

Will you be part of the Platoon at a FWD convention this year? Check the FWD website for a District or Division Platoon near you and join up to have some quartet fun.

Chairman YIH [OPEN]

No submittal.



District Historian

Celebrity Barbershop Singers

Some men may have sung Barbershop before or after they became celebrities. Why mention celebrity Barbershop singers? Because, you don't have to be famous to

sing Barbershop, just enjoy the sound you make when combining your voice with the voices of others.

Listed below are a few celebrities.

Greg Buttle – pro football player

Steve Carell - actor

Bing Crosby – singer, actor

Bill Gaither – gospel singer

Joseph Gordon-Levitt - actor

Bill Hanna – creator of cartoon series

Groucho Marx – comedian, actor

John Miller – Executive VP of NBC

Osmond Brothers – singers

Mike Rowe – actor

Kevin Spacey – actor

Justin Timberlake – singer, actor

Harry S. Truman – US. President

Dick Van Dyke – actor

The first 70 years of the Far Western District serves as testimony to what has been accomplished to date.

Director Wanted

The Tucson Sunshine Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society is interviewing prospective directors for our 35 member men's chorus. Director must be experienced and available for weekly rehearsals and periodic performances. Barbershop music knowledge and experience desired. Monthly salary and education benefits provided.

Contact Mike Elbert at melbert@cox.net or 520-664-7500.



Southwest Division Digest

Bakersfield Chapter

By Rich Owen

Golden Empire Chorus is joining with the **Mighty Oak Chorus** (Visalia) to do a joint show. The Visalia version will be on 4/29 followed by the Bakersfield version on 5/7. No show name yet but based on Disney music. **Front Line** will be headlining in Visalia and **Velvet Frogs** in Bakersfield. Each chapter is responsible for marketing the show in their town and keep the profits.

We had installation of officers on January 12; **Bill Rosica** was the installing officer. Officers are: **Rich Owen**, President, **Wally Nicholas**, Secretary, **Allen Belluomini**, Treasurer (yes, Walt finally retired!), **Jim Mahoney**, VP Music/Performance, **Mike Kennedy**, VP Membership/Chapter Development, and BMALs **Dave Fletcher** and **Andy Hensel**. **Mike Kennedy** was awarded BOTY for 2016. New Treasurer **Allen Belluomini** and I took the Treasurer's class in Sacramento.

Rincon Beach Chapter

By Justin McQueen

Rincon Beach Chapter Pacific Sound Chorus sledded right into the busy holiday season (even though we don't get snow) to bring old time standards and some new songs to young and old alike. Under the direction of **Kelly Shepard** and Assistant Director **Jim Browne**, the chorus performed at the Santa Barbara Club tree lighting ceremony and the annual holiday concert at the Good Shepard Lutheran Church in Camarillo while also raising money for charity. Speaking of Charity, Pacific Sound Chorus performed at the televised annual Unity Shoppe Telethon in Santa Barbara, and also at the assisted living facilities and retirement communities of Casa Dorinda, Atria Los Posas, and the Samarkand. There was plenty of weekend singing at the Paseo Nuevo Mall for good measure between performances.

After the holidays and a well-earned break, we held our annual installation banquet. Our new board was installed by **Jimmy Kline**. Immediate Past President **Jim Rodriguez** introduced new officers: President **Bill Winfield**, Secretary **Phil Allen**, Treasurer **Tom Cristiani**, VP Marketing **Bobby Georges**, VP Membership **Bill Chase**, VP Music **Doug Van Bogelen**, Program VP **Joel Levitz**, BMAL(s) **Chris Freeze** and **Bruce Hunter**, and Chorus Manager **Mike Murphy**.

Rookie of the Year honors went to yours truly actually. *The Chorus Champions* award went to **Bobby Georges**. The *BOTY* went to **Joel Levitz**.

Central Coast Chordsmen of Santa Maria, CA

Larry Long installed the new board of directors. **Margeret Nelson**, our current assistant director, and **Mary Lou Los**, our current publicity chairman, were welcomed as associate members. Chapter members forming several quartets entertained. The Chapter president set goals to concentrate on growth in membership and increase local performances in the community. The *BOTY* was awarded to the Program VP **Bob Arnold**.

Santa Monica Chapter

By Marty Mitnick

Leading up to the holiday season the **Oceanaires** and a quartet performed at the Westminster Gardens Continuing Care Retirement Community. Additional performances were at the Cedars Sinai Hospital Neo-Natal ICU department; The Salvation Army Silver Crest Retirement Home; Caroling at the Culver Hotel; the Culver City Fire Department Captain and crew; the West Los Angeles Veterans Administration home; and the Santa Monica Place Shopping Center stage.

Jerry Walker managed our installation of 2017 officers luncheon and **Bruce Schroffel** was the Master of Ceremonies. **Allan Katz**, a former director of the **Oceanaires**, installed our officers: President **Ken Scholtz**; Immediate-Past President **Jack Fry**; Secretary **Frank DaVanzo**; Treasurer **John White**; VP Chorus Manager **Wally Mees**; VP Membership **Jerry Walker**; VP Music **Jim Leedom**; VP Marketing & PR **Pat Kellogg**; VP Web Communications **Frank Giffen**;

Members-At-Large **Alan Hanson**, **Jim Mc Elwain**, and **Jack Walton**.

The Honors and Awards presentations followed. Director's Awards were presented to: **Andrew Lehto** - Rookie of the year; **Alan Hanson** - Costumer; **Jack Walton** for continued Leadership. President's Awards were presented to: **Bill "Doc" Boeck** - Keeper of the Key and Protector of the Pitch; **Kathleen Boeck** - Exceptional service as President of the SOS; **Jim Leedom** - for continued leadership.



SouthEast Division Digest

El Cajon Chapter

By Jeff Freeman

Paul Schmidt finished his third year as chapter president, and **Jeff Freeman** was elected to that office for 2017.

Our chapter did three Christmas shows during the holidays and had an additional paid performance for Fredericka Manor, a large retirement community in Chula Vista.

Over the last six months, the lead section grew by two members, **Ron Steen** and **Keith Mulfinger**, for a total of five. A new tenor is also being recruited for membership. The **Music Masters** now has more members attending regular meetings than it has in the last three years.

Inland Empire Chapter

By Gaylord Spence

The Inland Empire Chapter has some very exciting news to report that are the result of the hard work of VP of Marketing and Public Relations, **Dave Strough**. During the month of December when we were doing several "Caroling" sing-outs in the restaurants of a local shopping center (which Dave also lined up), Dave met and established a working relationship with a PBS show

producer. That meeting has evolved to a point where she attended one of our rehearsals with her photographer and taped a half-hour show that is to be telecast on PBS affiliated stations during the first week in April.

We are also joining with a Barbershop chorus from Erlanger Germany to produce what we are calling "The Sister Cities Concert" at the Magnolia Center Church of Christ on April 29. This evolved from the fact that Riverside and Erlanger are sister cities and this group will be touring Southern Cal in April. All of this plus, the new techniques that are being taught to us by our new VP of Music, **Bill Kliever**, are making 2017 a real fun year to be a Barbershopper!

Las Vegas

By Peter Feeney

Quartets representing the **Silver Statesmen Chorus** spread out through the Las Vegas Valley on Valentine's Day to deliver Singing Valentines. It was a busy and rewarding few days!

The chapter is undergoing a chorus "reboot" at the present time as it prepares to participate in the Southeast Division convention and contest in May. Each member is being asked to review the essential basics of our craft. Director **Jim Halvorson** works with the chorus each week to review these fundamentals and provides individual assistance as needed. Each section leader as well as our associate directors and Music VP have an important role in the process.

The chapter is hard at work preparing for the International Convention to be held in Las Vegas in July as the host chapter. Volunteers are very welcome! The contest will be held at the acoustically superior venue, the Planet Hollywood Hotel's Axis Theater, home to many world famous entertainers.

San Diego Chapter

By Greg Price

The Elf Chorus sang for the 39th successive year hosting the second half of our Christmas show at the Prado Theater in Balboa Park on the weekend after Thanksgiving. Somebody remarked that the elves looked suspiciously similar to the guys who sang in tux outfits in the first half. The same crew performed

five more times before Christmas at various events including San Diego's December Nights.

We welcomed two new members, **Tim Foti** and **Michael Williams** to our tenor and bass sections, respectively. The month of January brought us five visiting singers who continue to grace our risers.

The chapter installation dinner saw the return of our President **Louis Regas** for a fourth term, saying he is going to keep doing it until he gets it right. Your humble digester expressed the sincere hope that he should live long enough to see it happen.

Our dear director **Kathleen Hansen** has been absent from recent chapter meetings due to some physical challenges. We all send her our love and support and hope for her to get well and come back to be with us again soon. In the interim our assistant director **Neal Palmer** is doing a yeoman job as our musical leader.



Northwest Division Digest [Editor: OPEN]

Ed. Note: The NorthWest Division Chapters of the Far Western District are not represented in Westunes. The simple reason is that no member of the NorthWest Division has volunteered to take the responsibility of NorthWest Division Editor. The task is relatively easy and takes only a little time once a quarter. The Division Editor is asked to request submittals from your Division Chapters for publication in Westunes. The submittals are emailed to you. You copy/paste them into one document [alphabetically by chapter name] and send that document to the Westunes Editor by the 1st of the months of February, April, July and October. Please email me at westuneseditor@farwesterndistrict.org to volunteer.



NorthEast Division Digest

California Delta Chapter

By Jim DeChaine

Just starting our eighth year as a chorus, the **Voices of California** is pleased to qualify to sing for our third time on the International stage in Las Vegas, one of four choruses from the Far Western District.

VoCal held our afternoon Holiday show at the Harris Center in Folsom that featured our own **Artistic License**, and three local outside groups – **The Doreen Irwin Singers**, **Sacramento State Vocal Jazz Ensemble**, and **The Slavic Chorale**.

An evening show followed at the United Methodist Church in Loomis. A mid-glow between shows was hosted by **Stan and Donna Trumbull** at their home.

In November, **VoCal** completed our quarterly “**Sing Like a Pro**” training series, consisting of free singing lessons primarily for new-member prospects. Our **VoCal University** program resumed as well, which are instructive sessions for new and seasoned members.

The 2017 board members are: President **Jim Maass**; VP Music **Larry Halvorson**; VP Membership **Larry Womac**; VP Marketing **Rich Brunner**; Secretary **Darrell Chappell**; Treasurer **Roger Santiago**; Members at Large **Richard Kaiser** and **Derick Sturke**; and Immediate Past President **Stan Trumbull**. Deserving Awards went to: **Dwayne Smith** (Above & Beyond); **Dan Warschauer** and **Tim Martin** (Special Award for Valuable work on our shows); **Elijah Rich** (Rookie of the Year); **Chuck Copeland** (Member's Choice); **Jim Minoudis** (President's Award); **Darrell Chappel** (Gabe Carreto Director's Award); and **Richard Kaiser** (Barbershopper of the Year). A special Mate of the Year award to **Linda Eger** was presented by outgoing Mate Chair **Sue Sturke**. **Dan Warschauer** was our installing officer.

In the December 23-January 5 time frame, **VoCal** ran a professionally prepared 30-second video recording at seven theaters in the Sacramento area. There were over 100,000 showings of the commercial video over the two-week holiday period.

VoCal has a new rehearsal location: **E. Claire Raley Studio** (known as **CLARA**), located at 2420 “N” Street in Sacramento. All are welcome at our Thursday evening rehearsals from 7:30 – 10:00 p.m. Visit us at: www.Voicesofcalifornia.org

Central California Chapter

By Miles Sutter

Our annual show at the Turlock, CA Community Theatre, featured **FLIGHTLINE**, our FWD Silver Medalist International Youth Quartet champion. Also headlining our show was the Turlock High School Madrigal Choir, **Zach Stillman**, director. GVC’s own quartet, **Common Bond** (**Howard Barber, George Cooper, Roy Anderson, Greg Kramp**), also performed. The surprise entertainment of our show was **H.I.C.K.S!** (**Jethro, Billy, Bob and Cletus**), otherwise known as **Dave Wallace, Steve Leipelt, Richard Lund** and **Bruce Sellnow**. Our fabulous script writer and MC for our show was **Dan Warschauer**.

November 12, was the fifth year for the Better Together Benefit Choir Concert in Modesto at The L.D.S. Church. Modesto area churches and musical groups joined forces to benefit various food pantries in our community. Nine participants gave of their time to entertain the very generous people of Modesto and surrounding area. This year we were able to collect more than 4,000 pounds of food for the needy. The event is free to all community residents. You were invited to bring a bag of non-perishable, non-breakable groceries as part of your admission fee.

For the fourth year in a row we performed our Christmas package at the LDS Chapel in Modesto. Sixteen GVCers in holiday attire sang twelve songs celebrating the season.

The GVC repeated our LDS performance for Turlock’s Covenant Village Retirement home. The soloists for this performance were **Chuck Roots, Roe Darnell** and **Bruce Sellnow**. MC **Chuck Roots** introduced each selection with the history behind each song.

The GVC sang at the Casa De Modesto Retirement Center with all the members in Christmas colors and attire. We included the always requested “12 Days of Christmas”. **Howard Barber** provided the musical background.

Folsom Chapter

By Dennis Stohl

FWD DVP NorthEast Richard Lund, accompanied by his wife **Patsy**, was our installing officer at our annual installation dinner. About 25 members and wives were in attendance to see **Les Lorenzen** installed as president for the third year. Afterwards chorus director **Kent Borrowdale** directed the chorus in their two contest songs for the spring convention at McClellan AFB. **BOTY** for 2016 was **Burt Weichenthal**, who has been chapter treasurer for quite a while and is a faithful member of the lead section.

Nevada Placer Chapter

By Roger Perkins

The **Sierranaders** performed their 33rd annual show, “**Comedy Tonight**”, at the State Theater in downtown Auburn for the first time. Quartets were **The Artful Codgers, The Wheaties Quartet, What’s Next? Harmonic Conversion** and **B-BLT**. Our headline quartet was the **Velvet Frogs** (**Craig Ewing, David Livingston, Bill Wilson, C.J. Sams**).

With help from some of our friends from the **Folsom Harmony Express**, we sang at the Victorian Christmas in Nevada City on two Wednesday evenings. We have been performing there for about 30 years to a good crowd. Some of them even stand with us and sing along.

Richard Lund was our 2017 installing officer. Incoming president is **Roger Perkins** who is also chorus director. The incoming board is: Music VP **Ken Potter**, Program VP **Randy Friesen**, Membership VP **Tony Prowense**, PR VP **Cliff Johnson**, Treasurer **Steve Mathews**, Secretary **Burt Weichenthal**, Board Members **Tom Klasey & Jim Sipes**, and outgoing president **Art Baird**. 2016 **BOTY** is **Ken Potter** who works hard providing a variety of beverages at all social events including our annual Bean Feed & Somewhat Serious Quartet Contest as well as singing the unappreciated part, baritone. Thanks, Ken.

Reno Chapter

By Steve Shurtliff

We sang the National Anthem at the Reno Bighorns, one of the NBA D-League teams, home opener.

We performed two Christmas shows to end the year. The first was our own show, where we sang with four high school elite singing groups. The girls have always been good, and the boys are now growing in number and skill. The overall sound these kids make is improving by leaps and bounds. A Cappella music is definitely on the rise.

The second was in Squaw Valley at the Olympic Village where the Winter Olympics took place in 1960. They built a special tree for us to sing in at the opening party for a week-long event that was held there. We did most of our Christmas repertoire, and also led the crowd in singing several Christmas songs. They want us back this year.

Our new Board is in place, led by **Donnie Miller**. He has had many ideas for the Chorus, and is excited about being at the helm. **Sam Hardt** is our new Director of Promo. He is already responsible for our increased work with the local sports teams, and has many plans for increasing our community presence this year. **Bill Stephens** has been doing an excellent job as Director, and is now taking on the job full time.

Visalia Chapter

By Bud Case

The **Mighty Oaks Chorus** ventured in to a new way to fundraise with a Western Roundup/BBQ that netted us a big success. **Ken McNutt** is good friends with someone that donated their venue. Other members went to community businesses for donations for our Silent Auction and everybody worked hard so that we netted \$3,000! Besides tri-tip 'n' fixin's, good old-time Western gun fight/court, a great variety of music (barbershop and other), raffles and silent auction (pies, quilts and a whole lot more), a good time was had by all. We even had the A&W "Shake-mobile"!

The first Tuesday after Thanksgiving through Christmas week our chorus spreads cheer in 2-3 senior facilities around our area each week. Music is a great gift that gives back more than one giveaway.



Arizona Division Digest

Central Arizona (Quartet) Chapter

By Bill Kane

The Chapter has four meetings scheduled on Saturdays to prepare four songs for the quartet Harmony Platoon to be held April 21, the day prior to the Arizona Division spring convention in Mesa. These rehearsals will be on February 4 and 18, plus March 18 and April 15. Since men come from Prescott, Tucson and Phoenix, the location for meetings will be either Scottsdale or Casa Grande, depending on the sign-up to attend. Check with President [Bill Kane](#) for location. The four Platoon songs include Dave Briner's arrangement of the 1912 WC Handy hit *Memphis Blues*, and from the big band era *All I Do Is Dream Of You*, with the Lovin' Spoonful's 1966 song *Daydream* and Lou Perry's great chart of *For All We Know*. Anyone who loves to quartet is welcome.

Greater Phoenix Chapter

By David Melville

The **Phoenicians** presented three performance of our Christmas show, two at Skyline High School in Mesa and one at the Nazarene Church in Glendale, the latter being a LONG overdue return to the West Valley. December also saw our departure from our rehearsal location for more than 10 years at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran; starting in January we are meeting Tuesdays at 7:00 PM at Church of the Beatitudes, 555 W Glendale Ave, which is at the corner of Glendale and Seventh Avenue in central Phoenix. We're having a blast at our chapter meetings, and we encourage you to visit us and join in on the fun when you are in the Phoenix metro area. As we say at the close of every meeting, "It's GREAT to be a Phoenician!"

Arizona Division VP **John Bloomquist** installed our 2017 Chapter Officers at our Installation & Awards banquet. We are very pleased to announce that **Danny Ryan** has been named the Greater Phoenix Chapter

BOTY for 2016.

We've partnered up with the East Valley Harmonizers (Mesa Chapter) and the Arizona Quartet Chapter to offer Singing Valentines throughout the entire metro area; Mesa handled bookings in the East Valley, while Phoenix and AZQC covered the Central and West valleys. It's working into a great cooperative effort in terms of marketing and logistics, but more importantly it's fun to be working together with our brothers to achieve a common goal.

We're working to get involved with the "First Friday" events in Phoenix. In a recent survey, our guys overwhelmingly indicated they want to get out and perform more, and so our plans are to do just that.

Mesa Chapter

By Bob Shaffer

We began the fall with a fundraising concert for our hosts, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, and then a concert in Tempe at the King of Glory Lutheran Church. Before Thanksgiving we sang at the Festival of Trees at San Tan Mall in Gilbert, which is a fundraiser for the Gilbert CAN Association. Two Christmas performances and an appearance on Christmas Street in Chandler closed out 2016.

The chorus welcomes new member **Joe Freeman**, and dual members **Andy Pronko** and **Bob Kerdus**.

Ken Brannon was appointed to the position of Member at Large, vacated by **Adam Kaufman** who was asked to assume the duties of Program VP. **Russ Young**, who not only is our chorus director but also a past President of the Far Western District installed our 2017 officers. **John Johnson** was named 2016 Barbershopper of the Year. **Bill Johnson** presented each of the previous *BOTY* awardees still active in the chapter a commemorative medallion.

Bill Kane appeared in a Scottsdale Musical Theater Company production of "*Guys and Dolls*" in the roles of Angie the Ox and Joey Biltmore, while understudying the role of Brother Arvide. **Jim Brown** (our asst. director) appeared in a Sun Lakes Community Theater production of "*Dearly Departed*".

If you are in the metro Phoenix area on a Thursday evening, please drop in and ring some chords with us. We always include some quarteting at the end of every meeting before heading off to the afterglow.

Prescott Chapter

By Sam Stimple

The chorus performed in Prescott at the Sharlot Hall Museum, Acker Musical Showcase, and we shared holiday music at 19 locations (gated-community dinners, care centers, service clubs, AZ Pioneer Home) during the first two weeks of December.

Both **Mountain Sound** and **Antique Parts** quartets pleased the crowds by competing at the 2016 Far Western District Fall Convention.

Our November 12 show, "*Awesome Arizona*", featured Phoenix quartet **Suit Up!**, whose members assisted with the **Real Men Sing** youth workshop. It is gratifying to have high school boys and music teachers from Prescott and Winslow.

2017 officers are elected: President **Sam Stimple**, Secretary **Edward Wolfe**, Treasurer **Dick Patton**, VP Music and Performance **Tommy Keenan**, VP Programs and Public Relations **Rich Ludwigson**, VP Membership and Chapter Development **Gordon Ralph**, Performance Coordinator and Webmaster **Edward Massa**, Members at Large **Ted Proctor** and **Eddie Roush**.

Salt River Valley Chapter

By Eric Bjornsen

The **A Cappella Syndicate** competed in District convention in Riverside, improved its overall score to 80 and placed fifth amid some very tough competition.

The **Syndicate** participated in a local youth singing event sponsored by the Orpheus Chorus of Phoenix – **Boys to Men**. On the first Saturday in November each year, participating male singers from schools across Arizona join male singers from local male choruses in an afternoon-long rehearsal session with guest clinicians, culminating in a concert consisting of selections by participating schools, performances by the participating local male choruses, and a few songs by all participants

– over 300 voices. The **Syndicate** performance received standing ovations. The **Syndicate** also hosted a pizza party afterward for the kids, extending the fellowship with the teaching and singing of tags. The overarching objective of ***Boys to Men*** is to help today's youth understand that their singing enjoyment need not end with school, but can carry on well into adulthood. The **Syndicate's** own **Jack Mauney** was featured as an "older" example of this... still singing well at the seasoned age of 88!

The **Syndicate** sang several private Christmas performances. A most memorable event was a joint performance of two shows with the Chandler Symphony Orchestra, complete with individual and combined pieces, including the *Hallelujah Chorus*.

Sedona Chapter

By Michael McCaffrey

"If everyone started off the day singing, just think how happy they'd be."

— Lauren Myracle, Shine

And what a happy audience we had for our annual show. A capacity crowd of 130 was thoroughly entertained by our simulated barbershop setting, a great assortment of personal stories, and, of course, an eclectic selection of Barbershop tunes that amused, tugged at the heartstrings, uplifted the spirits, and magically meandered through many musical styles and eras. We also featured **The Eclectones**, the 7th place finishers at the youth Barbershop Quartet contest at the 2016 International Convention.

We had performances at the Church of the Red Rocks (our sponsor) and the Gem and Mineral Club for their Christmas dinner.

We invite anyone who is in the area to stop by and check out our weekly practices - every Wednesday night from 6:00 to 8:00 at The Church of the Red Rocks, 54 Bowstring Dr.

White Mountains Arizona Chapter

By Doc Dockendorf, Director

The High Country Chorus 2017 officers are: President **Millard Bolt**, IPP **Jerry Shrunk**, Secretary/Treasurer **Don Murrow**, Membership VP **Ron LaMar**, PR VP

Duane Krause, Music VP, **Jim Bohart** and Members at Large **Ron Montez**, **Ron Longenbaugh**, and **James Burden**. We lost our Community Board member **Jerry Howell**, who has served reliably on the BOD for the past two years. Thanks Jerry for your service, and for agreeing to remain as our Show MC.

We held our 5th Annual *Christmas In the Pines* show, which we use as a fund raiser for local school choirs. The finale of the show, which was the singing of Silent Night, had over 200 singers on stage, which included the HCC, the four choirs, and dancers from the local Dance Academy. We have an active Community Service initiative, and this year we donated \$2000 (\$500 each) to the choirs that participated in this very entertaining show. To date we have donated nearly \$7000 to the local choirs. The *White Mountain Independent* newspaper had a PR spread on the show and pictures of the presentation of checks to the choir Directors.

We put on a show at the local Walmart, followed by a performance at Haven Health Care Nursing home.

We offered a full, all expenses paid, scholarship to Harmony University to one of the local school music teachers, who has done marvelous things with her excellent choirs. There are a large number of boys in her choirs, so our goal is to introduce Barbershop to them through her.

Notices

Calendar

The FWD Website now contains the official FWD calendar - go to <http://farwesterndistrict.org>

Conventions / Contests

HEAR YE - HEAR YE - HEAR YE

All members

NOW REGISTER ELECTRONICALLY

IN ADVANCE FOR

ALL FWD CONTESTS and CONVENTIONS

You can pay at the door, but there is a steep price increase - not suggested.

Go to the FWD website <http://farwesterndistrict.org> for event notifications and registration forms, which will be added as they become available to Webmaster David Melville.

For your convenience, 2017 FWD & BHS dates are:

- March 9-12 FWD Spring Convention & NE/NW Division Contest
Location: McClellan Conference Center
McClellan Park, Sacramento, CA
Same locations as 2015
- April 21-22 AZ Division Contest
- May 12-13 SE/SW Division Contest
- July 2-8 BHS International Convention – Las Vegas
- July 23-30 Harmony University - Nashville
- October 19-22 Fall FWD District Conventions
Location: Bakersfield, CA

To Email Your District Officers & Chairmen

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