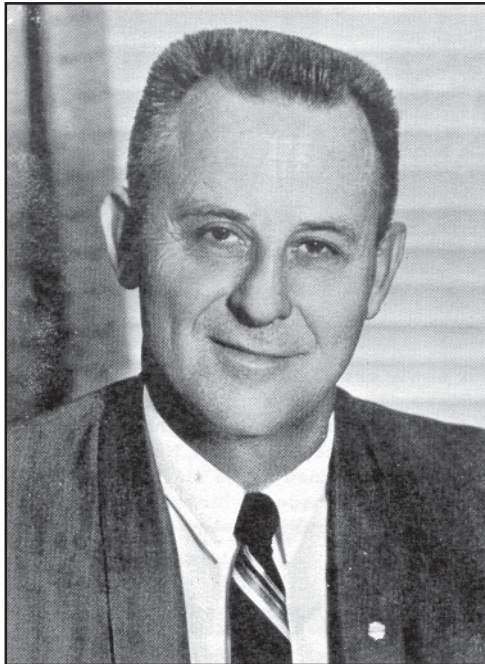


Chapter 2

November 1951 - October 1956



WESTUNES MAGAZINE, the District magazine was started in August 1951 with R. T. DeBusk as Editor. DeBusk listed as Associate Editors the 1500 members of the Far Western District, a subtle way of saying: "Get your news to me!" The cover of the magazine was drawn by Tom Wirick, tenor with the Crown City Four. In October 1951, the Phoenix Saguaro Chapter chartered a bus to take 35 of its members to the San Gabriel Chapter Parade. The "Mid-States Four," 1949 Society quartet champs, paid a surprise visit to the Arcadia Chapter and practically took over the meeting. The San Fernando Valley Chapter was holding a quartet marathon in which members sang week after week in quartets of different combinations. The quartets were judged and total scores for all members were maintained. After a certain number of weeks, the top scorers were honored. Among other things, it discouraged members from missing meetings. In late 1951 the San Gabriel Chapter joined with Pasadena and Arcadia to put on a 2-hour show for 2500 people in Alhambra, featuring the three chapter choruses plus six quartets, plus numbers by the combined choruses.



R. A. "Reedie" Wright
Far Western District President 1951
International President 1966
FWD Hall of Fame 1969

The Glendale-Burbank Chapter was host to the Hollywood and La Canada chapters, and a good time was had by all. In this pre-chorus-contest era, chapter visitations were quite

common. Chapters in Oakland and Orinda were making plans to merge with the Berkeley Chapter. The Phoenix Saguaro Chapter was giving paid-up Society memberships to interested local members of the armed forces. It was reported that in September 1951, the San Francisco Chapter participated in a Bay Cruise for members of the working press who were gathered in San Francisco for the Japanese Peace Treaty meetings. In addition to their chorus and quartets, they invited quartets from other chapters in the area to perform on the boat (*I sang with one of them -El Wirt*).

At the Society Mid-Winter Convention in Toronto in January 1952, the Far Western District's Dick Schenck was elected to the Society Board of Directors. When the San Diego Chapter appointed a committee to contact the Director of Music Education for the city's high schools, hoping to interest him in letting them promote barbershop quarteting among high school students, they were pleasantly surprised to discover that he was Dr. Alex Zimmerman, former director of the Joliet, Illinois Chapter Chorus. With the Korean conflict on at the time, the Phoenix Saguaro Chapter was putting on "Artery Party" shows that required the donation of one pint of blood for our armed forces in Korea for two seats at the show. They were commended by the Society Board of Directors for this activity.

The Spring District Convention and Regional Contest was scheduled to be held in Phoenix, but the District Board determined that it was too far for most representatives to travel and would result in poor representation by chapter officers and delegates, so it was again put out to bid, and would end up in Whittier. The Oakland Chapter reported that when working on a new chorus number, four men were picked at random to stand up and sing the number as a quartet. The Santa Monica Chapter staged a show at the Sawtelle Veterans' Hospital.

The Pasadena Chapter held a dance for members and friends, and *Westunes* Editor Dick DeBusk asked: "Who danced with the gals while all of you guys were woodshedding?" Dick also commented on the improvement in barbershop singing over the years, which he attributed to the "good old American spirit of competition". The Honolulu Chapter was busy performing in military hospitals as well as for island civic and social groups. They enjoyed a visit from 1949 Society champs the "Mid-States Four" and former Society President Jerry Beeler who were on their way back from a trip to Korea and Japan. The 3rd issue of *Westunes Magazine* (January 1952) announced that a decision had been made to accept advertising of chapter shows and other

events in the magazine, at a full page for \$20.

The Bakersfield donated \$300 from its treasury to the Physically Handicapped Children's Society. The San Francisco Chapter participated in a minstrel show put on by the San Francisco Ad Club. The Los Angeles Chapter was holding a quartet clinic for its own and visiting members. The Pasadena Chapter raised \$400 for the Sister Kenny Foundation with a benefit show. The Tucson Chapter put on a benefit show for the Polio Fund which raised \$425. District President Reddie Wright wrote of the controversy at all levels of the Society on chorus versus quartets. He mentioned the strong feelings on both sides, and expressed the opinion that one was just as essential as the other and that the only solution was to recognize this fact. The San Francisco Chapter Bulletin, presumably edited by a quartet man, had the following: "Old crows never die, they just sing in the chorus". San Francisco Bay Area chapters were holding joint meetings every time there was a fifth Wednesday.

Pasadena Chapter Chorus Director Paul McFatrige got his start in barbershop singing on the front platform of a trolley car in Peoria, Illinois. A past President of the Peoria Chapter was motorman, and one of the tenors was James Jordan, who later became famous as the comedian Fibber McGee. Los Angeles Chapter members reported that they had discarded chorus work, and were having the time of their lives woodshedding (impromptu harmonizing). The Berkeley Chapter had a standing date on the third Monday of every month at the Oakland Veterans' Hospital, where they sang in the auditorium while their quartets covered the wards. They were sometimes joined by other chapters, including Sweet Adelines.

The Culver City Chapter decided that it was too close to four other chapters, and it relinquished its charter. The Riverside Chapter received its charter in April 1952, and the Pomona Valley Chapter was chartered three months later. There was another new chapter in Kailua, Oahu (Territory of Hawaii). There were six certified contest judges in the Far Western District at this time, namely Bud Boyle (San Diego), Dr. Jack Pacina (Bakersfield), Don Keefe and Bob Bisio (San Francisco), Harrison "Hap" Bailey (Berkeley) and Dick DeBusk (Huntington Park). The District also had a number of judge candidates. The Bakersfield Chapter was in danger of folding but Jack Pacina and a few others were reviving it.

In the spring of 1952, the Arcadia Chapter put on a program that raised over \$300 for the Temple City High School Band. The Chandler, Arizona Chapter was turning over every dime it made on its shows to local charities. It raised \$1500 for the Arizona Boys Ranch, and two years earlier it had raised \$4250 for high school band uniforms. The San Francisco Chapter Chorus and Berkeley's "Uncalled Four" quartet appeared on a local TV show. The District's Area 11 (Hollywood, Los Angeles and Glendale-Burbank chapters) held its own quartet contest, judged by Reddie Wright, Dick Schenck, and Les Woodson. The seven competing quartets were very close, but the winners were the "Verdugo Dons," with Jack Blackhurst, Bufe Strange, Don Plumb and Dubb Stallings from Glendale-Burbank. A few months later they would win the District quartet championship in San Jose.

In the spring of 1952, the San Jose Chapter was attempting to sponsor a new chapter in Hong Kong (it was never

chartered). The August 1952 issue of *Westunes Magazine* was put out by "Fearless Frankie" Finnegan, as Dick DeBusk was on vacation. Finnegan mentioned a high mortality rate among quartets after they competed at a District Contest. Specifically, San Jose's "Travelaires" were losing their lead, Terry Bowman, to military duty; The "San Diego Serenaders" were losing their baritone, Rex Reeve, to a military transfer, and the "Crown City Four" had lost two members. Fortunately, "Crown City" picked up new lead Jim Powell, and their former bass, Art Huston; The "Serenaders" got Joe White back, and the "Travelaires" grabbed experienced quartet lead Dick O'Malley, so all three quartets were back in business.

Reddie Wright was elected to the Society Board in the



*The "Crown City Four"
1955 Far Western District Champions
1949 International Representatives*

summer of 1952. At his first meeting, he attempted to get the 1954 Society Summer Convention for the Far Western District. The first vote was a tie, and on the next ballot he lost by one vote. Twenty members of the Long Beach Chapter donated pints of blood to the Red Cross. In early September, the first District Preliminary chorus contests were held in NorCal and SoCal with the winners being qualified to compete at the District Contest in October. Choruses in Arizona, Nevada, Utah and Hawaii were invited to participate in one of these preliminary contests if they could arrange transportation. Santa Monica had a new Secretary, Pete Burger from Hawaii, who was a nephew of the famous "Hilo Hattie." With Dick DeBusk taking on the job of District Secretary, "Fearless Frankie" Finnegan assumed the editorship of *Westunes Magazine*.

The First District Chorus Contest was held at the District Convention in San Jose on October 25, 1952 with the Eden-Hayward Chorus, under the direction of Norm Cory, nosing out

the Pasadena Chorus, directed by Paul McFatrige. The convention was to have been in Bakersfield, but an earthquake caused a last minute switch. Elderly movie actor Burt Mustin had moved from Tucson, and was now a member of the San Fernando Valley Chapter, but he returned to perform on the Tucson Chapter Show with his old quartet, the "Promissory Notes". The directors of the Phoenix Chapter voted to return dues to members who were not active in the chapter. The San Francisco Chapter blindfolded their director, Dave Stevens, and then would have three chapter members come up and sing a song with him. Then Dave was asked to guess who the other three were and, according to their Bulletin Editor, Bob Bisio, he never missed.

The Huntington Park Chapter had entertained at the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Long Beach a total of 15 times during 1952. By the end of 1952, the Far Western District consisted of 36 chapters and 1269 members. The Indian Wells Valley Chapter, consisting mainly of employees of the China Lake Naval Base, was chartered in February 1953. The San Francisco Chapter filed, successfully, for admission tax exemption after their show, saving \$181.

On April 12, 1953, the Long Beach Chapter conducted a High School Quartet Contest with about 12 entries. The winning quartet was "The King's Men" from Bell Gardens High School. Singing tenor in this quartet was Dave Panther, who would go on to sing tenor with the "Gala Lads" quartet when they were District champs in 1960 and Society champs in 1962. Chapter Activities Vice President Rudy Thuor pointed out that there were two major changes in the past year: one was the first District Chorus Contest, and the other was the establishment of the District Achievement Award.

Area Counselor Jerry Brentnall in SoCal spoke out against the annual "Parades" of quartets put on by most chapters, feeling that they tended make each parade very much like the previous one, even to the songs sung by the quartets. He called them "Run 'em on, sing two, run 'em off" types. He liked the idea that some chapters were dropping the term "Parade" and using the term "Show," implying that they were changing the format and getting more chapter members involved in the show. The Berkeley Chapter bulletin was called the *Burp-ley Press*, possibly because they met in a restaurant. *Westunes* Editor Dick

DeBusk raised the common question: Is it correct to say the "Roundeleers" *are* a quartet, or the "Roundeleers" *is* a quartet?

Area 11 (L. A., Hollywood and Glendale-Burbank) was holding an annual woodshed contest, and invited surrounding chapters to participate. In 1952, the winner was the "Verdugo Dons," who (which?) went on to win the District Contest. In 1953, the winner was "The Harmony Hunters." The Santa Ana Chapter was in danger of folding, and a former president of the Chapter, Bill Young, was trying to revive it. New *Westunes* Editor "Fearless Frankie" Finnegan tried his hand at poetry and came up with:

*The tenor tried to hit high Cee,
While listeners groaned in agon-ee.*

Finnegan also proposed that the District give awards for the best song arrangement, the best song, the finest chapter, the most entertaining quartet, and to the man contributing the most to barbershopping for the year.

The first Far Western Achievement Award went to the Whittier Chapter, and was presented at the District Spring Convention in Long Beach by Society Board member John Means of Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Second and third place awards went to Arcadia and San Gabriel. Phoenix' 1953 "Artery Party" featured Society champs the "Four Teens" from St. Louis, Missouri, plus the "San Diego Serenaders," San Jose's "Travelaires," Pasadena's "Crown City Four," and others. The newly elected Executive Committee of the District Board of Directors voted to grant \$1000 each to the "San Diego Serenaders" and Sacramento's "Statesmen" quartets, who had tied in the Regional Contest and would represent the District at the Society Contest in Detroit. It was pointed out that the following year they might have to come up with three grants, since a slight increase in membership would entitle the District to send three quartets to the Society Contest. One solution suggested was to bring the Society Contest to California.

The District received 60% of the proceeds from the Long Beach Spring Convention, which amounted to \$1420. In July 1953, the Ventura Chapter was chartered. The Eden-Hayward Chapter claimed to be thinking of installing showers at their meeting hall for members who do most of their singing in the shower. They were scheduling one chapter visitation per month. The Sacramento Chapter, whose "Statesmen" quartet had placed 5th in the Society Contest in the summer of 1953, reported that they were working toward the formation of a chapter chorus. Many chapters reported performances at hospitals. At the NorCal Chorus Preliminary Contest, the San Francisco Chorus was declared the winner and, as such, sang on the San Jose show that night. The next day, the judges' addition was checked by Bob Bisio, who discovered an error, and Eden-Hayward was declared the winner.

On September 27, 1953, the Pomona Valley Chapter hosted a show at the Los Angeles County Fair. The show included six choruses from SoCal and nine quartets, and the finale was a massed chorus of all participants. The show was well received, and a half hour of it was broadcast over a local radio station. On October 30, the San Fernando Valley Chapter put on a show with all proceeds going to the Valley Association for Handicapped Children. The show featured top quartets from SoCal, plus San



*The "West Coasters"
1954 Far Western District Champions
International Representatives 1956, 1957, 1958*

Gabriel's "Haywire Orchestra," an instrumental group of chapter members playing barbershop/dixieland, and raised \$1475.25 for the Association. The Eden-Hayward Chapter put on a benefit show for the Tamarack Branch of the East Bay's Children's Hospital. The Peninsula Chapter put on a benefit show for Boy and Girl Scout camps, featuring their chorus and eight quartets. At the District Quartet Contest in Pasadena in November 1953, seven of the eight finalists came from NorCal.

By the end of 1953, the Far Western District had 35 chapters and 1304 members. The "Crown City Four" quartet was quite active, having made 147 appearances with their repertoire of 26 songs. *Westunes* Editor "Fearless Frankie" Finnegan wrote: "If your chapter doesn't tell it to *Westunes*...it never happened." Here's some more of Finnegan's humor: "If some visiting barbershopper calls your town 'unique,' don't feel too flattered. The word may have been derived from the Latin *unus* meaning one, and the word *equus* meaning horse." "What this country needs is a good five-cent anything." Art Harris, President of the Tucson Chapter, told of having received a phone call from a young lady asking if the Tucson Sunshine Chapter was a nudist club.

The Los Angeles Chapter was said to be devoting more time to quartet singing than any other chapter in the District. The San Fernando Valley Chapter was planning a quartet contest based on their chorus songs, and using one "hot shot" singer and three timid souls to make up each quartet. The Riverside Chapter put on a "Gifts for Yanks" show, featuring their chorus plus the Pomona Valley Chorus, and a large number of quartets from surrounding chapters. Service men were admitted free, but others were charged for admission, and the proceeds went to purchase Christmas gifts to be distributed to Service and Veteran personnel who were patients in military and veterans' hospitals in SoCal.

District Secretary Jerry Graham was offering to award a pair of barbed wire shorts to each chapter secretary who failed to mail him the Chapter Activity Report. Graham also favored slow-murder for a 5th member joining a woodshedding quartet (*even if he just adds 9ths to 7th chords?...El*). In January 1954, the Long Beach Chapter staged a Blood Bank Show for the benefit of the



*Jerry Graham
FWD Secretary
1954-1962
Int'l Board Member
1959 & 1960*

Armed Forces, featuring the "Verdugo Dons," "Edenaires," "San Diego Serenaders," "Adams of Eden," "Twenty-Four Feet of Harmony," "Uncalled Four," "Hoarse Doctors," "Parkaires," and "Travelaires" quartets, plus the San Diego and Long Beach choruses. An impromptu quartet got a big hand from the audience; it consisted of the show's MC, radio and TV star Art Baker, two Air Force pilots, and a stewardess. The Marin, California and Ogden, Utah Chapters were chartered in March 1954.

"Extension" was a popular word at this time; it referred to the practice of one chapter sponsoring another in a new area. For example, the Sacramento Chapter was trying to get a chapter started in Lakeport, and a dual-city chapter in the Chico-Oroville area, and a tri-city chapter in the Red Bluff, Corning and Los Molinos area. The San Francisco Chapter was sponsoring one in

Marin County, and San Gabriel was sponsoring one in Downey. The only state in the Union without a barbershop chapter was Idaho, and the Salt Lake City Chapter was working on one in Jerome, Idaho. The "Crown City Four" reported that they had now made over 350 appearances in a year and a half, covering seven states, and had performed with such radio and TV personalities as Art Baker, the Mills Brothers, Donald O'Connor, Danny Thomas, Judy Garland, Harry Babbitt and others.

Harry Price, editor of the Pasadena Chapter Bulletin reported that he had a new Underwood typewriter. He wrote: "It doesn't spell any better than my old one but it sure is easier on my two fingers." Bob Northup sang lead with the "Twenty-four Feet of Harmony" quartet, and was president and Bulletin Editor for the Inglewood Chapter; his bulletin was said to be the first chapter bulletin in the District to feature pictures. *Westunes* Editor Finnegan wrote: "According to the name of our Society, [we] barbershoppers are pledged to Preserve and Encourage Barbershop Quartet Singing in America. How are we doing?"

- San Gabriel, 84 members—2 quartets
- Glendale-Burbank, 65 members—2 quartets
- Tucson, 25 members—1 quartet
- Los Angeles, 46 members—1 quartet
- Pasadena, 62 members—1 quartet
- Long Beach, 51 members—1 quartet
- San Diego, 54 members—2 quartets

Pretty sickening, isn't it." This resulted in a lot of activity to increase the number of quartets, particularly in the chapters mentioned.

The Riverside Chapter Chorus was being directed by a lady, Lola Withrow. "Fearless Frankie" Finnegan stepped down as *Westunes* Editor after the April 1954 issue, and Bob Northup took on the job. Bob Hokanson reported that at the upcoming Regional Contest in San Jose, the traditional afterglow would be replaced by hospitality rooms. Six rooms were set aside in the headquarters hotel, to be maintained by the various chapters for visiting friends, snacking and quartet singing. A "Harmony Special" train was bringing barbershoppers to San Jose from SoCal. Joe White, San Diego Chorus Director, was awarded a genuine Fur-Lined Pitchpipe by the chapter, with the fur coming from Tom Leonard's daughter's hand muff. Riverside's George Dohn wrote: "Anyone who is blowing his own horn is always on the little end of it."

The Downey and Marin chapters were both chartered in May 1954. In July, the "Kord Kings" quartet from Illinois stopped in San Francisco on their way to perform for the troops in Korea. While in San Francisco, their lead, Al Hobik, became suddenly quite ill and was taken to a hospital, where it was learned that he would need several pints of blood. Bay Area barbershoppers fell all over themselves in a rush to volunteer to give blood for him. Al had to return home, but the quartet went on to Korea, planning to pick up a substitute lead when they got there.

At the Society Summer Convention, six Far Western District members were appointed to International Committees. Past President Marv Brower was on the District Advisory Committee and also on the International Woodshed Committee; District

Secretary Jerry Graham was on the Armed Forces Collaboration Committee; Pasadena Chorus Director Paul McFatrige was on the Barbershop Craft Committee; District VP Homer Aspy was on the Chapter Advisory Committee; Salt Lake City's Secretary and Chorus Director, Munson Hinman was on the Public Relations Committee; and San Jose's Hal Winget was on the Old Songs Committee. District VP Howard Cooper listed, as advantages to inter-chapter visitations: choruses learn new songs, new arrangements and new ideas in music direction; quartets get good practice singing for other chapters, and become better known so that demands for their services may increase; individuals learn woodshedding songs, make new friends and have fun. The Stockton Chapter received its charter in October 1954. Other new chapters were Salinas and Fallbrook.

At the District Executive Board meeting in Bakersfield in October 1954, Jim Arnold, who had been loaning stop-watches to contest judges for years, got the Board to vote to purchase two stop-watches for contest use. District Secretary Tex Modlin built a velvet-lined carrying box for them. Sacramento's twice-medalist "Statesmen" quartet was forced to break up when baritone Harry DuVall and bass Jack Gilstrap were called to active duty with the Navy. The Tucson Chapter was planning to put on a show at the Arizona State Prison where, as they put it: "At least the audience can't walk out on us!" District President Jim Clarke issued a plea

for more judge candidates, saying: "The District is badly in need of additional judges." The community service activities by the Ventura County Chapter took two-thirds of a page to list. The Salt Lake City and Ogden chapters in Utah were proud of the fact that 50% of their chapter members were in registered quartets. District Quartet Promotion Committee Chairman, Vern Lind observed that quartets in contests are not competing against each other, but rather against perfection.

The Davis County Chapter in Layton, Utah was chartered in December 1954. The Marin "Saltaires" Chorus was featured on radio and TV on New Years Day, 1955. For several years, Reddie Wright had been trying to get the Society Summer Convention to the Far Western District. At the Society Mid-Winter Convention in Louisville in early 1955, Reddie and Jim Clarke again put in a bid for the convention and this time, for the first time, the 1957 convention was granted to the Far Western District, to be held in Los Angeles. On January 28, 1955, the Pomona Valley Chapter was a big part of a fund raiser show for the March of Dimes. The Clear Lake, California Chapter received its charter on March 5.

Also in March 1955, the Pomona, Riverside and Whittier chapters combined to hold a Novice Quartet Contest in Whittier, with the proceeds to go to the Chorus Travel Fund. The Reno Chapter was said to be in danger of collapsing. The Society Office published a list of prospective chapters which included the following in the Far Western District:

- Coolidge and Yuma, Arizona
- Alameda, Concord, Fresno, Herlong, Lakeport, Lancaster, Monterey, Newport Beach, Northridge, Oceanside, San Clemente and Santa Barbara, California
- Las Vegas, Nevada
- Brigham, Huntington, Provo and Tremonton, Utah.



Jim Clarke
FWD President
1954
Int'l Board Member
1957 - 1960

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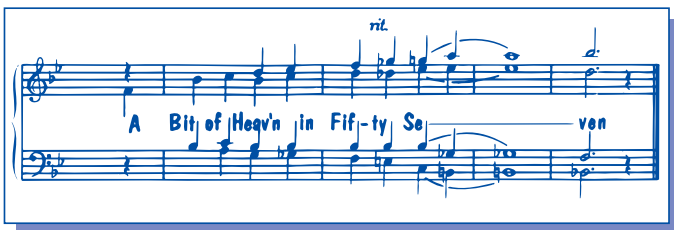
The Salt Lake City Chapter set up a High School Scholarship Fund to be supported by profits from their annual show. The Kailua Chapter reported that the "Marines had landed" and were regularly attending their meetings. The Ogden, Utah Chapter learned that the boys at the Utah State Industrial School weren't permitted to attend any shows outside the school, so they took their chorus and quartets to the school, and put on a show for the boys. District Secretary Jerry Graham had this sign on his desk: "If you want to see someone with a little authority, I have as little as anyone around here."

In these days, the Society was publishing an annual book of song arrangements called *Songs for Men*. In the 1955 version, which was Book 8, there was a song "The Old Sea Shore," written by John Cinnamon of the Eden-Hayward Chapter, and arranged by Norm Cory, director of the Eden-Hayward Chorus. The Salt Lake City Chapter was the winner of the District Achievement

Award for 1955-6, with San Gabriel 2nd and Pasadena 3rd. The Peninsula Chapter put on a show for the boys at a camp operated by the Santa Clara County Juvenile Probation Department. This was reported to be a season for moving as the following chapters changed their meeting places: Tucson, Riverside, San Jose, Ogden Peninsula, Pasadena, Los Angeles and Centinela Valley. The Downey Chapter donated \$200 from their show proceeds to the Downey Little League. The Pasadena Chapter took part in a benefit show that raised \$500 for the purchase of wheel chairs for the handicapped.

Newly certified contest judges in the Far Western District were Bob Bisio in Stage Presence and Dick DeBusk, already a certified timer, in the Secretary category. The Los Angeles Chapter was promising to come up with something new for them—a chorus. The Santa Monica Chapter had a device for discovering chorus-directing talent as well as promoting quarteting: as members entered on meeting nights, each was asked to write the title of his favorite song plus his own name on a slip of paper and put it in a hat; as a song was drawn from the hat, the person who named the song was asked to direct the chapter in singing it; next he was asked pick three members to sing the song with him as a quartet, after which another slip would be drawn. The San Gabriel Chapter donated \$60 to the San Gabriel High Booster' Club to be used for band uniforms.

In July 1955, the Society Board voted down a motion to limit Society members to a minimum age of 16, but, for some reason, did ask chapters to consider this as the “recognized” age limit. Many chapters ignored this request, and members as young as 10 or 12 were common in the FWD. Since the Far Western District would host its first Society Summer Convention in 1957, the phrase: “Bit of Heaven in Fifty-Seven” or “BOHIFS” was coined. A tag written by Munson Hinman was modified by some folks in the Riverside Chapter as follows:



At this time, many of the chapters were incorporating in order to protect members from lawsuits or claims. The San Gabriel Chapter reached the magic number of 100 members; the only one in the District to do so.

Emerson Johnson, President of the Publicity Club of Los Angeles, wrote a nice article about barbershopping which concluded: “In these days and times, when many musicians not only have expensive instruments, but electric amplifiers on them; when automobiles are equipped with thousands of gadgets for running up windows and running down pedestrians; when business is turning to ‘automation’ to eliminate human functions, it seems just plain wonderful to me that four men, with nothing but the vocal chords God gave them...no gadgets at all...can produce such a wonderful result.”

A Far Western District Association of Quartets was being

formed to encourage the formation of quartets and to assist the existing quartets. The organizational meeting was held in Whittier in September 1955. There was the usual concern over dropping enrollments. Ray Starkey suggested that each chapter have a committee of several members to handle visitors, saying that each one should have a host for the evening who will explain the aims of the Society and the chapter, introduce him around, tell him of the fun and relaxation that come from barbershop singing, try to get him to sing a song with three others, thank him for coming, get his phone number and call him a couple of days before the next meeting inviting him to come again. The San Fernando Chapter held a “Guitar and Ukulele” night.

The FWD Chorus Travel Fund, which had been used to help choruses travel to the District Contest, was terminated following the 1955 District Convention in Phoenix. In the future, such travel funds would come from the Divisional Contests. Chris McElravy, wife of John McElravy who sang bass with the “Uncalled Four,” was elected National President of Sweet Adelines. The first Society chapter to be chartered in 1956 was the Yavapai Chapter in Prescott, Arizona. The Monterey Peninsula Chapter, whose President was Navy Captain Paul Spangler, also received its charter in January 1956. In February, the Crescenta Valley Chapter was chartered. Roger Hoffman, tenor with Tucson’s “Bachelaires” quartet, put the name in jeopardy by getting married.

The San Jose Chapter headlined a Christmas party show for Food Machinery Corp. attended by over 5,000 (mostly children). The Honolulu and Kailua chapters were very active at Christmas time, entertaining at seven hospitals, a high school, and on the streets in downtown Honolulu. Heavy rains in NorCal caused many people to be moved to evacuation centers. The Stockton Chapter members, after spending most of Christmas Eve distributing sandbags, spent Christmas Day performing for the 4,000 evacuees. Jim Powell, lead with Pasadena’s “Crown City Four,” told how difficult it was to sing with his quartet, when all through each song, “we are watching [tenor] Tom [Wirick] out of the corner of our eyes waiting to see what that screwball will do.” Jim went on to say, “...there would be no ‘Crown City Four’ without Tom, because the fire and continued newness would be taken out of it. Tom doesn’t know what he did for me personally when he asked me to stand up there and sing beside him five years ago.”

The Utah chapters were forming a “Utah Inter-Chapter Council”. The Phoenix Saguaro Chapter challenged the Salt Lake City Chapter to a contest in which the winner would be the one that retained the highest percentage of its 1955 members as of April 30, 1956. Former District President Marv Brower complained that he had reached the “Metallic Age”...with silver in his hair, gold in his teeth and lead in his feet. Don Scholtz had a job transfer to Spain, so Tucson’s Hal Harris took over his District Vice-President job. It was rumored that Scholtz planned to form a quartet called the “Barbers of Seville.” With San Gabriel’s help, an East Los Angeles Optimist Club Boy’s Benefit Show raised \$750. The San Diego Chapter was on a radio forum, in which a panel asked questions about barbershop singing, and the chorus or a quartet answered, often musically. Explaining that his verbal diarrhea had run its course, Bob Northup stepped aside as Editor of *Westunes* and George Dohn took on the job.

At the House of Delegates meeting at the FWD Spring Convention in Sacramento, delegates from the Honolulu and Kailua chapters introduced Miss Hawaii (Phyllis Pacheco), who presented each new District officer with a lei and a kiss. The Martinez Chapter put on a benefit show for NorCal flood relief. The Monterey Peninsula Chapter donated \$180 to the Girl Scouts, and the Long Beach Chapter put on a two-hour show to raise

money to send teen-age girls to summer camp.

The Phoenix Saguaro Chapter gave their paid-up members free admission to the afterglow following their annual show. The Ventura Chapter did likewise, and also admitted card-carrying Sweet Adeline members free. The Far Western District had the greatest percentage of increase in membership in the Society for 1955-56. Fallbrook's Avocado Empire Chapter Chorus and two quartets performed in the convalescent wards at Santa Marguerita Naval Hospital at Camp Pendleton. Including this one, they made a total of ten appearances in twenty-three days. Past Society President Phil Embury did a Society-wide survey, and found the following to be the songs barbershoppers most enjoyed singing: "I Had a Dream, Dear," "I Want a Girl," "Mandy Lee," "Oh, Honey," "I Love You the Best of All, When You Were Sweet Sixteen," "Heart of My Heart," "Curse of an Aching Heart," "Let Me Call You Sweetheart," "Down by the Old Mill Stream," and "Sweet Roses of Morn."



*The "Sharpshooters"
1956 Far Western District Champions
1957 International Representatives*

The Arcadia Chapter raised \$800 for the Claiborne School for retarded children. The San Gabriel Chapter raised a total of \$550 for the benefit of three separate programs for children. The Salinas Chapter raised \$222 for the Salinas Optimists Club Boys' Work Fund. The Santa Monica Chorus entertained the Captain and several hundred crew members of the aircraft carrier Philippine Sea. In September the big Region 11 Sweet Adeline Chorus Contest was held in SoCal, judged by SPEBSQSA members, and the winning Crown City Chorus was directed by barbershopper Russ Blakely. The Monterey Park Chapter (in SoCal, not to be confused with the Monterey Peninsula Chapter in NorCal) received its charter in September 1956.



