



The Long Range Planning Committee
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To whom: Bill Cale, FWD President

Copy to: FWD Board of Directors

Subject: FWD Five Year Vision for Survival

FWD Survival =
4R_x + T + Y



The Far Western District
of the
Barbershop Harmony Society

The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America

FWD 5 Year Vision Statement

Envision with us, in 2012, the Far Western District with a membership of four or five thousand men, with the member average age of under 50, with over 100 Thriving Chapters, in 5 Thriving Divisions, flourishing and leading the Society...

FWD Survival = 4R_xesults + T_{raining} + Y_{outh}

R₁ = R_{etention} of current members

R₂ = R_{ecruiting} new members

R₃ = R_{evenue} enhancement

R₄ = R_{evision/Revival} of organizational elements

T = T_{raining} Members/Families/Community

Y = Y_{outh} In Harmony integrated into our every activity

PURPOSE of the FAR WESTERN DISTRICT:

- **Hold District & Division Contests** in conjunction with **conventions** of the members. These activities are for the benefit of all members of the District, not just of the participants.
- **Nurture chapters** in order that they may **Thrive**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Based upon the March 2007, LRPC membership analysis of the Society and of the District, and upon the financial consequences there from, we believe ACTION is needed in:

- Retention improvement
- Recruitment improvement
- Revenue improvement
- Revision/Revival of aspects of our District, Division and Chapter Organizations

It is our conviction that no single idea for improvement and no few ideas for improvement are enough to stem the decrease in membership and revenue in the face of the two thirds of our current membership, who will die in the next five to fifteen years.

We believe that to find the large number of prospective numbers of men who will want to become members, we must stop hoping to find them where O. C. Cash found them, in every household, with a life time of singing at home and church and in other organizations, with a repertoire already learned and the harmony part understood. We must find non-singing men in large numbers whom we can teach to sing in a group and who will enjoy the learning and the singing. That is why our formula for survival is the 4 R's of Retention, Recruitment, Revenue and Revival/Revision (of organization) plus Training plus Youth. We believe that we can significantly increase the exposure of our type of harmony, to high school youth, without changing our intention not to recruit high school boys away from their music directors. Likewise we believe that we can capture the excitement of college men in large numbers before marriage, rather than 20 or 30 years later.

Most of the ideas, or at least many of them, are not just stand alone ideas that can be accepted individually. Most, or many of our ideas do impact more than one area. Some are intended to improve one aspect of our membership experience, but will cause some number of men to leave, or not to join, or have a negative effect on revenue. The key not just to survival but to significant growth is to understand the overall, the system needs, and to understand that every possible choice will cause some to disagree and leave, or not join. We must attempt to choose the system changes that best fit together, knowing that we will lose the 2000 oldest men, regardless of what we do, or do not do, in addition to some who dislike the changes chosen.

RETENTION IMPROVEMENT

- 1) We recently surveyed 30 day past due, non-renewing members. We learned:
 - ; 48% are age 65 or less (the indispensable age group as we experience our “die off”)
 - ; 52% report that the experience is no longer ‘fun’, often music not good enough...
 - ; 74% have been in, 10 years or less (another indispensable group during our “die off”)

This group of men (under 65 and less than 10 years in) is critical to our survival through this next 10 years, and it appears we are not keeping them. We must find and expand ways to make participation enjoyable for this critical group. Because of our 30 day past due inquiry we can report that some were prompted to renew, which teaches us that the District must begin such an inquiry 30 days after each quarterly renewal date. The survey can be initiated from our web site by the web master and the results can be reported to Chapter Presidents and VPs of Membership. Even when we do not get the members back, we can learn from their comments on the survey.
- 2) **LRP2007-01 Create Member Retention Process** - Improved member retention comes via better chapter practices and a friendlier culture.*
We suggest that the 2007 COTS Membership class, create for the District a set of guidelines for this purpose. Examples would include
 - a. A visitor gift package of music, not a new idea
 - b. Membership information book about the chapter and the Society, not a new idea
 - c. Member and Guest music books, not a new idea
 - d. An active mentor, a real buddy, for every new member for a year, not just a phone #!
 - e. The formal singing education program, see Training section below, will increase both enthusiasm & ability
 - f. The suggested improvements in the required responsibilities and accountability of chapters, indicated, below, will also assist retention, see Revise/Revive section, below.

[*See Appendix I for an outline of requirements](#)
- 3) **LRP2007-02 Add COTS instructors to division staff** - When a Chapter has difficulty, or seeks assistance in a functional area of expertise, the Division VP will assign the COTS teacher of that function, from his Division COTS Staff, now in process of being assembled. When a Chapter fails to maintain it's required minimum membership, discussed below in Retention Improvement, and/or in judged performance rating, discussed below in Retention Improvement, which failings can be equated to a “Chapter Vitality Bankruptcy”, the Division VP becomes the “Chapter 11, Vitality Bankruptcy Judge” and assigns a chapter counselor from his staff to lead the chapter through it's reorganization, or dissolution. The counselor must be an expert in what that chapter needs, or he is a specialist as a ‘chapter turn around man’ team leader.*
[* See Appendix II](#)
- 4) **LRP2007-03 Create BHS Emeritus Membership** - We suggest that an ‘Emeritus Membership’ be created. by the BHS, for any member who, due to advanced age or medical condition, can no longer **perform** in a quartet or chorus. He would, for reduced dues,

receive the Harmonizer and other communications from the Society and the District. He would be nominated to this status by his chapter, and be welcome to attend their functions and meetings, and to sing at rehearsals, when he can.

- 5) **LRP200704 Free FWD Convention registration to new members** - All new members, and any member who is certified by his Chapter President as never having attended a District Convention, should be allowed to attend one, of the next three, without registration fee, if reservations are made by him in a convention hotel. This offer should remain in effect for all subsequent new members, from membership date, one time only. The purpose of this, of course, is to give every man the fun experience of the convention, and sooner than he would otherwise have it.
- 6) **LRP200705 Task Force to study improving district image** - It has been apparent for some time that there is little understanding or appreciation by “Joe Barbershopper”, for the value of the District and of the separate dues we pay to maintain it. It seems that “Joe” thinks that any dues over and above the BHS is a ‘gyp’, and that even the Society dues are too high for the perceived value. Our committee’s Vision includes a recommendation, see the Revise/Revive section, below, that the FWD Past Presidents be formed as a group to study and make recommendations for subjective problems like this.
- 7) **LRP200706 Create simple New Member process** - Too many of our chapters have become lax in the treatment of guests and of new members.

We believe that visitors who are singing prospects for membership deserve a consistent minimum treatment wherever in the District they first come to Barbershop. A standard list of things should be required, most of which are already in place in successful chapters, and some of which are used elsewhere from time to time. But, the point here, is how much should a chapter be willing to spend to find and ‘hook’ a prospect into becoming a member and then in keeping him? Should not each chapter at least have a fishing pole, some bait and a net, so to speak? Then they should have a budget for recruiting and for retention, per man.

The chapter’s plan to enroll a number of men, say 6 per year, should recognize that they will probably have to entertain, as visitor prospects, at least 12 men, and thus they will have to find and invite 60 or 120 during the year, or 5 to 10 per month, every month to get 12 to visit! Each chapter should be required to set a budget amount for, say, \$50 or \$100 or \$200 dollars, their choice, per new man, to find him and sign him and retain him, times the number of men they commit to enroll each year. And, they should be able to show their Div VP the plan for what that money is spent for: information booklet, music samples, advertising, music books, refreshments, etc. If they do not succeed, they should consider spending more money per enrollee, as an alternative in addition to whatever else they do.

Each new man must have a steady, every week, all year long, ‘buddy’ or ‘mentor’ or ‘life guard’. A man who agrees to be responsible for the retention of the new man for the first year. The chapter should be required to budget an amount for each first year man, and every other member, for the costs of the Singing Training the members will receive, see below, for details. This budget should also be seen by the Div VP, for his understanding/suggestions.

- 8) **LRP200707 Require chapters to have a membership plan** - Membership level must be a required responsibility of the chapter board. Every chapter must be required to maintain an active membership, including active dual members, of a District set minimum, say 24, or maybe 20, and a growth plan to reach and to maintain their 'normal active chapter membership' at 36, say, or maybe 32, but with no top limit. If the chapter falls below the normal, 32/36, or whatever the District BoD/HoD decides, then the chapter is 'Yellow lighted' for attention by the Div VP and his staff. If the chapter falls under the minimum 20/24 they become 'Red lighted' and placed under the operational control of the Div VP and his assigned 'Turn Around Man' for a year. At the present time, it may not be possible to set our requirement this high, and for the interim period a lower minimum may be in effect. Perhaps the normal requirement during this interim will be 24, the required will be 12? At the end of 12 months, if the chapter can not be re organized (a "chapter 11" condition) then it will be dissolved (a "chapter 7" action) and the members invited to either seek near by chapters, Frank Thorne membership, or to re group and start over with the further assistance of the Div VP and his staff. Every chapter, but especially the new ones, must be required to present 12 committed members who will be the key men on their BoD and their Committee Chairmen.

RECRUITING IMPROVEMENT

We propose a multi-pronged effort for recruiting. In our report to the BoD at Sparks, March 2007, we used the metaphor about recruiting in the days of O. C. Cash, comparing his 'ponds' and 'streams of men' who were prospects for membership to those which we have today. In his day men more often than not had grown up with music in the home and the church and the Boy Scouts and the YMCA. The men had a repertoire of songs already learned, and they knew which part they could sing. Since WWII men, and women too, have not been as 'associative', and membership in associations, of all kinds has slowly diminished. Some organizations have gone 'dark'. We offer these suggestions for new prospect 'streams' of promise:

- 1) **LRP200708 Design and implement High School Yearbook based membership process** - At the HOD last March the LRPC asked all delegates, to call us, after explaining the above metaphor, if they knew of any such 'stream' of men. One man, Jerry Fairchild, did call us. He proposed that we use high school/college yearbooks to identify men who sang in school. Jerry suggested that we contact the schools' reunion committees to contact them. Instead we propose to use the internet to find them, then call them and invite them back. We did just that with three men from a high school. Only one man returned our call and he was not a candidate. He said that he had dropped out after the year book picture was taken because he really could not sing. We believe we have correctly located the other two men, but so far, have not found them at home.

But the idea, while tedious, is IN-expensive at \$1 per man, the internet search cost. This would be a worth while method if we can generate enrollments @ 5% or 10% of the men sought. If we find 5 or 10 new member prospects for every \$100 we spend, our Marketing Chair will agree, this is worth while. We suggest 5 test groups of 100, one per Division.

- 2) **LRP200709 Accelerate Youth Harmony Education** - We believe that a Paradigm Shift is happening! Our American society used to be one that 'affiliated', that is, men joined associations. Then along came the telephone, radio, WWII, suburbia, television, hi-fidelity stereo, home video, cable/satellite TV, personal computers, cell phones, and the internet. It became so easy to just stay home for entertainment and mingling, even if only voyeur or virtual mingling. Membership in most associations, both male and female, and including veterans, has declined, just like in the BHS.

Today the cell phone is changing this. The latest cell phones, in addition to telephone services, also have cameras both 'still photo' and video, text messaging, MP3 recordings, television, calendars, answering service, alarm clocks, calculators and the internet. Our youth embrace this technology which frees them to associate with others because they take this part of 'home' with them. This is a huge shift and we need to plan chapters that our youth will find attractive. Westminster is proof that our youth are willing to affiliate.

- 3) We need a youth chapter wherever universities/colleges exist, and hopefully a high quality society chapter close by to act as mentors. The proposed FWD Sing In New Groups Program explained below, in the Training section, would be a terrific boon to these chapters.
- 4) We view as good recruiting programs:
- A. **LRP200710 Create summer Youth Harmony Camp** - A 4 day/3 night, summer time Youth Harmony Camp, modeled after the successful Buckeye event in Ohio, and a concurrent or similar program for College age students.
 - B. To improve both Recruiting and Retention we propose a new, chapter-member training program through several levels of higher singing accomplishment, open to the public at no cost, for the first level. Truly we must become dedicated to "Keep The Whole World Singing!" We call this program, 'Sing In New Groups' (SING)
 - C. We agree with our stated District policy that we are not interested in recruiting boys away from school music directors, and that we desire to assist their music programs in ways that the directors may suggest, or choose from our menu, for their class room expenses and that we desire to be able to bring the sounds of Barbershop Harmony singing into the experience of the boys and girls. Our one day harmony festivals and weekend harmony camps should continue and we recommend that each Division hold their own event of either, or both, types. We also recommend the routine chapter funding of high school scholarships to deserving students, for college, and to Music Directors to attend Harmony University, Directors College.
 - 1) **LRP200711 Increase school BBS demonstrations** – Engage/expose middle school and high school students in barbershop singing to prepare them for college where we will recruit them as society members.
 - 2) **LRP200712 Begin intensive college BBS promotion** - College – Inundate college campuses with information, registration booths, wandering quartets, free concerts, Tag-Ins and any other promotion method to capture their attention. Promote tags, quarteting and chorus competition.

- 3) **LRP200713 Create Family opportunities to learn to sing** - Family singing/community singing education – Create and schedule the new (in this report) chapter member classes that also invite the community families to enjoy the activity of singing together. Use this as a recruiting tool for men to join us.
- 5) **LRP200714 Create college fraternity based on BBS harmony** - The possibility of a national BHS college fraternity (BHS = Beta Eta Sigma), at many campuses, would also be a remarkable development and we suggest that a conversation relative to this idea be initiated with BHS headquarters staff.
- 6) Previously mentioned in the Retention Improvement section we describe a standardized way to treat prospects and new members. The flip side of that is the standard way, within the context of which kind* of chapter it is, for the continual training and advancement, through the ‘belts’, as they do in Karate, or through the ‘chairs’ as they do in the Masons, etc. This is not meant to be arduous but fun. If a man can not learn to carry the tune, or hit the pitch, or blend, etc, and if he will not work to learn and to improve, then he is asked to transfer to an “O.C. Cash” type, gang singing, good time, non performing chapter, or to leave the Society.
- 7) **LRP200715 Support multiple choruses in a single chapter**
 A chapter which has 2 or 3 or 4 choruses* has more options for more people and could accommodate the level 1 singer in their beginner chorus, unless their standards even there are higher than the typical “O.C. Cash” type, gang singing, good time, non performing chapter. Each singing level would have it’s own badge, or hanger or other emblem for recognition throughout the District.
 * See [Revise and Revive, below](#)
- 8) **LRP200716 Continue “One Man Brings In One Man” recruiting** - We must train, entice and expect our members to automatically ask all the men they meet, questions like, “What part do you sing?” and when the man replies that he can not sing, ask him, “Can you sing, ‘Happy Birthday’?” Then sing it with him, and extend an invitation, “Now that we both know that you can sing... May I pick you up for our next free rehearsal?” Charlie Davenport calls it “your elevator speech”, because you have only as much time with most people as you would have in an elevator. Recently, enroute to a chapter meeting in Bakersfield, two of us ‘ganged up on’ and used our elevator speeches on a man we happened upon, which resulted in taking the man to the meeting, which he very much enjoyed!

REVENUE ENHANCEMENT

The primary sources of District revenue are member dues (at \$19) for a little over \$60,000/year, and our conventions which used to bring in a significant percentage, but which now are variable and too often barely profitable. Our net budget requirement at this time has been pared down by extremely tough cost cutting to about \$90,000 per year. We have only one cost cutting suggestion, see #1), below, and several revenue enhancements to suggest.

LRP200717 Aggressively pursue grants at the district, division, and chapter levels - In addition we must state another of our very strong beliefs: our District must engage in Grant Writing at all three levels, District, Division and Chapter. However, with the few dozen men who are COTS trained we have no evidence of grants being submitted to say nothing of being awarded. We are aware of a few grants being received after informal requests were submitted. Every chapter can submit a simple request to a Target or WalMart manager who have up to \$5,000 grant authority monthly. There are thousands of Grant Grantors. We have projects like chapter risers and sound systems and the various YIH projects discussed throughout this document. The Division/District have similar but bigger projects which they have never thought possible before. They are possible.

We propose that a set of three 'Pilot Project Grants' be written, one by the District, one by a Pilot Division, and one by a Pilot Chapter, with whatever assistance is necessary for the chosen chapter. After that, the other four Divisions and five more Pilot Chapters would write their first grant requests, one per Division. In the mean time all Chapters and Division Grant writers would be sent to COTS where the training book given to each man is excellent.

Following this Pilot Project, probably a year, we strongly urge that every chapter be expected to appoint and have COTS training for their Grant Writer and require each chapter to win at least one grant of \$5000 per year; and, at the Division level there should be a Grant Writer Chairman, who teaches the Grant Writing COTS class in that Division, using the outstanding resource that our District has available for that purpose. He reports to the Div VP, operationally and should be expected to write and win \$25,000 to \$50,000 per year for the Division. But functionally he is supervised by the District Grant Chairman. The District Grant Chairman should be expected to write and win at least \$100,000 to \$250,000 per year. The test grants, by the 'Pilot writers' may, of necessity because of lack of belief that this really does work, be smaller than suggested. But why?

Grants, do not assist the District with the operating budget, but they do permit the purchase of equipment that is, capital assets, rather than as travel and utilities expenses. A recent example of this kind of transaction that was for a capital asset, but the money came probably from our dwindling reserve fund, was the purchase of a \$1,000 (approx) projector which previously had been costing us \$500 (approx) in rent per convention. Grant funds can, of course, be used to stage the various YIH programs, including sufficient advertising, sending high school quartets to District....

Our Revenue Improvement suggestions:

- 1) **LRP200718 Convert Westunes to monthly email** - Cost Reduction: WESTUNES. We recommend the return to monthly publication of our magazine, and with much more useful messages stressing this emergency situation we find our Society and District in, and about these solutions. We estimate that about \$8,000 per year can be saved by publishing Westunes via email, as is the Live Wire of the BHS. Those who do not have email can subscribe for a nominal fee (or have it paid by their dues, if we must), and/or receive it quarterly, mailed to their chapter Secretary for distribution. Approximately 83% of our members, over 2700, have email. Certainly that is a high enough percentage to make the change over, and to revitalize our internal communication.

- 2) **LRP200719 Raise district dues to cover lost membership fees - DUES.** When compared with the financial implosion ahead for the BHS, with the annual dues of \$89, our like problem with \$19 District dues, is much smaller. However, our problem will still be a financial problem. We will be more and more pinched to provide our services until our volunteer men who serve so many hundreds of hours, unpaid of course, some even thousands, per year, will not be able to carry the District expenses of travel and lodging that will become inevitable because the District will not have the capacity to pay for them. We will lose the participation of these men at the District level, just when they are most needed.

There is no question about whether or not dues must be raised. They must be raised. The question is “How much and how often? And, how will this be presented as a positive thing, for members to acknowledge is the right thing to do?” We are not talking about ‘spin’. We are talking about honestly giving the men their money’s worth and having them understand and agree, then do the right thing, to pay their fair share. That is not spin! The title of this document is The FWD Five Year Vision of SURVIVAL. That is not spin. Those of us who will die during the next 5 or 10 years, are who must save this hobby and organization for them, and to pay as much as possible to make it possible for them to continue as our membership decreases and as we are getting our new recruiting programs up and running. A man who attends his chapter meeting and goes to the after glow, 50 weeks a year, spends \$250 per year just for the afterglow, on average, at \$5 per week...

Because we attended the Bakersfield Chapter meeting recently, we learned that they collect \$1 from each man every week. In ‘the old days’ that money went to the Society for the Logopedics program. When the chapter ‘went down’ they used their remaining funds to pay their arrears in rent. When they began again, shortly after that, they had no money and so agreed to pay \$1 every week per every man who attends. That is how they are financing now their chapter, plus an occasional gig with a fee. Each man who attends each week is paying \$50 per year chapter dues!

Suppose we let chapters collect their own dues, and do it weekly, just like they would pay for bowling weekly? Interesting idea, yes? But, what if they charged themselves \$5 per week, which would mean \$250 a year, and suppose that the chapter then pays the BHS their \$89 per man, and the District its \$19, (or \$39, or \$44, see next paragraphs) per man?

If District dues become \$44, the chapter would net \$117 per man per year. It could afford advertising for new members, for students to their classes, for sales of tickets, etc. Not every member would come every week, but everyone would pay the trivial \$5. When the BHS raises it’s dues again, as it will, as it must, our chapters would all be able to afford it! A man attending irregularly would not be an active member, and pays less, but weekly, plus the regular District and Society dues, annually.

Our analysis of ‘how much increase’ is, that to raise the dues \$5/\$10 will not be worth the political fight. (We would get a fight even if we proposed to reduce dues.)

A \$5 raise to \$24 would raise a little over \$15,000, plus the \$19 already bringing in about \$61,000 yields \$76,000, plus the Westunes saving of \$8,000, yields **\$84,000**, less members who drop, plus the Convention and other variable small income.

If the increase is \$15 from \$19 to \$34, the increase would be about \$45,000 plus the \$61,000 from the \$19 already in place and the Westunes \$8,000, yields **\$114,000**; less members who drop. That is enough to pay our annual budget and still have the Convention income, if registration is still charged, and other small variable income.

If the increase is \$25 from \$19 to \$44, the increase would be about \$75,000, plus the \$61,000 from the \$19 already in place and the Westunes \$8,000, yields **\$144,000**; less members who drop. There would no longer be a need to charge a registration fee at the conventions. The small variable income would also still be available.

When you see these numbers you see how the conventions could be registration free for all dues paying members, because the District no longer has to finance itself on the backs of the convention attendees! After all, the function of the District is to hold the convention/competition for the benefit and fun of all District members!

That does not solve the 800 pound gorilla (travel and hotel) cost problem for members who want to go to the convention, especially with wife. The travel and lodging has to be solved at the Convention Committee level, with less expensive large venues and with motels instead of high priced hotels. We, the LRPC, are not qualified, at least as of this writing, to make cogent suggestions of how to accomplish this huge problem of dissatisfaction to members. But certainly a two track convention, one of competition and one of performance participation should be explored. Attendees could choose to participate in singing with each other, with or without coaches for quartets and tags and wood shedding and vocal technique while the contests are not into the finals. Are our competitors at even the lowest levels of District competitions so good that everyone else wants to hear them all, or is there a group of singers who care much less about lower competition watching, who will come out for the fun of the singing, for a reasonable cost?

And, finally, a dues increase of this size, whether or not collected by chapters, weekly and paid by the chapter, allows the Division VP to have a budget that fits the needs of their responsibilities! To be effective the Div VPs need a full staff and an adequate budget. Our Divisions are almost as large as some Districts, our So Cal West, with a membership of 800 is only 100 less than two of the Districts in the Society!

REVISE/REVIVE

Perhaps there is something to the general belief that our District is top heavy in manpower at the expense of chapters. We recommend that the Past Presidents' Advisory Committee (mentioned above, discussed below, and which has been recommended in prior LRPC reports) look carefully at

our organization chart and determine if we have positions that are no longer needed, or new ones which are indicated. We accept the District's recently installed "Line organization" which replaced the "Staff Function organization"; and, we offer a number of suggestions in this document for strengthening it.

LRP200720 Establish division support staff - We suggest that the Division VP role be strengthened by adding five Division staff members to support Division functions, plus his COTS team.

1. High School Director – get YIH programs started in all chapters
2. College Director – Make connections with all colleges in the Division, encouraging quartet and chorus competition
3. Grant writing Director and COTS teacher.
4. Divisional Webmaster, a Division staff position – to promote Division activities, chapter shows, inter-chapter meetings, chapter web site assistance, and with hot links to the Society and District web sites. Since only the AzSnSu Division webmaster has been actively maintaining a Divisional site, new webmasters are needed for the other Divisions. The District webmaster volunteers to teach new webmasters both beginning and advanced topics to assist this effort.
5. Division Convention Activities Director – work with the District Events team to enhance attendance at the Division conventions. A Convention Activities Director position to start adding convention activities to the Division conventions.
6. Plus the full team of COTS instructors – teach annual COTS classes in their own Division and provide one-on-one instruction for struggling chapter officers.
7. **LRP200721 Reduce convention costs to members** - To raise morale and retain more men who have more fun, get them into the convention seats, and there are several ways in this report which aim at that, for instance, the one free pass. But, make it less expensive! That is the single biggest deterrent to convention attendance. But with two thirds of us over 60, we no longer have the energy or enthusiasm that we did 30 years ago to party and sing all night. We stay home. **The solution is young men at inexpensive events.**
8. **LRP200722 Assign Convention Activities chairman to the Events Team** - The FWD Convention Activities Chairman position has been in place for four years now and the classes that our members find of interest have been clearly identified. It is time to move this position under the District Events Chairman.
9. **LRP200723 Convert Chapter Counselors to division Job Consultants** - We recommend that the Chapter Counselor position be changed (again) and instead of CC's being assigned to every chapter, that they report directly to the Division VP as Chapter Consultants. Each Chapter Consultant would have a specialty along the lines of the chapter officer positions and may be a certified COTS instructor. When a chapter is struggling in any aspect of chapter management, the DVP will assign a CC to visit the chapter to work with the officer(s) that need training and direction; or, as mentioned above, a 'Chapter Turn Around' Specialist.* [See Appendix II](#)
10. **LRP200724 Establish Past President Advisory Council** - We recommend the establishment of a FWD Past Presidents Advisory Council (PPAC).

This body of highly knowledgeable men of the Far Western District would be assigned short term issues to hear, discuss, and recommend action upon. It would likely be an email based process and/or by telephone conference using a low cost system, now commercially available, to assure timely attention to assigned topics. The FWD Board Of Directors would assign topics to the PPAC and use their reports in their decision making.

POSSIBLE PPAC TOPICS:

- a. Review every District leadership position with the intent of strengthening our efforts in all aspects of running the District. Can any jobs be eliminated? Should some jobs be broadened? Do we currently have a justifiable Return On Investment (ROI) in each job position. Do we have an appropriate management structure? Are there jobs that need to be created? Should we be more selective in some areas such as Chapter Counselors: why do all chapters really need one? What jobs should be Division jobs instead of District jobs?
- b. How do we increase the perceived value of the District and Divisions to the chapter members?
- c. How do we enhance information flow, including Westunes, from District/Divisions to the chapter members? How do we upgrade the importance of the HOD rep as an information channel? Can we route critical information to the HOD rep on a regular basis? Is the chapter info channel the secretary instead? Or just a person that is truly interested in the bigger picture that commits to be the District/Division focus within his chapter. Why should a chapter which does not send a representative to the HOD be allowed to keep it's charter? Can HoD meetings become compelling in interest?

11. THE NEW Far Western District.

This vision of the future of the FWD is based upon our belief that we must accentuate those things which are, or will be successful, expanding and amplifying them; and, we must eliminate or replace those things which we know are not working with new ideas which have potential for FWD improvement. For instance, the chapter charter must be seen as a valued privilege, to be earned to obtain and to keep. We propose a variety of chapters. This list should be published and each chapter vote for it's own preference, which indicate the intensity of the work investment into the chapter's music, the time on the risers and in choreography, etc.:

LRP200725 Create specific chapter type designations

COMPETITOR CHAPTERS

- International level Chapters that seek International standing and medals.
- District level Chapters that seek District standing.

PERFORMANCE CHAPTERS

- Quartet Only Chapters, in which each quartet must be CERTIFIED to perform publicly
- Performance Chapters, may/may not compete, but are CERTIFIED to perform in public

SUPERVISED CHAPTERS

(supervised by Div VP & staff, for ONLY a year – sink/swim)

- New Chapters
- Failing Chapters
- “O. C. Cash” type, Social, or fun only, Chapters, gang singing, with no public performances. This type of chapter would not be ‘sink or swim’ chapters, unless they fall below their membership minimums, and as such are not under the week to week control of the Div VP. An “O.C. Cash” chapter could last for years and not need any guidance.

NEW FORMS OF CHAPTERS

- A national college fraternity (BHS = Beta Etta Sigma) at Colleges/Universities nation wide (for the BHS to study)
- Chapters with women and families, as chapter members (but who are not BHS members), like Santa Cruz
- Multiple Chorus Chapters. A chapter BoD could manage a competition chorus, plus a performing but non competing chorus which is the ‘minor league team’ or ‘farm team’ for the competition chorus; plus an O.C. Cash gang singing chorus, plus a beginner, non performing chorus, and/or a college chapter. This would be an extreme, but who is to say they could not?

TRAINING SECTION

Recruiting programs initiated by the BHS for the last decade have had little impact on our membership, which keeps declining. Our members have not seriously bought into any of the programs. Add to that the poor singing quality that many of our chapter have and that their few guests find it easy to not return. The ‘Sing In New Groups’ Program will make a significant impact here. Our members will have an important program to join and be proud of. They will tell their friends with a new enthusiasm. Their guests will hear a better chorus and will be more likely to stay. The ‘Sing In New Groups’ Program is far more than craft training for our members. It is a recruitment program also.

LRP200726 Create structured singing education program with recognition

THE ‘SINGING IN NEW GROUPS’ (SING) PROGRAM

For chapter members, old and new, and for the community at large

Objectives: Raise singing level of our chapters and recognize our member’s accomplishments, train those who are new to us and inexperienced as singers, but who may become new members:

- Five or six cumulative levels of training
- Detailed curricula to be defined by select panel of District music leaders

- Trained Teachers for each level
- Trained Qualifiers to test men to attain each level
- Qualification testing at conventions and HCW
- May have Circuit Riding Teachers and Qualifiers
- During testing a member must demonstrate all prior levels of accomplishment to advance
- To advance a member must be able to teach the level two steps below
- Requirement to have competed in a chorus or quartet to achieve level 3
- Requirement to have competed in a quartet to achieve level 4
- Each level recognized by badge or title bars or jacket patch
- Offer a free, short term program, through level one, to the public both as a service and as a recruiting technique

High School Harmony Camp

We propose that each division work towards providing a summer Harmony Camp modeled after the Buckeye camp for boys and girls. These camps would be in conjunction with the Sweet Adelines organization. If our suggestion of training families to sing takes hold, we suggest investigating starting a week long summer camp for families with lots of recreation and lots of singing.

YOUTH SECTION

The society will only survive if young men join in large numbers before we fail financially. The Far Western District must accelerate the recruitment of college age youth now instead of waiting 20-30 years for them to find us again.

We see the middle school and high school age as the time to introduce barbershop harmony widely and the college age as the time for most of them to become members, before they are married(!). To encourage singing by high school students we need to promote singing in middle schools.

To fund these programs, in addition to a kick started Grant writing program, we have defined a Veteran's Day Singing Salute program for the public to hire our quartets, just as they do for Valentines, but instead of a love song, they would deliver a "Thank you!" to a veteran. We have arrangements in hand for the five service songs and a terrific greeting card also. This new program would be promoted as a YIH effort and the proceeds will go to the chapters' YIH fund.

CONCLUSION

We include the strengthening of our YIH program, over all, in EVERY section of this report. YIH must become integrated into every aspect of what we do. We must become totally **QUALITY HARMONY PLUS YOUTH** oriented if we are to survive as a Society and as a District. Else we will simply separate into dozens of small singing groups with no competitions except American Idol, and the like and become just gang singing, good time groups of guys.

APPENDICES:

I To increase retention

General Recipe for keeping a great chapter

1. Set clear goals.
2. Involve the members in setting those goals.
3. Make them your type of fun.
4. Review the goals constantly.
5. Change your goals as the membership needs.
6. Check that everyone understands expectations and goals. Check again and again and again.
7. Review your progress and set new goals.
8. Have a 1-year plan, a 3-year plan and a 5-year plan.

What matters is PURPOSE and CLEAR EXPECTATIONS.

II An operational mode for assigned Chapter Turn Around officers

who would visit their assigned chapter(s) two days and one night each week, drive over on one day, hold the chapter meeting that night, stay with a member, hold the BoD meeting the next day and go home, or some similar arrangement of time:

1. He first convenes a Recovery BoD Meeting to discuss the needs and the means for re organization. The outcome of the meeting would be gain agreement that those of the BoD who are present, pledge to do what ever it takes to succeed within 12 months. Do any members need to be replaced, or are any seats unfilled that are critical? What plans/desires do current members have?
2. The next day, or week, he convenes a First, Recovery Chapter Meeting to discuss the needs and the means for re organization. The outcome of the meeting would be gain agreement that those of the Chapter who are present, pledge to do what ever it takes to succeed within 12 months.
3. A Chapter Retreat for a weekend, or at least a chapter BoD weekend retreat, to create their Mission or Purpose Statements and their Action Plan, assignments by name and begin and completion dates for specified and agreed results to fulfill the Mission/Purpose Statements and how both enthusiasm and commitment within the chapter membership will be earned. Volunteers are signed up for specific tasks, as established by the BoD. All must sign up for something.
4. A new chapter meeting format, if deemed necessary, is instituted, with the BoD meeting held every week, the day afterward. Vigorous missing/former member follow up and vigorous recruiting, YIH and Training is required. The Turn Around Man would call upon the functional chairmen, via the Div VP, for specific functional help. This would not be a one man task it would be a team task in order for it to work well enough to succeed in saving the chapter.
5. Further details would be dependent upon the Statement and of the personalities.

End

Thursday 5/25/07 5:44PM