

Re: Draft operating manual

To Richard Jones <richardosj@comcast.net>

Yes, Rich G has done much for this chorus (as has Rich J) and he puts in a lot of effort into it. I have had little involvement in leadership roles here, but certainly have heard from quite a number that do that feel Rich is a little heavy handed when it comes to chorus management. I'm not going to comment on that except to say that it seems a tough balancing act, to care about something and not put your opinions out there (he is an employee but he is not JUST an employee as I have heard some in PB leadership say - he does care about this group and what the group does, does matter to him). At the same time, I understand those who feel that there is a little too much of Rich in areas outside of the role for which he has been hired.

However, in this case, I found I agreed with much of what Rich G said at the board meeting. So bear with me for a bit as a take on the role of stepping outside of the document task force, being a slight outsider, not tied to that process and saying what I heard/saw at the board meeting. If this is useful, great. If not, no need to respond, feel free to chuck it in the trash - I'm not offended. I only sent this to you because I am responding to your thoughts to me. If there is anything of value that you want to share with the group, feel free.

I process things in writing (as you can tell), so bear with the length of my response.

1) I heard people in the room that were clearly invested in this subject, that was a good thing.

2) It felt to me like the people in the room that voiced thoughts, were not talking about making general policy as they were about trying to accommodate certain people or a certain situation, right now, and using a newly written policy as a way of approaching this. This may seem like a unimportant point, but it feels to me like the making of policy should be unrelated to any specific situation and drafting policy based on a specific situation is unwise and I felt 'at odds' with what I was hearing. We've talked about this a lot in our church, where we have wanted to have a policy/stance about LGBTQ folk (inclusion, membership, marriage, etc) but did not want to do it based on a situation that included a person or persons that was here now. Making policy in the context of a situation is bad for everyone involved. On this point I disagree with Rich G, who advocated for putting off this whole conversation until we have a group that wants to affiliate. Now is the time, not when someone is knocking at the door.

3) I have heard lots of misunderstanding and issues arising based on misunderstandings that arise from lack of clarity about the differences between BHS membership/participation/perks, CHerry Hill Chapter membership/participation/perks and Ensemble membership/participation/perks. Someone would do the Pine Barons and the Cherry Hill Chapter a great service, if they could clearly define these memberships, singing status of each membership, ones responsibilities as a member and what each entity provides to its members and deal with any questions about as a xxx member I am entitled to x y z. Without this, all discussion is lost. It is in this context, that this document can also discuss what it means to have chapter members that are NOT members of any chapter ensemble. This just needs to be done in order to clear up this ambiguity and help with any misgivings from PB chorus members. On this point, I agree with Rich G.

4) Back to PB and the discussion of the gender makeup of PB. I think it was clear from PB and Rich G that, while there is interest from some in other singing options, that the PB experience is to remain as a male chorus, in all parts of its life. I do agree with Rich G on this point. To the extent that some members of this document task force may disagree with that, I think that now is not the time to push that. In fact, to do so will be counter-productive as the next item of business is to define specifically what it means to have more than one ensemble in a chapter, regardless of their genders. In fact I think it very useful to take this discussion completely away from the gender issue (eliminate the hot button for some) and address it as an issue of how the chapter is going to grow with multiple ensembles within its care. That is the real issue for this group. If this group disagrees with that and thinks that the focus of this group is to find a way for a specific group of people to sing and graft themselves onto the PB in some form, then I am out and want nothing to do with that. It's the larger issue that must be addressed over the next 6+ months.

5) At the meeting I heard lots of disagreement between those who felt that that the document as written, maintained PB as a male chorus and those who saw that this document opened the way for women to be part of PB. On hearing from Rich G, I have to agree with him that this document got in its own way and on one hand gave a nod to the all male PB ensemble but then went and listed changes to the PB ensemble, based on what other non-PB's were entitled to do. I read it now and it is a confusing read, on this point. Rich G just got all over this, as he or someone should have.

6) So while I understand that having ones work trounced on is not a happy experience, there really were issues in what was written and issues in what was not discussed in the document. I do think that once the issue in point 3 above is done and presented and approved, then going after the larger issue from the point of view of a chapter with many ensembles (of which PB is just one of the ensembles), regardless of their gender or size, that is what needs to be done. I don't view the current work as wasted in the least but I would recommend that a new outline be started (no verbiage) that outlines all of the things that need to be addressed in such a document. Once this is "finalized", then policy language can be written around the outline. Since this process is a function of the chapter, this process goes on above and unrelated to whatever is going on in the Pine Barons - they

have little to do with each other. Once this document is written, it can then be presented to the CHAPTER board for discussion and approval. Again, at this level it is not a PB issue.

I'll stop here because you are certainly fast asleep by now as I ramble on and on.

Peace

Jeff K

On Mon, Sep 23, 2019 at 6:11 PM Richard Jones <richardosj@comcast.net> wrote:

Thanks Jeff for your thoughtful response. I have to say I am greatly disappointed in the attitudes expressed by the music director. The operating manual draft did state that the Pine Barons Chorus was to be male. I don't know how he missed that. The audition processes we defined are being done on an informal basis, we just put them in writing. I did expect some revisions would be requested, but not a rant and rave session. If the intent of the music director was to discourage us to the point of stopping, then he nearly succeeded. Yes, he has done great things for our performance and singing, but this is still our chorus. And I am a Pine Baron!

Sent from my Verizon 4G LTE Droid

On Sep 22, 2019 11:00 AM, Jeff Knightly <jwknighlty@gmail.com> wrote:

This is partly my fault for not being more present for this conversation, but the conversation at the board meeting was very eye opening for me (from both the point of view of this committee and concerning Rich's comments, many of which I agreed with).

For whatever its worth, here are my thoughts.

1) I must admit that I thought that the purpose of this group was to work out a general framework that allowed for other ensembles to organize and be voted in as part of the Cherry Hill Chapter, including what that means as far as oversight, branding, responsibility to the board, responsibility of the board (if any) to other ensembles, etc. According to Rich, I was wrong and if that is so, then it is clear that for right now this group has overstepped its immediate mandate in its hurry to try to address a specific situation. It is also clear that the current document does not fully address all of the issues of this general framework.

2) While I have no issue with women in Chapter membership, I am unclear what this truly affords someone to be part of a CHAPTER but not part of a chorus or quartet, regardless of their gender, except they are a financially supporting member with a few non-singing role options. In any event, this option needs to be clearly defined by this group and presented for approval. This should be a very simple task. I understand that this is not what you wanted to be about, but it is the proper first step. I will add under this point, that I don't understand Rich's request that one must audition to be a Chapter member. That seems silly to me. Chapter membership is a non-singing membership. Choruses, quartets and mixed ensembles are singing memberships. As a member of the Pine Barons, I have a chorus membership (which gives me certain things) and I have a Chapter membership (which gives me certain rights) and I have a BHS membership (which gives me certain rights). BHS will take anyone's membership. With the above change, Cherry Hill Chapter will, with approval, give membership to anyone that will pay their dues. But these are not singing memberships. Your singing membership comes from your ensemble, whether they be aligned with a Chapter or not.

3) It was made very clear that changing the Pine Baron Chorus is not on the agenda, nor should work by this group seek to cause change to the Pine Baron Chorus. I agree with that. I think this group needs to respect the general wish of the Pine Barons chorus and its director that it remain an all-male chorus, in all of its aspects, whether that be chorus membership, warmups, tags, coaching done for specific singing events or anything related to singing in the Pine Barons chorus. That may change in the future but that is not going to happen now and that is not the responsibility of this group. However, there is nothing here that says that I or anyone can't organize a holiday singing event or a weekly singing time at someones home and invite any singers you like, Pine Barons, friends of Pine Barons, people from my choral groups, whoever, just to sing. This does not take away from the Pine Barons chorus and it promotes singing, for whomever wants to sing. Singing is the point, right?

4) However, after item 2 above is resolved, I do think that this group should continue its work to think through out a general framework that allows for other ensembles to organize and be voted in by the board as part of the Cherry Hill Chapter, including what that means as far as oversight, branding, responsibility of the board (if any) to other ensembles, etc. I also think that we need to think through and understand why anyone would want to do this (be an affiliated ensemble). What are they gaining, what is Cherry Hill Chapter gaining, what is the Pine Barons gaining? I think other ensembles would increase the diversity of musical offerings in the area, bring other people to singing and might actually be useful in enlarging Pine Baron membership and audiences. I heartily disagree with Rich that this work of thinking through this framework should wait until we have a group that is requesting chapter membership - I think this is short-sighted and likely simply a reaction against the perceived attempts to make changes to the Pine Barons Chorus. This group is about being the forward thinkers that help promote musical offerings under the auspices of the Cherry Hill Chapter. Again, this has nothing to do with the Pine Barons.

5) Currently, any new ensemble can organize and sing barbershop in whatever gender makeup and group size they wish. If you want to sing then you are free to do that. As the leader of Final Four, that is what we have done. When we sing at an outside venue, we do it as a barbershop singing group, whose members may or may not be part of another barbershop chorus, or part of the the same chorus, but we are registered with BHS and have any rights and privileges that this allows. We get nothing from the Pine Barons chorus or the Cherry Hill Chapter. No music, no warmups, no director, no coaching and really no encouragement except if we are good enough and there is room in a Pine Barons show, we may be allowed to sing a song. If we wanted to compete at District/Division, our membership in the Cherry Hill Chapter gives us the opportunity to compete, right? It is not about being a member of Pine Barons. So, the only thing that an ensemble being connected to a Chapter gives to it is the ability to compete, right? While that may be a wish for some future ensembles, we do not have that now and I see no other reason for a group that wishes to sing, to go ahead and do that and be free of any constraints/responsibilities to a board put on them by being part of a Chapter.

If I had time, I'd love to create an 8ish person mixed voice acapella group (not just barbershop). But if I did this, I would just do it. The point is to sing and not to get all tangled up in the politics of BHS, Chapters, etc. If we ever got to the point of wanting to compete within the barbershop world, then we would have to see what we needed to do to do that at that time.

So there are 3 takeaways:

- This task force needs to make a way for there to be non-singing chapter members with definition of what that means and make the language clear about the Pine Baron identity and the distinctions between BHS membership, Chapter and singing ensemble memberships and what each membership gives (and does not give) and the responsibilities of each membership. This is as much about a slight expansion of membership as it is a making clear to the Pine Baron membership that their experience is not changing and clearly setting the stage for the idea of separation of Chapter and Singing Ensembles. This should be done soon and this clarification is vital for the success of the next item.

- This task force then has the option of continuing beyond their mandate to explore and define the relation of ensembles that choose to affiliate with the Cherry Hill Chapter, defining requirements for membership, responsibility for governance, leadership, funding, facilities, what a group gains by doing this what a groups responsibilities are and mandates from the board are, etc. This is a huge conversation but there is no pressure and no timeline, but since the conversation has started, it would be great to finish it. I would strongly suggest that when doing this work, you NOT do it in the context of anyone or any group. This is important work and does not need to be hurried and must be done right. That said, I would hope that a proposal could be available by the end of 2020.

- Any groups outside of the Pine Barons that want to sing barbershop, should organize and do just that. Sing!!! Work on your craft and create something that is at least fun and maybe even something of which you are proud and want to share. If you get to that point, you can find lots of places that will love to hear you sing (and you might get paid). If you want to compete some day, check in with the Cherry Hill District at that point and by that time we will have guidelines drafted for making that work.

Peace
Jeff Knightly

On Sat, Sep 21, 2019 at 10:19 AM Bruce Barker <bbarker21@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear committee:

There is no nice way to put this. Last night Rich Gray totally trashed our work. His basic objection was that we went beyond our original purpose and dealt too much with ensembles that don't exist yet. He also didn't think it was entirely clear that the all-male Pine Baron experience wouldn't change. At the end of the session, **the board agreed** that the Operating Manual has to be revised along the lines Rich called for.

Other specific objections:

- * He favors auditions for all chapter members, not seeing much value in having administrative non-singing members who don't regularly attend rehearsal.
- * He doesn't want women participating in warmups or even tag singing, saying this would bring change that might upset some who want to keep the group stag.
- * It isn't entirely clear that ensembles could be affiliated only with board approval. He expressed the fear that some would come on board thinking they could just organize their own chorus without approval.
- * Appearance on the Holiday Show must require approval by the chapter music team.
- * Governance and support matters should just be decided when the need arises.

He wants the operating manual stripped down to a list of what women who join the chapter can do right now, which would consist more or less of:

- attend chapter social functions
- vote in chapter membership meetings
- listen to coaching sessions
- participate in mixed quartets/ensembles affiliated with board approval

In addition, it should spell out that the Pine Barons chorus remains all-male.

Evidently mixed quartets/ensembles could sing at singouts or shows with music team approval.

Recall that the membership chartered the committee to propose a definition of the rights and qualifications of chapter membership in the Everyone in Harmony context. It seemed to be the consensus that women could organize and join mixed vocal groups under the chapter umbrella - that the door should be opened to this. The chapter and the Pine Barons Chorus would no longer be one and the same. This leads to a range of questions as to the roles of the chapter and choruses, and their relationships. Most of these questions would naturally have to be worked out if and when the occasion arose.

We need to think this through. If we require auditions for chapter membership, we would audition women (in what format?), then may tell them they passed but can't sing with us. I think this matter is best left alone until common sense has a chance to prevail.

My overall reaction: For all his paranoia ("Trojan horse", etc.), Rich may be wise to favor stripping the manual down to the immediate basics. Further decisions can be made when we know what sort of groups we're dealing with. The rest could lead to a lot of discussion and possible dissent.

Could one of you please make a fresh start and **draft a one page or less operating manual**? I'm not sure I'm the right person to take the next step.

Some context:

Expect to have nominations Oct. 7 and the annual membership meeting Oct. 21. At the membership meeting the chapter needs to (a) elect officers for 2020 and (b) vote on the option in the new standard chapter bylaws - which are already in effect - whether the **chapter** is to be all-male or open to both genders. (Note that under the previous bylaws we were by default open to everyone.) If the chapter opts to be open to both genders, an operating manual becomes **necessary** to keep the **chorus** all male, and to define the roles open to women in the chapter. At this point we could (c) present the new draft operating manual for a later vote. If the chapter opts to be all-male, no operating manual dealing with anything that has been proposed would be appropriate.

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Bruce