



The Central States District of the
Barbershop Harmony Society

The Serenade

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Vox Infinitus Builds Community with Monthly “Taps & Tags” Event

Submitted by Vox Infinitus

Des Moines Metro Chapter, Des Moines, Iowa

As barbershop singers, the question of “do you want to sing tag?” is rarely met with any answer other than a resounding “yes!” followed shortly by a belly full of butterflies and heart palpitations. It’s one of the most awaited parts of any concert, convention, or show: the socialization afterwards of making magical music and ringing chords with friends and strangers alike.

Outside of the barbershop microcosm however, the same question is often met with a confused look and possibly a raised eyebrow or two. For those who have witnessed a newcomer hear, or better yet sing, a tag for the very first time, it is a thing of beauty to bear witness to: the advent of someone’s barbershop journey.

Over the years since its inception, Vox Infinitus, under the Des Moines Metro Chapter, has sought to build a community around this very experience. Both the existing and developing music communities in Des Moines seemed to be void of an opportunity where people who love music could casually come together

and simply experience music either as a listener, or a participant. It was this void that Taps & Tags was created to fill.

Hosted by Vox Infinitus once a month, friends and strangers of all abilities alike are invited to gather,

socialize, and join together in the experience of unadulterated music making.

“The long-term vision of this event,” says co-founder and secretary Weston Hennings, “is to foster both an environment for music lovers to meet, and a desire within the

community to enjoy and create music together that



See TAGS on Page 8

IN THIS ISSUE

Lincoln Chapter Tour	1
CSD President Update	2
CSD Immediate Past President Update	3
Iowa State VP Update	3
CSD Events Update	4
CSD Executive Vice President Update	5
CSD Contest & Judging Update	6
CSD Chorus Director Dev. Update	7
Serenade Deadlines	8
CSD District Officers	9

CSD Talent Shining on District and International Levels



Matt Suellentrop

CSD President

Greetings one and all!

By the time you read this, we'll have wrapped up what I'm sure was a fantastic spring convention in Ames, IA. No doubt that we'll have a handful of representatives to the International Quartet Contest in Cleveland this summer, and I know we've got at least one quartet competing out of

district this spring. We also have a number of quartets competing in the Next Generation contest as well as our chorus representatives, and the Ambassadors of Harmony performing their swan set as outgoing champions. We certainly aren't short of talent here in CSD, and I'm proud of all the groups that have the gumption to cross any sort of stage, not just at the international level. I've performed in my fair share of quartet contests (37 to be exact) and still get those butterflies when it's close to go-time. If you've never performed in a quartet before, I encourage you to do so. At our district conventions, you have the opportunity to receive some valuable feedback from the best musicians in our society, serving on the judging panel. It's not always about the score, but more so about the experience you have with the other three singers around you.

I'm now in my fourth year as a part of the District Presidents Council, which includes the President and Executive Vice President from all 17 districts of the Barbershop Harmony Society. That group meets monthly as well as in person at the Midwinter and International conventions. It's a great opportunity for us leaders to converse and take away some "best practices" from what the other districts are doing. Additionally, it give us the opportunity to ask questions and voice opinions to society leaders on

behalf of our members. If you ever feel as though your voice isn't being heard, please know that it is. Maybe you had a negative experience in the past. But I encourage you to reach out to myself or EVP Brett Randolph so that we can understand better how we can help to improve your barbershop experience. If we don't know about it, we can't act on it. It's our members who really are the boots on the ground in your chapters and communities.

There's a lot of exciting things in the works within the Central States District, most of which I hope to see come to fruition before my term ends. I am constantly amazed at the dedication of those who volunteer to serve on behalf of the district. The number of hours they spend on top of their already busy lives is a true testament to their character and passion. That being said, there's always room for YOU! If you've ever thought about wanting to do more, we'll find a spot for you, I promise. Please reach out to myself or any other district leader so we can put you in contact with the appropriate person.

This crazy barbershop thing that we do has enriched my life more than I would have ever thought possible. And I'm so grateful that I get to share it with all of you!

Mark your calendar for the 2024 CSD Fall Convention

Our fall convention will once again return to the Lied Center in beautiful Lawrence, Kan. The convention will be held October 10-13, 2024. Keep an eye on The Serenade, the CSD Facebook page, and your email for updates on registration deadlines.

Looking forward to seeing everyone in Lawrence!

Fall Convention Brings Opportunities for New Faces in District Leadership



Duane Lawson

CSD Immediate Past President

With the upcoming Fall Convention, there will be an election for a few positions on the CSD Board of Directors:

Executive Vice President: Matt Suellentrop will move to Immediate Past President and Brett Randolph will run for President. If Brett Randolph is elected President, that will leave the Executive Vice President roll vacant.

Nebraska State Vice President: Rick Pape currently holds this position and is eligible for a second term.

Missouri/NW Arkansas State Vice President: Michael Bass currently holds this position and has served and fulfilled his two consecutive two-year terms.

South Dakota State Vice President: Dave Stephenson currently holds this position and has served and fulfilled his two consecutive two-year terms.

District Secretary Shadow: Mark Fuerniss has served the Central States District for many years and has expressed interest in retiring. The District is looking for someone to shadow the District Secretary before the 2026 election. The position has many details, and the goal is to have someone work with Mark for a year before the transition.

If you or a member of your chapter are interested in a position on the Central States District Board of Directors, please contact me at tornadoalleybaritone@gmail.com.

Quad City Chordbusters Bring 70's Flare to the Barbershop Stage



Larry Hlavacek

Iowa State Vice President

The Quad City Chordbusters show was held on March 16, with special guest Muscatine Heartland Chorus. What a wonderful show! The theme was "That '70s Show", with music from the 1970s. Each song was introduced, with a story about the song's origin and artist. The performers sang well, and looked like they were having

a great time singing these retro songs. And the audience enjoyed it. Tapestry was their guest quartet. As usual, they sang extremely well. According to Austin, they have a new "favorite" song. No spoiler here on what that is.

Here are more dates from Iowa chapters:

- The River City Chorus and the Black Hawk Metro Proud Image Chorus hosted their annual joint spring shows with the theme "Listen to the Music". They performed on April 6, in Mason City with special guest quartet OC Times. Then performed again on April 13 in Waterloo with special guest quartet, Center Ring.
- Iowa City Old Capitol Chorus will host its Cookie

See IOWA on Page 8

CSD Events Provide Opportunity for Growth in Singing and Leadership



Doug Brott

CSD Director of Events

There are a number of Events that occur every year within CSD. So far in 2024 two events have been completed. On February 3, the 2024 Leadership Academy was held in Shawnee, KS. Thirty five elected chapter leaders attended classes related to their jobs as President, Secretary, Treasurer, Music Team, or

Chapter Development. In addition, they could choose to attend three extra classes from the following options: What You Don't Know About Leadership, Accelerating Leadership Development, Five Functions of a Team, Relationship & Confidence Building Between Music Team and Administration, Let's Sing.

Our goal is to conduct the Leadership Academy each year before the end of the year so leaders can start the new year with all the information they need for

success. Unfortunately we could not make it happen before the end of 2023. Please watch for information about the next LA to be held November 2024.

The 2024 HEP School was also held in Shawnee, KS on February 24. About 80 members attended representing 3 choruses and numerous quartets. Comments from everyone indicated they enjoyed the day and the coaches provided positive feedback to enable their continued growth and enjoyment.

Of course we also conduct two conventions every year. Spring Convention will be in Ames, Iowa on April 19-21. The Headquarters Hotel is the Gateway Hotel and Conference Center and the Venue is the Ames City Auditorium. Meetings will be held for the District Board of Directors and the House of Delegates to catch-up on and discuss District Business. Of course both quartet and chorus contests will be held on Friday and Saturday. There will be plenty of opportunities for singing and fellowship throughout the weekend.

Fall Convention and Contest will be held again in Lawrence, KS on October 11-13. The latest Information for all of these events can be found on the CSD website and by watching for the updates that arrive in your email inbox.

Want to see your chapter, chorus, or quartet in the next issue?

We know that there are some awesome things going on across our district and we want to make sure everyone knows about them. If you want brag about your chapter, chorus, and/or quartet; or maybe you just want to give an update on what you've been up to ... let us know!

Send submissions to one of the following:

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Successful Chapters Leverage Members' Skills to Fulfill Mission



Brett Randolph

Executive Vice President

the time to find out what secret skills your members possess. I am certain that you will find that there are some hidden gems among your members.

Once you have those skills identified, how can you leverage them to help the chapter? An article that I came across recently, gave some tips to use as you work to utilize the newly found skills of the chapter members.

1. Identify the roles - What are the roles and tasks the chapter needs? Think about the skills, experience, and availability of your members and match them with the needs of the chapter.
2. Communicate the vision - Share with your members the vision and purpose of the tasks you are asking them to complete. Highlight how the work of the members can create positive change for the chapter.
3. Provide training and support - Give your members the training they need to accomplish the task that you have asked them to complete. Supervise and give ongoing guidance as needed to ensure the quality that you are expecting. Having access to the necessary resources are key or members to perform effectively and confidently.
4. Recognize and reward - Make sure to recognize

As volunteer organizations, the success of our chapter depends largely on our ability to know what skills our members possess and to leverage those skills to help the chapter fulfill its mission. If it has been some time since you last did an inventory of the skills of your members, I would strongly encourage you to take

and reward your members for their efforts and achievements. Appreciate and acknowledge their contributions and skills and the difference that they make in the chapter. This can be as simple as a thank-you note or certificate.

5. Foster collaboration and learning - Encourage your members to communicate, network, and share best practices with the rest of the chapter members. Especially since they will be the next wave of people that you will need to take on the tasks and be the future leaders of the chapter.
6. Evaluate and improve - Monitor and measure the results of the tasks. Identify any opportunities and challenges of the tasks and use these insights to inform your decision-making, planning, and improvement of future projects and activities.

I hope that you will find these tips to be helpful as your chapters continue to make progress on the goals that you have set for the year. Feel free to reach out if I can be of any assistance.

Keep up on all the CSD news at www.singcsd.com or by following the CSD Facebook page.

Looking for upcoming conventions?

As dates and locations are set for future conventions, the information is posted on the CSD Website.

Start your planning for your next convention trip with a visit to www.singcsd.com/future-conventions.

New Contest Rules Open the Door for Smaller Choruses to Compete



Carter Combs

Contests and Judging

adjusted our Plateau I rules to match this adjustment.

We are now in the beginning of the intensive 3-year program to train & certify new judges. The SCJC has reviewed the applications for all categories, and announced that CSD has 7 approved applicants: 2 Administrative, 3 Musicality, 1 Performance, and 1 Singing. We wish these applicants well as they begin their training at Candidate School this summer. CSD's Spring Conventions are always exciting! It is the perfect opportunity for us to get a sneak-peek at our district's top quartets as they vie to qualify for International. We have more than 20 quartets registered, and a third of them have either qualified in prior years, or are right on the cusp. Will this be the year some new ones make the jump to the Big Show?

In other C&J news - the SCJC (Society Contest & Judging Committee) announced a change last November, reducing from 12 to 9 the minimum number of singers required to be officially classified as a chorus. This is good news for smaller chapters, giving them the opportunity to compete in chorus contests. CSD has

Spring is also when we crown both our Youth and Seniors Quartet district champions. These contests usually provide some the most interesting & entertaining fresh takes and old standards of the entire weekend.

And let's not forget the Chorus Contest! Although we have a smaller field of competitors than recent years, it includes the newest chorus in our district, and "regional" groups that have drawn members from multiple chapters. They are all in search of the CSD Small Chorus Championship, as well as Plateau I & Plateau II awards. And the Ozark Overtones are looking to qualify for an invitation the 2025 Midwinter Seniors Chorus Contest to be held in San Antonio.



The Manhattan Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society
presents
Wish Upon a Star
Disney Themed a' Capella singing
featuring

The Humdingers
Saturday, 4 May 2024
Forum Hall, KSU Student Union
Doors open at 2:30pm Showtime at 3:00pm
Tickets are available for purchase from chorus members or at the theater box office the day of the show!
\$15 per ticket or \$50 per family

Chapter Musical Director is Much More Than a Weekly Salary



Larry Monson

*Chorus Director
Development*

Academies, Harmony University, and sometimes, when there is time, during the Chorus Coaching sessions.

Yes, we assume that Musical Directors offer coaching

Coaching a quartet or chorus, or a Musical Director in all things musical can be a successful experience. Quartet coaching, many times, is experienced in preparation for a contest. Chorus coaching, many times, is experienced in preparation for contests.

Musical Director's mentoring can occur at Leadership

in rehearsals, listening to chapter quartets, but who mentors the Musical Director? The responsibilities lie within the chapter by securing and encouraging funds each year for "continuing education" of the Musical Director.

Harmony University 2025, is in Denver, just a "stones throw" from CSD territory. Earl Moon: Peggy Leon Women in Barbershop: Front-Line Director: Jim Miller Front-Line Director; and Music Educator Scholarships are offered from BHS. CSD also has some scholarship monies from the CDD for those who apply.

Musical Directors should always be willing to experience "continuing education" each year by either attending LA, HU or personal mentoring by a noted outside coach during a full rehearsal, observing rehearsal techniques, gestures, and score study. Lets take care of these important musical leaders.

Let's not forget the Musical Director and what he, she, provides for the musical leadership of the local chapter. It's more than a weekly salary.

Send us your photos!

We know all our chapters are up to some amazing things in their communities.

Send us your photos of your chapter our in your local community, hanging out during and afterglow, spending time together at a convention. The old saying rings true that the music brings you in but the people is what keeps you coming back, so help us showcase how your chapters are spending time together and getting out and about in your local communities.

Send your photos to Michael Pommier at gorillaphotog@gmail.com or Rick Ziegler at rick.ziegler71@gmail.com.

Serenade Publication Schedule and Deadlines

Below is the intended schedule for the publication and submission deadlines for the Serenade. Any changes to the schedule below will be communicated in future issues of the Serenade as well as via email to the membership.

Spring Issue

Submission Deadline: February 28

Publication Date: March 15

Summer Issue

Submission Deadline: May 31

Publication Date: June 15

Fall Issue

Submission Deadline: August 31

Publication Date: September 15

Winter Issue

Submission Deadline: November 30

Publication Date: December 15

Send submissions to:

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TAGS continued from page 1

TAPS & TAGS

HOSTED BY VOX INFINITUS



exists outside of Vox Ininitus. We want people from all the area choirs and musical ensembles, both barbershop and non, to be a part of this community. And more than anything, we want to reach people who have never heard a tag before in their lives and provide them that experience. Through this we can expand the influence of barbershop, and ultimately a cappella, within the Des Moines Metro, as well as the local music scene at large."

This vision is well underway in the Des Moines area and continues to grow. So much so that the event occasionally yields a quartet of complete strangers that come together during the event to sing tags all by themselves. At the end of the day, that is what Taps & Tags is ultimately about.

Now, who wants to sing a tag?

IOWA continued from page 3

Festival on Thursday, May 2. It is an early evening event that includes a friendly contest (a fun trophy for the top performance to keep for the year) and everyone learning a song together. Of course, lots of delicious cookies to enjoy.

- Cedar Rapids Harmony Hawks have their show, 75 Years In The Making, scheduled for May 11, celebrating 75 years in existence.
- Des Moines Metro Vox Ininitus has their show scheduled for October 26.

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