

Chapter Member Questionnaire results of ILL District Past Presidents Visits To Chapters
 Compiled April 12, 2011 by Greg Caetano, 2011 VP CSLT
 NO ACTION REQUIRED AT THIS TIME – INFORMATION ONLY FOR YOUR ENLIGHTENMENT
 VISITATION PROGRAM IS STILL ONGOING

Chapters Visited To date: (*) No identifiable surveys received from this chapter

Aurora, Belleville, Bloomington, Carbondale, Coles County(*), DuPage, Elgin, Joliet, Sandoval, South Cook, Sterling-RockFalls

Chapters Declining a Visit: Arlington Heights

Total Number Surveys Returned to date: 120

Survey results are unedited – many have no responses to questions.

Do You attend/support District conventions:	Yes:63	No:22	Sporadically: 5	Spring Only: 2
Send a delegate?	Yes: 29	No:4	Sometimes: 1	
Bring family members?	Yes: 11	No:23	Sometimes: 7	Can't Afford:1
Stay Over?	Yes: 20	No:20	Sometimes: 3	SpringOnly: 1
1 or 2 nights?	Yes:3	No:4	1Night: 3	2Nights: 5

Chapter Participate in Chorus Competition	Yes:67	No:12	Usually: 5 Occasionally: 2 Used to: 4	SpringOnly: 1	2010:14 2009:8 2008: 2 2003: 1
Quartet Competition	Yes:10	No:			2010:3 2009:5

Chapter get involved in District Level Offices?	Yes: 52	No:34
In what way? If not, why not:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recently(3) • Some do. I don't because I am uninformed of the particulars like how much time involved, travel etc. • Yes - ACs, DPs, several district officers, District Treasurer 3yrs, Awards Committee 3yrs etc • Don't think so (1)S • Travel • Don't know (10) • Not Asked and distance • No interest (3) • Do not have time, to far to drive • Distance to meetings we're isolated • Yes – QCA activities • Past Presidents, Past Treasurer, IDEA Trustee • What offices? Probably do • Not Yet! • Sometimes 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 8 members & no motivation • Yes one of our guys. I don't know why the other don't • No Lack of interest – Lack of budget – it would make a difference • Health reasons • Idea not promoted to us – no enthusiasm for it • No have enough trouble getting guys to serve as chapter officers. • No one in our chapter has been a district officer while I've been a member. I can't for the other members as to why they don't get involved. Personally when I held a couple of different chapter officer positions within our chapter, I thought it might lead to a position on the district level. However as I served in the chapter position I wasn't impressed with the district structure and I was very disappointed in the lack of communication between those that held the district position and we who held the position in chapters. I felt my volunteer time would be better spent with another non-profit agency. • 30 years ago we had area reps from our chapter but none in recent years – not sure why • Yes, we have some district reps in our chapter. Couldn't tell you all or many of their duties, but I know they are involved and proud to represent the district. • Put out an invite - some may be willing to do so. I have been asked in the past to take on an office. At that time I was not comfortable - now I am willing to undertake an at large position or something with YIH/membership if the need arises. • Yes. But, I have seen new ideas get shut down or dismissed very quickly in the past. I have seen fiscal decisions made with a lot of heart, but with no thought to long-term planning. I have seen decisions based on generating revenue, versus camaraderie among members. Add all these things up and one of two things happen 1) Apathy, and therefore have no desire to get involved nor see the district succeed. 2) The District decisions become so upset the members so much that they are ready to make a change, but get shut down by past leaders of the district. •
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Is changing convention sites a good or bad idea?	Good: 70	Bad: 18	Indifferent:17
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of venue would make the weekend a little more interesting, especially for the spouses. Kelly's Seed and Hardware Store only goes so far after a few times • It should rotate around the state (2) • I see value in using the same site, knowing ahead what to expect. • Depends on if it's more north or more south • Bad – because this District always prided itself that I always knew that contest was always in the same place. I do not like the new contest venue. • Good idea – Variety is better than SOS. Other cities have more to offer than Peoria. • Not Good – since the current arrangement couldn't be made to work better by changing locations. It's all in one location which make it 		

	<p>very convenient – facilities are great.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probably bad for both sites financially. No opinion otherwise • Bad – Peoria has best site, but I understand about cost too high. • Yes – more exposure to other areas of the state. • The audience seems empty at recent conventions. A smaller venue may promote camaraderie. • Good idea – District needs to keep costs down (hall rental etc) and improve attendance. • Good – it gives the wives a different place to shop and eat. • Good idea – but keep one site in Peoria • Good – Peoria is boring , cc is expensive, contest site is inadequate • Good – gives us a change of scenery (2) • Good – Move it further south like Springfield • Moving it closer to Chicago would improve attendance • Good – adds interest (for wives); a few occasional visits to Chicago is ok • Good – I like it closer to us • Keep it as is, unless its costly ... “if it ain’t broke.....” • Think it's a good idea – need some new locations. • Bad – easier to plan • Last year was ok being close to convention center • Good if it doesn’t go North and stay • Good only if it is moved farther south • Not important! • I don’t know. If we are changing for change sake then NO. It is a long way from Carbondale. • Don’t know • Good idea – sometimes closer to home • Probably good – different locations • OK • Is Peoria getting tired? People need to be used to locations. They are going to sing not sight see. • Good – different parts of state might help attendance, consistency is generally good, prefere convention at Peoria/Bloomington not Chicago area (too much \$\$\$) • Bad – if near big city (large choruses) would not help staying at hotels/motels (less revenue) • Stay in same city but get out of the fire trap hotel • The closer the better • Can’t hold us back – Can’t hurt • Good – get out of automatic mode • Bad – I Love Peoria • Good – Lets Try it! • Good – its ok check it out and see • Good – Chicago / Arlington Heights • Good – Decatur, Springfield and Bloomington would be good – Peoria is OK • Middle of the state makes it fairer for everyone • Peoria is an OK site – things to do – places to go – decent facilities • A good idea if it can be kept somewhat centrally located.
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- Probably best to keep where it is, or at least centrally located
- I like the convention site we have in Peoria. If it saves money to change, maybe it would OK. It's not as fun anymore since the format changed
- I am ready for a change, because I prefer hotels/motels that don't require up to 15 minutes to get on an elevator to visit hospitality rooms. If we can afford a better auditorium (than Scottish Rite) in another city that would be a plus
- In the long run, I believe a change of site will benefit the district. Sometimes doing something the same way year after year gets to be stale. I know there are those who enjoy the repetitive nature, but I think like International, we might get more areas of the state involved if we moved around. Also, those who were tired of Peoria might enjoy seeing more of the State of Illinois. Trying a western suburb of Chicago one year, Springfield another year sounds like a good idea. In addition, barbershop could get more local publicity as we bring our statewide convention to new Illinois communities. (I can't recall the last time I saw an Illinois District press release. Copies should be shared with all District Chapters).
- Good idea, have chapter bid on running convention – we haven't participated lately but we like to – intend to be in competition in spring.
- It seems to be in a central area in the state
- I have stayed over in the past however time doesn't allow me to stay.
- We have not competed for a number of years but plan to sing at spring convention.
- Has to be better than Scottish Rite in Peoria
- I enjoy the consistency of Peoria every year. I joined in 1964, so I participated in conventions in Rock Island (my first), Decatur, Southern ILL, etc. Hosted 2 conventions in Aurora. It was fun but competition facilities were sketchy at best. Enjoyed eating at various restaurants but Peoria is still best.
- I think changing convention sites every year, every other or every third year is a good idea. It's always been in Peoria, and will soon be in Bloomington. Would like to see it in Champaign, Decatur, Rockford, Springfield and Chicago.
- Awful attendance killer. Few hospitality rooms--no singing in the lobbies, and the biggest mistake Ill Dist. has made ever. Bring back the idea that ALL Choruses sing on Sat Nights--spring and fall. Quartets should sing on Fri nights prelims, then Stet finals Sat afternoon. More will attend by arriving Sat morning, staying all day--and overnight with Hospitality rooms. I hear this a lot from many guys.
- I'm not sure how the location change will help. If there is a transportation requirement to and from the concert venue, That may be a problem for some choruses. The ability to walk to the venues is a definite plus. Not a big fan of the Scottish Rite. Was the Methodist Church not considered? It is a nice stage and acoustically good, and nice seating – a nice hall to perform in. IMEA uses it for all of their choral performances at conventions.
- good idea - nothing wrong with Peoria, except the cost is way too

	<p>high.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good idea, but only if we take a look at the cost. I am in favor of using a more affordable facility (conference center, high school, church, Masonic lodge), at least until the district has enough funds (or fundraising) to move to a more professional facility. • It's a good idea. Will allow larger choruses to travel around. I have part of the FWD and SWD and they always move it around. • Good idea, if it is for a better venue. • Like the same site, so I can drive home and back • I like the idea of changing locations because it will make the convention more of a destination event rather than something that I attend and then go home. I think I would have more opportunity to find the elusive after hours tag sessions that I hear a lot about but never seem to find.
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Why did you join the Barbershop Harmony Society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I enjoy choral singing • Fellowship and singing (2) • Learn to sing, sing in a quality chorus • The sound of harmony • To sing and better myself • Strictly for the thrill of singing barbershop harmony • I love to sing and I like what is sung. Type and style of the music. • To sing, perform, arrange and support GOOD music (this is what attracted me) • To sing with a great group of men and to share the sounds of barbershop harmony • I LOVE barbershop harmony (2) • To further my musical education • Enjoy producing harmony • Opportunity to sing acappella and enjoy camaraderie • I love to sing. I have actively sung since the 7th grade • I like the music (2) • Fun and camaraderie (2) • A quartet visited my high school choir • I joined because of a church choir friend. Didn't know what to expect but my second meeting I knew it was my calling. • A good hobby • To sing with good guys, to entertain an audience; to sing well • Like to sing, perform, share the hobby, sing in quartets • A barbershoppers wife heard me in church, I like the guys in my chapter • Like to sing (3) • Because the guys were having too much fun to be unsupervised • Love to sing, enjoy performing and fellowship • Love to sing (12) • Support / activity • To Sing (12) • Brotherhood • Make New Friends • To sing in barbershop quartets and chorus (2)
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- Sing barbershop
- I like singing 4 part harmony (2)
- Because I love the close harmony (2)
- Fun singing
- To sing in a quartet (2)
- To sing the “old songs”
- Singing opportunities, meet other singers who like to quartet
- Enjoy Singing harmony
- I sing well and like Quartet singing (2), chorus singing not so much
- Sing and have fun – 26 yrs
- To Sing and compete – want to get in a quartet
- Sing, Sing, Sing
- To sing OLD close harmony songs and improve sight singing
- Sing close harmony
- Love to sing and love the harmony
- To enjoy the harmonic company of others and to ring chords with other barbershop enthusiasts.
- I love to sing and sing with men’s voices
- To sing locally
- To sing - joined in 1968
- Enjoy singing barbershop
- I like to sing – 38 yrs
- I enjoy singing (2)
- Via northern division campouts – Roger Redding invited me. B Kershbanm cajoled me to join.
- Enjoy Singing – Barbershop chords – unique sound
- Friend twisted my arm
- Fellowship and song (2)
- I like the singing, quarteting + friendship
- For Fun!
- I love the fellowship while I sing
- Love the sound of 4part Harmony (2)
- To sing & sing better & have AH moments
- Enjoy singing – create good friendships – conventions & competitions
- In the family! – Love it!!!
- To keep voice sharp!
- Passion for music/barbershop
- I enjoy the sound of barbershop music
- Sing and Have Fun! (2)
- Love to sing (52yrs)
- Friend invited me to have some fun (3)
- My brother asked me to join
- Years ago to sing – had sung in high school with my first quartet members
- I was invited to “come & sing” down here in Salem. I lived in Springfield 1975-1986 & never even once heard about “barbershop” singing chapter.
- They needed a director and I love barbershop harmony.
- Have always been active in singing – enjoy 4 part harmony & fellowship.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I joined because I like to sing. Any fun or friendships made beyond that I consider a bonus. • Through attending a show • I can carry a tune, and my wife wanted me to get a hobby. She now has more than she bargained for (in 2 choruses) • A friend got me to go to an Aurora show, then asked me to a meeting, I was hooked. I still enjoy it every week. • The close harmony, the music, and outlet to perform. • Camaraderie and a genuine love for the music produced. Helping to make people happy, even if only for a short time. • Enjoy performing • Because I wanted to sing in a good quartet. Directing the chorus was the only way I was going to see a chorus start up again in the Kankakee area. I didn't join to hear grown men complain and not get along • It is fun to sing for just a hobby • I always dreamed of being able to sing with a group of men – they accepted me as I was, and made my dream a reality. • I came to a show in Bloomington, and I was hooked. The level of quality singing and showmanship was excellent, and I wanted to be a part of it. • To experience four part a cappella harmony with friends • Love of a cappella singing. • Membership chairman (son) told me I had to do it or no Christmas presents. And, I like singing harmony with friends. • Attended shows and decided maybe I could do it too.
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How to improve the District?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong chapters are a start • Recruit and send more visitors from the District Leadership to visit • No idea • ? (3) • Listen to the small choruses !!! • Re-arrange the contest schedule! • Don't know other than work on programs to interest younger singers • Less "business-like" and more loose, free-form organization. Society costs are way too high!!! • Give more people an opportunity to take ownership of the District activities – it is really cliquish. Flipflopping District officers is getting old. • I miss the small District magazine • This survey is a great idea. District needs feedback from its members, this will help the board make decisions to move into the future. • To continue to find ways to keep people interested in outside functions. Trip to museum, zoos, factories, casinos and bring in speakers for the ladies during non-contest time. • Make conventions more appealing to the masses • Change convention format. Appoint a committee to get ideas. • Hard work and innovative thinking will help membership attendance • Competing twice a years is expensive; have one contest for lower level choruses
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- Promote the hobby, help choruses sing better, improve our image
- Have activities for down-state chapters, change contest format
- Don't know (5)
- Not sure but our Southern area seems always left out
- Closer relationship
- Reduce dues
- Have representatives be more involved with local choruses. Like most we need help attracting and retaining new members.
- Sponsor local get together
- Coaching for southern IL choruses and quartets
- I don't know – more workshops
- Nothing – doing fine now
- Improve the/each Chapter first (2)
- Have an activity close enough for us to attend. We're way too far from Starved Rock.
- Have small chorus competition – restore woodshedding room
- Less competitions – more socializing
- Tired of Peoria – Wives had no reason to shop or go
- We are doing as well as we can
- Put Nashville on a diet – listen to members – improve communications
- Get younger members and sing newer music
- Get new younger blood into board – more “fun events”
- One contest a year. – Judging scoring is too arbitrary
- Drop fall contest – drop judging S/A vocal (?) , use written comments.
- Find a way to lower the total cost of going to the contest and staying overnight.
- By recruiting new younger members
- Unified effort to promote barbershop – in all areas regardless of the size of the local chapter
- Improved participation in the conventions – give us things to do at them. Communicate- visit chapters – Bring back Area Counselor program?
- Not sure but District has to compete with so many other events in people's lives.
- Need to visit other chapters
- Choruses need to increase membership to get new people charged up to come. The older long timers are dying out.
- Membership Old and Young
- Reach out to smaller choruses. There is a huge emphasis on large choruses. Do more to help each chapter to recruit and retain members.
- District Golf, Picnic, Christmas Party, Wives Club, small chorus competition, Jet, ice cream, etc.
- How do we improve OUR district? Reach out to smaller choruses and get involved. Suggestion: Move convention sites to those areas!
- More one on one – Not so much a click
- CHANGE CONTEST FORMAT
- Work with YIH – Promote YIH
- Try to get more participation from all District chapters

- I'm not sure how to get the "old days" back when a convention was fun and a lot more singing
- Help our chapter get a director who insists on competing
- Promote Quartet Singing (2)
- Have District pay us some (minuscule) attention & visit so we know, they know we're alive and well – no director for last year & a half
- Get more active
- Wish I knew – hard to compete with "big" chorus
- High School Prom
- Help us get a director – change the convention how it was 4 yrs ago – help the smaller choruses
- With more people
- Need younger members – need smaller group competition
- Go heavy with youth
- Get each man to invite at least one person
- Get a district road show together & take it to several performances spread around the state – places which don't have an existing chapter (8-10 shows a year) – Get help from the small existing choruses in each area – 10 yrs ago I did it all – its hard to do at 80 yrs old
- Would love to go to a convention – we would compete if we could count on having all the parts
- Double membership? – half dues – opportunities to sing with established quartets would be fun
- To click oriented to change
- First, a massive recruitment drive to get our membership numbers back to where they should be. New blood, energy, and enthusiasm would greatly give us a shot in the arm. Our present ideas are good, but seem redundant to veteran members, but I, as a newer member want to do all the things the districts used to do. BUT let us not forget the internet, not only website but Facebook, youtube, and twitter.
- Make it more responsive to individual, particularly small, chapters' needs.
- Change the format for the district competition to the way it was 7 years ago when I became a barbershopper. I miss competing with the small choruses in the spring. Most of all I miss having a chorus hospitality room that we provided for the quartets, but due to the new schedule, the quartets are not available to join us until nearly midnight. It feels like the fun went out of the convention when you changed the format. I would love it changed back and I believe lot more people would attend.
- Cut programs that do not pay for themselves. Keep members cost for functions as low as possible. I think a lot more guys would attend IDAH if it were more like \$50 for an all-day/evening session. Wife rarely attends convention because it's too much sitting in the auditorium for her taste – most of my chapter does not attend conventions.
- I appreciate that the past presidents are visiting the chapters and taking the first big step. There is no magic formula, but there are many small things that well might be considered. Here are a few

thoughts I have. They aren't in any particular order:

- First, we all need to recognize that it is broken
- The next major step is to reconsider how the district convention is organized. Are there too many complaints about it from the membership? Should things be changed? Listen to ever chapter and maybe there is an entirely new way for conventions. Many in our chapter, I for one, lost interest in the convention when the format of the convention changed. One highlight of the weekend was the hospitality suites. It allowed us to be entertained by many district quartets. It also allowed our wives to socialize with the wives of other members of our chapter. The show of champions at the end of the evening and the quartet evaluation on Saturday night ruined the hospitality suite and took the fun out of the weekend for many members and their spouses. Maybe two different conventions – maybe one large annual convention? Start with a clean piece of paper and a new innovative committee.
- Don't relay only on emails or the internet to communicate with the membership. A district officer should visit all chapters at least once preferably twice a year.
- Consider term limits for district officers. Have at-large positions on the board that must get filled with new blood each year.
- Each District officer should touch base, at least quarterly, with his chapter counterparts, especially marketing and membership. If something worked in Bloomington, maybe it will work in Elgin, too. Share good working ideas.
- At District conventions have first time attendees where a different badge and encourage others to show them around and make them feel comfortable.
- Don't encourage smaller chapters to fold or merge, but rather help them to work with other chapters to survive (see next two points).
- Divide the state (district) into grids. Find a volunteer in each grid that will work with all chapters in that grid to organize a barbershop base and/or several joint meetings.
- Barbershoppers love to perform, but some chapters are too small to put on their own annual show or can't financially afford it. Within each grid, encourage chapters to join to gether to produce one large area show. Have district experts help them figure a way to share costs and profits.
- Let the chapters and the membership know that they are part of the Illinois District. Show interest in us.
- Leadership that can really help
- Offer more joint events with other choruses, more chorus coaching opportunities
- I don't have any answers. Membership is critical but I don't get out now that I'm retired and a full time caregiver for my disabled wife. Its easy to say "District support to chapter" but if we as individuals

	<p>generate new members, a lot of things will improve. Perhaps then we can look to the district for help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change convention sites, bring Youth In Harmony to different sites. Change requirements for international contest to allow more choruses to compete. Hold more Youth events. • Really listen to the membership. I feel the board has for too long not done this really. The board has been perceived for many years as an elite closed group, getting too many perks with free rooms, better seats, and having an elite status. Maybe it's time for some soul searching on the board, to show they are just guys like us, and show some restraint in perks they get. Ill is really in a bit of crisis with so many chapters in trouble. We gotta shake things up. We gotta get more choruses compete and get better. We gotta get more quartets scoring better to go to International. It's sad we only send 1 a year. Either we grow and get better, or we wont be around in 10 years. • Listen to membership. Promote Youth In Harmony, and make this the LIFELINE for all that we do. Provide the opportunity, give some structure, then get out of the way. Use conventions as opportunities to build camaraderie among members from other chapters. ABSOLUTELY LOVE Tom Woodall's Sing with a Champ and B-flat sings. DO have some tag masters hang out in the lobby, and let the new convention goers know that it is a MUST for them to try doing some of that. Take a road trip to another chapter. Host a district-wide chapter meeting w/ an afterglow. MORE of that. IDAH - don't think we need to bring in outside quartets. Use district talent first. Then go to those that live in Cardinal/Central States and LOL. No need to pull from FWD or SWD or MAD until the district is in better financial shape. Also, challenge and encourage larger chapters to reach out to leadership of smaller chapters near them. If the smaller chapter is open to it, do some joint events. Take the big chapter to them . . . not vice-versa. Find ways to build each other up and promote good chapter relations. That may help build membership in surrounding communities. • Couple things: (1) Have District Board members reach out and get to know the chapters. Have each District Board member assigned a chapter or 2 (other than their "home" chapter) and really get to know them. Yes, we have a Board Delegate. (2) I think communications to the District membership need to be better. District Board needs to communicate to their chapters. See what the issues chapters are facing. The District Board needs to be a Solution Provider for the chapters (if they want it). • Previous leadership must understand that change must occur in order for membership to increase. If the ship is taking on water, things cannot remain the same. If the same ideas produce the same results, then it is time to change. • Replace some of the board members / officers / past officers that aren't performing - and/or are dead weight. We need to think outside the box. Don't overspend. Change is for the better. • Start up choruses in under served areas. Suggest consolidation of some choruses to improve the experience for all. Bigger is better and more stable. If we are struggling financially, then raise the
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	<p>district dues. We all can afford a rate increase of \$20-40 a year can't we? Every member in the district should do their share, not just the folks attending the conventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote quarteting. In my 20 years as a barbershopper, I have seen a decline in the amount of people who are in quartets. It's because unless your quartet is full of music majors or high profile people, they discourage quarteting. Or, the groups of people who are popular in the chorus make fun of those who are trying. Higher-level singers choose to stay at that level and don't choose others to sing with them in their "inner circle." • We need to draw in other groups. When I visited with some in other communities I hear, "too expensive" dominated by the larger more aggressive chapters. Or, "We don't looks so good (as a district)," etc. • Need MUCH BETTER COMMUNICATION to members. I have no idea what is going on at the district level. Chapter meeting with PERSONAL updates would be great. Do that, and you would also have a chance to get direct membership feedback. • Have a show at the Spring Contest • First order is to get district back on good financial standing. Second goal: keep chapters healthy. I believe Bloomington, for instance, ought to be very active in getting Peoria, Decatur and Champaign-Urbana back on their feet. Central Illinois was once a hotbed for barbershopping, and it was very healthy when these communities were friendly competitors. Only Bloomington is thriving downstate now, and we have a responsibility to help the neighboring chapters come back to life. • Look for cost effective measures to expand activities for barbershoppers/non-barbershoppers alike who attend conventions. Have a brief international preliminary quartet contest on one day only in the district (spring) and have just one convention over a long weekend for choruses and district quartets (summer or fall) • I will answer this question in two parts. First, my only tangible • connection with the "district" is at conventions so I will answer "how can we improve district conventions". Secondly, I will answer in terms of a struggling chapter (Bureau County) and their role in support of the Illinois District. • Conventions: Since the conventions are focused around the quartet and chorus competitions I don't know if there is much that can be done to improve the actual contest events. They are what they are: quartets and choruses singing 2 songs for a primarily barbershop audience in a systematic, "non-show", type process. As a barbershopper, I'm okay with the flow of competition, but, on occasion, when I brought friends to the competition I spent a lot of time apologizing for the monotonous process. The part of the conventions that most disappointed me was the idle time between sessions. As a new member of BHS, I didn't know anyone at the conventions. It was rare that I would see someone from my chapter wondering around in the convention lobby. After competitions on Friday and Saturday nights I would go to the host hotel and try to engage in some tag singing or post competition
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	<p>festivities, but, found none. I enjoyed the president's receptions and listening to top choruses/quartets from the district. The reception kept the convention from being a bust for me. At one convention, Dick Kingdon taught/sang tags with a group of us in the hotel lobby for an hour or so. That was good fun. I've heard about hospitality rooms that have some barbershop activities, but, I didn't feel comfortable following people into the tiny Pere Marquette elevator to crash someone's party. In general, conventions are not too much fun to experience as an individual. I think the district could do more to explain the activities and events to the newer society members so they can feel more welcomed to participate. I'm sure 25+ year members know what is going on, but, for the new guys it isn't that way. Someday I would like to compete in a quartet, but, it is very intimidating to think about all of the "trained ears" in the audience that would be listening to every note and chord being sung. I suggested in a previous survey that the district should try to promote new quartets. One idea I had was to ask the top 5 district quartets from spring convention to volunteer to compete with 2 novice barbershoppers at the fall convention. Two experienced barbershoppers would be randomly matched with two novices. This would make up ten new quartets where novices that were interested could apply by voice part. The quartets could select their songs and prep over the summer. Logistics may prevent them from getting together before the convention, but, they could get together at convention to sing through songs and do some self-coaching. They would compete during the normal contest and once the contest was over the quartet would be disbanded. I'm certain that the 2 novices would be willing to split the quartet registration fee as part of the experience. I think this would draw interest to the convention and seed future quartets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choruses: If the chapter choruses don't improve the district won't improve. In the 5 years with the BC chapter I enjoyed being with the chorus members once a week and during various singouts. The one thing that was lacking for me was the quality of singing and the desire to improve. The average chorus members were much older than me and have dealt new guys, like me, that join "full of P and vigor". I eventually fell in step with the rest of the chorus and once the initial excitement was gone with no real avenue for improvement, I decided to join a different chorus that was more interested in quality singing. I don't know what the district can do to help small choruses like BC improve, but, I'm sure they won't last too much longer without new membership. BC competed 3 times while I was with them and it was gut-wrenching to hear the judges reviews and to see the scores. After these experiences, it was clear to me why they didn't like to compete as a chapter. I proposed an idea a few years ago where 12 random chorus members would be selected from each of the spring convention choruses. These members would then sing before a "judging panel" and the results would be used to scale/calibrate the official chorus contest judging and selection of the chorus champion for spring convention. For example, if Bloomington
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	<p>scored an 80 for the full chorus and a 55 for the 12 members, the average would be 68.5 for their "district" score. If Springfield's full chorus sang a 72 and their 12 members sang a 68 they would average a 70. In this example Springfield would place above Bloomington in the district competition. It would add some excitement and suspense to the results. I think this would provide incentive to the smaller choruses to come to the spring conventions knowing they may have a chance to finish higher in the standings.</p>
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<p>Observations from Past President's Visit to Chapter Meeting:</p>	<p>Report to Task Force Visitation by Syl Wetle to Elgin Chapter Monday January 3, 2011</p> <p>On Monday the 3rd, I was greeted and welcomed by approximately 24 members of the Elgin Chapter, Bill Miller President. I was given the floor to a most attentive group that had many comments and responded very well. Some members were extremely active and few had little or nothing to say. Overall the interest was VERY high.</p> <p>In response to specific questions:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">For the most part, they only attend and support the SPRING convention. They always have a delegate at the HOD Just a few bring wives and usually stay over for only one night</p> <p>The chapter only participates in the Spring contest and they do have some quartet participation.</p> <p>The only District Level involvement recently was Bill Miller as District Treasurer, and Carl Missele as Awards Committee co-chair.</p> <p>There were mixed feelings about changing the convention site. Some believed that Peoria was good because of it's central state location, others were fed up with Peoria.</p> <p>10 written forms were passed back to me, and I may receive more, asking that the President collect them. They will reflect answers to Why Did You Join the BHS, and How do we improve the District.</p> <p>Observations: The general feeling I got for lack of participation was that conventions have become too boring, and are too centered on competition. The old hat guys seemed to have made inroads on the membership about what it "used to be like". A genuine feeling of the loss of camaraderie throughout the hobby, but especially at District conventions seemed to prevail. Cost was certainly a factor as well, both travel, lodging and fees. There was also some "contest concern" that judges evals were presented in one way to lower level choruses and different way to higher level choruses. I know this isn't a District problem, but it's food for thought.</p> <p>Suggestions: Would like to see a small chorus competition (30 men or less) They would like to see the "field men" back visiting chapters. (Again, not a District problem, but perhaps the District could indeed send out talent) A half hour sing along before contests Bring back the Wood shedding room</p>
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	<p>Comments: This is a chapter that has very deep barbershop roots. Average age, I'd guess is 60, but they indeed have some young blood that is very "into it". I will pass my comment sheets on to Greg.</p> <p>I have two more chapters to visit, but have not had a favorable response for a time. I will push that within the next weeks.</p> <p>Respectfully submitted: SYL WETLE</p>
	<p>Subject: chapter visitations Date: Fri, 19 Nov 2010 11:42:54 EST From: Bobsingslead@aol.com</p> <p>I completed my first chapter visitation (Joliet) last night, which went well. Ten members present. Average AGE of the men present in the room: 74.6</p> <p>After sleeping on everything over night I feel it necessary to offer several important points. In preparing for the visit, I was armed with the questionnaire that was put together by Joe. I also felt that it would not be very affective if I tried to "break the ice" with an off-the-cuff introduction, so I prepared a simple format which read:</p> <p>Background: a simple explanation of the Task Force and its purpose.</p> <p>Overview: the district, our programs, where we are at; where we are headed.</p> <p>In order to stimulate discussion I asked these questions (some of which overlapped what was in the questionnaire.)</p> <p>How can the district do a better job of communicating with its members? What can the district do to help your chapter grow musically and in membership? Are there any programs that you would like to see the district put into place? I then asked for their questions and concerns.</p> <p>The entire presentation too only 15 minutes. The group then took a break at which time they had an opportunity to fill out the questionnaire. It was interesting to note that many did not know who Dave Cowin or Mike Bagby were.</p> <p>Other discussion points of note were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * concern regarding a lack of communication from BHS regarding the chapter tax status and the "not-for-profit" status. State of Illinois sent them warnings and they were clueless. * because of their size and age they felt that doing more things with other chapters of similar size would be to both chapters benefit. I encouraged them to follow through and initiate a starting point. I mentioned the similarity with the old Corn Belt chorus program of the "40's..learning the same songs, etc. * felt that more inter-chapter activities would spur greater interest in both morale and attendance. * some felt that attending a convention alone as a non-competitor left them with no others to sing with, other than the Joe Barbershopper chorus. The headquarters hotel lobby was deserted, as everyone else was in rehearsals. More time for "recreational singing" like the Sing With the Champs. * they indicated that there was a desire to become more involved in the YIH program on their level. They have one collegiate quartet with two members in their chapter. I indicated that the Joliet area, with the closeness of the local Sweet Adeline's chapter, would be an ideal place to hold a YIH Festival.

	<p>Bob</p>
	<p>From: Joe Sullivan: Report to Task Force Visit to DuPage Chapter January 18, 2011</p> <p>Was welcomed by President Tim McEvily and about 20 chapter members. Thanked them for "sponsoring" the Jack Baird Memorial a few weeks ago. Also, congrats on their 50th Anniversary.</p> <p>Explained the purpose of my visit and initially discussed the chapters attendance at recent convention. About half of the group have <i>never</i> been to an International. Again about half of the members haven't been to a district convention in over three years.</p> <p>I asked the group if they were familiar with IDEA, IDAH or QCA....almost to a man, the answer was...."NO"! So I explained each organization and what they did.</p> <p>I asked if they knew who the current and past District President were, they said YES, they knew that.</p> <p>When was the last time someone from the district visited them in an "official" capacity?.....no one could remember (A few remembered when I saw them in '97).</p> <p>MAIN GRIPE! To a man, they "hate" the competition change that took place a few years ago. They want to return to the "old way" which has the opportunity for small choruses to compete against one another. They have no been in a contact in a few years because they would compete against Bloomington, Northbrook, West Towns, etc.</p> <p>They always had a Hospitality Room, but don't go to the conventions any more because.....<i>"they have the quartet evaluations on Saturday night, taking away their time to visit the hospitality rooms. By the time the quartets are finished, it's very late in the evening and people lose interest..waiting!"</i></p> <p>OBSERVATIONS: This is a good chapter....good leadership and musical direction. They're active in the community and have periodic connections with the Joliet Chapter.</p> <p>If they are any indication of the other chapters complaints, they need more visits by SOMEONE from the district on a regular basis - eg: pay more attention to the smaller chapters. Also, pay a lot more attention to getting back to the old format in the Spring and Fall to give the smaller groups more interest.</p> <p>Questionnaires were given to Tim who will have the group fill them out this week, collected next Tuesday and sent to Greg.</p> <p>Respectfully submitted,</p> <p>Joe</p>
	<p>From: dking227@comcast.net To: Smwette@aol.com CC: hnicolai3520@wowway.com, gerrycarroll@comcast.net, info@chicagometrochorus.com Sent: 2/3/2011 2:36:46 P.M. Central Standard Time Subj: Re: Visitation</p> <p>Dear Syl,</p> <p>Thank you for your interest in the Arlingtones. We however, are not interested in competing downstate and therefore will not be participating in any visitation program at this time... maybe</p>

	next year. Thanx. dave
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