

To: House of Delegates

From: Terry Mann, Long Range Planning Committee Chairman

Date: September 2007

The Long Range Planning Committee of the Far Western District submitted 27 proposals to the Board of Directors for their Spring board meeting in June at Oakland, California. The full report is available on the FWD Website. A short summary of each proposal is below. Also, two supplements to the original proposal are appended below.

The LRPC was asked to identify the top five proposals. They are marked as (#1) through (#5) below.

LRP2007-01 Create Member Retention Process

The LRPC surveyed a number of men who were not renewing their membership. If their chapters had used a Member Retention process, many would have stayed. It is suggested that every chapter actively employ a Member Retention process. (\$ Cost: None, Benefit: High)

LRP2007-02 Add COTS instructors to division staff

Many chapters could benefit from division located specialists in chapter job positions. These specialists/consultants would be available by email, telephone, and occasional chapter visits. These men could also be the COTS instructors. (\$ Cost: None, Benefit: High)

LRP2007-03 Create BHS Emeritus Membership

Many of the older members leave the society because they can no longer participate regularly in chapter meetings and performances. They benefit from a new membership category that continued their subscription to the Harmonizer and entitled them to attend conventions and contests, all for a much lower membership fee. We suggest that the FWD BOD recommend this to the society. (\$ Cost: Minor, Benefit: Low additional revenue, increased membership)

LRP200704 Free FWD Convention registration to new members

Frequently new members take several years to attend their first district contest. By giving new members one free registration, to be used within one year, it will initiate the practice of regular convention attendance sooner. (\$ Cost: Moderate, Benefit: Moderate)

LRP200705 Task Force to study improving district image

Many of our members have little understanding of the functions and benefits provided by our district and divisions. We suggest a task force be established to propose ways to improve this. (\$ Cost: None, Benefit: Moderate)

LRP200706 Create simple New Member process

Many of our chapters do not have a New Member process that covers first visit, to joining, and through the first year of membership. We suggest that the COTS Membership classes be tasked to create a simple plan. (\$ Cost: None, Benefit: High)

LRP200707 Require chapters to have a membership and retention plans (#1)

Once reasonable plans are defined, require all chapters to have membership and retention plans. (\$ Cost: None, Benefit: High)

LRP200708 Design and implement High School Yearbook based membership drive

Use high school year books to identify men who sang in high school 20-40 years ago, then locate them with special software now available on the internet. Nearby chapters would be given their contact data. (\$ Cost: Low with significant manhours to locate, Benefit: Moderate)

LRP200709 Accelerate Youth Harmony Education

Fifty-six percent of the FWD members are 65 or older. The average age of most chapters is closer to 70. Older chapters tend to have lower scores in contest. Every year it is harder to find men who are singers to join us. We have to start creating singers if we want our society to survive. (\$ Cost: Low, Benefit: High)

LRP200710 Create summer Youth Harmony Camp

The weekend Youth Harmony Camp in Pollock Pines is terrific and should continue. This proposal is to mimic the Buckeye youth camp that is longer, held in the summer, and is for both boys and girls. (\$ Cost: Moderate to High, Benefit: High)

LRP200711 Increase school BBS demonstrations

Several FWD chapters now make presentations to their local schools on the joy of singing and the harmonies of barbershop. This has been well received, especially in the lower grades, and the choral programs of the high schools are growing. This type of program needs to be copied across the whole district. (\$ Cost: Low, Benefit: High over time)

LRP200712 Begin intensive college BBS promotion

A cappella music is seeing a resurgence on college campuses. We need to capitalize on this and make sure that barbershop harmony is included. We recommend that each division add a college staff member to pursue this. (\$ Cost: Moderate, Benefit: High)

LRP200713 Create Family opportunities to learn to sing

Our society is no longer a singing society. Most families do not teach their children to sing. We suggest that a program be defined that will bring whole families into a singing situation for FUN! (\$ Cost: Low, Benefit: Moderate)

LRP200715 Support multiple choruses in a single chapter

If baseball can have farm teams, why not choruses. Every chapter has a management team. There is no need to replicate it if a chapter wants to have a competing chorus and other oriented choruses. Other choruses could include recreational, performance, educational, quartet only, and youth. The BHS would need to approve this. (\$ Cost: Minor, Benefit: TBD)

LRP200716 Continue "One Man Brings In One Man" recruiting

For the last decade the society has primarily used the strategy of members bringing in new men. We are losing ground this way. But it still produces some results and should continue to be encouraged. We also need more productive recruiting tools, such as proposed in LRP200708, LRP200726, and LRP2007S2. (\$ Cost: None, Benefit: Moderate)

LRP200717 Aggressively pursue grants at the district, division, and chapter levels (#2)

Grants can only be used to fund special events or projects. (\$ Cost: None, Benefit: Potentially High)

LRP200718 Convert Westunes to monthly email

With only four issues per year, Westunes does not provide a timely vehicle for future activities. In the past Westunes was a monthly magazine and we should return to this schedule. However, we believe it would be too costly to mail a monthly magazine, so we propose that Westunes become a monthly magazine delivered electronically. This would provide an annual savings of approximately \$8,000. Around 400 members do not have email and would not be able to directly receive the magazine. (\$ Cost: Savings, Benefit: Timely delivery but reduced member coverage)

LRP200719 Raise district dues to cover lost membership fees (#3)

As an alternate to no longer printing Westunes, we suggest a moderate increase in district dues. The FWD BOD has less money each year to fund our activities. Next year we expect a deficit spending year. Inflation has increased by 19% since the last district dues increase and our membership has declined significantly. An increase of \$6 per year (50 cents a month) would make a huge difference in funding our activities. The best long-term answer is significantly increased membership and the resulting additional dues income. (\$ Cost: \$6 to members, Benefit: High to district)

LRP200720 Establish division support staff (#4)

We returned to line management at the division level to put stronger emphasis on division management and activities. It is time to fully implement this strategy and put volunteer staff in place to work with the division vice presidents to support their chapters. Suggested staff positions include high school, college, grant writing, webmaster, convention activities, and COTS Instructors/job consultants. (\$ Cost: Minor, Benefit: High)

LRP200721 Reduce convention costs to members

As our members age and more and more are on fixed incomes, the prices of large hotels is keeping members from attending our conventions. Our division conventions have been held with lodging in lower cost motels. This should be considered for the district conventions. (\$ Cost: None, Benefit: Moderate)

LRP200722 Assign Convention Activities chairman to the Events Team

The district convention activities added over the past several years by the Conventions Activities committee have now been well tested and the popular ones determined. It is time to move this function into the Events Team. (\$ Cost: None, Benefit: Moderate)

LRP200723 Convert Chapter Counselors to division Job Consultants

The Chapter Counselor program has been selectively successful. Many chapters do not want a chapter counselor. We suggest that the program be cancelled and that chapter job-specific specialists be assigned to each Division Vice President. These men would be available to the chapters in their division as consultants to the men in the specific jobs. They would likely also be COTS instructors. (\$ Cost: Moderate(training), Benefit: Moderate to High)

LRP200724 Establish Past Presidents Advisory Council

The wealth of knowledge, experience, and wisdom in the men who were previously FWD Presidents is a marvelous resource. We recommend that these men be handed short term issues to discuss and to make recommendations for closure. (\$ Cost: None, Benefit: High)

LRP200725 Create specific chapter type designations

There are approximately seven general types of chapters in the BHS. We think each type should be clearly defined and each chapter identify themselves by a type. This would help chapters better focus on their goals and would better help men decide what chapter to belong to. It would also help in the definition of chapter processes. The 2007 May/June Harmonizer has a similar recommendation. (\$ Cost: None, Benefit: TBD)

LRP200726 Create structured singing education program with recognition (#5)

The Barbershop Harmony Society and the Far Western District have excellent music training classes and we call them "colleges". But we don't have a formal training program and we don't confer degrees or titles. For directors we do have a formal program and do award titles from Certified Director up to Master Director. This is a proposal to define a clear singing education program with testing for members to accomplish increasing levels of proficiency. Each level would have a title such as Ensemble Singer and Advanced Ensemble Singer, up to Master Singer. (\$ Cost: Low, Benefit: High)

LRP200727 Establish Veteran's Day Singing Salute program to fund YIH

This is a program for Veteran's Day to deliver a Thank You For Your Service to our veterans. It would function like Singing Valentines where the public hires us to make the deliveries. Chapters and quartets that use the program would be asked to use the proceeds for Youth In Harmony activities. (\$ Cost: None, Benefit: High)

Supplements to the 2007 LRPC Report

LRPC2007S1 Write a Grant to Create a DVD for distribution to all high schools

We suggest a district level grant be pursued to create a DVD to be sent to all high schools. This DVD would have examples of youth singing, education on barbershop harmony, the video of our youth camp, and other tracks that would be of interest to youth and Music Educators. (\$ Cost: Grant supported, Benefit: High)

LRPC2007S2 Adopt the BABS Learn to Sing program for high volume recruiting

The British Association of Barbershop Singers (BABS) has been extremely successful in large number recruiting by offering a free six-week program called Learn To Sing. Four chapters have reported results of 6, 9, 10, and 16 new members. They have shared their materials with us. One Ladies Association of Barbershop Singers (LABS) has reported similar results. Twice the FWD Placerville chapter has offered a free Four Part Harmony class and recruited 1 and 3 new members, with little advertising. (\$ Cost: Low, Benefit: Very High)