

# *From The Upper Left...*

**A Guide for Membership  
with the**



**Fremont Nebraska -- Chapter A-020  
of the  
Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS)**



Letter from the Pathfinder President and Director

Welcome to the fellowship of Barbershop Harmony...

As the chief elected officer and the creative director of the Pathfinder Chorus, we welcome you. The Pathfinders are always looking to add new men to our roster who enjoy sharing fellowship and musical excellence. We're committed to making your experience here a great one. Whether you've been singing barbershop for years or have never attempted this type of music before, we want you to have the opportunity to learn a little about the barbershop craft and the men of the Pathfinder Chorus. Our membership team will get you the materials you need to participate during your visits and help you through the audition/application process if you've decided to join us. If you're only passing through the area, we hope we've provided you a World Class Barbershop Harmony experience that inspires you to seek out the local BHS chapter near your home and...

***“Keep the Whole World Singing!”***

Signed

Aaron Smith  
President, Pathfinder Chorus

Jacob Ritter  
Director, Pathfinder Chorus

## Who We Are

We are the Fremont, Nebraska Chapter in the Central States District of The Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS). The chorus is made up of over 80 men from dozens of towns and cities surrounding the Fremont area covering over 20,000 square miles. Founded in 1972, the chapter has adopted an enthusiastic program that includes music education, participation in Society Competitions, youth outreach, and service to the community.

As a “working man’s chorus,” there are few professional musicians in our midst; most members enjoy barbershop as an avocation and a hobby. Our membership includes Active Duty and Retired Military, Administrators, Doctors, Truck Drivers, Salesmen, Legal Professionals, Farmers, Students, Computer Professionals, and more.

We are proud to be Nebraska's Premier A Cappella Chorus, and a 2015 International appearance ranked us as one of the Top 15 Barbershop Choruses in the World by the Barbershop Harmony Society.



Our chapter is a non-profit corporation, chartered by BHS in 1948 and incorporated in Nebraska in 1972. It is a part of BHS, Inc., incorporated in Nebraska, and is a part of the Central States District of the Society. The Central States District is an association of about 64 chapters of the Society, located in Nebraska, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and South Dakota. This District is one of 17 Districts containing some 23,000 members.

We are a democratically-governed group, guided by a Board of Directors elected annually by the chapter members. Somewhat unique to the Pathfinder chorus organization, our Director participates actively in chapter policymaking as a non-elected member of the board since everything we do impacts the music program.

<b>The 2016 Pathfinder Leadership</b>	
<b>Pathfinders Board</b>	
<b>President</b>	Aaron Smith
<b>Immediate Past President</b>	James Nygren
<b>Chapter Secretary</b>	Gary Weddel
<b>Chapter Treasurer</b>	Gerald Johnson
<b>Chapter VP Marketing/PR</b>	Don Bowen
<b>Vice President of Membership/Chapter Development</b>	Chris Weddel
<b>Vice President of Music/Performance</b>	Jeff Klemme
<b>Vice President of Operations</b>	Lee Cavner
<b>Vice President of Programs</b>	Steve Slykhuis
<b>Board Members at Large (2)</b>	Andrew Brooks, Darrell Denker
<b>Chapter Chorus Director</b>	Jacob Ritter
<b>Additional Leadership Positions</b>	
<b>Chapter Associate Director</b>	David Pinkall
<b>Chapter Chorus Manager</b>	Ray Brown
<b>Chapter Historian</b>	Phil VanDyke
<b>Chapter Librarian</b>	Jeff Klemme
<b>Chapter Webmasters</b>	Alex Lewis, Michael Petry

## Purpose

This is a musical organization. As an extension of the Barbershop Harmony Society, we seek to enrich lives through singing. The lives we enrich are our own; through the friendship and fellowship of singing as a chorus and in quartets; and the lives of others through our many performances staged throughout the year. Our chapter has grown and the music we make has gotten better because our current members have adopted a set of goals:

- Be “World Class” in everything we do... whether singing a tag, supporting a local fundraiser, or providing our membership with learning materials, we strive for excellence.
- Earn the Central States District Chorus Championship and be contending for the top spot every year.
- Be a top-ten competing chorus within the Barbershop Harmony Society.
- DO ALL OF THE ABOVE WHILE HAVING FUN!!!

## What We Do

### *Performances*

Throughout the year the Pathfinder chorus performs across eastern Nebraska at various events large and small. Through these concerts, the chapter raises money for charitable organizations, provides entertainment for local business/organizational events and covers our own operating expenses. Not to mention the fact that it's much more fun to sing for others than to sing for ourselves! Some key events in our performance year are:

- Pathfinder Annual Chapter Show – Our big concert usually held in March. A matinee and two evening performances of musical revue plus an “Afterglow.” During this show the Pathfinders feature an internationally renowned quartet to wow audiences of 700 to 900 guests a performance.
- Christmas Benefit Concerts – Our big annual charity events. We give two Christmas-themed concerts featuring both sacred and secular music to benefit the Salvation Army in Fremont and the Omaha World-Herald “Goodfellows” charities. In 2015 we raised over \$12,000 for these charities.

### *District and International Contest*

We're also a competing chorus. Each fall we compete within the Central States District (CSD) to qualify to sing at the international level. Eighteen to twenty-five choruses compete within our district, one of the most competitive in the nation. We've slowly been climbing the ranks over the past five years, actually winning the CSD in 2010, and qualifying to sing at the 2014 International BHS Chorus Contest where we finished in the top twelve choruses worldwide. Though some members choose to perform at only the non-competition events, we hope you'll add your voice to those on the risers at districts and international.

### *Quartets*

Our hobby is founded on barbershop quartet singing. Four voices, one awesome sound! We do not assign men to permanent quartets as they join our ranks, or at any later time. If you want to sing in a quartet, doing so will come from your own initiative or when other members who want to quartet invite you to join them. You are not required to do so. It may take quite a while before you find the “right combination,” if you are particular. But before that time, you can have a million kicks, just singing with any three Pathfinders who invite you to “come on and bust a chord with them...”

### *Social*

...and have fun doing it. The Pathfinder Chorus is also a social body. We hold gatherings for members and their families (both formal and informal) throughout the year. Each rehearsal has a

dedicated bunch of guys that assemble at a local establishment for an afterglow of friendship, conversation, and usually a song or two. Where else can you go on every Monday night to hang out with eighty plus other guys who enjoy the same hobby?

## Expectations

While we are not an organization of professional singers, we do expect you to be able to sing in tune *without* vibrato, have an ear to listen to what's going on around you, and enjoy the sounds of close harmony. There are a few more key expectations that we'd like to put up front:

### *Practice*

In the spirit of musical excellence that the Pathfinders pursue, we expect you'll review your learning materials, practice your moves, and be ready for each rehearsal. Just like a good football team, you have to know the playbook before you step on the field. Your teammates, those Pathfinders on the risers next to you, count on your being ready to perform.

### *Attendance*

Like any team or group activity, we rely on you being on the risers each week. Not only is it the time to demonstrate what you've practiced, but also to take on the challenges of learning new music and improving upon the tunes already in our repertoire. Just being there each week is the best opportunity for us all to learn our parts and learn to sing with each other. If you choose to join us for contest, you are expected to attend some additional rehearsals and coaching sessions to make sure we've got our performance at the "A level". Whether for contest or paid performance we strive for - ***Unit Sound, Big Sound, World Class Sound.***

### *Uniform*

No team exists without its uniform and the Pathfinder Chorus is no exception. The Pathfinder Chorus has one stage uniform and several casual uniforms. The chapter provides and owns the stage uniform. While members of other chapters have been required to purchase all or part of the uniform, our current plan requires only the upkeep. The Chapter stores and issues the uniforms for each event for singing purposes. This cleaning fee is \$35.00 per year and is charged along with your yearly chapter dues. Members must wear a uniform if they appear in public with the chorus.

## *Fees & Dues*

<b>Regular Member Pricing</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Fee</b>	
<b>Enrollment Fee</b> For this fee the member receives a "New Member Kit." This includes a membership certificate, lapel pin, music, and orientation literature. (One time expenditure)	<b>\$10.00</b>
<b>Dues</b>	
<b>Annual Society Dues &amp; District Dues</b> These funds are used at our headquarters in Nashville TN, for Society operations, maintenance of our head-quarters building, publication of music, manuals and literature, etc. included is the subscription to our bi-monthly magazine, "THE HARMONIZER". These monies also finance some Central States District activities.	<b>\$140.00</b>
<b>Chapter Dues</b> These provide funds for some of our social and administrative expenses at the Chapter level. Also includes the Uniform Cleaning Fee	<b>\$41.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$191.00</b>
<b>Special Youth Pricing</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Fee</b>	
<b>Enrollment Fee</b> For this fee the member receives a "New Member Kit." This includes a membership certificate, lapel pin, music, and orientation literature. (One time expenditure)	<b>\$10.00</b>
<b>Dues</b>	
<b>Chapter Dues</b> These provide funds for some of our social and administrative expenses at the Chapter level. Also includes the Uniform Cleaning Fee	<b>\$41.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$51.00</b>

NOTE: The Society has Life Membership and Multi-Year Society Dues plans, along with discounts for full or part-time students under the age of 26 or retirees over 70. These plans can reduce dues by up to 50%. Please contact the BHS for more information.

## *Resources*

The dues discussed above don't sit idle; they go to work providing us all the resources necessary to enjoy the Barbershop hobby. The Pathfinders will provide you with:

- All music to be used in Pathfinder concerts.
- State-of-art learning tracks to supplement the music sheets downloadable from our members' only side of the website.
- Formal uniform.
- World-class visiting clinicians to help improve our sound.
- A friendly and fun atmosphere in which to learn and grow that great Pathfinder sound.

## The Membership Process

We have a process when you are ready to join the Pathfinders: attend three consecutive rehearsals, advise any of the leadership team you are interested, and demonstrate that you can sing well and hold your part within a quartet (with a song of your choosing) in front of some of the leadership team. It's not a huge pressure situation, but this verifies to us that you are committed and capable. Perhaps you know which singing part your voice fits best. Perhaps you don't - that's nothing to worry about. When you wish to apply for membership, our Musical Director or a member of the Music Team, will check your voice for range (how high? How low?) and ask you to sing a simple melody. They will then suggest which part your voice fits best. The Section Leader will help you learn your part in weeks to come. Other learning options will also be provided to get you up to speed and ready for your audition. More specifically:

**First Visit** - The guest receives this booklet, and other literature about the Chapter and the Society. He is given a temporary voice placement and assigned a "Buddy" to sing with.

**Second Visit** - The Membership Vice President asks whether the guest is interested in membership, and would like to enter the audition process and if he is, takes him to the Musical Director for a formal voice placement and a basic singing test. When he demonstrates his basic singing ability, he receives a membership application.

**Third, Fourth and Fifth Visits** - The guest returns the application in completed form (he may also do this at a later meeting), but is not asked to pay any dues or enrollment fee at this point. As a candidate for membership, he now receives a chorus music book on loan. He should also start preparing the audition piece of *You're as Welcome as the Flowers in May* (music is available at our rehearsal hall) singing it through with the chorus, a quartet, or just a group of fellow singers. If he wishes assistance, he will receive it from his Section Leader. Attendance by the candidate at regular Chapter meetings is expected, with general participation in chorus, quartet and fellowship activities. Beginning on his third visit, he may indicate whenever he wishes, that he is ready to sing the audition piece. If he thus demonstrates his ability to "carry his part," he will be notified either verbally or by letter in the mail if he has passed his audition. If he demonstrates that he is not quite ready, he is encouraged to try again after more assistance if he does not qualify on the first try. **Note: some people have been known to audition and be accepted in only two weeks. It can be done!**

**Sixth Visit** – When the Board approves his application, the candidate will be informed by the Membership Vice President. At this point, he is expected to pay enrollment fee and dues. The new member is formally inducted into the Fremont Pathfinders Chapter. He will receive his membership card, new member kit and framed membership certificate as soon as it arrives from the BHS office.