

A Time for Change!

“Come gather ‘round people, wherever you roam
... for the times, they are a-changin’.” — Bob Dylan

Change is happening globally on a daily basis, and it's soon going to be happening in our Sweet Adelines world too. But then, you already know that because rumors have been flying for months — now is the time to dispel them and to give you the facts!

Admittedly, there is not enough space in *The Pitch Pipe* magazine to give you every single detail. The main purpose of this article is to give you a brief synopsis of the changes that are going to be made to competitions, regional boundaries, governance and the rationale behind why we made them. Everything else you would like to know can be found on the Sweet Adelines International website by following the links.

On the website, you will be able to hear and see a recording of the presentations to the Regional Management Teams given on October 17, 2011, by the two Task Force chairs — Carole Kirkpatrick and Kathy Carmody. You will be able to read and digest the PowerPoint slides that were presented. I encourage you to listen to the presentations and to study the rationale behind the decisions. If you have questions after doing so, please contact your regional management teams or staff at International Headquarters.

Competition

The International Board of Directors, the Judge Specialists and the Education Direction Committee enjoyed lengthy discussions about the recommendations by the Competition Task Force, and we are all very excited by what is coming to a contest stage near you! Here are the results:

As of Regional Competitions in 2014, there will be two quartet and chorus competitions at the Regional level — the



Vegas in 2015, both the Quartet and Chorus finals will require that two contest songs be sung in the semifinals, but only one traditional contest song be sung in the entertainment package (compared to two right now). A maximum of 100 points per judge will be awarded for the contest song and 100 points per judge for the entertainment aspects of

the performance. The criteria for the entertainment package scoring will be developed and decided by the Judge Specialists by June 2012, with judge training to follow in 2013. Everything will be in place by regional competitions in 2014.

Other new additions:

- A maximum time limit of seven minutes for regional contests and international semifinals performances will take effect with the 2012 regional contest season, and at International in Denver in 2012 and beyond. (I can see lots of directors jumping up and down at this one!)
- A celebrity judge will be invited to judge the chorus finals in Denver 2012 and present a Celebrity Award after the Audience Choice Award is announced. This award will have no effect on the final outcome of the contest.

One of the main reasons that we are implementing these changes, particularly at the regional level, is to encourage our smaller choruses to come to contest and compete more frequently. By doing so, we believe that this new venture will continue to strengthen vocal skills while enhancing performing skills. In addition, it will:

- Continue to improve barbershop skills
- Transfer the joy in performing non-barbershop music to barbershop and vice versa
- Explore bringing barbershop into the

International Division and the Open Division.

- International Division – for competitors who wish to qualify for International. You will compete with two contest arrangements and receive numeric scores. Choruses will be able to qualify for Harmony Classic and International based on your winning scores, as per usual.
- Open Division – for competitors who do not wish to qualify for international. You will present a 10-minute entertainment package that includes one contest arrangement, and you will receive level scores. Competing in the Open Division will satisfy the requirement that a registered chorus must compete once every three years. However, you will not qualify for international awards. (Last year's outgoing champions may also compete in the Open Division for level scores.)
- A Regional Audience Choice Award will be established for the Open Division and will be based on votes by audience members.
- Competitors in the International Division and the Open Division will be drawn for order of appearance in the normal manner. You will not be introduced according to the division you are competing in, but your division will be listed in the program.

As of International Competition in Las

- musical theatre genre
- Emphasize visual performance
- Train judges to reward all aspects of performance
- Fully integrate barbershop into performances
- Provide educational value for directors to learn more about music education
- Provide more opportunities for arrangers to arrange a wider range of songs
- Train judges to judge a wider range of elements

At the International level, it will give performers the freedom to expand their music choices, provide opportunity for a wider variety in rehearsal planning and contest preparation, plus it will provide fewer constraints in package planning.

We fervently believe that this is a win-win situation for performers, audiences and judges!

Regional Changes — Harmonic Progression

At the Regional Governance level, we have heard from so many Regional Management Teams how difficult it is to find leaders to step up to take positions on the team, and also how much cross-over there is in Education and Directors' Coordinators portfolios and in those of the Team and Communications' Coordinators. We are recommending a consolidation of those four positions into two positions and that the team be reduced in size from eight members to six members. The RMTs will be voting on this change over the next few months, with a decision due at the end of January 2012.

The Regional Task Force studied an enormous amount of statistics and data from International surveys, State of the Region reports, RMT forum discussions and feedback to IBOD members and staff before they came up with their recommended changes to regional boundaries within North America. They discovered that regions currently vary in size from 549 members to 1373 members. Some regions have 15 chapters, while others have 34. Some contests have seven competitors and others have 30! The Task Force studied Five Year membership growth and loss statistics, the sizes and levels of achievement of regions and choruses, and the available and potential leadership within

each region. They did extensive location studies, looking at maps, population centers, contest sites, transportation access and costs, as well as geographical and weather obstacles. No stone was left unturned!

And of course, they also took into consideration the emotional impact such changes will have on the leadership and the membership.

Here is what is going to be happening on May 1, 2013:

Regions 7, 22, 23 and 24 will be absorbed into other regions, with their choruses being redistributed into regions that are closer to them geographically. (This is a broad statement — see the website for the details of which chorus is going where.)

Our overseas regions and Region 26 (all Canadian) are not going to be changing, mainly due to the geographic challenges and costs of adding or subtracting choruses from them. Other rationales for leaving them alone at this time are explained in Kathy Carmody's presentation.

We believe that making these boundary changes, while difficult at first, will meet head-on many of the challenges that RMTs have been telling us about. As a result of all these changes, we anticipate that:

Financial perspective

- Members will be divided more evenly throughout the regions helping with dues income and greater financial security for all regions.
- More members in the regions will help increase registration/dues possibilities for funding educational events and competition.
- Two fewer RMT members will cut down on the expenses provided for RMT meetings, training, etc. allowing for greater possibility to meet.
- The possibilities of more cost-effective convention locations and facilities emerge.

Regional Events

- Attendance will increase at regional events.
- Enthusiasm generated at regional events because of greater attendance will help to successfully market subsequent events.
- Input from a broader range of members will enrich other attendees musically, relationally and globally.

Governance

- Filling 6 RMT positions with qualified

candidates will be easier than filling 8 positions.

- Greater equity will exist in job responsibility and time demands.
- Clearer job descriptions will result in reduced confusion on who is responsible.
- The possibility increases for potential RMT leaders to be observed and develop leadership skills through regional committee assignments.
- RMT will have greater opportunity to develop more as a governing/visionary/management group instead of attempting to do the committee work.

The timelines for implementation of these changes are listed on the Sweet Adelines International website under Harmonic Progression.

The International Board of Directors is fully cognizant of the impact that these changes will have on our North American regions, and are planning that the next round of In-region training will be aimed at assisting regional leaders in confronting the fears, finances, inconveniences and details associated with boundary changes.

Please know that we have made these changes with the best interests of the future of the organization at heart. We must move with the times and deal with the financial constraints that are upon us all. Our aim as an organization is education — we are striving to make it easier for everyone to access it, whether as competitors or as members attending workshops. We have greatly expanded our online Education Center which is a true gem, but there is nothing like the synergy of getting together with your fellow sisters in harmony and making beautiful music together, whether you are in the same region or not.

John Kotter, a professor at the Harvard Business School and an author who is regarded as an authority on leadership and change, said, “Leaders establish the vision for the future and set the strategy for getting there; they cause change. They motivate and inspire others to go in the right direction and they, along with everyone else, sacrifice to get there.”

Everyone in the organization will be impacted by these changes, we hope, in a positive way.

Yes, the times ... they are a-changin'. Together we will shape the future of Sweet Adelines International! 