



HARMONY CAMP - 2014

Thank You for your continued support of the Far Western District Harmony Camp. Your dollars and your enthusiasm make this Camp Possible. However ...

Harmony Camp 2014 was Cancelled because of the King Fire. DARN! Yes, the cancellation of camp was very disappointing as we had 101 boys registered (a high for camp attendance) and 10 music directors (another high).

The fire started Sunday the week before camp was to start; and we were monitoring its progress almost hourly. It really looked like we were going to dodge a bullet with the weather and winds continuing to blow away from Sly Park until early Friday morning (the first day of camp). We woke up to smoke at our house which is some 15 miles southwest of the fire, and almost in line with Sly Park where the smoke was worse.

Joe Cerutti, one of our main clinicians was already here, staying at our house. Jim Halvorson, one of our other regular clinicians, was already in Reno, meeting up with Mike Stewart to drive over to Sly Park. KJ McAleesejergins, who attended high school and was introduced to Barbershop at Nevada Placer High School was already here, spending the day with the his music teacher and visiting classes in the Grass Valley area. The other three Lunch Break guys were in Los Angeles waiting for their flight up to Sacramento.

The decision was likely the hardest thing I have ever had to do, but at the same time it was clear that cancelling camp was the absolute right thing to do. Young voices breathing all that smoke for a weekend would not be a good thing!

But wait!! Five boys from Ponderosa HS with the blessing of their choir director said that we should have camp at their school in Shingle Springs (out of the smoke zone). In fact, the boys called it: "Project Save Barbershop".

So in the space of an hour, we contacted everyone one more time, inviting them to Ponderosa HS for "PSB". We couldn't get the Lunch Break guys who had already booked return flights, however KJ, Gabe Caretto, and Joe Cerutti joined us as our clinicians – and with Rich Brunner as a fourth, a pretty fair quartet was put together. Some 26 boys and 20 volunteers made their way to Ponderosa for a fantastic Saturday of singing the camp songs, learning some tags, eating pizza, and even putting on a show for friends and family. These 26 boys will surely have wonderful memories of 2014 Camp at Ponderosa High and the special meaning and experiences that we nurture and foster for the boys What a day!

We received many emails from the boys, parents, and music educators expressing major disappointment but acknowledging that cancellation of camp was the right thing to do.

Among those emails was this one from the Santa Maria: "Our boys were very disappointed. We all went out for breakfast and then they decided they wanted to go somewhere to sing the camp songs. Dona's husband is a pastor of a church in Santa Maria, so we all went over to her church and the boys sang for a couple of hours. The two Cabrillo boys joined them and by the time we left, they were all the best of friends. Just know the day was not a total waste". And another: "On behalf of the boys of Chico High, we just want to thank you so much for all of the work that goes into planning, organizing, communicating, purchasing supplies, getting your guys here as well as the guest quartets. Your hard work is to be commended. My boys were so excited to attend camp this year (9) of them. They were let down of course, but took the news graciously and I was proud of them. Again, thank you for all of your dedication and hard work, even though the event didn't occur. Sincerely, Sue Delgado and the guys of Chico High". And one more: "Camper and I (Mom) decided to donate his registration fee. Please use this donation to fill any need Harmony Camp may need. Maybe even to help a young man attend camp"; and an email we received early on "Your website is impressive. Kudos to those who coordinate this event! I'm a music educator myself and appreciate the hard work and time it takes to coordinate and plan for such a large endeavor. Thank you in advance for taking the time to nurture the love of music in our young people".

The "other" parts of camp that you need to know about are the finances, the dollars that you so willingly shared with us to help make all of this happen.

Sly Park returned our entire deposit which we will simply roll over to 2015! We did refund the boys' registration fees; and we did have major travel expenses for Lunch Break, Joe Cerutti and Jim Halvorson. But the bottom line turned out to be just about break even for the whole thing.

Then we got some really good financial news: the BHS/Harmony Foundation grant that we had applied for back in November of 2013 came through with \$3,600 of the \$4,000 that they had initially awarded us. So the bottom line for Harmony Camp 2014 is that we were not hurt financially. The Fire is a terrible thing to go through, and we would certainly have made the same decision at any time during the weekend if it had gone that far; but if cancellation was to happen, doing it before camp actually started was certainly the best time to do it.

So, Thank You one more time!! It is You who make Harmony Camp work; and you should be very Proud of your Camp and the boys who attend. We are indeed "Making the Music That Makes the Difference".

Harmony Camp 2015 is scheduled for September 18 – 20. Gabe Caretto will be our dean and "After Hours", a quartet from Illinois will join us. Watch for them in Pittsburgh!

It is also time to announce that we are launching a very special fund raising campaign to create an Endowment Fund for the FWD Harmony Camp. The campaign will begin in December, 2014; and is the direct result of a meeting I had with our BHS CEO, Marty Monson, who challenged all of us in the FWD to create an endowment fund to replace the dollars currently provided by the Harmony Foundation to Camp. As a result, Harmony Camp dollars will be raised locally here in California and Nevada. You will be hearing more about this campaign later.

Richard Lund