

PENINSULAIRE'S NEW MEMBER HANDOUT

Version 1.0 – April 5, 2016

Welcome to the Peninsulaires! Here is some information that will help you understand how the chapter and chorus operate.

Rehearsals

We meet virtually every Thursday evening at Sunnyvale Methodist Church, 535 Old Francisco Road, Sunnyvale. Members are encouraged to be at every rehearsal possible. Rehearsal meetings start at 7:30 pm, and sing until 10:15 PM, with early choreography and sectionals occasionally at 6:30 pm.

Before contests and shows, rehearsals may be extended until 10:30, and extra rehearsals may be scheduled. We occasionally have an all-day Saturday coaching session, often with a special Guest Coach to give us new ideas and bring out our best singing.

Groupanizer

The Peninsulaires chorus maintains a public website to advertise our chorus. We also have a private website, called Groupanizer. The Groupanizer site is password protected, and contains digital song learning media, as well as a calendar for members to indicate their attendance at performances and events. All official documents are archived at the Groupanizer site, including monthly Board of Directors' minutes, our Chapter Bylaws, and song choreography. As a Peninsulaires member, you will be given a username and a password to use for music, attendance, and access to chapter documents.

Music

You will be issued copies of all current music. This music should be placed in a loose leaf notebook or three-hole binder and brought to every rehearsal. Label your folder and each sheet of music so it can be returned if lost.

You do not necessarily need to read music. The Chapter usually produces or purchases Learning Tracks to help members learn their music by listening. These feature a designated voice part on the Left Channel, the other parts are placed on the Right Channel. By adjusting the level of left/right speaker, the listener is able to hear their part at many different levels in relation to the other parts. Digital Learning Tracks are available on the Groupanizer website, and CDs are available. To sing in public performances and contests, you need to know the notes and words.

Recording at rehearsals with a digital recorder smartphone App greatly helps in learning the songs as well. A copy of our learning method is available under CACM Documentation on the Groupanizer website.

Contests

The Peninsulaires is an improvement-oriented chorus, and as such, competes every Spring in the Northwest Divisional competition, where we usually place in the top three of the Division. When we place with a sufficiently high score, we then go to the Far Western District Fall Convention, singing with the best choruses of the District, which includes California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, and southwestern Utah. The Peninsulaires Chorus has qualified to compete at district every year since 1996.

Most fall contests are out of town and require at least overnight accommodations. Many of us go to these contest/conventions to listen to the best choruses and quartets, and share time with many friends from the district and the barbershop world.

Choruses that qualify then go on to compete at the International level the first week of July the following year.

Performances

The Peninsulaires sing for special events in the community, including community barbecues, sporting events, and two chapter shows. Chorus members are expected to be participants in these events when these events do not conflict with a member's religious, familial, or employment obligations.

Uniforms/costumes

As a Peninsulaire, you are expected to maintain two uniforms.

The Class A uniform includes a shirt, tie, vest, tuxedo pants, black socks, and patent leather shoes. Each member buys his own Class A uniform. The shirt, tie, and vest are ordered through a special website and cost approximately \$70. The tuxedo pants and patent leather shoes can be obtained from local stores. (Talk to board members about how to find inexpensive pants and shoes.)

The Travel uniform (more informal) consists of a special blue Peninsulaires short-sleeved shirt, khaki pants, black belt, and black shoes. The chorus splits the cost of the shirt with the member (approximately \$20 from each). The Travel Uniform is worn at community events and during non-singing periods at contest events.

Shows may require unique costumes or props. Member are responsible for providing their own costume or props. Both contests and shows call for stage makeup to keep our faces from appearing dull and washed out under the bright lights. The Program VP will be able to guide you to a theatrical or costume shop to find stage makeup; not the makeup counter at Macy's. Ask for help to obtain the correct shade for your skin tone.

Quartetting

Though certainly not required, singing in a quartet is highly recommended. One gains experience and confidence when singing with three other guys.

A good way to start is to learn the 'Barber Polecat Songs.' Every member of every chapter is encouraged to learn these 12 songs, so that they can sing with other guys outside the chapter meetings. Our Chapter Development team will give you the polecat book and a disc with all of the songs in your singing part. We sing these "Polecats" before and after the meeting and at breaks. Once you know your part to a Polecat, ask any member to sing with you and a quartet can be formed on the spot.

Etiquette

A few items which might not be obvious.

On the risers – The director needs everyone's full attention, and talking on the risers distracts both him and your fellow singers. (If you want to crack a joke, do it in a single word and sotto voce just to your neighbors without turning your head.)

Correcting other singers – Usually, you should not correct other singers on the risers. If you notice a part that is being sung wrong and/or badly, ask the director or your section leader to go over the part with your section. However, if you have a good rapport with a guy, he might appreciate the feedback. But remember the comment above about not talking on the risers.

Fifth-wheeling – If a quartet is singing a song (like at a break, or in the hall at a convention), it is considered bad form to walk up and join them in singing. If you want to sing with them, wait until the current song is done, then ask.

Costs

In addition to uniform expenses, there are dues and contest-related expenses. District and Barbershop Harmony Society membership is required.

One-time Fees:

- Registration: \$ 10.00
- Cost of Uniform: \$ 70.00 up to \$ 150.00

Annual Dues:

- Barbershop Harmony Society: \$ 120.00
- Far Western District: \$ 25.00
- Palo Alto-Mountain View Chapter: \$ 60.00
- Total Annual dues: \$205.00

New members under 26 pay society fees of only \$10 for the first year. Discounts are available to senior members.

There are several options to pay your dues, including installment payments on a credit card.

Registration for contests the chorus competes in:

- Northwest Divisional Contest approximately \$ 50.00
- Far Western District Fall Contest approximately \$ 50.00

Other conventions and events you might want to attend:

- Far Western District Contest, Spring Prelims \$ 50.00
- International Convention and Contest \$ 175.00
- Mid-Winter Convention and Contest \$ 125.00
- Harmony University \$ 725.00

Discounts are available for early registration. Lodging, travel and meal costs will vary according to your tastes and budget.

Board of Directors

Our chapter name is the Palo Alto-Mountain View Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society. Our chorus name is the Peninsulaires. The chapter is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational organization, run by a Board of Directors. There is a list of board members on the Groupanizer website under Board Documents.

The Board meets once a month, usually on the first Saturday of the month at 10 AM. Members are encouraged to attend a board meeting to see how the chapter is run. The Board typically discusses increasing membership, increasing revenue, spending wisely, marketing, shows, etc.

Members are also encouraged to become an active member of a chapter administrative committee, e.g. for membership, show planning, etc.

History

The Palo Alto Mountain View Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) along with The Peninsulaires Chorus was founded in 1948, making it one of the longest continually running barbershop choruses the Far Western District. The Far Western District encompasses the states of California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, and a portion of Utah, and is one of seventeen districts of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. (SPEBSQSA). (AKA Barbershop Harmony Society) .

Resources

Our public chapter website: <https://www.barbershop-harmony.org/>

Our members-only website: <http://peninsulaires.groupanizer.com/>

The national Barbershop Harmony Society website: <http://www.barbershop.org/>

The Far Western District website: <http://farwesterndistrict.org/>

Many email lists serve barbershop and bay area a cappella music.

- ba-acappella · Bay Area A Cappella Music Community <http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/ba-acappella/>

- bbshop · A Discussion List For Those Interested in Barbershop Harmony

<http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/bbshop>

- HarmonetLite · A moderated, "lite" version of the Harmonet, for discussing barbershop harmony

<http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/HarmonetLite>

As the largest men's singing organization in the world, the Barbershop Harmony Society has assembled a self-guided Music Theory class, starting with the basics of reading music, progressing to basic barbershop harmonization. The class is available free at <http://barbershop.org/education/music-theory.html>