

AREA 4 COUNCIL ZOOM CONFERENCE
September 20, 2020

Area 4 Director Betty Gunterman called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM and welcomed participating Council Members. Present on the call were the following Council Members, Chapter Presidents, and Committee Chairmen:

Council Management

Betty Gunterman, Area 4 Director
 Denise Struve, Secretary
 Linda Bloch, Area 4 Treasurer/AC&C Treasurer
 Beth Montgomery, Membership
 Maria "Ria" Bunte, ACJC

Not present:

Linda Kersey, Associate Member Coordinator
 Pam Ringo, Website/Facebook
 Sara Stone, Convention Team Manager

Voting Members of the Council (Chapters officially represented) in this meeting:

Bluegrass Harmony – Charlotte Moore
 California Note Catchers – Ann Ash
 Covered Bridge Harmony – Kathy Custis
 Harmony Magic – Susan Spencer
 Lake Ridge Legacy – Kelly Ramey
 Misty River Music Makers – Barb Ries
 St. Louis Chordinals – Ruth Farrell
 St. Louis Vocal Project – Susie Slavney
 Sound Celebration – Marianne Cooke
 Village Vocal Chords – Jacquie Jensen

Not Present:

Wolf River Harmony – Leah Armstrong

Copies of this meeting's Agenda and Treasury Reports were distributed via email prior to the meeting.

Welcome	Betty welcomed Council Members and led them in reciting the Harmony Creed.
Area 4 Director's Report	Details:
June Meeting	✓ Minutes of the June, 2020 meeting were approved via email and posted to the website
Zoom Meeting with Other Area Directors	✓ Betty talked about some of the things that have been discussed at the monthly Area Directors meetings. Subjects included funds given to Areas by Harmony and ways in which they are used, the MBHA for quartet or chorus at AC&Cs, AC&C contracts, updated job descriptions for Area Directors, and Area websites. Betty mentioned that while

	Area 4 has not yet signed their AC&C contract, other areas have; also that some Areas are putting the funds from Harmony into their general treasury.
Education	<p>This position is still vacant; however, it is primarily for AC&C and we don't yet know whether that will take place.</p> <p>Since the meeting, Harmony has announced that 2021 AC&Cs will be cancelled.</p>
Membership	<p>Beth Montgomery asked if choruses have lost members and most reported that they have not. Many reported good attendance at Zoom rehearsals and some even have potential new members.</p> <p>Susie Slavney talked about JAMULUS, which St. Louis Vocal Project has been using as an alternative to Zoom. She said that it is audio only, so there is no ability to view the Director. While there is a lot of tech to set up, it's also a lot of fun.</p>
Website	<p>It was pointed out that officers have not yet been updated. Any chapter needing corrections should give updated information to Pam Ringo. Website address: www.hiarea4.com</p> <p>Pam has been informed of updates needed and is working on them.</p>
Area 4 2020-21 Budget	<p>Linda Bloch sent out the financial reports via email prior to the meeting. The Budget approved in February was reviewed and discussion followed. Linda pointed out that fees at the new venue will be higher; for example, the cost of dinner will go up to \$51.50. Betty questioned the dues figure for 2022. She felt that basing it on 315 members was too high and suggested that we reduce the number to 275 members, resulting in \$1650.00 in dues. Linda said she would make that change.</p> <p>Motion by Susan Spencer, seconded by Marianne Cooke, to accept the amended budget as proposed. Motion carried.</p>
Area 4 Financial Reports	<p>Following review of the remaining financial reports, motion by Kelly Ramey, seconded by Barb Ries, to approve the Area 4 Financials as presented. Motion carried.</p>
AC&C 2021 Budget	<p>The AC&C Budget for 2021 was reviewed and discussed. Using the high school as our contest venue is not a sure thing depending on Covid-related circumstances; however, if the school allows other events, we are on their calendar. Our contract with the hotel has not yet been signed. The hotel room rate will be \$139.00; \$155.68 with tax.</p> <p>In light of higher expenses and the possibility of fewer members attending, Linda said she would feel more comfortable with an AEP of \$135-\$140.</p>

<p>Manual Updates</p>	<p>Motion by Marianne Cooke, seconded by Kathy Custis, to approve the AC&C 2021 Budget with an AEP of \$135.00. Motion carried.</p> <p>Since the meeting, Harmony has announced that 2021 AC&Cs will be cancelled.</p> <p>Sara is updating the Convention & Contest Manual adding new team members and any other changes that need to be made. Betty is working on the Operations/Policy Manual. Both will be distributed to chapter presidents or put on the Area website.</p>
OLD BUSINESS	
<p>Singing of Harmony Grace and Two Nations</p>	<p>Following the IBOD’s decision at their Mid-Year Meeting to discontinue singing Harmony Grace and Two Nations in support of inclusion, some members expressed that they are in favor of this decision while others are not. The Board later clarified that the songs are not to be sung at Harmony-sanctioned events; however, there was no clear directive that choruses not sing them at their performances. When planning performances, choruses should always be mindful of performing songs that contain lyrics that might be offensive to or inappropriate for their audiences.</p>
NEW BUSINESS	
<p>MBHA Quartet/Chorus Contestants</p>	<p>While Area 5 in Ontario is “bursting at the seams” with applicants, Area 4 has not had any but would accept them. Marianne Cooke would like choruses to have the opportunity to talk about this and come back with feedback. Betty will put this on the agenda for the February Council meeting and will invite Roxanne Powell to attend and give input.</p>
<p>Survey Re. Virtual Rehearsals</p>	<p>Responses to a survey sent out by Anne Bureau regarding virtual rehearsals are still being compiled. Sound Celebration took a survey earlier this year, which they have shared and which is attached as Appendix A.</p>
<p>Chapter By-Laws</p>	<p>Chapters are reminded that their By-Laws need to be reviewed every five years to be consistent with current practices and to ensure adherence to Harmony’s guidelines. Misty River Music Makers and Sound Celebration are due for this review.</p>
<p>Big Screen Ad</p>	<p>Betty asked if there was interest in Area 4 purchasing an ad for the big screen at IC&C and stated that cost is \$10. Consensus was “yes,” and Betty will ask Pam Ringo to put something together.</p> <p>Since the meeting, Pam has completed the big screen ad and it has been sent in.</p>
<p>Next Meeting</p>	<p>February 21, 2021, 6 PM CT –Zoom Conference</p>

Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.
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CHAPTER UPDATES

Presented as received...

Village Vocal Chords

The Village Vocal Chords have been meeting weekly for regular Zoom chorus rehearsals. While it doesn't give us a chance to be part of ringing those chords we love so much, it DOES give us a chance to keep singing, to learn new music, to practice our facial choreo, and to see each other, though virtually, each week.

We are fortunate that our director, Lynn Randall, not only is a Certified Singing Judge but also has some good techy skills so she keeps us working and learning, including a study of "straw phonation" as a vocal warmup technique. We have also spent 6 weeks studying the contest scoring categories, 2 weeks on each, including learning about the focus for each category, reviewing their scoring forms and practicing judging and sharing observations for each category. It's been a real eye-opening experience...a look behind the curtain, so to speak, of the HI judging system.

Having to cancel our retreat plans for early September, we planned an "Un-Retreat" in our rehearsal church parking lot, which we also had to cancel, and now are hoping for a "Wishful Thinking Retreat" in early October. No way to know how many more retreat names we'll need to come up with, but we are always hopefully that eventually we can meet in that parking lot, socially distant, of course. Can you say "Winter Wonderland Retreat"?

--Jacquie Jensen, VVC President

Sound Celebration

- We began ZOOM rehearsals in mid- March as soon as most community activities were "locked down" due to the pandemic.
- We have had continuous ZOOM rehearsals every Tuesday night for one hour. Director Janice Westphal, assisted by the music team, have put together fast pace rehearsals utilizing learning tracks, breakout room sectionals, speakers, video warm ups, etc. Weekly attendance has average almost 90% of members.
- Janice has participated regularly with Anne Bureau's round tables for director sharing
- We have a scheduled outdoor rehearsal for Sept. 26
- Members enjoyed a socially distanced summer picnic and pool party in July.
- Sections have met in person and via ZOOM
- Although we had to cancel our show set for October, we did conduct our usual money raffle and patron sponsorship campaign. Donations from patrons has been very gratifying.
- We are discussing a process for doing our annual Singing Christmas Card fund raiser.
- Life goes on amid the global pandemic.

Marianne Cooke

Harmony Magic

Harmony Magic has had a wonderful summer of singing outside (with a few on Zoom who weren't comfortable being around others), 6' apart and masked with special masks that keep the

mask away from the mouth as you sing. It was weird to sing in only 2 lines (about 10' apart front to back), and not really easy to hear each other, but it was at least possible to feel the song one-to-another and to see each other eyeball to eyeball was priceless. As of Oct 1 we return to Zoom only rehearsals as we continue to learn new songs for our upcoming show (hopefully sometime in 2021 spring/summer) and for the holidays. On Saturday Sept 26 we had an extremely successful bake sale at a local Farmer's Market. They have a spot they allow non-profits to request to use once a year and we had chosen this date back in April, simply hoping we would be able by the time September came around but not knowing the summer would bring. Not only were they glad to see us for our wares, they bought a LOT, almost doubling our expected profit! We also used Square for the first time to accept Credit/Debit which also helped a lot for those who weren't interested in or comfortable with carrying cash.

Susan Spencer

Misty River Music Makers

We had a very hard summer. We are grieving the passing of our long time tenor Linda Berg from a sudden heart attack in August. Linda was a member of Misty River for over 25 years and served as our president for numerous years.

We continue to meet by Zoom every other week but just socially for now. We had our annual banquet per Zoom and most of the members of our chorus performed.

In October we are starting a Holiday project where we record our Christmas songs with video. One of our members will put together the parts and we will email a link to our families and community. We are especially excited to share our music with residents of senior living centers that will not be able to have live performances this season.

In Harmony,
Barb

Sound Celebration Chorus
ZOOM Rehearsal Survey 2020
RESULTS

Scoring:

- 1=Strongly dissatisfied
- 2=Dissatisfied
- 3=Satisfied
- 4=Very satisfied

Over all, how satisfied are you with our ZOOM rehearsals? Average score = 3.6

	<u>Average score</u>
• Weekly section leader call ins:	3.6
• Guest speakers:	3.6
• Learning/singing tags:	3.3
• Singing show/repertoire songs:	3.3
• Learning new music:	3.2
• Warm ups by our Director:	3.3
• Warm ups by guest video:	3.4
• Video/critiques of choruses:	3.4
• Watching PVI's (Private Vocal Instruction) of chorus members:	2.6
• Socializing with other members:	2.9
• Working on emotions/faces:	3.5

Would you be interested in trying the following:

- Having "theme" nights? For example: wear silly hats; pick a theme and sing appropriate songs; have a virtual cocktail hour; glam night wearing performance make-up, etc.

Yes=9 No=8

- Have quartets record a four- part tag or song and play for the chorus? (lead records her part, bass adds hers, bari adds hers, and tenor adds her part to have all 4 parts recorded together)

Yes=13 No=5

I think the chorus should continue ZOOM rehearsals (select one):

- Until we resume in person rehearsals =11
- For at least two more months=2
- Stop them now=1
- Don't know=4

What is the optimal time our ZOOM rehearsals should last (select one):

- One hour=12
- One and one half hours=6
- Two hours=1

- Other (specify)=0

What do you like most about the ZOOM rehearsals?

- Seeing each other
- Guests
- Singing repertoire songs
- Being able to see and hear others
- Staying connected and keeping Tuesdays as my rehearsal night
- Being able to sing
- Learning new things
- Seeing all faces when I can but I still have my face in the music or key board
- Judges critiques
- Being together with everyone
- Working on new music
- Breakout rooms
- Seeing all faces 5
- Having a rehearsal at all
- Guest speakers 2
- Sectionals
- Working on faces
- Using other choruses to learn from (specifics)
- Freedom to sing the entire song with no stops to be able to concentrate on performing with faces and bodies
- Singing
- Hearing comments from the director, president, and sharing members events
- Meeting weekly
- Well planned and executed
- I like the variety and that we are working on skills
- We're gaining new knowledge
- I don't have to go anywhere and won't ever be late!
- Singing show songs
- Easy access to all members without leaving home
- Janice's rehearsal plans
- Keeping us going very important. Can't give up.
- Productive time learning new things: songs, breathing techniques, judging categories, etc.
- Zoom is ideal to connect to resources in larger barbershop world
- Sectionals and chorus singing are very beneficial and productive as always

What do you like least about the ZOOM rehearsals?

- Technical difficulties 2
- Not everyone is able to join in
- Harsh lighting. Need tips on optimal lighting
- Sitting for so long 2
- Not knowing when the need for these will end. Getting harder and harder to get motivated not knowing when this will end
- Not able to hear others 9

- Don't get full musicality vs physically being with others. Seems more tiring. My eyes get tired. I'm on a computer all day at work.
- I lose focus after a while
- Multi-tasking becomes draining
- Hard to "socialize" on Zoom
- Preparing and singing tags and is work learning but no skills learning. Only positive is sight reading
- Conversation is difficult
- Nothing. We're moving forward as best we can.

What ideas do you have to make the best use of our ZOOM rehearsals?

- Make sure guests know their time frame 2
- Rotate leadership roles
- Janice is doing her best to make the most of these rehearsals.
- You and Janice are doing the best you can with the situation
- Have option for all to sing at the same time
- Empower each member to share something e.g. new recipe; exercise that helps them; meditation stance; story about their job; giving time to each member 5 minutes to speak before rehearsal
- We're all doing great things.
- Ask us to do more warm ups at home
- Socialize at beginning sharing how we warmed up
- Do less warm up on Zoom
- Use other choruses to look at specific skills or stop video at specific spot to show what they did well. Then we work on that specific skill
- Breakout times with section leaders
- In breakout sessions use recordings of each separate part alone. Section leader would sing with each separate part then we try it. More productive than singing with full mix? Helps to hear separate parts, strengthen skills, for moving back to shot gun standing order.
- Doing a good job with what we're currently doing
- Keep up the variety in rehearsals
- Everyone take HIVE classes
- More social time.
- Feature fractals or triangles to have individual members share or come up with ideas for sharing during social time
- Concentrate on better singing
- Sing full mix at end of rehearsal gives chorus a better singing experience
- Continue singing with all parts
- Music team is to be commended for their collaborative efforts with the Director to plan productive rehearsal agendas. Much is being accomplished within 1 hour rehearsals
- Recordings of new music by section leaders are appreciated
- Please continue sharing information from outside resources
- Portray emotions by wearing applicable clothing
- Continue providing learning opportunities

Comments:

- Works best for me to change clothes/eat and be in new frame of mind for the Zoom rehearsals
- Have tests or worksheets on music theory?
- Happy to go every other week for summer or skip 2 months and restart. Thanks for all you do.
- Get together in small groups in a large space one week then Zoom the next week until we can all be together. If some uncomfortable that's ok. 2
- I like the thought to eventually go to every other week or summer hiatus
- I'm proud of our group and changes that Jan and the music team make to keep things fresh
- How can we get Mary Lou and Amy onto the video calls?
- I love weekly call ins with immediate feedback
- I enjoy the less stress felt when members are singing without the thought of being stopped when an error made. Interrupts the flow of the story telling.
- I think it's important that our members know and get familiar with our guests speakers. Guests should be introduced giving a brief bio.
- Zoom is wonderful to stay connected
- I look forward to Tuesday evening rehearsals.
- Thank you all for your work helping us stay productive, inspired and connected.
- I like the idea of goal setting. Set long the short term personal goals; keep a journal. Apply those personal goals to Sound Celebration goals.
- Can rehearse longer if more time for socializing
- Like warm up videos
- Enjoy guest speakers
- Tags are fun to start rehearsal
- I need to get off paper faster
- Thank you, Chris for your amazing technical expertise and time in preparing for Zoom rehearsals
- Our singing hobby provides a valued "outlet of expression" for each of us especially during these difficult times. Let's seek to identify and celebrate (internally) our progress and successes. Joy is contagious!
- Be very proud of what we're doing on Zoom. Our music team has been excellent during this difficult time.
- Section leader call ins enjoyed but it's a challenge at times because of technology, time, being positive, and being constructive.
- Keep it fun
- Janice, music team and Chris are doing an amazing job. I like the song of the week.
- This is an amazing group of ladies!

Summary

Twenty surveys were returned, however, not all surveys answered all questions thus the numbers don't all add up to 20.

Where responses were between choice numbers, the lower number was used.

Generally members are very satisfied with our ZOOM rehearsals. The most popular aspects are weekly section leader call-ins and guest speakers. Least popular are watching PVI's and socializing.

Members were almost evenly split on wanting theme nights or other "socializing" activities. Many wanted to try 4 part recorded singing.

The vast majority want to continue weekly ZOOM rehearsals until we can rehearse in person.

Over half of the respondents want rehearsals to last 1 hour. Several wrote in "1 ¼ hour."

Conclusions

The survey affirmed what we are doing is appealing to most members.

While there is some interest in social activities, members seem most pleased learning new things and just seeing everyone's faces. Most regret that we cannot sing together but understand that it's just not possible. We're doing the best we can. The Director, Music Team, and Chris Hembel were praised by many.

Recommendations

- Make social time available from 6:45-7:00pm when rehearsal starts. Also, keep the ZOOM call open until the last member leaves the meeting. Staying after rehearsal is optional for any who want to remain to chat with other members.
- Seek a volunteer or two to plan a fun event on periodic calls.
- Ensure that all guests conform to their allotted time and give some information about them to the chorus.
- Use as many outside resources as possible to bring us new information and keep variety in the rehearsals.
- Continue use of breakout rooms
- Share videos of top performing barbershop choruses and critique them
- Try to keep rehearsal time to one hour with 10 minutes for announcements
- Strive to keep rehearsals fun and positive to counter our troubling times