



Town Hall Meeting Summary | 7 December 2025

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Harmony Creed Language Updates

Based on feedback from numerous members over the past several years, a task group has recommended several changes to the Harmony Creed. The changes included replacing "neatness in our dress and in our thinking" with "noble and diverse in our culture," altering "outstretched hands to every race and creed" to "outstretched hands to all individuals," and changing "Harmony Creed" to "Harmony Principles" to emphasize the organization's core values. The International President, Gaye LaCasce, emphasized that these changes were made to reflect modern values while maintaining the original principles of the organization.

These changes will be submitted to a membership vote following the January town hall meeting. Member input is crucial; detailed information about the changes will be shared with members before the vote in various ways. The next town hall meeting is scheduled for January 11th, and meeting details will be shared through various communication channels.

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Expansion Area Convention & Contests

Gaye, answered a question about our expansion efforts and the approved dates of an Expansion Area Convention & Contests. Gaye gave a summary of Harmony Fest West and the overall impact on existing Harmony members and chapters as well as the positive impression made on prospective chapters. In an effort to capitalize on momentum, the IBOD has committed to supporting an Expansion Area Convention & Contests in the southwestern US on the weekend of May 15-17, 2026. Gaye emphasized the importance of balancing expansion efforts with member retention, mentioning the new board positions of Director of Expansion and VP of Membership to support both of these priorities.

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Enhancing Organizational Communication and Engagement

The discussion included encouraging members to read the HI Note, our bi-weekly newsletter containing important organizational updates and information. Members of IBOD emphasized the importance of staying informed and suggested that chapter presidents highlight key points from the newsletter during chapter meetings. Board members also thanked attendees for participating in the annual membership surveys, which provide valuable feedback that informs board decisions. Gaye highlighted the efforts of volunteers and staff in supporting the organization and encouraged members to provide feedback to improve communication and processes.

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Chorus Director Development Initiatives

The group discussed chorus director development, with an attendee raising concerns about the need for coaching and support for interim directors. Executive Director, Kelly Peterson explained that the new Chorus Director Development Coordinator is reviving the roundtable for directors beginning in January and focusing on building the musical leader mentorship program. Gaye mentioned that the new VP of Membership position will help market outside current membership to find potential leaders. The group agreed on the importance of finding directing talent from both inside and outside the barbershop world; new directors can be coached in the specific style of barbershop music. Attendees discussed the need for funding or assistance for chorus directors to get coaching, and current available grants were mentioned, as was the need to work through Area Directors to access those funds

All agreed that an effective musical leader is one of the most important factors in a chapter's viability. Based on these discussions, the IBOD will consider creating a director development task group to focus on recruiting, training, and supporting musical leaders.

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Philanthropy

Gaye discussed the need to clarify fundraising arrangements between Sing Canada Harmony (SCH) and Harmony, Inc. While SCH receives donations from and offers generous support to Canadian members of Harmony, Inc., Harmony has no control over these funds. Gaye and Kelly are scheduled to meet with SCH representatives on Tuesday to address this issue.

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Membership Recruitment, Retention, and Coordination

The conversation turned to membership recruitment and the overall need for more support for volunteers serving as membership chairs. Membership coordinators at the chapter and Area levels would benefit from working together and sharing best practices on membership recruitment and retention. Area 1 is working to bring together all membership coordinators in the Area with a goal of improving connections and exchanging ideas, and other Areas are encouraged to do the same.

An attendee shared their experience of conducting a survey of their chorus and the importance of sharing survey results with the membership to address concerns and foster open dialogue. This is just one example of the kinds of activities a chapter might engage in to better support members at all stages of their member lifecycle. Chapter representatives are encouraged to explore the member support resources available through the Member Experience Discover & Action Library (MEDAL) on the Harmony, Inc. website.

The group discussed membership initiatives and recruitment strategies, with Gaye sharing her experience starting a new chorus in Charlottesville, Virginia. They explored the need for more creative recruitment approaches, particularly in the post-COVID era, and discussed the potential for a membership mentorship program. The conversation also touched on the importance of marketing and communication efforts, with possible support from Harmony's Marketing & Communications team. One attendee suggested the idea of running education days focused on chapter officer training, including roundtables for various roles such as membership, vice presidents, and section leaders.

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Youth Camp Funding Discussion

An attendee inquired about financial support for a youth explosion camp planned for Atlantic Canada. Members of the IBOD encouraged the attendee to discuss funding options with Area 1 Director, Yvonne Rafuse.

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Conclusion

The conversation ended with participants introducing themselves and expressing gratitude for the opportunity to engage with the organization.