

Evergreen Big Four

Evergreen District President Bob Robson's message to chapter officers hit home with the Rogue Valley Harmonizers, Medford, Oregon chapter. Bob focused on the "Evergreen Big Four" and asked that each chapter plan their events and activities to cover each of these four areas: Growth in Membership; Growth in Music, Singing and Performance; Growth in Community Outreach; and Growth in Chapter Leadership and Training. The Harmonizers have taken Bob's words to heart and are working hard to achieve these goals, according to Rogue Valley Music Vice President, Mark Larsen. He writes:

Growth in membership is the most difficult goal for us to achieve. We are determined this year to make everything we do be in support of this goal. It is the most important thing we can do. Our annual show is particularly targeted at finding new singers. We are doing a show based on music from the 50s and 60s. That era coincides with our target demographic for new members. It turns out that kids in high school really like music from the 50s and 60s too.

Growth in music. As vice president of music this is a significant part of my focus this year. We have found brilliant vocal coaches in each of the two communities we serve. For nearly a year our chorus has been financing vocal lessons for anyone in the chorus who wants to participate. Unless we can get a few younger voices, we will sound like old men growing older. This year we have decided to focus on the quality of music in our shows. This will come at the expense of our participation in division competitions so we have decided to forego competing this year.

Growth in community outreach. This is my favorite part of our chapter's success story. For 10 years now we have been conducting the Get America Singing...Again! program in local grade schools. This year we've expanded the same program into the Boys and Girls Club. We also conduct a quartet class at a local high school and are engaged with two other high schools in coaching toward Broadway musicals that they are producing.

Growth in leadership and training. This is a tough one. Nearly everyone in our chorus has been on the chapter board for years. It all goes back to finding new younger members. About a third of our chapter are ex-presidents and frankly are getting older and wiser. Financing all of this activity has been trying. We have found generous members of the community who have been very helpful. This year for the first time we applied for and received a grant from the Harmony Foundation, and we thank the Foundation for their support.

Mark Larsen, Rogue Valley – April 30, 2015