



August 23, 2010

From: Society President Bill Biffle

To: HOD members, district leaders, interested others

Greetings, Barbershop Leaders!

Over my term as Society President, I have focused most of my time and energy on one task – that of shining a consistent, bright light on the need to reverse our decades-old downward spiral in our membership numbers. Since the mid-1980s our total number of members has declined over 36%. Clearly, this cannot continue if we are to survive as a viable organization – and as a place where all men of good will can find a healthy, harmonious musical outlet in this increasingly fractured world.

Over the past couple of years, hundreds of good men have spent thousands of hours mapping out the strategies necessary to reverse this decline. And all of this effort and thought is beginning to bear fruit. This year we are recruiting more members and – even more important – we are **RETAINING** more of our members, too. Many of us – indeed, many of you - are more engaged in solving the problem than ever before. And we continue to reconfirm that, to succeed, we must help more of our chapters be more successful – help them to achieve their goals and grow again.

You are here today as a leader in your chapter. If that were not so, you wouldn't be reading this. So I want to speak to you plainly, directly, and sincerely today about your part – your **VITAL, PERSONAL** part – in the path to positive membership growth for our Society. For all the Society-wide strategies we are discovering to help with this problem, the one thing we know for sure is that all membership growth – **ALL** membership growth – happens at the chapter level. And when our chapters are growing, we know they're doing something right. When they're not, we know the opposite is true.

Is your chapter growing? If so, spread the word. What's going right at your place? If not, why not? I believe that when any chapter grows, it's the result of the consistent efforts of a few good men – men who decide to make a difference in the program of their chapter. A handful of committed, passionate barbershoppers who decide that what's happening every week at their chapter meeting is not all that it could be. And then they decide to change things. They talk about it. They agree on needed changes. And they enlist their chapter in

the necessity of making those changes in a positive, affirmative, energized, and fraternal way. They decide to make the changes necessary for their meetings to become a more attractive place for men of all ages, creeds, colors, and condition of life to spend a few hours together each week – in harmony.

The answer for every chapter, of course, is unique. Each group has its culture, its goals, its history. But all chapters also share some things in common. All chapters are made up of men who share a love for this music, who share a fraternity that grows when we make this music together, and who share a commitment to perpetuating this hobby so that our grandchildren's grandchildren will have a chance to have their lives enriched by it as theirs have been. They want to leave something behind for future generations.

So, this is what I ask of you. As you go away from this weekend, think about what's happening every week in your chapter. Is it as compelling, as satisfying, as fun, as rewarding, as energized and as energizing as it can be? If not, call a couple of your buddies and get together to talk about how you can make it better. When you decide to make a difference – and carry through on your decision - your chapter will have a chance to grow again. And when a significant portion of our Society's chapter leaders do something positive in their chapters, our Society will grow again, too.

Help is available. Go to www.barbershop.org and click on [View Membership Resources](#) at the bottom of the page.

Gentlemen, let's resolve to make a difference – you and me. No, scratch that. Let's MAKE a difference. Let's do whatever it takes to revitalize and reenergize our chapters, you and me. If we do this, our chapters will grow again. Our Society will grow again. And our grandchildren's grandchildren will bless our name. I guarantee it

Thanks for reading. Let me know how it's going at bbiffle@barbershop.org.



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