

The Pitch Piper

77 Years of Barbershop Harmony

Over 714,089 Square Miles

Volume 78 Number 4

A Bulletin for Barbershoppers in the LO'L District

July-August 2025



The cover image features a hot air balloon with red, green, and black stripes floating in a blue sky with white clouds. In the background, there are buildings, including a prominent orange one on the left. The text 'Land O' Lakes' is in the top left, '2025 Fall Convention' is in the top right, and 'UP, UP and AWAY' is in large letters at the bottom. Below that, it says 'October 10 - 11, 2025 | Bloomington, Minnesota'.

Land O' Lakes

2025 Fall
Convention

UP, UP and AWAY

October 10 - 11, 2025 | Bloomington, Minnesota

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Pitch Piper

The Pitch Piper is published bi-monthly by the Land O' Lakes District Association of Chapters of the Barbershop Harmony Society.

Land O' Lakes Chapters are situated in the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, Wisconsin, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and the Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario.

Office of Publication

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LOL District Convention

Hello LO'L Members! The Fall Convention is just around the corner. If you haven't done so already, It is time get your reservations and registrations. We are going to have another super fun gathering of Barbershoppers from all over the District. Our LO'L convention webpage which provides everything you need to make it happen:

www.loldistrict.org/conventions.

- **REGISTER FOR THE CONVENTION** — Register online with your credit card or download a mail-in registration order form and send it in with your check. You can also order a Saturday lunch, the Showcase dinner (chicken or pork), or get a ticket for the Saturday evening show. Once you register, your badges and meal and event tickets will be ready for you when you arrive.
- **RESERVE YOUR ROOM** — Reserve a room at the Headquarters Hotel - MSP Airport Hilton Hotel, 3800 American Blvd E., Bloomington, MN 55425. www.group.hilton.com/d883ie. Our special rate is \$115/night plus taxes.

- **QUARTET CLINICS** - If your quartet in not competing, but would like coaching, the District is offering free Quartet Clinics on Friday morning and a chance to perform in the afternoon. All you need is a quartet, two songs, and an All Contest Events registration badge. Sign up with Dylan Ahmann: dylanahmann@gmail.com
- **ALL CHAPTER CHORUS** – Once again, the Northern Pines Harmony Brigade is helping sponsor the All-Chapter Chorus. For just \$10 Steve Zorn will get you the music and the learning tracks and Donny Rose will be directing the chorus. This is another great opportunity for you to sing with some of the best! Just connect with Steve to let him know you are interested and to make your payment for the music. Steve Zorn: zorn.stephen@gmail.com

We look forward to seeing you, and over 800 more barbershoppers, at our Fall Convention.Up, Up and Away!

Jay Althof — 2025 LO'L Convention Chair



Convention Registration – Or On-line at: www.loldistrict.org/conventions
Land O'Lakes Fall Convention
October 10-11, 2025

Name (First/Last):

Phone:

Email:

2nd Attendee Name (if applicable):

3rd Attendee Name (if applicable):

4th Attendee Name (if applicable):

Group Name on Badge - Chapter/Chorus/Quartet:

Event	Cost/Person	Quantity	Amount
All Contest Events Registration	\$70		
Saturday Showcase Dinner and Show	\$45		
Saturday Box Lunch	\$20		
Complete Convention Registration Package **	\$135		
Jr. Contest Events Registration (12 and under)	\$30		
Jr. Complete Convention Registration Package (12 and under) **	\$95		
Total enclosed			

** Complete Convention Registration Package includes access to all contests, Saturday Lunch and Saturday Showcase Dinner and Show

Menu Options for Showcase Dinner

Entrée Choice	Quantity
Pork	
Chicken	

If there are special dietary needs, please provide specifics:

Individual Contest tickets go on sale 30 days prior to Convention and may be purchased at the Registration Desk for Friday Quartet, Saturday Chorus, or Saturday Quartet Finals. Cost: \$25/event

Registrations/Badges will be held at the Barbershop Convention desk at the Hilton Hotel.

Make check payable to: Land O'Lakes District

Mail to: Jay Althof

4671 Lake Avenue

White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Any questions: contact Jay at: JayAlthof@Gmail.com or 651-206-2686

Registrations are transferable, but not refundable within 30 days of the Convention.

Mail-In Registrations must be postmarked No Later Than September 26.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (Preliminary)
LAND O'LAKES DISTRICT FALL CONVENTION
Oct 10-11, 2025 – Minneapolis Airport Hilton Hotel, Bloomington, MN

Friday - Oct 10

8:30 - 7:00	Registration/Ticket desk	2nd Floor - Foyer
8:00 - 12:00	Coaching (non-contest quartets)	Mtg Rms I-VIII, XI
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch Break	On Your Own
1:00 – 2:00	Performances (coached quartets)	Ballroom Stage
1:00 – 1:45	ADC Board Meeting	VII Pelican Bay
1:45 – 2:15	ADC Membership Meeting/Rehearsal	VII Pelican Bay
2:00 - 3:00	House of Delegates Meeting	Riverside Rm
2:00 – 3:45	Stage Open for Inspection	Ballroom Stage
3:00 - 4:00	All Chapter Chorus Rehearsal	VIII Wood Duck
4:00 - 9:50	Quartet Prelim Contest	Ballroom Stage
9:50 – 9:55	Barbershopper of the Year Award	Ballroom Stage
10:00 -12:00	Hospitality - Cash Bar	2nd Floor - Foyer
10:00 – 12:00	AHSOW	1st Floor – Meadows Rm
10:05 -12:00	Quartet Feedback Sessions	Mtg Rms I-VIII/Ballroom

Saturday - Oct 11

8:00 – 1:30	Registration/Ticket desk	2nd Floor Foyer
7:30 – 8:45	Stage Open for Inspection	Ballroom Stage
9:00 -12:00	Chorus Contest	Ballroom Stage
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch break	Pre-order/A La Carte
1:00 – 2:50	Quartet Finals contest	Ballroom Stage
2:50 - 3:10	Hall Of Fame Award & Spice Swan Song	Ballroom Stage
3:10 – 3:30	Chorus/Quartet Contest Results	Ballroom Stage
3:30 – 6:30	Chorus/Quartet Feedback Sessions	Mtg Rms I-VIII
3:30 – 6:30	Fun Squad Activities	2nd Floor – Foyer
4:00 – 5:00	BHS Listening Session	Riverside RM
4:00 – 5:15	ADC Chorus Rehearsal	Ballroom
6:30 - 7:15	Banquet Dinner	Ballroom
7:15 - 9:15	Showcase Show & Joe Liles Lifetime Achievement Award	Ballroom
9:15 - 1:00	Afterglow/Hospitality	Mtg Rms I-VIII, XI

AHSOW At The LOL Convention

Hey everyone. Something different is happening at the convention this year, possibly for the first time ever. At least, I don't recall it happening before, and I've been barbershopping for nearly half a century. There's gonna be an AHSOW Room this year! If you're not someone who goes to International or Midwinter where these opportunities happen regularly, you may not know what AHSOW is. It's an organization for woodshedders. (In keeping with the fine traditions of the SPEBSQSA founders, AHSOW is an acronym for Ancient Harmonious Society Of Woodshedders.) We make up our notes "on the fly" rather than sing arrangements, pole cats, or tags. It's the way barbershop used to be done. Indeed, it wasn't even legal to sing written arrangements in contests at one time.

It's challenging and a lot of fun. A foursome picks a song (often from one of our booklets that only contains words and melodies), and someone sings lead. The adventure begins when others pick a part to sing and make up their parts spontaneously, trying to harmonize to the implied harmony of the song. Discovering chords and where you fit into the each as you go along is the challenge. You "gotta have your ears on", so you can hear if you're doubling someone unnecessarily or what note might be missing. It's often said that "there are no wrong notes - just better choices", but the goal is to end up being able to sing the whole song thru with as few clinkers as possible. Some people think it's gotta be impossible, but I promise, it's not. We'll start you off with some easier ones and move to tougher ones as your skills improve. It's not a "spectator sport" either. Until we work things out, the melody singer will most likely sing slowly to give everyone a chance to hear where things may be going. It often only takes a melody note and one harmony note to suggest what the other 2 notes need to be, and sometimes only the melody note in context to "hear" the chords before they happen and find your note.

Whether you're an old hand at it or never done it before, you're welcome to come and give it a try. The room will be open in the downstairs boardroom on the main floor of the hotel, just to the left of the main doors. Things get started at 9:30 Friday night. As a barbershopper, I'm sure most, if not all of you, have sung notes in your quartet or chorus that you thought fit better than what was written. If so, you've been woodshedding without knowing it. The people in your quartet or your chorus director probably didn't appreciate your efforts, but at AHSOW, we encourage it. Please stop by and give it a try. It's a blast!

Steve Hardy - AHSOW board member



The Parade of Checks back at District Convention!

The Parade of Checks is a cherished convention tradition where chapters have the opportunity to publicly present donations that support various aspects of our barbershop hobby, especially youth and NextGen programming across the district.

Where Your Donations Go

Chapters can choose where their generosity will make a difference. Options include: Harmony Foundation Inc., Sing Canada, General District Fund and the General NextGen fund.

This year we have a special option called the Harmony on the River Festival. This NextGen event will be held in conjunction with our Harmony Academy (formerly known as Leadership Training Academy) on January 9th. Our team is working with music educators in high schools to bring their students for a day-long clinic to be immersed in barbershop harmony, and to meet and perform for those barbershoppers who are attending the Harmony Academy.

Whether your chapter wants to direct funds to a specific initiative or contribute to one of the more general funds, your donation will help create meaningful opportunities for singers across the district.

How to Participate

Bring your check to District Convention and join us for the Parade of Checks during the convention weekend. You'll have the opportunity to present your donation on at the House of Delegates meeting that will take place at 2:00 PM on Friday, October 10th in the Riverside Room at the Hilton Hotel.

Let's Make This Year's Parade Memorable!

As the Chair of the District Youth-In-Harmony/NextGen committee, I invite all chapters to participate and make a statement about the importance of youth in our barbershop community. Together, we can create a legacy that ensures our art form continues to grow and flourish.

See you at District Convention!

Justin La

ADC Scholarships Available

Did you know that the Association of District Champions has scholarships available for quartets or individuals?

Scholarships for what, you ask?

Contact Leonard Huls at lensingstenor@gmail.com

Contest Corner

with James Estes, Director of Contest and Judging

Warmest summer greetings to all of you in the Land O' Lakes District! Summer is just flying by, and I recently completed my most fulfilling judging assignment to date, as a member of the International Panel at the BHS International Convention in Denver, Colorado. 268 songs were judged at the Bellco Theatre, and every performance was a sheer joy to watch. Special congratulations to our Land O' Lakes district representatives in Denver! Forward Harmony from the Greendale, WI chapter gave a truly heartfelt and inspiring performance in the chorus contest, while Coulee Classic had an awesome hit in a *very tight and competitive quartet contest. Thank you to all our district competitors' time and effort to prepare, compete, and perform at the highest levels of the Barbershop Harmony Society!

Very shortly, on or about August 1, we will begin accepting entries for the Fall District Quartet/Chorus Contests and Festivals in Bloomington!!

Head over to <https://loldistrict.org/conventions> for the entry link. Make sure to purchase your registration to the Fall Convention, as that is a BHS and District requirement to compete. In addition, make sure your BHS and District dues are current/paid as of October 10, 2025 so that your group (chorus or quartet) is not disqualified. In addition to registering for the convention, make sure to complete your contest entry through the BHS Member Center, or we won't know of your intention to compete. If you have any questions about the contests/festival, or have any trouble getting your group(s) registered, please reach out to me via email at dir-cj@loldistrict.org. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you - whether you're competing or not - in just a few short months! Enjoy the remaining summer weather and vibes!

LOL District Harmony Academy

(formerly Leadership Training Academy)

SAVE THE DATE!!
January 9–10, 2026

University of Wisconsin – River Falls

There will be a variety of elective classes for all barbershoppers who want new ideas on how to make this GREAT hobby even better. We'll have core classes for chapter officers, as well as opportunities to sing and socialize with old friends and meet some new ones.

Our faculty will include:

Donny Rose – Harmony Foundation International
Bob Cox – BHS Certified Training Facilitator
Skipp Kropp – Past BHS Board Member & President
Scott Kvigne – Visual Performance Coach/Clinician

Chapter Support Report

By Jim Rasmus, VP of Chapter Support
Email: pjras20@gmail.com; Phone/Text: (920) 973-0010

How is MY Chapter Doing? That is an important question for all LOL Chapters to ask themselves! Sadly, we lost two more Chapters in the last year, and the Chapter Support Committee has identified FOURTEEN more that could fold in the next two years. Is your Chapter one of them? There are many resources on the LOL website to support your Chapter. Check them out at: <https://loldistrict.org/chapter-development>. Or, give me a call...I'm happy to help!

Don't forget the ongoing **LOL programs** available to assist your Chapter development efforts:

- 🎵 **Chapter Show Grants** subsidize registered District Quartets to perform at your show for up to \$750 per Chapter per year.
- 🎵 **Chapter Development Grants** provide up to \$1,000 per Chapter per year to promote your Chapter or pay for resources to help your Chorus in your musical development.
- 🎵 **Visioning Retreats** provide a method to survey your Chapter and bring consultants to guide your conversations on how to focus your efforts toward growth and development.
- 🎵 **Take Coaching to the Chapter** helps identify and pay the mileage for bringing a coach to choruses who want to improve their performance package or basic repertoire.

Go to the LOL website: <https://loldistrict.org/lol-grants-and-programs> for the details.

In order to more effectively support our Chapters, your LOL Board we decided to increase the focus of our Chapter Liaison Program. Beginning in 2026, we will replace the Liaisons with **CHAPTER MENTORS**. A District Mentor will work with one or two Chapters to learn the strengths present and challenges facing their Chapters and to support them with resources from the District and other Chapters within the LOL. The goal is to help Chapters be as successful as they can be.

The District organization will also shift from two regions to **THREE DIVISIONS**. The composition of the Divisions is still in process but may be something like this:

- 🎵 The **East Division** will be composed of 14 Chapters in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, with Mike Ziegler as Division Vice President.
- 🎵 The **Central Division** will likely be composed of 11-14 Chapters in Minnesota and Wisconsin, with Arv Zenk as Division Vice President.
- 🎵 The **West Division** is likely to be made up of 7-10 Chapters in Minnesota, North Dakota and Canada, with Brent Gerber as Division Vice President.

Mike, Arv and Brent are seeking those who might be interested in becoming mentors. There will be a class offered to train mentors at the **Harmony Academy** on January 9-10 at UW-River Falls! (Yes, it's new name for the Leadership Training Academy and not just for leaders anymore!!) Put it on your calendar today!

Reach out to me if you have ideas or questions we can explore together! **It's GREAT to be a Barbershopper!!**

A Fusion of Science and Sound: Greendale WI Chapter Quartets to Perform at the World-Renowned Orfield Labs

Barbershop harmony will be taking center stage in one of the most unique and acoustically advanced facilities in the world. While in Minneapolis for the LOL District Contest, the Greendale WI Chapter quartets, Forward Fusion and Lakefront, are partnering with Orfield Labs. Join us on October 10 at 10am for an intimate and groundbreaking musical experience that brings the heart of barbershop into the world of science.

A Barbershop First at a Record-Setting Venue

Orfield Labs is known internationally for its innovative acoustic spaces. The lab holds the Guinness World Record for the quietest place on Earth with its anechoic chamber, which measures at an astonishing -9.4 decibels. Join the quartets as they sing a tag in a space where all sound reflections are eliminated, allowing every nuance of the human voice to be heard in unmatched clarity.

In addition to the anechoic chamber, the quartets will be singing in the lab's reverberation room, designed to create the exact opposite effect. Here, sound lingers and bounces, enhancing overtones and offering a dramatic environment for vocal music. Orfield Labs also holds the distinction of being home to the first digital recording studio in the world, making it a true historical landmark where you can join the quartets for another tag.

Harmony Meets Acoustical Innovation

Forward Fusion and Lakefront will each perform selections that highlight the unique features of the various acoustic environments. The quartets are exploring how barbershop harmony can be shaped by the space around it, using the silence of the anechoic chamber and the resonance of the reverb room to create an experience like no other.



A Fusion of Science and Sound

(continued)

Forward Fusion are all founding members of the 2024 District Champion Chorus Forward Harmony, and Lakefront is LOL District's 2024 3rd Place Quartet. Both groups have a long history of barbershop singing, camaraderie, and innovation. This performance is certain to be a fun exploration of barbershop sound when tradition meets technology.

Only 20 Seats Available

Because of space limitations at Orfield Labs, this special performance will be limited to just 20 audience members. Tickets will be sold for \$75 each +tax and Eventbrite fee (Regularly \$90-\$200 each) Tickets can be reserved on Eventbrite at <https://tinyurl.com/mrd93d8f>.

A One-of-a-Kind Musical Moment

This is not just another barbershop performance, it's a unique exploration of harmony in an extraordinary setting. Whether you are a longtime barbershopper or a fan of the science of sound, this event offers something truly special.

Mark your calendars for October 10, 2025 at 10am and get ready to experience barbershop in a whole new way.

Orfield Labs is located at 2709 East 25th Street Minneapolis, MN 55406.

Questions? Reach out to Sarah Balke (sarah.a.balke@gmail.com)

Reserve tickets online today:

<https://tinyurl.com/mrd93d8f>



Vocality - The fun continues!

Vocality continues to have a great time performing for groups, learning new songs and being together. This year we hosted our 10th annual Free Concert From The Porch in White Bear Lake. It was a beautiful day and we had so much fun sharing the stage with our good friends Kordal Kombat! We also had some fun participating in the Minnesota State Fair Amateur Talent Contest.

We are very much looking forward to the District Convention on October 10th and 11th. We will have the opportunity to help with some emcee spots, participate in the Showcase performance on Saturday and, of course, have fun in the Hospitality Rooms!

We have a few performances lined up for 2026 and we'd love to share some of our new arrangements with your audiences. Please let us know if your chapter is interested so we can get your show on our schedule. Hope to see you soon!

Vocality

Jay Althof, Ben John, Tom Matchinsky, Tony Blackwood

2007 LO'L District Quartet Champions

2016 LO'L District Hall Of Fame



Northeast Wisconsin Choruses Hold Inter-Chapter Picnic

Manitowoc's Clipper City Chordsmen and the Appleton Fox Valleyaires hosted a social and singing event together on Sunday August 19th. Held in a pavilion at Horn Park in Brillion, the barbershoppers feasted on brats and hamburgers with all the fixings and beverages to wash it all down. The choruses then sang a few songs for each other. A few quartets (some made up on the spot) added their voices as well. Jokes were shared and Polecats were sung by all together for the enjoyment of their families.

In addition to the guys from Manitowoc and Appleton, there were some representatives from the Oshkosh Winnebagoland Chorus and Green Bay's Baylanders as well as Midwest Vocal Express and Forward Harmony.

According to Manitowoc member Don Lewellen, "Getting 50 folks together to celebrate barbershop in the middle of a busy summer was wonderful. Watching little kids on the playground while chatting with old friends and making new ones from other choruses made for a fun day. Barbershoppers really are a family."

It's Great to be a Barbershopper!



*Photos courtesy of
Rita Steffen*

Reviews for Bob Dykstra's Book

I had a chance to spend a few very enjoyable hours reading *Musing of a Barbershop Curmudgeon – Bob Dykstra, Celebrating a Legacy*. As I read, there was a song that kept coming to mind - "Simply the Best". Everything Bob Dykstra did in his lifetime was quite simply the best. A good portion of that remarkable life is captured in this compilation of his columns that he wrote for the CHORD-INATOR. Over his lifetime he was around for so many memorable things that were happening as the Barbershop Harmony Society evolved and, lucky for us, he was a most willing and able storyteller. Come along for the ride and be thoroughly entertained.

MARK ORTEN BERGER – Commodore

"This book is a polished gem that shines brightly. I know genius when I see it and this fellow called Dykstra clearly has a gift for telling a story. Although I am loath to admit it, I was never very good with setting words to my scores but this man, with pen firmly in hand, knows his way around a word. Some people say my music had too many notes but even if I were to admit that was so, I would gladly provide every one of them to this guy. He would know what to do with them since he understands the concept that every note or lyric has a meaningful place where they should reside." Bravo!

- W. Mozart

"I can't even hear but I can read and I know that what I read comes across with a strong foundation and tempo that leads me to believe this comes from an immense talent." Wunderbar!

- L. Beethoven

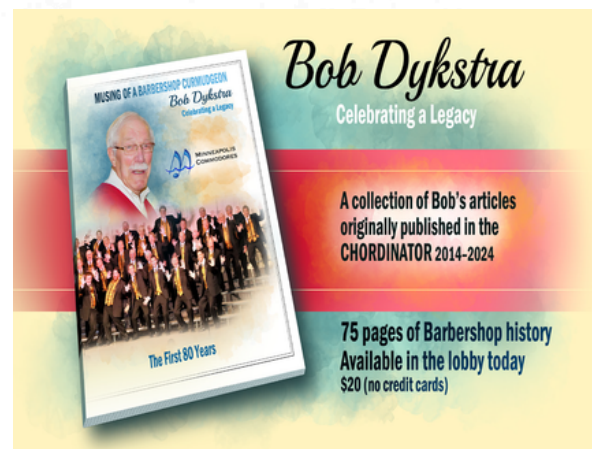
After reading the journals of this Signore Roberta Dykstra I'm a bit sad that I never heard about this kind of harmony singing before. Maybe I had been missing the point all along about the Barber of Seville and it was really about the glories of close harmony singing. You should know that I love to sing by myself but I would gladly trade most of that for a chance to sing some of what he calls Barbershop with three other gents. Signore Dykstra's eloquent prose fully captured me and swept me away on the wings of soul stirring harmony.

- E. Caruso

Bob Dykstra collection of articles available for sale!

Proceeds go to the Bob Dykstra Legacy Fund
Contact Harvey Weiss
763-439-4447
harveyw137@gmail.com

Harvey Weiss and the Dykstra family have collaborated to give us this opportunity to relish some of the late legend Bob Dykstra's wit and wisdom, the yarniest musings of a barbershop curmudgeon, as he so eloquently describes.




Quartets



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Contact: Harry Hanson 2020 Grange Ave. Racine WI
Phone: 262-498-0314 Email: checkmatequartet96@gmail.com
[Facebook.com/CheckmateQuartet96](https://www.facebook.com/CheckmateQuartet96)



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Sam Sather, Erik Eliason, James Estes, Scott Perau

info@chordsmash.com
715-461-0318



Lakefront Quartet
Max, Dylan, Derek & Brian

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Jeff Paul
Ken Ryan



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Angela ♦ Heidi ♦ Liz ♦ Jan

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QuartetSpice@gmail.com
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JAY TONY DAVID TOM



VOCALITY
classic a cappella sound

www.vocalityquartet.com 651-206-2686

Calendar

2025

October

- 4 Greater St. Paul Area | North Star Chorus
North Heights Church, Arden Hills, MN
- 4 Polk County | Indianhead Chorus
Amery High School

November

- 29 Winnipeg | River City Sound
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

December

- 3 Appleton | Fox Valleyaires
DoubleTree, Neenah, WI
- 6 Oshkosh | WinnebagoLand
St. John's Lutheran Church
- 9 Appleton | Fox Valleyaires
Neenah High School, Neenah, WI
- Manitowoc County | Clipper City Chordsmen
- 13 Franciscan Center for Music Education &
Performance, Manitowoc, WI
- 14 Fergus Falls | Heart O' Lakes Harmony
Trinity Lutheran Church, Pelican Rapids, MN

2026

March

- 28 Dunn County | Northern Lights
Colfax, WI

April

- 11 Fergus Falls | Heart O' Lakes Harmony
Holm Center Theatre
- 12 Fergus Falls | Heart O' Lakes Harmony
The Center for the Arts, Fergus Falls, MN
- 25 Appleton | Fox Valleyaires
Xavier Fine Arts Theater, Appleton, WI
- 26 Mankato | Riverblenders
Hosanna Lutheran Church, Mankato, MN

Send show registrations to:

District Secretary, Tyler Hall
603 6th St NE
Mandan, ND 58554
(701) 213-7636
secretary@loldistrict.org

Future District & BHS Conventions

2025	October 9-12	LOL District Convention, Minneapolis Airport Hilton
2026	January 9-10	Harmony Academy, UW-River Falls
2026	January 13-18	BHS Midwinter Convention, Pasadena, CA
2026	October 15-18	LOL District Convention, Minneapolis Airport Hilton
2027	October 14-17	LOL District Convention, Location TBD
2028	October 12-15	LOL District Convention, Location TBD