



Hi friends,

I hope this message finds you and all of your loved ones staying safe and healthy.

You received some important information via email recently which was sent to all members of Sweet Adelines International. We understand that email is not 100% reliable for communicating to everyone and wish to restate the information in this video message, along with two other announcements which came out of the International Board of Directors meeting in June. In addition, some of you have been asking us important questions, and I hope to address them now.

The Sweet Adelines International Board of Directors met June 10-13 and, with unanimous decisions, took action on several important issues related to our guiding principles of Culture of Belonging and Diversity and Inclusion. A statement was issued to members from the Board regarding those decisions. They are as follows:

1. Changing the contest rules so that songs with racist lyrics, messages, and history will result in disqualification beginning with the 2021 International competition.
2. Approved the creation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council to serve as permanent stewards of the work of the Diversity and Inclusivity Task Force.
3. Establishing education and resources to teach members how to determine if a song has racist lyrics, message, or history.
4. Create an ongoing, living database to which members can continually refer and share information regarding songs with racist lyrics, messages, or history.
5. Establish the safe@sweetadelines.com email address as a way for members to confidentially contact us to share their concerns within the Culture of Belonging and Diversity and Inclusion guiding principles.

Some of you asked why these decisions were made right now. They may seem “sudden” but many of the actions are in fact the result of several years of work by the Sweet Adelines International Diversity and Inclusivity Task Force as well as leadership and volunteers from across the organization. Some changes were proposed by the task force last year but had to go through a review process to be sure that the language we used aligned with that of our guiding principles of Diversity and Inclusion and Culture of Belonging.

We created a plan to roll out our decisions regarding culturally insensitive music via webinars in July. However, after the murder of George Floyd and the resulting outcry for substantive, immediate change, the Board agreed that our position must be finalized

and released without any further delay. We realize that this work should have begun long ago, but we hope that these first steps are just the beginning of our work towards living our guiding principles of Diversity and Inclusion and a Culture of Belonging.

The Board's first decision, in accordance with these guiding principles, was to develop a policy that Sweet Adelines International rejects any song with racist lyrics, messages, or history and considers them unacceptable for performance in any setting. Our statement includes actions we are committed to — including changing our contest rules so that these songs will be unacceptable for performance in any contest setting.

Second, to ensure that the work of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force continues, the Board also took action to create a body to serve as permanent stewards of this important work. This body will be known as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council and will have a wide representation of our membership. The Diversity and Inclusivity Task Force itself is taking the lead on the definition and composition of this group with a deadline of early July. Third, the task force will also be releasing the Song Evaluation Tool from the Chorus Toolkit in July. And fourth, the song database will allow members to share information regarding the songs that have racist lyrics, messages, and history. This will help those of you who have written in asking questions about specific songs and whether or not they are okay to sing in a contest setting. We promise you will be supported through this process as we all learn together.

And lastly, the Board unanimously voted to establish the email safe@sweetadelines.com as a way for members to confidentially contact us to share concerns within the Culture of Belonging, and Diversity and Inclusion guiding principles. The Board of Directors and our headquarters staff want to hear your concerns, and by knowing what they are — from you personally — we can talk and decide the best course of action to take.

To see the original communication along with other information related to diversity and inclusion in Sweet Adelines, visit www.SweetAdelines.com/diversity-equity-inclusion.

In addition to the important work surrounding diversity and inclusion, the Board released information about the cancellation of our 2020 Sweet Adelines International Convention and Competition in Louisville, Kentucky. Although this may not be unexpected news, it is heart-breaking nonetheless.

We are so very sad that we will not be able to gather in person to continue conversations about our organization's commitment to change, renew appreciation of our rich traditions on the occasion of our 75th anniversary, and, of course, enjoy the thrill of barber-shop performances and competition. This does not mean that we won't celebrate our anniversary together, however! The regions that had virtual gatherings this year in place of regional competitions made it clear that we can use our creativity to commemorate our 75th anniversary and celebrate the music that we make. We will share plans for our virtual event with you as soon as they are finalized.

In the meantime, we will be kicking off our 75th anniversary celebration on July 13 – Barbershop Music Appreciation Day — and continue activities through convention week in October. Last weekend, you were sent an email with information about sharing your Sweet Adelines memories in celebration of Barbershop Music Appreciation Day and our 75th anniversary. I look forward to seeing your photos and special memories during this celebration.

Of course, the cancellation of the International Convention and Competition involves some practical decisions regarding fees, tickets, travel arrangements, and other concerns. You will find answers to most of your questions in the FAQ which accompanied the email. If you did not receive the email or have other questions or concerns, please contact events@sweetadelines.com or visit the webpage at www.SweetAdelines.com/Louisville to review the FAQs.

Related to this year's cancelled international contest is the formal cancellation of 2020's virtual regional contests. If you are a competitor who qualified to compete in Louisville, you will compete in St. Louis in 2021. Quartets will qualify in 2021. Our 2020 Rising Star Quartet Contest is also cancelled. The next Rising Star Quartet Contest and the debut of the Diamond Division Quartet Contest are scheduled to take place at the Queens College in July 2021.

With the cancellation of the 2020 Rising Star Quartet Contest, the age limit for the contest will be extended to 26 years of age or younger. This change means that those singers who normally would be ineligible next year due to not meeting the age limitation can compete! This exception will be made just for the 2021 contest.

We have a lot to look forward to when we get to do all of these events again! Throughout this entire decision-making process, you have been very patient, and we can't thank you enough for that.

There have been suggestions from some members to “go green” with our publication of *The Pitch Pipe*. We also know that some members love the printed version – they are keepsakes. In light of the budget implications of cancelling multiple events in 2020, the Board made a decision to deliver two issues electronically and to print two issues for the 2020-21 fiscal year. This change results in a substantial financial savings for the organization. For your October 2020 and April 2021 issues, you will be sent an email with a link to the magazine. The January 2021 and July 2021 issues will continue to be mailed to you. If you prefer to receive all of your issues electronically, you can log in to the membership database and opt out of receiving all printed issues. And as always, the magazine is always available at www.pitchpipemagazine.com.

I know this is a lot to take in. You and I will have help along the way as we choose songs and learn how to become a stronger organization over time. I'm learning and gaining new understanding as a person, chorus director, and leader of Sweet Adelines. Processing things and working together and continuing to sing during this unique time is

a challenge but one I'm up for. I hope each and every one of you will join me on this journey.

Thank you.

Until next time, stay Sweet Adelines Strong.