

KEEPING THE
WHOLE WORLD SINGING

CHORD-INATOR

BARBERSHOP
HARMONY
SOCIETY



MINNEAPOLIS
COMMODORES

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, CHAPTER
**** A CHAPTER WITH AN ENVIABLE PAST - AN UNBOUNDED FUTURE ****

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O' LAKES DISTRICT

DECEMBER 2014 - VOL. 70 - NO. 11



6 Acappella Rocks the Holidays!

May good health and good will be
with you and yours throughout this
most joyous of seasons!



Merry Christmas
and
Happy Hanukkuh



**Minneapolis, Minn. Chapter
Land O'Lakes District, BHS**
Meetings every Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
House of Prayer Lutheran Church
7025 Chicago Avenue South
Richfield, MN 55423

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Through 2015

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Waiting...

By Dan Williams, President

Ever notice how much we *wait* for things to happen?



Dan Williams

I always seem to be *waiting* for something. Take last Sunday, December 7; it started with church. Arriving earlier than usual, I *waited* for the service to begin. Title of

the sermon was "*Waiting On the Edge of Your Seat.*" After the service, I *waited* in line for a cup of coffee. Once I arrived at Kennedy High School for the Christmas Show, we all *waited* for our "stage time" to warm-up, sing and perform during the course of the afternoon. Later, I *waited* at the restaurant for the meal that I ordered to be served. Many in our group were certainly more concerned over the *wait* than I and complained on my behalf. (Thank you, by the way.) The reward for my patience was a free meal.

Wait can be defined as "to remain inactive or in a state of repose," as until something expected happens. The length of time one *waits* may depend on the event. We *wait* nine months for the birth of a baby. We *wait* weeks to open gifts at Christmas. I'm sure Doc is anxiously *waiting* for this article to be submitted. I guess my procrastinating is a form of *waiting* to do something that I know needs to be completed, but I frequently *wait* until the deadline to finish. We even have created a room to *wait* in, the "*waiting* room," found in most doctors' offices and hospitals.

But just what are you *waiting* for when it comes to learning music? Do you need a deadline to make it happen? We have a great show just *waiting* to happen! Let's not keep Paul *waiting* to see if we'll be prepared until the day of the show! Begin today—the *wait* is over!

SUNSHINE HOTLINE

(Holiday Edition)

By Rich Ongna, Sunshine Chairman

Phone: 952-829-7009

Email: ddongna@usfamily.net

Jane Rolloff, Denny's wife, left the hospital in Bran-son on November 18, they arrived home the next day. Jane is slowly recovering and gaining strength.



Rich Ongna

Bob Griffith is doing well after his fall at chapter meeting on November 25. He required stitches for the cut on his head and spent an overnight in the hospital. He was back with us again on December 9.

Leo Odden is home again after spending several days in the hospital near the end of November with an irregular heartbeat. While he's still monitoring a couple of things he is back at work.

Marc Duran's adopted grandmother, **Miss Ruthie**, has returned to her normal quarters at Becky's Place and is doing well after her stroke.

Romana Jorgensen, Jim's wife is continuing in therapy at Northridge Nursing Home. Jim tells me that it'll be at least another week or more before the physical therapist gives her the ok to go home.

Remember: Please keep me informed about who is ailing and don't assume that I already know because generally I'm in the dark. Help me brighten the days of our ailing members. Just a short note of encouragement or a brief phone call can make the day of a person who's not feeling well.

On another note, I don't want to *wait* a moment longer to wish everyone a very **Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!**

It is great to be a Commodore!

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

From the meeting of November 20

By Bill Warp, Secretary

- Treasurer: Line-item for Youth In Harmony added to 2015 Budget; \$500 allocated to NP Harmony Brigade.
- Music: Additional assistant section leaders are being recruited; attendance policy discussed.



Bill Warp

- Groupanizer Update: Problems with new version are being addressed; **Jerry Koch** commended for his efforts. **Paul Swanson** has completed the *Public Site* for Groupanizer and its inclusion approved by the Board; past issues of the Chord-Inator will be included; Paul advises that tracking music on the site is “a little tricky.”

- Holiday gift cards approved for our directors, Paul, Gary, Dave, and James.

Next meeting Thursday, December 18, at Wooddale Lutheran.



Chord Candy #128

by Dr. Jim Richards, Der Tagmeister



Jim Richards

With the Christmas Season nearly upon us here is a very simple, rhythmically un-challenging (all quarter notes except for the final chord) musical greeting to the entire family of Chord-Inator recipients. Even people who claim that they do not read music should not have a problem with this tag. But for any who may still need help, be sure to download the attached file (We Wish To You A Very Merry Xmas-All Parts.mp3) and if you can play it you will have your own set of training tracks. This is an experiment to see how many of you might like to have this type of aid available for future Chord Candy offerings. Meanwhile, Chord-Inator Editor, Hardin Olson, joins me in sending our season’s greetings to you for a wonderful Christmas and the hope that you enjoy this humble offering.

We wish to you a ve - ry mer - ry Jol - ly ho - li - day!

Happy Birthday

- 12/14 David Casperson
- 12/15 Teresa Douglas
- 12/19 Steve Daniel
- 12/19 Ken Knutson
- 12/21 Judi Jarnberg
- 12/21 Sam Johanneck
- 12/21 Doc Olson
- 12/21/ Lawrence Smalley*
- 12/22 Rollie Neve (85)
- 12/27 Gene Heupel
- 12/28 Terry Jean St. Martin
- 12/29 Chuck McKown
- 12/29 Ebie Richards
- 12/29 Bonnie Vink
- 01/01 Donna Martz
- 01/03 Mary Erickson
- 01/03. Doug Miller
- 01/06 Connie Ashley
- 01/09 Caryl Hansen

* Commodore South

Happy Anniversary

- 12/17 Paul & Becky Wigley
- 12/19 Tony & Debbie Mason
- 12/21 Denny & Jane Rolloff
- 12/23 Ken & Judy Knutson
- 12/30 Bob & Jean Spong
- 01/05 Russ & Jeni Born



November Re-enlistments

- Dennis Maas.....3 yrs.
- Kirk Douglas.....4 yrs.
- Mark Bloomquist.....6 yrs.
- Gene Heupel.....6 yrs.
- Ken Wentworth.....6 yrs.
- Blake Wanger.....7 yrs.
- Kenneth Jones.....10 yrs.

2015 Officers and Board

The following slate of officers was approved at the Chapter meeting of October 28.

- President: Gordie Aumann
- Executive-VP: Denny Maas
- Immed. Past-Pres: Dan Williams
- Secretary: Bill Warp
- Treasurer: John Carlotto
- Music VP: Carl Pinard
- Membership VP: Harvey Weiss

- Marketing VPs: Russ Born
Peter Jarnberg
- Program VP: Dan Cole
- Board-at-large:
Through 2015: Jerry Koch
Vince Trovato
Ben Hancock
Through 2016: Andy Cook
Blake Wanger
Nate Weimer

Quartet Quaffs

Four Seasons

The Union Gospel Mission operates *Daily Diner*, a restaurant at 616 University Ave. West in St. Paul, and uses it as a training place to rehabilitate individuals who come to the mission from off the street. They are trained in the culinary arts for twelve weeks and then assigned to an area restaurant to work for one week. At the end of this trial week, they usually are hired by the restaurant and become productive self-supporting citizens.



Rollie Neve

It's a fabulous program with a high success rate, and a shining example of rehabilitation by the private sector without government involvement and without a cost to the taxpayer. You might ask: what does this have to do with Barbershop? The answer is a wedding rehearsal dinner at the Diner spiced with pre-marital harmonies by the *Four Seasons Quartet*. What a combination! About fifty celebrants in a missionary-sponsored diner and integrated with the magic of ringing Barbershop chords. Why, it's enough to bring goose bumps on your skin. And cap that off with singing *Can You Feel The Love Tonight* prior to the couple being wed. Our Barbershop experience always is enriched by special occasions like this.

Christmas is such a beautiful time of the year. This special birthday works wonders on all of us. The trials and tensions of everyday life are softened as a spirit of seasonal joy and happiness that mandates control. Christmas parties proliferate and Santa has a heyday. *Four Seasons* was privileged to sing for many of these gatherings including St. Michaels Lutheran Church's women's group in Roseville on December 1. Singing to 100 lovely women makes for a rare and quite delightful opportunity. These ladies were mentally sharp, too,

scoring a 99-plus for omitting the pronouns in *Let Me Call You Sweetheart*. They were a beautiful audience to say the least and thoroughly enjoyed our Christmas harmony Barbershop style.

Every Christmas the Linden Hills Shopping Center in Minneapolis, on the shores of Lake Harriet, has a *Reindeer Days* celebration. This year it was on December 6, and included a roving *Four Seasons* quartet. We sang to patrons at coffee shops, toy stores, boutiques, candy stores, restaurants and other business establishments and to outdoor gatherings including the patrons at the reindeer pen.

Families with their young children were everywhere, and singing to those youngsters warmed our hearts. A choral group from Southwest



High School was also entertaining at the celebration and when we met outside one of the businesses we got acquainted. They sang a German carol to us that was beautiful. We countered by singing a number they had never heard, *Santa Had a Tummy Tuck*. They loved it. We talked to and encouraged them, boys and girls, to try Barbershopping.

The boys seemed very interested, and may get involved. It's possible some of them showed up at our Christmas Show at Kennedy High School. We concluded our performance by boarding a motorized trolley and singing to all the riders as we completed a tour of the entire area. No one tripped or fell as holding straps and metal poles kept us stable. Spreading harmony puts extra energy and enjoyment into the occasion, and reinforces the Christmas spirit. Smiles and approval were

the well-received rewards of the day.

Robbinsdale's Friendly Robins Club happily hosted the heavenly harmony of the *Four Seasons* at their annual holiday party on December 10. This lively group of 50 friendly Robin seniors were in a festive mood and, if you'll pardon the expression, chirped like robins in the group-singing portion of the program. It's difficult to stump a mature crowd with the pronoun challenge. They didn't disappoint. Singing in the Robbinsdale Police and Fire Station building gave us a comfortable feeling of security. With the bad publicity police are getting, it's important to know that doing their duty is for our benefit and protection.

Our baritone, **Rich Ongna**, performs volunteer work at Fairview Hospital in Edina, and we entertained his volunteer group there on Thursday, December 11. We roamed through the crowds in two cafeterias and brightened their patrons' day. Volunteers are an important part of a hospital's operation and rewarding them with some seasonal harmony was our way of thanking them for their selfless service. Rich cleaned up nicely from his Grinch greasepaint, and gave no indication whatsoever that he played the part of Grinch in our Christmas show. Remember that in the show, his heart grew about three times larger. The hospital audience certainly benefited from Rich's big heart!

Our busy week was climaxed on December 13 with a performance before a Shriner's Christmas party at JAX cafe in Minneapolis. It was a challenge setting up in the odd-shaped room we were in, but a quick analysis of room characteristics was made and all the problems were solved. The sixty Shriners gathered there sang so well that we qualified them as candidates for the JAX Choral Cuisine Canters. Maybe the repetition of the pronoun challenge lapsed us into complacency because two in the quartet did in fact sing a pronoun. I won't reveal the culprits.

Go to **Quaffs**, Page 5, Column 1

Quaffs from Page 4

In all of our appearances we sang the regular Christmas songs plus *Santa Had a Tummy Tuck* and *Oh, Lutefisk*. During “Tummy Tuck” we got an interesting reaction from the line, “All the reindeer stayed with Santa, he would not part with them – he loves venison.” Loving venison got a gasp from the ladies. I guess it's like asking a deer hunter, “Did you kill Bambi?” *Oh, Lutefisk* is always fun singing to our Norwegian friends. In many instances some have already had their “special December treat.”

With all the activity noted above, I'm sure you can understand that the on-going investigation into the Jim Erickson chord-ringing caper has suffered. The challenge of this investigation is immense, and many resources must be utilized to insure a solid and satisfactory resolution. I can report to you, however, that one line of inquiry has been to peruse past issues of Georgia Grind articles in the *Chord-Inator*. There is a picture in each of these articles of a wooden outhouse. Actually it looks like the outhouse is made of birch. I've been intensely searching for a trade mark on a panel of the outhouse that would have the letters “BJS.” If I find them, it will confirm one of my worst fears, namely, that it was manufactured by the **Birch John Society**.

That in itself is a serious concern, but not nearly as serious as the **tinge of terror** that has entered into this investigation. Deadline Doc will not give me enough time to develop this **terror** in this issue, so hang on my dear friends. You will get the “skinny” on this development in the next issue. It truly is something to look forward to in the New Year, which by the way, is wished happily to you all, in addition to a **MERRY CHRISTMAS**.

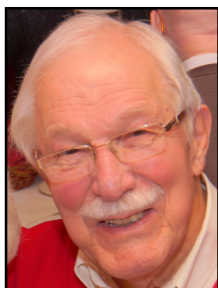
Rollie for Dan, Rich, and Tom

Editor's Note: There are simply just not enough complimentary adjectives to apply to the tireless peripatetic efforts of the four dedicated and committed men who call themselves the

My Most Unforgettable Commodore Character

By Bob Dykstra, Historian pro tem.

Many of us remember a regular feature of Reader's Digest entitled “My Most Unforgettable Character” in which guest contributors would write about some unusual person in their lives.



Bob Dykstra

I often remember thinking that I should nominate a truly unforgettable fellow member of the Minneapolis Commodores, **Dr. Robert Browne**. I never got around to it, but I'd like to take a few moments here to provide an abridged version of what I might have submitted to Reader's Digest.

As an interesting aside, Doc Browne's wife, Dr. Dorothy Hutchinson, played a major role in getting the Commodores into Northrop Auditorium where we produced annual shows from 1951 through 1977...and again from 1987 through 1993. Our partnership with the University and Northrop Auditorium also involved our selection of the Variety Club Heart Hospital as our chapter charity and we proceeded to contribute almost \$400,000 over the years to support cardio-vascular research.

We were able to present our shows at Northrop primarily because Dr. Hutchinson successfully treated the daughter of **Ed Drake**, a high-level administrator in the University of Minnesota's Department of Concerts and Lectures, for a life-threatening case of cerebral meningitis. Mr.

Four Seasons. To a man they continue to give so much of themselves for the benefit of their grateful audiences, the Minneapolis Chapter, and for Barbershopping as a whole (and might I add particularly—for the quality of and for the enjoyment of the dedicated readers of the Chord-Inator, few as they may be).

Drake was so grateful for Dr. Hutchinson's role in his daughter's recovery that he eventually...after much prodding from Dr. Hutchinson...and undoubtedly the unforgettable Dr Browne as well... greased the skids to enable our chapter to present our shows in the very prestigious Northrop Auditorium.

But I'm afraid I've taken a bit of a Jim Erickson-like side-step in my essay. It is Doc Browne himself about whom I wish to write. Doc was an early member, perhaps an original member, of the Minneapolis Chapter when it chartered in 1944. I first met Doc when I joined the Commodores in 1955. Doc, without question, was a CROW as were many early members of the chapter and the Society. CROWS were basically non-singers who joined chapters because they enjoyed the fellowship and camaraderie and appreciated Barbershop Harmony. They were clearly welcome in the words of our Society Code of Ethics which stated then and STILL STATES TODAY...*We shall accept for membership only congenial men of good character who love harmony in music or have a desire to harmonize.* Interesting! There's no mention of having to possess the ABILITY to harmonize! And early chapters welcomed with open arms those who came to be known as CROWS.

It's not clear where the term CROW originated but there are those who believe it was O.C. Cash, our Society founder, who was having fun once again creating an acronym while basically spoofing President Roosevelt's penchant for alphabet agencies. Dick Johnson, a long-time Barbershopper, who now lives in Montana, opines that Mr. Cash might have concluded that C-R-O-W-S could easily stand for “can't ring one worth a snip.” Doc fit that description perfectly.

At any rate, CROWS were a significant part of early chapter membership. They often took on major roles in chapter activities be it fund-raising, ticket sales, meeting room set-up, as-

Go to **Character**, Page 8, Column 1

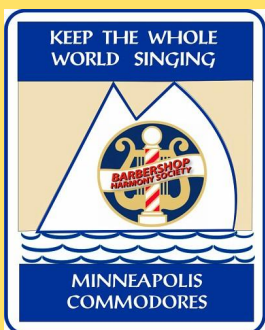


1944
to
2014



From left: 60-year members Jim Richards, (Ebie Richards), Bob Dykstra, and Bob Spong (almost).

Another 50-plus-year member, John Hansen with his wife,



Out with the old...



...in with the new!

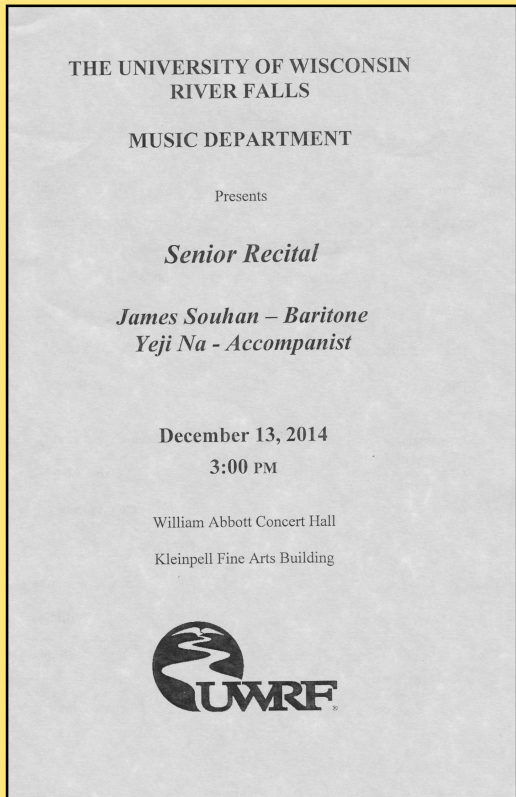
Minneapolis Commodores... 70 years



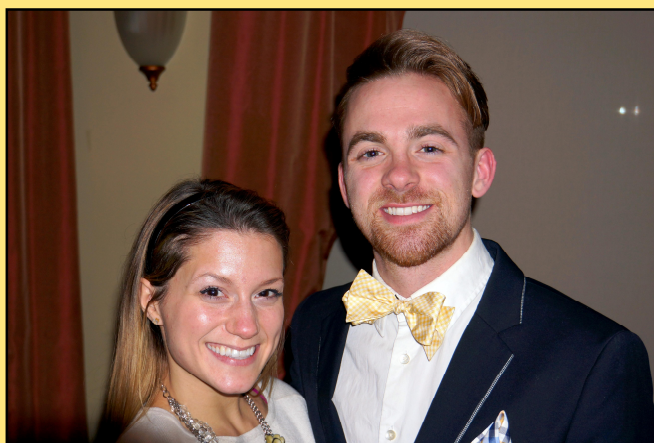
The Commodores are hoping that Paul Dahlen (ctr.), with Paul Paddock (left), and his dad, Tom Dahlen (rt.), will soon be back on our risers.



I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy!



James with his rather proud mother, Carol.



Kelsey Eckstein (left) and friend.



Accompanist Yeji Na was a jewel at the grand piano.

Way to Go, James!
Bravissimo!



Ah, Barbershop! For the ensemble requirement James was joined by (left to rt.) Nate Weimer, Dave Casperson, and Matt Richards.



With a few Barbershop - 7th friends (left to rt.): Dan True, Dan Cole, James, Gary Jacobson, and Jim Richards.

Character from Page 5

suming major responsibility for chapter shows, or any of the other tasks that are part and parcel of being a successful Barbershop chapter. Remember also that competitive chorus singing was not part of the Barbershop experience until many years after we chartered in 1944. (In fact the first International Convention chorus competition wasn't held until 1953 in Detroit). Moreover, our early chapter shows featured only a couple of numbers by the chorus so not being able to sing was not a major problem for our CROW population. In later years when choruses became a more important part of chapter meetings, shows, and competition, Judge Luther Sletten, longtime director of the Commodores, allowed Doc Browne to join the chorus on stage only.....and I do mean only.....if he agreed to mouth the words and never make a sound.

Doc Browne was an oral surgeon.....who himself sported the noisiest ill-fitting set of choppers you could ever imagine. For many years it was customary to hold our chapter board meetings at the homes of board members and generally popcorn was available as a snack. It so happens that Doc had been appointed Permanent Advisor to the Board sometime during the 1950s, a position he cherished until it was abolished during Dr. Hardin Olson's term as chapter president in 1975. It is interesting to note that he died just a year later, although far be it from me to suggest a cause and effect in the matter.

But again I find myself employing an Erickson-like digression. Doc Browne, during his long tenure on the board, hardly ever missed a meeting. And his love for munching on popcorn, coupled with his unruly dentures, quickly became such a noisy distraction that board members soon agreed without dissent to ban popcorn from the snack menu at meetings.

Another thing that stands out in my mind about chapter board meetings was Doc's fierce protection of a chap-

ter slush fund that had been created using funds earned as a result of our hosting the International Barbershop Convention in 1956. I think the fund amounted to somewhere in the neighborhood of \$3500 which at some point along the line was designated as a Building Fund. As I recall, the chapter dreamt of building its own meeting hall and some of the proceeds from the Convention were designated as seed money for that eventuality. Predictably things came up on a regular basis where we needed money for something: new uniforms, new risers, a truck to haul risers, money to cover a trip to a convention, and so forth, and many of us were quick to suggest tapping into our Building Fund for quick financial relief. But we could never get that plan past our Permanent Advisor to the Board. I have no idea how long that slush fund existed in toto because of our watchdog, Doc Browne, but I know it existed for many years. I'm not even sure that the fund was ever tapped for anything during Doc Browne's lifetime.

Doc was also a scavenger/scrounger of the first order. He would hit up the Rosacker Floral Shop annually for mini corsages for every woman who attended our Barbershopper of the Year parties. He would browbeat canning companies to supply fresh corn on the cob for our annual picnics which attracted [literally] hundreds of members, families, and guests. He would confiscate free lumber and other materials to be used in construction of the wonderful show sets designed by Mal and Mary Leipke. He was truly a tireless worker for our chapter.

Countless stories exist about Doc's idiosyncrasies. I suggest, for example, that you ask **John** or **Caryl Hansen** to tell you about how Doc stepped in (without being invited) to serve as general contractor for the addition they built on their house. Or ask **Loren Berthilson** how Doc would invite fellow Commodores to spend a long weekend at his North-

ern Minnesota cabin only to work them half to death on special projects. Or ask any of us old-time convention attendees about how Doc and his conscripted crew would push an orange juice cart around hotel corridors on Sunday morning trying to help convention-goers get ready for the long trip home. Or ask any member of the *Hut Four Quartet* how Doc would slip us Tootsie Rolls for our kids if...and only if...we sang his favorite song, *Bell in the Lighthouse*, on a show or afterglow.

Ask me about the trip Doc and I took to a liquor store on a steamy July day in Toronto, Canada, during the 1963 International Convention during which Doc removed his sweat-soaked headband and handed it to the liquor store clerk with instructions for him to put it in some ice or ice water for him. Or ask any of us who attended the Boston International Convention in 1965 about how Doc's roommate, **Art Erlandson**, was unable to shower during the convention because Doc had filled up the bathtub with shrimp, which Doc proceeded to offer as a snack to friends and strangers alike. And, as you can well imagine, they were getting pretty ripe after three or four days of his haphazardly trying to keep them refrigerated.

Doc Browne, the unforgettable CROW, never served as a chapter officer, never directed the Commodores, never served as Show Chairman, never contributed to a Chinese or any other type of Seventh Chord, but his behind the scenes leadership contributed greatly over a lengthy period of time to the long-standing success of the Minneapolis Chapter. He truly was a MOST UNFORGETTABLE CHARACTER.

Editor's Note: Dan Slattery, Jim Richards, and others of us still on occasion have discomfort in our shoulders where Doc Browne's right index finger would beat a tattoo when emphasizing, in his characteristically robust way, a verbal suggestion or critique.



Hot Commodity Warms to Zero Degrees Fahrenheit

Submitted by David Speidel, Ass't Director; NPHB President

For years, the city of Minneapolis has been known for its *Hollidazzle Parade* that runs every evening, beginning with the weekend after Thanksgiving all the way up to Christmas regardless of weather conditions. Many Minnesotans have made the parade an annual tradition, wending their way to the famed Nicollet Mall to watch the brightly decorated floats, culminating with the Santa float, make their way down the crowded street to the delight of all the children.

So when news that the 2014 event was being cancelled spread throughout the community,

disappointment reigned. Event planners were hastily called into action to come up with an alternative to this holiday affair, and proclaimed **The Minneapolis Holiday Market** emulated the traditional and popular European-Christmas Market concept.

The Minneapolis Holiday Market planners established a replica of a European-style market at the Orchestra Hall pavilion next to the familiar Nicollet Mall that included a covered, minimally-heated gazebo to accommodate musical entertainment. The planners had put out calls to high schools, colleges, churches and, of course, to local Barbershop groups. By the time our quartet found out about the opportunity, only a few spots remained to be filled. We quickly opted the earliest opportunity that

happened to fall on Dec. 1, at 7:00 p.m.

Checking the weather forecast we became keenly aware that that Monday evening was predicted to be the *coldest* for the next two weeks, not by just a few degrees but by 20 or more. Never mind that the wind chill would make it feel like minus 20. We debated whether we should ful-

tent, sipped warm cider, authentic German Gluhwein and delighted in other European holiday delicacies. Between sets, we made our way out to the vendor huts to bring our barber-shop form of holiday cheer to the freezing occupants. One vendor was placing his hands over a pancake griddle to stay warm while two German fellows all the way from Dres-

den were selling their Gluhwein and spiked cider. One of the Germans said he had never experienced such cold temperatures in his life. He thoroughly enjoyed our rendition of *Love Me*, and said, "We don't have any such *bands* in Germany!" I said, "Just wait, someday you will."



The not so Hot Commodity braving the Arctic blast at the Holiday Market on December 1. From left to right,; Paul Swanson, Tony Mason, Ben Wanggaard, and Dave Speidel.

Did I mention how cold it was? Well the frigid condi-

fill our commitment given that the pitch pipe might freeze to our tenor's lips. Would the pitch pipe jam? Could there be possible complications with our voices due to extreme cold? Would runny noses turn off the audience? Could we sing through scarves? Would there be anyone there? To me, the answer was clear. We had made a commitment to sing and it didn't hurt that we were finally getting a paid gig! So off we went.

Upon arrival, we were grateful to learn that the warming tent had been chosen as the alternate entertainment venue. After all, it was a balmy 20 degrees warmer than outside!

All in all it turned out to be a delightful event. We spent the better part of two hours singing to small groups as they meandered into the

tions were too much for our cell phones. Our phones froze when we asked a Holiday Market visitor to take a photo! Fortunately he had kept his phone warm, and was able to take a photo for us.

We then concluded the evening by stopping by one last hut, with a mom and 2 daughters selling their homemade, Northern Minnesota brand of delicious Maple Syrup varieties. They huddled together and danced side-to-side as we serenaded them with *Winter Wonderland*. It was a fitting end to a chilly but lovely evening, and to borrow a tag line from my Harmony Brigade chaps, it was an **eXtreme Barbershop Quartet Experience!**



Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, Bell-Chiming Baritone

Can you remember the Christmas when you were just a child and you received that one gift you had asked for, hoped for, but deeply doubted you would find wrapped under the tree? For me, that was a **Red Ryder BB gun**—with a wood stock, a free-swinging round ring with a genuine rawhide lace attached, a tube of copper coated BB's and more.



Jim Erickson

On Christmas Eve (when we opened our presents according to our Scandinavian tradition), we had just come back from the traditional church service where I (and other members of my Sunday school class) had just recited a short verse. At the end of the program, we were given an apple and a small decorated cardboard box with a short white string as a handle. Inside was that hard, wavy candy, other non-descript candies and a few, in-the-shell, unsalted peanuts. If my excitement over those rather plain presentations seems trite, understand that times were simple then.

Anyway, we had just come back home and I ran in to see if the long, self-revealing package was under the tree. Nope! Just another year of unrealized expectations was to be, I guessed. To this day, I don't know if I just overlooked the long package, or if my parents had held back putting it under the tree until I wasn't looking. Whatever the case, it did appear. And I was beyond ecstatic when I finally opened it. I kept running my hand over the mahogany-colored real wood stock, fondling the cold gunmetal blue of the barrel, and admiring the faux engraving on the gun. Ah, the deep satisfaction of fulfilled desires...

That was my most memorable gift, at

least as a youngster. What was yours? Why not take a moment right now to think back and relish your favorite present once again. Then, think of the many children who may have to go without any gift at all this Christmas. Worse, they may hear of other kids on TV, or wherever, opening present after present and then crying when all are finally opened, "Is that all there is?" Again this year, I am following a long family tradition of giving gifts to **Toys for Tots**. I don't tell you this to laud how wonderful we are. I do it to gently remind you that there is a whole world apart from mine, and probably yours, where it is likely that, except for your generosity,



Reading the *Georgia Grind*

some "little ones", including pre-teens and teenagers, will go without anything to open at Christmas.

So please consider contributing toys, money or both to Toys for Tots. You have a hard heart, indeed, if you do not experience some satisfyingly warm feelings by making a memorable Christmas for someone you will never know individually. This is an extra-special opportunity. Why not make the most of it this year?

Even though this shift in subject is somewhat abrupt, another opportunity that shouldn't escape you is answering **Jerry Koch's** plea concerning e-mail replies. As he has preached, an unintended consequence of replying to an e-mail to the whole chorus by hitting your reply button instead of the handy

"Reply to Sender" button in the received e-mail is that everyone in the chorus is copied with your reply. So when you think you are replying to just the sender and you don't hit that "Reply to Sender" button, ALL of us receive your message. For instance, if someone, oh, let's say a coach, tells everyone he still has some openings in his schedule for coaching, and you reply that you want the 4:30 session, all of us do not have to hear from you that 4:30 will work. And later if you need to cancel your session, don't send an e-mail to all of us telling of your cancellation and the reason.

Example: "I booked the 4:30 session but can no longer make it. My significant other went on a date with someone else and smashed my car upon which I had a \$2500 deductible. I got depressed, made some poor food choices and have had three long days of diarrhea, vomiting and dizziness. Needless to say that in between bouts, I spent time on my cell phone yelling at the sig-other after breaking my wrist slamming it into the wall in frustration, *ya-da-da, ya-da-da...* So, hit the "Reply to Sender" button and save yourself some embarrassment and cease grossing us out!

AND, making another pretty momentous shift in subject once again, I need to mention that we had a fun Christmas concert. The audience got into it, and a nice mix of songs and groups made for an entertaining afternoon. There was, however, one small tragedy. While waiting in the cafeteria prior to the concert, **Doc Hardin**, our award-winning editor, told me he had lost a lens to his reading glasses. He thinks wearing bi- or tri-focals will make him look older. So he uses the "cheaters" that slide down on the nose, and reads with those.

I told him he had pretty much reached the end of the line and that full glasses couldn't make him look any older. Nothing would, as he was already approaching that great depot in the sky. Anyway, he fiddled with the remaining lens, which now had popped out too, and after running the frame *Go to Grind, Page 11, Column 1*

Grind from Page 10

under hot water and enclosing it between his thighs to keep it warm, he now proceeded to fit the one lens back into the frame. Joy supreme, it fit. At least he had one lens. After forcing it into the frame, he modeled it and asked my opinion.

Now doctors know that laughter is good for the soul, but this Doctor Hardin gave me a good month's worth. He is a certificated Doctor [*i.e.* physician], you know. I continue. I told him that with the one lens he looked a bit lopsided and tended to tip his head eerily when now trying to read. And, a monocle it just wasn't. I think he gave up for that moment.

But Doc knows that good things come to one who waits. Like the Sears catalog did back in Doc's youth. Anyway, one of the woman singers came walking through calling out, "Did anyone here lose a pair of reading glasses?" Now I would never accuse Doc of outright lying, but desperate times call for desperate measures. I imagine he raised his hand and shouted, "Over here!" When I came back to his table, Doc proudly showed me the "new" glasses and read some sheet music to me.

Now remember, the substitute glasses were someone else's prescription. This meant that he had to hold the music 4.279 inches from his eyes. But, he was able to read. I sort of recall him saying something like, "Good things happen to good people," or some such. (As it turns out, a fellow sitting next to my wife in the concert audience, turned to his wife and said, "Have you seen my reading glasses anywhere? I must have dropped them someplace when I took off my coat.") To this day (This sounds like it has been more than just a few days, but it hasn't.) I don't know, and don't really want to, whether Doc found the owner, returned them, traded them in on a better prescription, bought a new pair or made an appointment with the eye doctor to fit himself with real, full glasses. Time will tell. (How many clichés can you count in this paragraph?)

Editor's Note: The aforementioned spectacles were expeditiously returned to their proper owner, a very gracious member of the Twin City Show Chorus.

Now I must tell you that I have run out of space. So, I'll end this by wishing you a **Merry Christmas** and a soon-to-be-here **New Year**. To

Rollie Neve, I thank him for being such a source of so much rich material in the past year. He is (sorry, but I can no longer stifle my side-aching laughter) to me an artesian well that, with his antics, eternally flows with amusing material. Better than any muse of mine!

And to **Lisa**, a regular reader of my column through her Grandfather Rollie, I hope you enjoy my articles as much as I enjoy writing them for readers such as you. Please know that your unique grandfather and I enjoy a special relationship! Further Lisa, I hope to keep you laughing in the New Year. Sort of lastly, for those of you to whom I was going to direct my findings in my **Big Reveal** about the **Georgia Grind**, some subjects have just taken priority in all of the penultimate months of this year, but I swear on my oath as a registered baritone of **Baritonia**, that this next year I will "tell all" about the Grind. Until then, MAKE THAT BARBERSHOP BUCKET LIST, keep on recruiting, and hold fast to that which is good! Do go out and buy some toys for **Toys for Tots**, too! You will be the better for it.



The Friday Lunch Bunch That Meets On Thursday



Look ye well! Miraculously on Thursday, August 14, 2014, the men of TFLBTMOT all appeared at the Moose On Monroe in proper attire. Bob Spang was so stunned that he bought wine (imported *Ripple*) for the intire assembly. (Ironically, the two events are most likely never to occur simultaneously again.)



Going to New Orleans?

Rudy Zarling, Ambassador of Song Chairman

By the time this gets into your hands, you have probably made your arrangements to attend the Midwinter Convention in New Orleans. You are looking forward to all the great Cajun atmosphere, the Mississippi delta, stern wheelers, Antoine's restaurant and the French Quarter. I hope you have. It has always been my wish to see more of you at the Midwinter. It is there that you really feel the emotional aspect that completes the thrill of supporting the Youth in Harmony program. Not able to fit the convention into your budget? Physically not able to make it? Then watch those young folks sing for you on the webcast! Sure you won't be able to see your friends and enjoy the southern atmosphere but you will be able to see those young men and boys singing their hearts out for you. They know you have given of your funds to enable them to be there and they appreciate it.

In the time that I have devoted to raising funds for Harmony Foundation, I am constantly surprised when an unexpected display of generosity occurs. You may recall that **THE HUT FOUR**, with help of the Commodores, produced CDs of their quartet and donated the entire proceeds from the sales to Harmony Foundation. Well, **Excalibur**, most recently inducted into the LOL Hall of Fame, has announced that they have made available their CD entitled *Unforgettable* and will donate the entire proceeds to the Harmony Foundation. This type of generosity is not often visible to the public. I learned that they were involved in many youth programs on their own that I and many people probably were not aware.

Congratulations also to **Chuck Schubbe** for being named to the

Letters

Dr. Hardin,

I have enjoyed reading the the Commodores newsletter and appreciate you sending it me all these past years. I would like to continue reading the newsletter online saving the mailing cost. Please remove my name from the hard-copy list.

Thank you,

Ginny [Sathe]

Editor's Note: Recently I had occasion to call Ginny regarding a potential client for Mark Sathe & Associates, the executive-search company that Mark had founded in 1974.

Recall that not too long before his untimely death in 2007, Mark had unveiled a plan whereby upon his death his business would in essence be turned over to its employees and thus be able to continue its well-earned success. In fact, Mark and his plan were featured in a large spread in the Business section of the Minneapolis Star-Tribune some months or weeks before his death.

However I was shocked and saddened to hear from Ginny that only

Hall of Fame. Ask him how it feels to see those young singers at the Midwinter.

I ask you to consider the following:

1. Attend the Midwinter in New Orleans either in person or via webcast.
2. Take advantage of the offer from **Excalibur** for the CD. This is a wonderful recording full of variety. There is no set price, send whatever your heart tells you is fair plus \$3.60 for mailing and postage. Or if you are going to New Orleans. send your donation to me and I will deliver it to you there.

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the LOL convention.

Rudy Zarling, 1381 Western Ave., Cedarburg, WI 53012

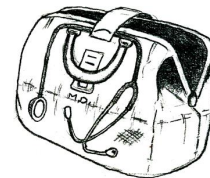
rhzcmz@aol.com

six months after Mark's death Sathe & Associates closed its doors, the tangible monument to a most remarkable human being having to be replaced by the indelible memories of Mark's countless friends .

I would pose that all who knew this unforgettable gentle man would agree that in Mark's "all-seeing" eyes, the vision of "Second Place" was ever anathema.

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Doc's Bag



By Dr. Hardin Olson, Editor

It is that time of year again when I have the privilege of offering Editorial Kudos to all of my faithful writers who continue to make the Chord-Inator so well anticipated and received each month. Their pieces are so good that regardless of how I put them together virtually every issue is exemplary.



Hardin Olson

My regulars, **Jim Richards, Jim Erickson, Rollie Neve, Bill Warp,** and **Rich Ongna** are my *starting five*. **Dan Williams** has been my *sixth man* this year and **Paul Wigley, Mark Ortenburger, Dan** Go to **Bag**, Page 13, Column 1

Bag from Page 12

Cole, Glenn Retter, and Bob Dykstra, are always ready to leap from the bench and step in when particular needs or situations arise.

The Chord-Inator team is one of the finest around and the envy of bulletin editors throughout the country. You should be proud of them and it wouldn't be out of line to let them know it once in a while.

Can any of our readers identify the

gentleman in the photo below? Bob Dykstra thinks it possibly could be that of Dr. Robert Browne, the subject of his article beginning on Page 5, the picture taken about 1952.



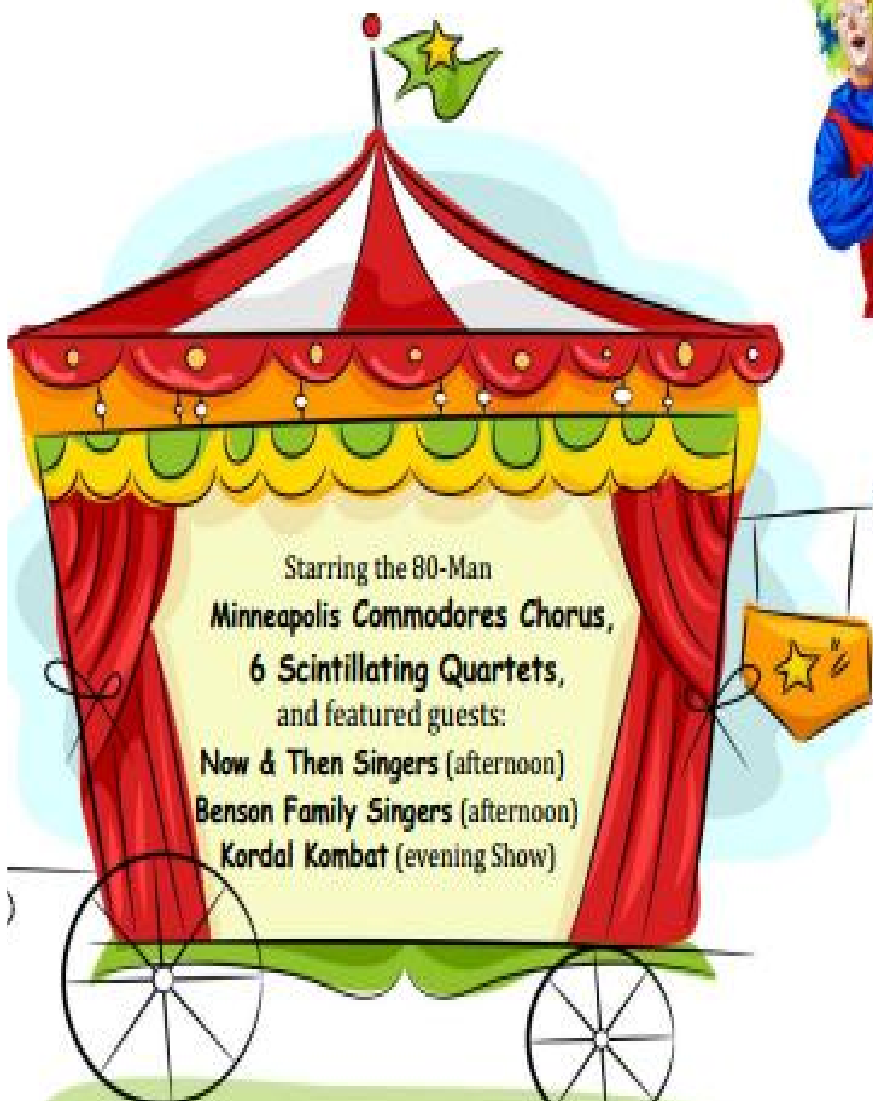
Bob Dykstra and I disagree about the estimated age of the gentleman in the picture. I think he looks relatively young; Dyke thinks he looks old. At any rate he looks happy and unashamed to show off his teeth.

It is also that time of the year to wish all Commodores, their wives and families, our loyal patrons, and our many friends in the Land O'Lakes District, a joyous holiday season. May your days be merry and bright!



The Minneapolis Commodores Proudly Present:

Under The Big Top



April 11, 2015

2 BIG SHOWS!!
3 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

Benson Great Hall, Bethel Univ.
St. Paul, Minnesota



Lions & Tigers & Bears - OH MY!

Be prepared for non-stop, edge of your seat entertainment, right from the very first pratfall to the final ringing chord. You'll be treated to soaring a-cappella harmonies in the Barbershop style. Did we mention there will be clowns? If you're brave enough to watch Booming Basses being fired out of cannons, spine-tingling notes being sung by the high-wire aerialists (our Tenors), mayhem in the Baritone section as they chase the elusive 7th chords, and our Lion-Taming Leads, staring down the king of the jungle as they search for the melody, we'll have it all. This is a "don't miss show". Come one, come all. Make sure to bring the whole family.



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**1st CLASS
 POSTAGE
 HERE**

Neither shared with the Girl Scouts nor dumped by the Sweet Adelines.

Logo courtesy of Bob Clark

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Chapter Quartets

- EASY LISTENIN'
 Dan Slattery..... 651/747-6384
- FOUR SEASONS
 Rollie Neve.....952/470-2129
- HOT COMMODITY
 Dave Speidel.....612-437-4325
- MINNESOTA GO-4'S
 Harvey Weiss.....763/439-4447
- NOTESWORTHY
 Harvey Weiss.....763/439-4447
- SKYPE
 Mark Bloomquist.....952/541-0232
- SOUNDS of RENOWN.....VLQ
 Mark Ortenburger.....952/942-8382
- TRIPLE Q.....VLQ
 Dave Speidel.....952/941-7153
- TURNING POINT
 Judd Orff.....651/439-3108

To:

LOOKING AHEAD

Chapter Level

- April 9, 2015, Tech rehearsal for “Under the Big Top”, Benson Hall, Bethel University
- April 11, 2015, “Under the Big Top”. Benson Hall, Bethel University.

District Level

- January 9-10, 2015, Leadership Academy/ Chord College, River Falls, Wisconsin

International Level

- January 6-10, 2015, Midwinter Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana

**2014 Barbershopper Of The Year
 Rod Vink**

**Commodores and others *
 contributing to this issue.**

- Bob Dykstra
- Jim Erickson
- Ginny Sathe*
- Rollie Neve
- Hardin Olson
- Rich Ongna
- Mark Ortenburger
- Jim Richards
- Dave Speidel
- Bill Warp
- Dan Williams
- Rudy Zarling*



CHORD-INATOR

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