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MINNEAPOLIS
COMMODORES

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

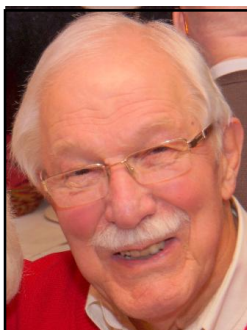
10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O' LAKES DISTRICT

MAY 2014 - VOL.70 - NO. 4

"The Early Days" continues...By Bob Dykstra

This month: "The Majesty of Northrop Auditorium!"

One of the more interesting aspects of the Minneapolis Chapter's seventy-year history is the manner in which we gained access to Northrop Auditorium as the site of our annual shows. Our chapter, which was chartered in 1944, held its first of what were to become annual shows in West High School in 1948. We used the same performance venue in 1949 and 1950. All three shows were sell-outs so the movers and shakers in the chapter looked about for a larger facility. Covetous eyes very quickly were cast on Northrop Auditorium on the University of Minnesota campus, a beautiful facility which could seat approximately 4500 patrons.



Dr. Bob Dykstra

At the same time, the Variety Club Heart Hospital was being constructed on the University of Minnesota campus. This new hospital dedicated itself to the dual role of specialized treatment of cardiac patients and research focused on the causes of and problems associated with heart disease. At the time funding for research was quite limited and the Variety Club Heart Research Program was desperately in need of financial support which could be used to purchase research equipment, provide research laboratories, and attract research-oriented young doctors.

Dr. Dorothy Browne, an M.D, and wife of Barbershoping activist and Commodore, Dr. Robert W. Browne, himself a dental surgeon, was the primary catalyst in getting approval for the Minneapolis Chapter to hold its an-

nual concerts in Northrop Auditorium. She realized that since the Heart Hospital needed funding and the Minneapolis Chapter needed a larger show venue it only made sense to get the two sides together. She also knew someone at the University who could help make it happen. That someone was W.E. (Ed) Drake, the Business Manager for,

the Department of Concerts and Lectures, who obviously was heavily involved with the operations of Northrop Auditorium.

She was acquainted with Mr. Drake because his daughter had been a patient of hers while suffering from spinal meningitis, a very serious disease then as it is now, often resulting in death. In the words of Mr. Drake, Dr. Browne carried out an experimental treatment which was successful and led to his daughter's recovery, the first such recovery from spinal meningitis in the state of Minnesota. Drake, in a letter to the Minneapolis Barbershoppers following the death of Dr. Browne in 1965, related the story of his daughter's miraculous recovery and stated further, "Naturally, I owed her everything."

While treating Drake's daughter in 1950 (or thereabouts) Dr. Browne started lobbying on behalf of her husband's beloved Barbershop chorus. Despite being told many times by Mr. Drake that "Northrop Auditorium was not for rent and that profits could not be taken out of Go to *Early Days*, Page 2, Column 2

**Minneapolis, Minn. Chapter
Land O'Lakes District, BHS
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Early Days from Page 1

the building,” she continued, with the help of influential Barbershoppers, to argue her case. Drake, together with James Lombard, Director of Concerts and Lectures for the University of Minnesota, were finally persuaded to discuss the possibility of shows being presented at Northrop for the benefit of the Variety Club Heart Hospital. Drake and Lombard met with representatives of the Minneapolis Chapter to discuss details, then Lombard met with Vice President Middlebrook of the University. As a result of this meeting, rules were waived and our chapter was given permission to hold its annual shows at Northrop Auditorium with the stipulation that a portion of show profits would be donated to a Special Research Equipment Fund (named for the Commodores) of the Variety Club Heart Hospital.

The first show to be held at the venerable venue took place on February 10, 1951. Four thousand people attended and \$2700 was donated to our new special and most heartfelt cause. (Ticket prices for the show ranged from \$1 to \$3, so this indeed was a healthy donation). Over time the research staff at the hospital chose to purchase with our special funds a 350-liter Tissot respirometer, a flame photometer, and a Beckman Model DV Quartz Spectrophotometer. (Wow!)

As part of our agreement enabling us to hold our shows at Northrop Auditorium, we agreed to certain stipulations: (1) to provide a professional skit as part of each show; (2) to bring in at least three outstanding quartets for the second half of the show; (3) to provide an all-male

show...unless we obtained special permission; and (4) to conduct an extensive ticket-selling campaign.

I have no idea why Number (3) above was stipulated. And we must have received near-annual special permissions because almost every (perhaps every) show had female roles in the first-half production. Furthermore, the second show held at Northrop in 1952 featured the well-known and popular female quartet, the *Chordettes*, who at the time were regularly featured on Arthur Godfrey’s radio and TV shows. Stipulations (1) and (2), I assume, were designed to ensure that the chapter would produce a high-quality show in keeping with the standards of the University’s Concert and Lecture Series. The stipulation (4) that we undertake an extensive ticket-selling campaign was intended, I assume, to strengthen the probability that enough tickets would be sold to fill up the auditorium and to make possible a significant contribution to the Special Research Equipment Fund of the Variety Club Heart Hospital. Year in and year out, we certainly did our part...selling in the neighborhood of four thousand tickets to each show for many years.

We continued to present our shows at Northrop Auditorium through 1977. The chorus became a much greater part of the show as years progressed and we no longer brought in three “outside” quartets. We continued to work hard at selling tickets, however, and we continue the practice of preparing a first-half production.

In 1978 we moved our show venue to Orchestra Hall for nine years, then returned to Northrop Auditorium for seven years. Since 1994 we have produced our annual shows at the *Go to Early Days, Page 3, Column 1*

What is the **ALTITUDE** of your **ATTITUDE**?

By Dan Williams, President

I've noticed lately how the weather seems to affect the attitude projected by several of us Commodores. The grumbling about the rain and cold, where's the sun, it seems to go on and on and on. Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining about the grumbling. But let's consider how our attitude affects our singing and performing. I propose using altitude as a basis of measure for our attitude.

My American Heritage dictionary defines ATTITUDE as 1. *A position of the body or manner of carrying oneself;* 2. *A state of mind or feeling;* 3. *The orientation of an aircraft's axes with respect to the horizon.*

When our directors and coaches talk about smiling, looking pleasant, and the proud regal stance, they're really talking about attitude. How well we sing and perform is the result of our collective attitudes at a given point in time. I googled attitude, got 76,800,000 results and 617,000,000

Early Days from Page 2

Ted Mann Theater at the University of Minnesota, and, most recently, at Benson Great Hall at Bethel University. In 2012, after much soul-searching, the Commodores decided to support charities other than the Variety Club Heart Hospital, but not before cumulative giving to that worthy cause reached nearly \$400,000...a magnificent total indeed, that should be a source of pride to all Commodores, past and present. Very few, if any, Barbershop chapters anywhere have come close to that record of philanthropic accomplishment.



Dan Williams

images were available to view with messages of encouragement or just silly humor. This attitude thing is BIG, REALLY BIG!

Personally, I believe being positive is the foundation of one's attitude. Try it someday; look for the positive in everything you do, everything you say and everything you think. Do it for the entire day. Don't allow any negativity. I think you'll be happier and will enjoy the day more than usual.

Now altitude is the height of a thing above a reference point or level, for example, above sea level. What if an average performance is our base or sea level? We strive to be better than average, somewhere above sea level. The higher the altitude the better. So, at what altitude is your altitude – ten feet off the ground, higher than a kite, somewhere over the rainbow or on cloud nine or 20,000 leagues under the sea.

I'm Proud to be a Commodore!

SUNSHINE HOTLINE



By Rich Ongna, Sunshine Chairman

Phone: 952-829-7009

Email: ddongna@usfamily.net



Rich Ongna

John Hansen fell in his home on April 26 and suffered compression fractures of vertebrae L1 and L2 and is seeing doctors to determine the appropriate course of action to minimize his pain. **Caryl** says he'll also be receiving a new battery for his defibrillator on May 21.

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 not feeling well.

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Chapter members are always welcome to attend the Board meetings.

From the meeting of April 24

By Bill Warp, Secretary

- Annual show revenues significantly short of budget; some receipts still pending.
- Riser-buddy System to be introduced as will *Come Sing With Us* business cards.
- Quartet Night will be bi-weekly with the equivalent of three quartets needed to finance the evenings. Bring your own quartets.
- Groupanizer is being updated by Chairman **Jerry Koch**. All members will have current photos taken.
- There will be a *Youth In Harmony* program on February 7, 2015. **Dan Cole** reports that the March 2014 event was quite successful.

• **Denny Maas** is continuing his research on potential altruistic endeavors for the Commodores.

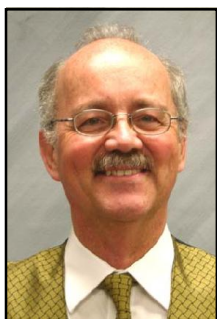
• Plans are in the works to celebrate the Chapter's 70th Anniversary.

Happy Birthday

- 05/11 Gordy Aumann
- 05/11 Lance Johnson
- 05/13 Ardis Von Fischer
- 05/14 Doris Hall
- 05/16 John Carlotto (65)
- 05/19 Linda Lee
- 05/20 Lisa Sansgaard
- 05/24 Pat Griffith
- 05/21 Steve Mangan (60)
- 05/27 Pete Mitchelson
- 05/28 James Erickson (75)
- 05/28 Marge Riemenschneider
- 06/04 Jeff Sansgaard (30)
- 06/05 Neal Mortenson
- 06/07 Gary Jacobson

Putting Ourselves Out There!

By Paul Wigley, Director



Paul Wigley

This summer promises to be one of the very most exciting summers ever for the Minneapolis Commodores! We have performance opportunities at many NEW venues, and these opportunities are a super means of putting ourselves out there. We are a very, very, good Barbershop chorus, but we spend way too much of our time *in-house*. It's great to come on a Tuesday night, sing with each other, and socialize a bit. But our music needs to be shared, our art form needs to be shown to the general public, and our collective ability to connect musically with others needs to be broadened.

These public-performance opportunities fulfill all of the above needs, and more! For starters, I am personally excited to sing at the Coon Rapids Dam pavilion, which promises to be a very cool venue, and a spot that we all might want to bring family members, friends, neighbors, and co-workers to simply enjoy a great summer evening with excellent family-friendly music.

The Sunday, July 20, performance at the Lake Harriet band shell will be HUGE! A beautiful Sunday afternoon (I just am sure the weather will cooperate!) at that very popular gathering spot could be one of our best public-relations activities of the year! And if you've never been to the Centennial Lakes area (August 4), that is certainly another place you will want to bring family and friends. It's a

beautiful venue, and again, a wonderful opportunity to share our music with an audience that may have not heard the Commodores before. And it will be another great opportunity to ask new men, "So, where do you do YOUR singing?"

We also will be at Spring Lake Park High School on June 14, St. Louis Park on July 16, and the Como Park Pavilion on August 12. Whew! This is going to be one active summer for all of us! But, we rehearse, rehearse, rehearse...and this summer it's time to reap some fun-filled benefits of all that hard work. It looks like a lot of performances on the calendar, but they are all spaced comfortably apart, and you all will still have weekends free to go to your cabins!

I'm so proud to be a part of the Minneapolis Commodores, and I feel very strongly about our obligation to get out and sing our music in public. I only hope that every member of the Commodore Chorus has the same burning desire to share music, laughter, emotion, love, and human connection with our audiences around the entire metro area. There are no finer men anywhere than the men of the Minneapolis Commodores, and it is time that we put ourselves out there, and let the larger public know exactly who we are, and what we do.

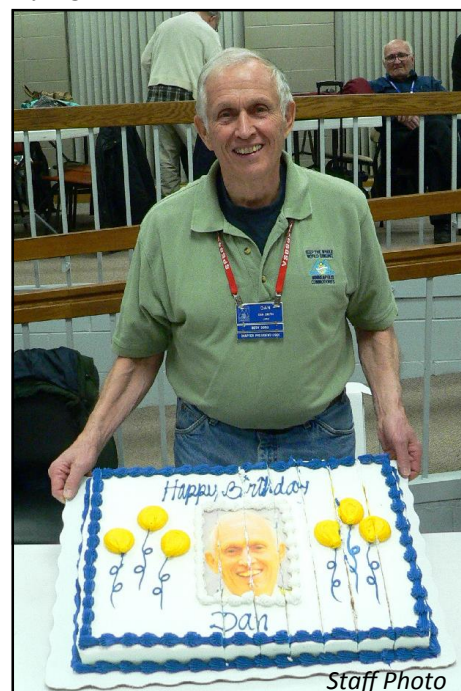
Let's continue to work hard, set a high standard for ourselves, and most importantly....realize one thing...it is great to be a Commodore!

**Let's put the
capital
"B"
in Barbershop**

Finally...some relief

Virtually all of **Dan Smith's** efforts for our chapter, except for his quartet work with *Four Seasons*, are behind the scenes; whether they be turning out learning CDs, validating chorus repertoire charts, working the sound system and the many other chores that the rank-and-file Commodores take for granted.

Most recently Dan and Carol were flying back and forth to Florida to be



Staff Photo

Dan and his cake

with Dan's terminally-ill mother and to make funeral arrangements when she finally passed away. This was a hectic and very sad several weeks, leaving them virtually no time to take a breather or to even celebrate their own birthdays, March 17 and April 29.

However, that on Tuesday, April 29, Dan and Carol were back from Florida in time to be surprised (Carol was in on it) on his big day with a super cake at our weekly chapter meeting.

Dan's shining eyes relayed all that was needed. They said it all.

Chord Candy #121

by Dr. Jim Richards, Der Tagmeister

My music dictionary defines *Cadence* as “the conclusion of a musical thought.” Cadence is a good definition of a tag!



Jim Richards

The goal of a tag is to conclude the musical thought melodically and harmonically at the same time. Without getting technical there are some rules that apply to both melody and harmony that have provided a variety of cadences to please the ear of the listener and singer. That is why there are so many tags. Sometimes a tag arranger will deliberately provide an interesting harmonic cadence that upsets the melodic cadence. Alternatively, the melody can be concluded nicely at the expense of a legal, but unexpected harmonic cadence. In either case the result does not make musical sense, but does provide an unexpected surprise that delights many a devoted tag singer. This month’s Chord Candy offering is a good example of such a surprise. It starts out nicely in the key of Bb but somehow ends up on a final E-Major chord, a tri-tone (one half an octave) away from the tonic. The harmonic steps to get there are legal but the melodic cadence is destroyed. This tag is not for sissies, but it can be fun if you like surprising adventures. Moving from the last note in Measure 6 to the first note in Measure 7 the lead stays on the same note, the tenor moves up one half-step, the bari moves down one half-step, and the bass moves down one whole step. Enjoy!

(JDR variation 5/6/14)

Oh, what a beau-ti-ful day in May. Oh, what a beau- ti-ful day!

Eb6 Gm Eb6 B7 B9-R B7 E E

Happy Anniversary

- 05/11 Lou & Nan DeMars
- 05/17 Gerald & Beverly Koch
- 05/18 Gordy & Barbara Aumann(35)
- 05/21 Mark & Jeanne Bloomquist
- 05/24 Mike F. & Candice Hojan
- 05/26 Loren & Jane Berthilson
- 05/27 Rod & Bonnie Vink
- 06/02 James & Kay Foy
- 06/02 Mark & Cathy Ortenburge(35)
- 06/02 Dan & Kathy Williams (35)
- 06/06 Glenn & Barb Aronson
- 06/06 John & Caryl Hansen (55)
- 06/08 Vern & Virginia Johnson



A Barbershop Trifecta?



Staff Photo

Andy Richards (left) brings a quarter of a century of guitar playing and singing experience in a 60s - 80s band along with his son, Matthew (right), who brings his drum-corps skills as a Vikings’ Skol Line drummer to the challenging experience of singing Barbershop as Lead and Bari, respectively, to a recent Minneapolis Chapter meeting, of course with the invitation of their Bass dad and grandfather, Jim (center). All three seem to be having a wonderful time.

Quartet Quaffs

Four Seasons

You never know what's going to happen in the world of Barbershop singing. Such is the case for the *Four Seasons* quartet for the month of April showers. Of course love and romance are involved. **Sean**

Randall had special plans for his 37th wedding anniversary; a special surprise for his bride, **Georgia**. Georgia is an elementary school teacher, and at 12:15 p.m. on May 7 (their anniversary date), while class was in session, he would meet a Barbershop quartet and usher them into her classroom. Therein he would present her with a bouquet of flowers and have the quartet sing to her, "Will You Still Need Me, Will You Still Feed Me, When I'm 64?"

All that was fine, the only problem was where would Sean get the Barbershop quartet? It so happens that Sean is a friend of **Peter Jamberg**, and from there the connection to the *Four Seasons* was made (Thank you, Peter).

Georgia's workplace, St. Peter's Catholic School, is located in North St. Paul on Margaret Street, a territory unfamiliar to the "Seasons". With the help of GPS we came to Margaret Street but found no school. It turns out that there are two Margaret Streets in North St. Paul, one going east and west, the other going north and south. We were at the wrong one, and some anxiety began to develop about getting to the school on time. Tom left the car to talk with a local and got some good directions. We



Rollie Neve

had Sean's telephone number, but his phone was off because he was on his way to the school, denying us direct contact with him. As it turned out, we got to the school on time and warmed up on the sidewalk outside the building. One mother who was bringing her child to school liked our harmony, so exclusively to her, we sang *Let Me Call You Sweetheart*. It blew her away. She had never experienced a Barbershop quartet before, let alone being sung to by one. It was one of those special Barbershop moments that one treasures and is defined with some emotional tears.

Right on cue, Sean came walking

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down the sidewalk with his bouquet of flowers in hand, whereupon we proceeded into the school and into Georgia's classroom, where about 30 bright, sparkling and surprised kids with gaping eyes were wondering, "What's this?" We sang *When I'm 64* and then added a *Happy Anniversary*. The kids loved it, and so did Georgia. That wasn't enough, however, as we were moved to make Georgia an honorary *Mary Lou*.

Sean told us as we left that the kids give us rave reviews. That's the magic of Barbershop. That's another beautiful Barbershop memory and another reason why it's great to be a Barbershopper and a Commodore.

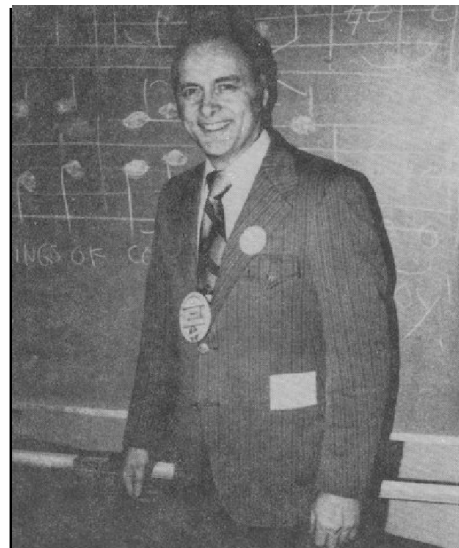
Rollie Neve for **Dan, Rich**, Tom and **Gary** [Gary Jacobson sang in for **Dan Smith** who was called away for a family emergency.]

Looking Back

Editor's Note: Recently I was perusing a large stack of Jim Richards' old Chord-Inators that had been passed on to me by our ad hoc historian, Bob Dykstra. The file included the 1977-79 issues when I first assumed the editorship. Following is a piece from the January 1978 issue that I think worthy of re-publication.

Jim's Dandy!

When the Minneapolis Chapter inaugurates its Hall of Fame, Jim Richards will be a charter member.



Dr. Jim Richards - circa 1979

Being so close to Jim, we, the average Chapter members, are probably not aware of the stature he commands throughout the Society.

Joining in 1953, it took him some time to really get involved. Quartetting seemed natural, so he got the ball rolling with the *Rose Villians* in 1959. To follow later were associations with the *Men of Accord*, the *Amalgamates*, the *Northern Statesmen* and the *Red Barons*, the latter being LOL District Champions in 1971.

Realizing that he did not have the *Go to Dandy*, Page 7, Column 1

Dandy From Page 6

necessary abilities for chapter administration he turned to other less demanding challenges like District Secretary (1971-72), District President (1972-74), and International Board Member (1977-78) as well as serving the LOL District Contest and Judging Committee chairman.

In between he was a member of the committee that formulated the Sound Category and was certified as an official Sound Judge in 1975. On weekends Jim has served on the faculty of International HEP Schools and it seemed only logical that he should be a member of every faculty of Harmony College since its inception in 1974.

Having gained some experience at long last, Jim was elected Chapter Vice-President in 1975 and President in 1976. Currently he is an at-large Board member and for diversion will chair the 1979 Parade of Quartets [the annual show].

His hobbies include woodshedding [tags], pole-cattin, woodshedding [tags], coaching, woodshedding

[tags], part-time directing, and something called 3M (whatever that is). Through it all Ebie has been right there beside Jim, encouraging him in all of his endeavors.

There was no surprise when it was announced that Dr. Jim Richards would succeed Mr. Don Clause as the Society's Sound Category Specialist. Our hats off to you, Jim—after all, Sound is what it's all about.

[Jim's rise to the Society's presidency, the story of his personalized license plates, and the route via Hawaii in 1989, with *Grandma's Beaus* to Tucson and the International Seniors

There Are Smiles That Make You Happy

By Jim Richards, Musicologist

The Commodores are currently in the process of getting the late Ed Waesche's brilliant arrangement of the Smile Medley off the paper. I counted the number of times the basses say the word "smile" in that song and came up with 20. We have about 65 Commodores on the risers. That means we have about 1300 or so times when as a group we should all be singing and displaying a smiling face. If we fail to do this you can be sure that we will hear comments from the judges in our next competition.

This challenge reminded me of a research report I read from Houston University. This report acknowledged that a genuine smile has its origin in the brain activity that sends a message to the appropriate facial muscles that corners of the mouth will curve up and the cheek muscles will cause the cheeks to rise and spread to result in "smiling eyes." The Houston research discovered that, even though we may not feel like smiling, the very act of consciously activating the smiling muscles causes the brain activity to work as though they had been responsible! In other words, even though your brain is not spontaneously telling you to smile the very act of smiling causes your brain to go along with the idea! The resulting brain activity will make us sing more believably.

According to Frank and Ekman* the

Quartet Championship in 1990, would make an interesting postlude to this remarkable odyssey. Keep an eye out!]

French neurologist G.B. Duchenne 100 years ago observed the there was more than one way to smile, but only one way to smile that is accompanied by positive emotions. The combined contraction of the *zygomatic major* muscle causes an upward pulling of the lip corners, and the *orbicularis oculi*, causes the skin above and below the eye to be pulled in towards the eyeballs. This combined muscular activity produces the Duchene Marker. The following changes associated with the Duchene Marker are indicative of positive emotion:

- a) the cheeks are pulled up
- b) the skin below the eye may bag or bulge
- c) the lower eyelid moves up
- d) crow's feet wrinkles may appear at the outer corner of the eye socket
- e) the skin above the eye is pulled slightly down and inwards, and
- f) the eyebrows move down very slightly.

If you see an "Easter Island" face looking back at you from the mirror, try exercising the *zygomatic major* and *orbicularis oculi* muscles to achieve the characteristics of the Duchene Marker. This exercise is every bit as important as learning words, music and choreography. Without an expressive face we are not likely to do justice to this wonderful song.

* Mark G. Frank, PhD and Paul Ekman, PhD on the "Psychologic Effects of the Smile", Directions in Psychiatry, Vol. 16, Lesson 25, Dec 10,1996



Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, Backward Baritone



Jim Erickson

No, calling myself a “Backward Baritone” is not what you want to think. I wrote that because I was recently ruminating about how much music has meant to me over my lifetime. Taking a meandering trip many years backward, being a ~~bit~~ lot older, I’ve had many musical encounters along the way. And some periods when practicing and performing took a back seat to career, raising children, and all of the other usual obligations and intrusions.

But my appreciation of, and interest in, music never waned. Later, after singing in choirs and quartets, I found that most of the time I enjoyed the rehearsals at least as much as the actual performances. The performances are over in such a short time. The rehearsals go on and on.

Something I heard **Elton John** say recently is that “The thrill of the music will never die!” I believe that if you love music, performing, and all that goes with them, the thrill doesn’t die. I know I enjoy the musical brain massage I get when a song has been worked on and worked on and then finally comes together. That moment of accomplishment and overall harmony takes second place to very few things.

But even if you are not a singer or other musician, you may hear and feel music from the earliest ages. If you were fortunate enough, nursery rhymes and age-old children’s songs of every kind were part of the fabric of your toddler life. Now don’t laugh at what I am about to say.....OK, you can laugh, but laugh with me, not at the little five-year-old me. My first recollection of playing and hearing music was when my mother showed me how to turn the crank handle on our old **Victrola**. Then she showed me

how to carefully place the arm, and the head housing the phonograph needle, onto the edge of the 78 rpm record.

From that varnished, wooden box about the size of four long, large, shoeboxes came the story and music of the *Three Little Pigs*. I played it over and over fascinated by the story and music. And, if that darned chrome crank handle wouldn’t have had the cantankerous idea of fun by kicking back at me at the worst times, bruising my little boy’s hands, I probably would have worn a deep, deep groove in that old record. I loved that musical story so much that my mother gave me an alarm



Reading the *Georgia Grind*

clock with the image of the three little pigs being chased by the big wolf on the clock face. And with each click of a second, the wolf’s mouth would open and close, snapping at the tail of the nearest pig.

Going through a box of old childhood toys recently, I discovered that old clock that had been stored for so long I had completely forgotten about it. A bit of a windup and that old, hungry wolf began to huff and puff and to try to snap at the chased pig once again.

I should probably explain what I mean by playing the record on a Victrola. (For you younger readers, a record is a round, hard black disk

about the size of a medium pizza with a hole in the center. Recording on the disk was done at various speeds, the oldest being 78 rpm. Quite fast. After the 78’s, 45 rpm and 33 rpm records became popular as products of the latest technology. These were slower and each record held more music. Awwww, you younger readers can search the Internet if you are really interested in more of this information about records.)

The Victrola had to be wound up by hand, kind of like winding a clock. And then when released, the turntable would revolve for the time needed to play a whole 78 rpm record and maybe a little more; then cranked up some more for the next record. Or, if you didn’t crank it up enough, the turntable would turn slower and slower and the voices would get lower and lower and voices slurred slower and slower. Fun to hear some, but not for a steady diet. I can’t imagine how young people must think about how quaint this process was. Eons from what the devices today are capable of.

I seem to have wandered a bit from whatever this article was about. My memory isn’t what it used to be and I’m not so sure it ever was. But that jerks my brain into action and I recall that I was going to say something about the meaningfulness (you made up that word didn’t you, Erickson) of music in our lives. My good wife, **Mary**, used to play the piano every week for nursing home residents. Many residents were very with-it and enjoyed all of the songs. Others were wheeled into place across from the piano and appeared to be in an unresponsive state; head sometimes hanging, blank stare at the floor, and seemingly little going on in their minds.

But after a song or two, gradually one would see a slight tapping of a shoe or a finger keeping time to the piano tunes. The heads would raise a bit, a little recognition would cross their faces, and an obvious connection. *Go to **Grind**, Page 8, Column 1*

Grind from Page 8

tion to the music of their past would stir pleasant memories, however removed they were from now rather vacant lives.

The power of music that had been instilled in those residents in earlier days broke through for at least one more time. So you can see that what you as singers and musicians enjoy is truly to be treasured from earliest ages through times near the end of life. And as Elton said, the thrill stays with us forever. May I suggest that we, as Commodores, do all we are capable of to keep that thrill going and growing for us and for our many listeners. It goes farther than you might think!

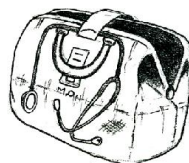
A second topic I wanted to talk about this time was, "What it's like to be a baritone." It was to be kind of a "tell all" on the lives and loves of a baritone. But that will have to be a topic for another time, I guess. I did mention to **Rollie Neve**, connoisseur of all things of little value, that I was considering writing about that possible revealing topic. He said, "One is never too old to learn something stupid." Need I point out his envy of never being permitted to visit *Baritonia*? I think not.

In the meantime, hold fast to that which is good and keep on recruiting. You will be doing a real favor to those you bring to the Commodores. Maybe even a favor for the rest of their lives?

Addendum: I have no idea why, but so many of my faithful readers have questioned me outright, e-mailed me, slipped me notes in dark hallways, and even encouraged me to put the question and answer on *Jeopardy* so that they would finally see the response to a long-time, perplexing question.

And what is that question? "What is the origin of the Georgia Grind?" How did it all start with such a goofy title and will there ever be at least one article with a smidgeon of substance? Having barely survived **Doc Hardin's** most sophisticated water-boarding

Doc's Bag



By Dr. Hardin Olson, Editor

If it has been a while since you have attended a Commodores' performance you might now notice a goodly number of abundantly-coiffed young faces manning our risers; many of whom have been recruited from the ranks of **Paul Wigley's** former vocal program at Lakeville North High School.



Hardin Olson

These eager young men have infused most of the wizened gray-heads in the Minneapolis Chapter with a renewed spirit and motivation to become the best we can be as Barbershop singers, the results of which are becoming increasingly apparent to the coaches who mold us and to the Society judges who critique us.

Thus it is disturbing and disappointing (at least for me) when one or more of these enthusiastic yearlings decide that they would be better served musically in a more rigorous and challenging ensemble. Most certainly we sincerely wish them well but, more to the point, what could be done to minimize such migration?

technique, I, **Baritone Jim**, have finally agreed to reveal all in the next article (or so). Our Editor, and Chief Gynecologist to the Commodores, now seems satisfied that there will be an end to this seemingly fruitless quest. So readers, Doc will patiently (?) await with you the revelation of the saga of the origins and meaning of the *Georgia Grind*. Wait for it. Wait for it.....

Editor's Note: There are techniques worse than water-boarding. (He'd better believe it and guard his fingernails.)

I think it can justly be said that the Commodores are a friendly, gregarious group but that some, perhaps too many, of us don't exhibit the drive and urgency to even try to keep up with these energetic voices. Thus it behooves each of us old hands to decide how and if we want to do something to minimize such departures.

At the very least that would mean spending a few minutes *each and every day* learning our notes and words. Such practice could indeed be habit-forming and would further enhance the quality of our musical product. That might not be enough to keep all of our new friends with us rather than farther afield but at least each of us would have the satisfaction of knowing we had contributed measurably to the overall improvement of the *Commodore Chorus*.

PLEASE...DO NOT be turned off by **Homer Simpson's** motto and I quote, "Trying is the first step toward failure!" That is reserved only for slackers and losers.

The Commodores have an enviable record when it comes to philanthropic endeavor. Our support of nearly \$400,000 for the Variety Club Hospital was an extraordinary achievement. I am sure that **Denny Maas** will appreciate any suggestions the members might have regarding selection of a worthwhile program for our altruistic dollars. Think about it and let Denny in on your thoughts.



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LOOKING AHEAD

Chapter Level

- June 8, Sunday, **Ladies Night/BOTY, Crystal Lake Golf Club, 5:00 p.m.**
- June 14, Saturday **Performing Arts Series Spring Lake Park**
- June 26, Thursday, **Coon Rapids Dam Summer Series, Coon Rapids**
- July 16, Wednesday, **Summer Concert Series, St. Louis Park**
- July 20, Sunday, **Lake Harriet with TC Show Chorus**
- August 4, Monday, **Centennial Lakes**
- August 11, Monday, **BHS Open, Elk River Golf Club**
- August 12, Tuesday, **Como Park**
- November 2, **Lakeville**
- December 7, Sunday, **Christmas Show with TCSC**
- December 9, **LDS Food Shelf Performance, Lakeville**

District Level

- October 24-25, **Fall Convention, Rochester**

International Level

- June 29-July 6, **International Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada,**

Barbershopper Of The Year

John Carlotto

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

- Bob Dykstra
- Jim Erickson
- Rollie Neve
- Hardin Olson
- Rich Ongna
- Jim Richards
- Dan Williams

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