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CHORD-INATOR

BARBERSHOP
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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

AUGUST 2019 - VOL. 75 - NO. 4

Doc's Bag

By Judy Olson



It was sitting on the top shelf of the storage closet. "Docs Bag". I lifted it off of the shelf – worn black leather and the name "**Hardin Olson**" stamped on it in cracked gold lettering. Inside were many old, used medical items and a stethoscope. Imagine my surprise when I took it out of the bag only to find it had a pitch pipe on the end of it. Only Hardin! I wonder if he was experimenting with patients to find the answer to perfect pitch?

Hardin was passionate about the Barbershop Harmony Society (SPEBSQSA) and especially the

Minneapolis Commodores. My most vivid memories are when the deadline for the Coordinator was looming. I would come home from work only to hear Hardin on the speaker phone with **Bob Dykstra** editing and arguing – uh discussing – the use of the comma and correct syntax.

Bob and Jean Spong commented on his love of cooking, and his "famous" caramels. Per Bob Dykstra, "He loved to share humorous stories with The Friday Lunch Bunch That Meets on Thursday. The only problem was that he could never get to the punch line because he was laughing so hard in anticipation of it. In a similar vein he wore his emotions on his sleeve when sharing something of a sentimental nature."

His camera was never far away and he loved taking pictures of special people and places and sharing them.

Above all, he loved all of the people who were part of his life.

Good times and hard times, he was always supportive and caring of others.

On April 19, 2019, I received a letter from George Washington University, and I quote:

As a tribute to Hardin's relationship to the George Washington University, we have arranged to dedicate a book in the Gelman Library's permanent collection in his memory. Library staff will select a book compatible with Hardin's field of study at GW and a memorial bookplate will be created.

Stories and memories abound. Many thanks for the amazing love shown for this special man – my loving husband and best friend.

"Doc's Bag" is now closed and back on the shelf. It's great to be a Commodore.

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President's Corner



Blake Wanger

Chorus members who have been at rehearsal recently now know that the near future is going to bring a change of direction for the Commodores. Our esteemed director **Paul Wigley** is not leaving the chorus, but he is planning to start spending the winter months in warmer climes and, in the interest of the chorus not having a director who is gone for several months each year, Paul has asked chorus leadership to begin the search for a new director. Paul plans to continue directing in an assistant capacity for most of the year, so we will still be seeing Paul in front of the chorus going forward.

As President of the chorus, I think this is a very exciting opportunity for the Commodores to continue to enjoy top notch teaching and direction from Paul and **Dave Speidel**, while at the same time taking a big step to ensure that the future of the chorus remains in strong directorial hands. A Search Committee has been formed, lead by **Carl Pinard**, which includes myself, members of the music team, board members, and chorus members at large. The committee met for the second time last night and laid out an application and interview process for potential candidates. Our intent is to have the new director ready to start by

December of this year at the latest.

One of the greatest things about the Minneapolis Commodores is our camaraderie. We truly are a family. And soon we'll be welcoming a new family member. Our new director will be someone who loves the Commodores, is committed to our mission and our inclusive philosophy, is enthusiastic, positive and fun, and of course is a very capable musical leader. At this time, the search committee has identified several candidates but we are also open to suggestions. Anyone who knows a potential candidate that may be a good fit for our director position can pass the name along to Carl Pinard and he will reach out to that person. In the coming weeks and months, chorus members may see some new visitors to our rehearsals as candidates come to meet the chorus, see what we are about, and maybe even direct a song or two. My expectation is that each of these guests will be warmly welcomed by the chorus.

How lucky we are to have had so many wonderful directors throughout our 75 year history! And now, our next director will be able to add an exciting new chapter to our history, while we still get to enjoy Paul's continued coaching and direction as well. As we always say, it's great to be a Commodore. And this director search is an excellent opportunity to ensure that it continues to be great to be a Commodore for the foreseeable future.

From Fearless Leader...



Paul Wigley

After a BIG month of barbershop during July, I've had a lot of time to reflect on our history, traditions, and features that are unique to barbershop. Between judging International contest in Salt Lake City, and attending Category school in Nashville (and I am certified to judge for another three years!), and now writing evaluations for competitors at International... a lot of barbershop time! So, Wigley, you might ask, what are you reading in your free time? Of course, I'm reading a book that contains sequences about... barbershop!! (Obsessed much?!)

I'm going to quote you a fairly long bunch of material from this book, and then tell you the author and date from which I'm quoting (DO NOT cheat and look right now at the end- hah!) So here goes:

"Look here. There has never been a barbershop quartette in any Broadway show or in any motion picture. Ever. At no time. Except *The Music Man*. No sir. Those familiar handlebar- mustache beer-barrel guys in the sleeve garters singing "A Bird In A Gilded Cage" and "St. Louie" and all such ballads and one-in-a-bar waltz clogs like "Bicycle Built For Two" are not, never have been, and nev-

er will be any good for barbershop quartette singing. The harmony on the one hand presents insufficient challenge, and the tempo on the other is too unyielding for barbershop. And as far as a tin-pan piano accompaniment goes, no barbershopper would be found dead with accompaniment. Barbershop quartetting, by the way, is the only art of its kind: where the pleasure is primarily for the singers- where performance for an audience is only secondary. Barbershoppers sing for *themselves* and for the pleasure they get out of an evening of 'practicing' hunting for luscious chords and modulations- experimenting with this harmony and that. Strictly trial and error *faking*, which is something nobody learns. You have to be *born* to be a barbershopper. The requirement includes a peculiar, particular kind of ear and soul for faking harmony. Your voice has to be a straight-tone blending voice, not a soloistic, emotional, or trained voice of any kind. Also, the art of barbershop quartette singing is strictly an American one.

And barbershop has never been on the Broadway stage. Except in the days of vaudeville: a good barbershop quartette always stopped the show with regularity no matter who was on the bill. The amazing truth is that even today, in spite of the barbershop quartette societies that have contests monthly and annually and locally and regionally and every other way, to which peo-

ple flock by the millions at a couple or three dollars a head (right in New York City, for instance, at Carnegie Hall, several time a year- and just try to get a ticket!)- in *spite* of all this the producers by and large, to say nothing of directors and agents, don't have any idea of what barbershop quartette singing is. That's why I put a barbershop quartette in *The Music Man*- and that's why those four guys stop the show in there, any time they want to- and *still* almost nobody in our business really understands the difference between a barbershop quartette and some other kind. You will only get red-headed as I do about the whole matter if you're a barbershopper, which thank the Lord, I happen to be.

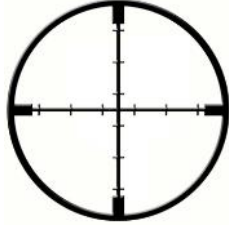
Anyway, the Buffalo Bills were the first ones hired the for *The Music Man*- poetically and rightfully so."

And so, Commodore friends, you see the passion with which **Meredith Willson** added the Buffalo Bills into his iconic musical- *The Music Man*. His book was originally published in 1959, titled "But He Doesn't Know the Territory". I said in rehearsal the other night that I'd be happy to loan this short paperback to any of you (but you must be present at rehearsal to get it- haha!) It is great to be a REAL barbershopper! And a Minneapolis Commodore!



MINNEAPOLIS
COMMODORES

Hunter's Bullseye



Shawn Hunter

Howdy fellow Commodores. As we go to press, I am sad to report the passing of **Brooks Bergersen**. As you know, Brooks was a



very, very long-time member and an excellent Bassist. Funeral arrangements will be sent out shortly. Our deepest sympathies to Brook's entire family.

As I write this I am just home from another fabulous Barbershop Harmony Open golf outing. For those of you who didn't attend, put it down for next year! August 10th, 2020.

The event is not only fun, Fun, FUN, but is also a main fundraiser for the Barbershop Harmony Society in the Twin Cities area as part of the Jim Richards memorial challenge. Many various prizes are given out, tags sung, and lots of laughs are on display.

In an entirely different line, your Board of Directors is looking for a few good men to serve on the Board in the next couple years. This is an important transition time for our Chapter as we search for new directors. Please carefully consider this and contact myself, **Dan Cole**, or **Blake Wanger**.

THANKS!



Jim Richards Memorial Chord Candy # 124



Paul Paddock

"May the 4th Be With You---even though it's August! It's never too late for some Jedi feats. And some Jedi chords! The **George Lucas** and **Brian de Palma** written-and-finessed opening text crawl, "Long time ago in a galaxy far, far away..." precluding every Star Wars movie we have seen is at last lyricized by yours truly! There were several intergalactic takes I was considering with this one, keeping in mind the vastness of space and trying to instill epic locking despite stretched chords, especially for the mixed voices. I honed in on two versions each for lower voices and for a mixed group. The aim for this is simple--introduce the story in the chapter. B Major is a great powerhouse of a key, and with that many sharps, it's only logical to ascend a little higher on things. Everyone starts on the tonic in unison, both halves

to duet, warming up the engine on 'ago', before taking off into the galaxy, far far away. The tenor leads the pack for melody. I originally had "galaxy" on a half note, letting you, the singers, freely choose your own narrative syllabic beat for yourselves inside it ("galaxeee" vs. "ga'-lexee"). But the burden of indecision perhaps has no place here, so I wrote it out as eighth notes and quarter note. The magic three's are present with each beat-crux on 'ga-', 'far', and '-way'. So strap yourselves in, make your Kessel Run in less than twelve tones, and punch it! Enjoy!"

Star Wars Opener (TLBB)

Music by Paul Paddock

Long long time a---go in a ga-la-xy far far a---way...

Get in the Brigade!



Dave Speidel

For those of you who are chomping at the bit to get your next round of great music and learning tracks you won't have to wait much longer. Look for registrations to open on or about August 15th. Just go to www.nphb.org to get registered. Music and learning tracks are in the que for immediate delivery.

One way to test your ability is to ask to sing one of the chorus songs with some of the Brigade guys and see how you do. We'll give you our honest opinion.

If you've found that you are pretty good at learning music we're doing in the Commodores – that's another good sign. In fact – a few charts you've already learned have been songs we've done at previous Brigades. Something Big, World on a String, The Way You Look Tonight are a few examples. These songs are very reflective of the difficulty to expect.

You can learn more by going to our website www.nphb.org.

HEY! Don't just take my word for it.....ask some of the "Brigaders" in the chorus like **Shawn Hunter**, **Steve Grady**, **Andy Richards** or **Matt Richards** (just to mention a few). They will all tell you the same thing.....The Brigade is absolutely the most fun you can have as a barbershopper.....and it really kicks up your game to a new level.

Hope you can join us this year. It's great to be a Commodore & a NPHB Singer!

Most of you have heard about the **Northern Pines Harmony Brigade** (NPHB) rally many times. For those who've pondered stepping into the waters it is absolutely a great barbershop singing experience not to be missed. Just chat with one of the Commodores who have made it an annual 'must do' on their calendars. As usual, we've got 12 great charts with excellent learning tracks to propel you forward with the music learning process.

How do you know if you can 'hack' it? Well....If you can hold your own in a quartet, that is the first and most important criterion.

It is a huge benefit to register early so that you can get the charts memorized – which really reduces the 'anxiety' you may experience. If you were to register, get the music and discover that you don't think you can 'hack' it – you'll only pay for the music (\$65) and get any other money returned – if you notify us in a reasonable amount of time before the Rally.

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NUT TIME!



Dick Riemenschneider

Fellow Commodores and Chordinator Readers: I write this close to mid-August. From today to the first day of the State Fair is 11-days, and the end of the State Fair signals the start of another season in our personal yearly cycle. The up-coming season includes school starting again, another church year beginning and church choir for many of our members, football starting, and other cyclical events. Not the least of these events is the annual Commodores Nut Sales Drive.

The Nut Sales Drive is a major way our patrons and members can contribute to the treasury of the chorus and receive a first class product for their contribution. When you think about it, the Nut Sales is very similar to selling tickets to a Commodores Performance, patrons receive a first class product for their money! In the years since I have been coordinating the Nut Sales Drive (2006 to now), the treasury has been enriched by a total of \$132,000, or an average of just over \$10,150 per year. And thanks to the splendid selling efforts by our members the last six years of sales have been above average.

Here's how the nut sales drive works. Members take orders for one pound bags of nuts to be delivered at a later date. When orders are complete the appropriate amount of bulk nuts are ordered and the bulk nuts are broken down

into one-pound bags. The nuts are then distributed to the member salesman to deliver to the customers. Since this is a "wholesale product in / retail product out" operation the Commodores take the profits on the sales.

As always we take orders for a delivery date prior to Thanksgiving. This delivery date is, Thanksgiving gatherings for distribution to friends and family. The deadline for orders for Thanksgiving delivery is Tuesday, October 29 and delivery to chorus will be on Tuesday, November 19 and Tuesday, November 26.



There will also be a pre-Christmas delivery this year. This delivery will assure fresh nuts for some vendors that purchase nuts for Christmas and for those that want to give nuts as a Christmas present. Deadline for orders for pre-Christmas delivery is Tuesday November 19 with delivery to chorus on Tuesday, December 10 and Tuesday December 17.

There are still some details to be determined regarding this years Nut Sales, foremost being price of product. Chordinator editor, **Shawn Hunter**, is much more a rigid calendar person than previous editor, **Doc Hardin Olson**, so prices are not set at press time. A special distribution of the 2019 Customer

Nut Order Form will be arranged as prices are finalized.

The time to begin your sales is as soon as you receive the Customer Nut Order Form. The "2019 Nut Order Form" (2019 NOF) should be given to all potential customers. When you give the form tell your potential customer about the win-win of them helping the chorus with their check plus getting a first class product for themselves. If you do not want to make your own copies there are plenty at the rehearsals. All 2019 NOF's handed to me will be returned to you when your order is distributed. Another form will be distributed with "2019 Salesperson Nut Record" (2019 SNR). If you wish to keep a record of your sales you can copy the info on the 2019 NOF to the 2019 SNR. You can turn in either form to me for processing your order. I think filing out the form is pretty straight forward but if you need help see any of the members for help.

As the song "Hey Look Me Over" in our repertoire states: "How can you win the world when nobody knows you're there?" That thought is true for nut sales also. People can't buy our product if they don't know we are selling. So hand the Customer Nut Order Forms to many people so they can buy if they want.

Most of our customers look forward to our nut sales every year. They like the very high quality of the product we sell and, of course, many like to support the Commodores. Remember the Nut Sales Mantra Sell – sell – sell!

It's GREAT to be a Commodore!

Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, Bemused Baritone



Jim Erickson

Summer doldrums? No wind in your sails? Just basking in the mid-summer sunshine? I guess it doesn't matter what the reason may be. Or maybe just no reason at

all. Relaxing with a cool, ice-laced beverage gives my brain a chance to reminisce a bit and as I do, I find myself chuckling at things past.

My first memory of things gone awry actually was about something that happened a year or two before I joined the chorus. I believe it was at the annual Commodore concert, but some of the old-timers will know for certain and they will let me know if I have it wrong. Doesn't matter.

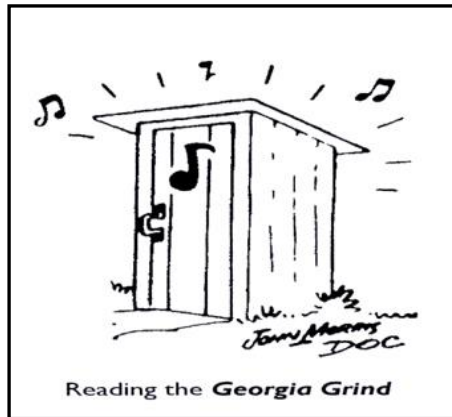
The song, "The Happy Wanderer," was very popular at the time. And so, it became part of the concert's song list. To start the song, there was a lead solo telling about how that singer loved to go a-wandering and sing a hiking tune. For the concert, he may have even worn a backpack and used a hiking stick. Again, check with the old-timers. The lead chosen to sing the solo was the late Joe Hauser. A robust guy with an outgoing personality and then some, he fit the part perfectly. And as such, he took center stage at the appointed time. A pitch was blown as the chorus awaited the initial solo.

Independent though he was, Joe was not one to ignore a required pitch. But, in the murkiness of the past, somehow the pitch was not the one Joe chose to start the song. Maybe he just didn't hear it well enough. Maybe excited. Or maybe

the wheel of chance happened to land on his performance and accost him with the inaccurate pitch.

Whatever, Joe started his solo several notes too high. Not a problem for him, I am guessing, and the basses, for once, would have a comfortable range within which to sing. Also, probably not a problem for the baritones because they sing a ping-pong sort of singing that bounces from the lowest to the highest notes, all in a day's work.

But for the tenors! This is the part that uses the singing tool of "screeching" as one they keep ever-handy and often leaned upon. Yeah, that's what they do. Don't ask them. They won't admit it. Remember this is what they do as a regular practice with most of their



Reading the *Georgia Grind*

repertoire. But on that Joe Hauser solo day, eyeballs popped, hair stood on end, tip-toes were engaged, and certain male parts ascended to heights that had not been experienced since pre-puberty. All in vain attempts to reach the bar Joe had set. Some say the chorus met the challenge. Others bowed out and mimed the words. All were beset with the startling thought of "Where the heck did Joe find that lofty pitch?" But none forget that rendition of "The Happy Wanderer."

As kind of a footnote, maybe the name of the tune was a prophecy of things to come as Joe's pitch cer-

tainly wandered off the well-practiced path.

Another memory is one of the time Carl Bloedel, an accomplished and well-rehearsed musician, was chosen for an instrumental part in a Commodores song. It was a small part and instruments are not the usual part of Barbershop Harmony. But this was. I stood right next to baritone Carl and my recollection is that he had something like a three or five note solo once during the song. The instrument was a triangle that gave off a nice ping each time it was struck by a chrome rod I'm sure you have seen them before. To keep the triangle from being muffled by holding it in your hand, one corner had a leather loop from which to hang and hold it. Having become routine, Carl confidently took the solo in stride for every practice. Well done, Carl.

Except, at the concert the triangle took on a mind of its own. Or was it a misstep by Carl? Whatever, when the concert rendition required his tapping the triangle, his first tap started the triangle spinning slowly, but freely, in the air. With no time to spare between notes, he struggled to keep pace with the now merry-go-round of a simple instrument. To be charitable, I think he hit most, if not all of the notes, but not before reaching a musician's level of playing the triangle seldom achieved by mortal twangers.

I am running out of space, but maybe these couple of mishaps will trigger some of your own Barbershop memories. There are so many that happen while we exercise our privilege to sing for others. I know the Commodores have some sterling performances of many different songs, but what lingers the most tenaciously are those that highlight our humanity. And the humorous trippings.

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- Oct. 25/26 – District Convention
- Dec. 7—Christmas Show
- March 28, 2020—Spring Convention
- Apr 25—Annual Show
- Aug 10—Barbershop Open (golf)

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