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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

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From Fearless Leader...



Paul Wigley

(Intro by President Blake Wanger)

Those in attendance at the Land O' Lakes District Convention at the end of October

who saw the Minneapolis Commodores perform might have noticed more than few Commodores singers getting emotional during our ballad. The song, Something Good from The Sound of Music, was moving in and of itself, but the real emotion came from the knowledge that our fantastic director **Paul Wigley** was in front of the Commodores as our director for the last time. To be clear, Paul is not leaving the Commodores. He will remain a chapter member and will stay on with the chorus in a new capacity that may include some assistant directing, coaching, and of course singing.

Paul Wigley has been the director of the Commodores for nearly twenty years. In that time he has helped the chorus grow immensely as musicians while remaining steadfastly committed to our inclusive and fun-focused philosophy.

The Commodores have performed at the International Convention twice under his direction, and have maintained a high level of singing in all of our performances. Paul was also recently inducted into the Land O' Lakes District Hall of fame. All of us who have had the privilege of singing under Paul's direction feel extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to share music and friendship with a man who is a gifted director and teacher, a warm, funny and caring friend, and the living embodiment of the joy of music. The chapter as a whole and each of us members as individuals will be eternally grateful for all that Paul has done for us and given to us over the last two decades. I recently asked Paul to reflect on his years as Commodores director.

Here are Paul's thoughts:

Thoughts from a soon-to-be retired barbershop chorus director:

*When I think about directing the Commodores for almost 20 years, it simply doesn't seem possible! But my best memories are about people- **Jim Richards, Joe Houser, Mark Sathe, Loren Wuttke, Hardin Olson, Dave Bayer, Wes Hattlestad, John Hansen, Brooks Bergerson, and on and on-***

so many others that had barbershop in their blood. These men were friends through barbershop, and that's the thing that will always be at the top of my memories as a director- my very best friends were all found through this hobby.

Even today, when I see younger guys in quartets and small ensembles, I see that they grow to be best friends through the music, and realize those friendships would never have happened without their being a part of the Minneapolis Commodores. The pride in being part of the Minneapolis Commodores (and previously in Mason City, who shares the same philosophy), stems from the attitude of "if you want to sing, want to improve, and want to be part of a musical group bigger than yourself, we will help you!"

My great memories are always about people, and the unique personalities we all share. Amidst all those different personalities, political leanings, philosophies, etc, only one thing matters- singing together and making music on Tuesday nights (oh sure...some other times, too.)

It's been an incredibly fast 20 years. But I've got 200 years' worth of memories jammed into these past 20.

**Minneapolis, Minn. Chapter
Land O'Lakes District, BHS
Meetings every Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
House of Prayer Lutheran Church
7625 Chicago Avenue South
Richfield, MN 55423**

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President's Corner



Blake Wanger

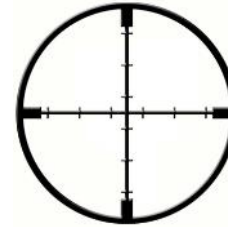
The Minneapolis Commodores are extremely excited to introduce our next director, **Jamye Casperson**. Jamye taught music in Iowa after graduating from Luther College (where she met her husband and fellow Commodore, **Dave**). She came to Lakeville and taught middle school choir for a few years, taught at Lakeville South (with **Peter Benson!**), and when **Paul Wigley** retired from teaching, she took over his choral position at Lakeville North HS.

Jamye has put together some excellent girls' quartets during her time at Lakeville North. She has also directed (both staging and musical direction) musicals at Lakeville North and Lakeville South. Her Now and Then Singers have also appeared on many Commodores' shows. She was the accompanist for combined Christmas shows between the Commodores and Twin City Show Chorus. Jamye has also been very active in Minnesota Choral Directors Association, and provided administrative and musical leadership in that organization as the Middle School Girls' Honor Choir Chair. She has also been very active as a musical leader at St Johns Lutheran church in Lakeville. Jamye brings a strong work ethic,

love of choral singing, and extensive directing experience to the Commodores. December 10, 2019 will mark Jamye's first rehearsal as director of the Commodores and the chorus is very excited to start working with her.

Welcome to the Commodores, Jamye!

Hunter's Bullseye



Shawn Hunter

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all y'all. As we move out of 2019, I would just like to close the year by publicly thanking **Paul Wigley** and **Blake Wanger**. In my 5 short years with the chorus, Paul has taught me more about music and the barbershop style than most directors could ever teach in a lifetime. We will greatly miss you "out front", Paul.

Blake has been a strong, selfless, hardworking president. Thank you for your leadership, Blake. We will miss your steady, can-do hand at the wheel.

For Paul Wigley

Director Emeritus

Minneapolis Commodores

December 7, 2019

The end of an era
Alas it is so
As we bid fond farewell
In *solfeggio*

A man of such grace
A great teacher to all
His musical chops
Left us often in thrall

Relentlessly upbeat
Willing all to succeed
With sharing and caring
Wears his heart on his sleeve

A true one in a million
And unique to his core
We'll not see his kind ever
Quoth the *Raven*, nevermore

Chorus 1

(A Little History)

Ski-U-Mah did become
His own Gopher refrain
And so Medicine's loss
Was the music worlds gain

Those great Barbershop chords
Grabbed his soul in a hurry
Favorite Sons did excel
District Champs in a flurry

Then back 'cross the border
Lakeville North it did beckon
Such fortunate students
Oh so grateful I reckon

And quite lucky indeed
Those *Now & Then Singers*
A lifetime of music

Such jazzy chord ringers

Yet the Wigley's greatest joy
A star in the making
Sarah's now a professor
Her teaching's *brehtaking*

Verse 1

(A Little Golf)

Crystal Lake's green fairways
The best part of summers
'cept the dreaded thirteenth
Pars, bogies, and "others"

On those early cold mornings
Have some coffee and Baileys
At our seventh hole rest stop
Casa David and Jamye's

After golf a nice lunch
Then a song's overdue
It's amps to eleven
Well *Hello Mary Lou*

Chorus 2

(What We've Learned)

We all see what's so clear now
That ones posture's the thing
We've become *early risers*
How you stand's how you sing

To "contest" now verboten
We "convention" instead
Just sing and have fun
And get out of your head

At District we vie
To crown a new king
More important for us
Our own *golden ring*

How grateful we have been
Learning at his behest
Songs sung for their own sake
Will take care of the rest

And the world that we know

Will be better by far
If we all join in song
It's a reachable star

Verse 2

(Looking Forward)

Twenty years at the helm
A career of some *note*
Now it's on to what's next
For our Emeritus *G.O.A.T.**

Wait what's that word we just heard
A lame excuse for a rhyme
But when GOAT'S written in caps
It means *Greatest Of All Time

And as Florida calls
With some golf and warm breezes
A respite from winter
While the rest of us freezes

But we're comforted knowing
That when spring does arrive
Our good friend will return
To rejoin his old tribe

He'll find we've been busy
Learning from a new leader
She'll have us fine tuned
With new songs *4/4 meter*

And The Tag

A Rochester moment
Something Good it would seem
You did fill up our hearts
With your face all abeam

That one song told a story
A reminder indeed
Of the meaning of *grateful*
One another we need

A friend to so many
A fine mentor it's true
C'mon let's sing a tag
'Fore you bid us adieu

Christmas Cabaret a huge success!



The annual Christmas show was replaced this year with a new concept....the Christmas Cabaret. This event, spear-headed by **Matt Richards** was a huge, Huge, HUGE success. Not only was the event sold out, but the audience and participants alike were treated to a night of fun, food, drink, and great MUSIC. All of the quartets and small groups did us proud and the chorus sounded great.

This event marks the last time Paul Wigley will formally direct the chorus and the Commodores sent him off right. Paul was presented with a nice plaque, and big cake, and our undying thanks for all the years of leadership.

Congrats and thank you to Matt and his entire team who coordinated hundreds of actions to pull this off. Great job!!

Alas, your CHORDinator newsletter editor learned a valuable lesson.....we need MORE PICTURES! (Sorry about that). Rumor has it that he will redouble his efforts moving forward to personally take more pictures at these events and include them in the newsletter. As always, he is more than happy to share these duties so if anyone can step forward to be the "official" photographer, that would be great.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays

to each and every one of you!

It's GREAT to be a Commodore!!!



Paul Paddock

Jim Richards Memorial Chord Candy # 125

The first time I was introduced to this song was my high school when I was asked to accompany for its 7-voice vocal ensemble, the Harmonix, back on the East Coast of Virginia. It was originally written by soul musician Donny Hathaway in 1970. It became a Christmas standard in 1991, having a reputation for being the 30th most-played song of all time by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Scholars. This tune is the perfect one to get you in the spirit of the holiday season as you start putting up your decorations. The tag comprises the first verse of the song, starting out in Ab Major and ending on a 'distant' relative in the scale--E Major. But it's not just any E Major chord, it's a sexy E9! Basses, this might be a bit tricky to land on, coming from the Bb before. I designated baris to be on the 5th

above to help out. The beginning chords are staccato for capturing the audience; converse from how it's usually sung--more sustained. It's meant to be sung slowly and sneakily, and with a pause in the middle with the element of surprise. It can also be effective as a synchronizing experiment for your ensemble or quartet if you often find yourself coming in too early or late. Plus, in a reasonably echo-ey environment, it makes it even more fun! Tenor has the melody, and it's in a comfortable range for everyone--erring on the low side for lower voices, just the way we like it, right? Have fun with this!

SCORE **THIS CHRISTMAS**

DONNY HATHAWAY
ARR. PAUL PADDOCK

PIANO

HANG ALL THE MIS - TLE - TOE I'M GON - NA

GET TO KNOW YOU BET - TER

Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, Bannered Baritone



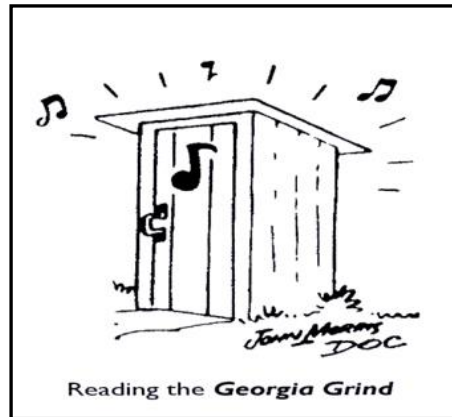
Jim Erickson

At **Mark Ortenburger's** request and promotion for banners on the new rehearsal risers in the facilities we had just moved into months earlier, several donors stepped up to buy them to defray the new riser costs. The unique idea of purchasing a "banner" (a black strip of material with white lettering made to fit and adhere to the front of each riser step) drew immediate enthusiasm and, at \$100 a banner, most were sold. A few riser steps remain unnamed and anyone may still purchase their own banner by contacting Mark. Even better, the "story" behind each banner is being sought from the banner sponsor(s) and **Paul Swanson** is developing a Commodore website section that will contain each sponsor's individual story. Many interesting ones and some are attributes to those of special influence in the sponsor's musical life. Be sure to check these out!

When the new risers were ready to be put together, some eager-beaver Commodores arrived before the scheduled time and jumped right into the assembly training. With so many "assembly workers," a few of us were relegated to picking up packing materials and performing other menial tasks. **Blake Wagner** stepped in to claim some large sheets of thick cardboard materials which he said he would use for some classes he teaches, but there were those who suspected he was using them to build a temporary summer hut on the shores of Lake Harriet. I only report the rumors, I don't verify them. He is, though, a

self-proclaimed master of improvisation and what could be more improvised than such a hut?

Now as the sections were being assembled, I eagerly looked for the baritone sections. I had been promised, I think by Mark himself but my memory has faded a bit, that the baritone sections would be specially appointed. How? Well, for starters there would be an extra layer of cushioning to stand on to help the baritones withstand the rigors of concentration when bouncing from one note to one completely unrelated next note while suffering the cacophony of the other harmony parts. (The dropped ball plinker nail game approach to arranging music.) Each baritone section step



would contain cooling or heating coils to maintain just the right temperature for maximum tonal production. Accessible holders for their electrolyte-laced water and their tickle-cancelling cough drops or gummy bears—pineapple flavor recommended—were to be installed. Top back rails were to be padded and contain vibrating, heat-infused action to relieve the stresses unique to baritone singing. There were many other accoutrements too many to mention here. To my extreme disappointment needless to say, none of them were present in the new baritone section.

First, I thought perhaps they had

been mis installed ending up in, heaven forbid, the lead section. But no, not there, nor were they in any of the other sections. What could have happened? Intense questioning revealed only blank faces and a pleading of ignorance on the subject. Even Mark just held his hands up and open, shrugged his shoulders and said something insipid like, "Looks like a hot summer coming up." Last minute engineering problem? No. I think like all great engineering ventures, the final product falls far short and becomes less than stellar due to the financial wizards hacking away at the funding until the unsinkable Titanic sinks. And, sink to being no better than other sections of the chorus.

Oh, mind you, the risers are fine and with the attractive banners appearing on the front of each step, they will be quite adequate, but think of what they could have been. (at least for the baritones). So, once again let me remind you there are still a few empty riser steps just waiting to be named in the honor of someone special in your life, a memorable quartet or other group, or really just about anything you come up with.

Here's an idea! Touch your banner at each rehearsal for good luck and lyrics retention. IAs a special treat, I have arranged an interview with **Paul Wigley** before he departs for greener pastures. (I like to use clichés like that when I talk about Paul as he clearly understands what I am alluding to, being a former farmer.) I will have him delve into a whole universe of musical information about his treasured theory of the **Airy Epiglottical Sphincter (AES)** and specifically, the little recognized or valued **tubercle of epiglottis**. I can hardly wait! Can you?



Don Lundeen

- A memorial by Peter Mitchelson

Don was quite a character and was known as Santa Dan with a full white beard, etc. I think he sang only for a few years, as I did, and I completely lost contact with him. One thing I DO remember were his personal antics on the risers in practice. He stood in front of me of me and we'd be singing some great

energetic song with lots of stage presence and when we'd be doing a big gesture with our arms stretched out, he'd grab my leg just above the knee. We'd both crack up, but carry on. Some folks like Dan Slattery, etc. who have been around a long time may remember him as well. It was a thrill to be a Commodore in

that period as we were competing in nationals, etc. Bob Spong conducted as did Richard Dick, etc. I have many fond memories of barbershopping.

- *Peter Mitchelson*



A Tribute to John Hansen

- By Bob Dykstra

With the recent passing of **John Hansen**, I lost a close friend with whom I shared the quartet stage for 37 years. John (most appropriately) was born in Harmony, Minnesota a few months more than ninety years ago and was a 67-year member of the Barbershop Harmony Society. He spent all 67 years singing bass although he had a wide vocal range that permitted him to post the high tenor note on "German Band" and to sing "Pennies from Heaven" in two octaves.

John's first quartet experience was with a Macalester-based quartet called the Par Four which performed widely in the Twin Cities and surrounding area and culminated their activity by appearing on the popular **Arthur Godfrey** Talent Scouts television show. Shortly thereafter, in late 1952, John was drafted and assigned to Fort Riley, Kansas, where he was assigned to Special Services. He immediately scheduled an evening of barbershop singing which led to his forming a quartet, which he named the Hut Four in deference to the army marching cadence.....hut, two, three, four. I auditioned to join the quartet as lead singer and John selected me along with tenor **Herb Fane** and bari **Bob Moksnes**.

So began nearly two years of service at Fort Riley where our primary role was that of army recruiters. We sang around the base and throughout Kansas and John also lined us up with live national TV appearances on the **Ed Sullivan** Show, the Arthur Godfrey Talent Scouts Show and a pair of army recruiting shows hosted by **Arlene Francis**. We also attended the 1954 International barbershop convention in Washington, D.C. as the official army quartet. In all appearances we were expected to "sing" the praises of the U.S. Army.

Following our discharge from service in late 1954, John reorganized the quartet in the Minneapolis area the following summer. **Bob Spong** took over as tenor (after a short tenure by Johnnie Wheeler) and **Don Sundt** as bari and with John and me earned the LOL quartet championship in 1958. In 1962 **Dan Howard** replaced Sundt as baritone and the Hut Four continued performing for another ten years. During the period 1958 to 1969 the Hut Four competed ten times in international quartet competition, earning semi-final status seven times. We also sang throughout the United States and Canada and were one of a select few quartets chosen to take USO

tours in 1968 and 1970 to entertain wounded soldiers from the Viet Nam conflict who were hospitalized in Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines. During the latter years John showed his musical versatility by adding a bass fiddle to Dan Howard's guitar as the Hut Four expanded its musical repertoire. John and the Hut Four retired in 1972 and he took a 12-year break from singing in a quartet. He did, during this hiatus, however, organize and sing with a trio called "Them." This musical venture became the impetus for John's next quartet activity.

A wonderful period in my life was the many years traveling and singing with John for all those years with Hut 4 and later with 17 years of the Salty Dogs. It's hard to estimate the hours spent together in cars, planes, and hotels. He was always a great storyteller, standup bass player, and of course, bass singer.

I recently cataloged my collection of songs sung by John and me in quartets...77 songs recorded and many more not recorded. It was a great ride through 66 years of friendship and music. Rest in peace, old buddy.

Shawn Hunter, Bulletin Editor
4125 Country View Dr.
Eagan, MN 55123
(651) 341-1373
Shawn.h.hunter@gmail.com



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LOOKING AHEAD

- March 28, 2020—District Contest
— St. Cloud
- Apr 25—Annual Show
- Aug 10—Barbershop Open (golf)

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