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CHORD-INATOR

BARBERSHOP
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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

APRIL 2020 - VOL. 76 - NO. 2

From Fearless Leader...



Jamye Casperson

Commodores, no matter if you believe that we are in a terrible time of sickness or a terrible time of economic stress or if you are worried about both scenarios

in different amounts...we are in a time that none of us have ever experienced. Here are a few things that I think you should do during this time.

Don't watch so much news. I don't care what channel you normally watch. It doesn't make you feel better. Watch just enough to get informed (weather, stories about people that are doing good, and know how to stay safe). Past that, turn it off.

Choose to be happy. If you are confined with someone (a spouse, a child, a roommate, a partner), you owe it to that person to be easy going and have a happy disposition. I don't like teaching through a screen; I don't like staying at home all the time; but I choose to be happy. I just listened to a podcast and the host said, "I truly believe that happiness is a moral obligation. Happy people made the world better. Unhappy people make the world worse."

Choose to be happy. Life is filled with difficult times, this is one of

them...take it easy. Find small ways to enjoy the moment! (hint...sing!)

Learn a new hobby. I actually think you should take a new approach to your hobby of barbershopping! Do something you haven't done before with this hobby; watch Youtube videos of barbershop quartets or choruses; listen to our tracks; listen to the full mix and sing your part; listen to a track and mark up your music; listen to other acapella groups and expand your acapella library.

Don't waste time! Read, walk outside, garden, call friends and family on the phone, watch a good movie, find a good series on Netflix or Prime, listen to different genres of music...use the time wisely.

Join us Tuesday nights! If you have the technology, join us at 7:00 on the Zoom meetings that we are having. It is so good to see everyone's face and talk and laugh and sing and joke. It isn't perfect, but it is Commodores!

Remember, the only true freedom we have is how we react to what happens to us. You are good people with good hearts and you matter! See you on Tuesday nights!



President's Corner



Dave Casperson

Wow! What a crazy couple of months we have had! I just glanced back at my inaugural Chordinator

article as president, and so much has happened since then. I'm going to re-address a couple of things that I said back in February, but it's worth talking about some of the things that have gone on since then.

First, I had the opportunity to participate in my 6th consecutive annual Northern Pines Harmony Brigade in February. A bunch of other Commodores get in on the fun every year, and I hope that even more of you want to give it a try in the future. What a fun way to share the joy of Barbershopping with other like-minded guys! You've got to try it – it's so much fun!

**Minneapolis, Minn. Chapter
Land O'Lakes District, BHS
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Next, regarding our annual show, we have navigated so many twists and turns. From dealing with a scheduling conflict (another chapter scheduled a show the same day) to ultimately rescheduling for September 12th, it's been quite a roller coaster! Also, we have had the honor of hosting several guests at our chapter rehearsals so far this year, with the newest member joining just in the past couple of weeks (Welcome, Bill Walkowski!!).

Now, the “elephant in the room”: Coronavirus/COVID-19. What can I say that hasn't already been said many times over? This pandemic has really stifled not only our ability to hold our weekly chapter meetings, but it has really handcuffed our local, regional, national and global communities. There are many facts and opinions about this whole thing, and I am not going to get into picking sides here. Rather, I would prefer to focus on what we can do to keep our Commodore community active and thriving throughout this whole ordeal. Time will tell the complete toll this virus takes on us personally, organizationally and societally, from a health standpoint as well as an economic standpoint. However, we can still continue to focus on planning as a group and rehearsing independently, so that when we do get back to some semblance of normalcy, the Minneapolis Commodores can pick up right where we left off ... and hopefully even better.

Chapter Growth – it is still my goal to see that the Minneapolis Commodores can continue to build on our successes and add singers to our group. Please keep thinking of people who you think would be a good fit for the Commodores. If you know a good singer, or hear a good singer, compliment them and invite them to a rehearsal to see the great music we make and camaraderie we share. I know that each one of us can bring one guest to a rehearsal before the end of 2020. Let's all make it a goal, okay?

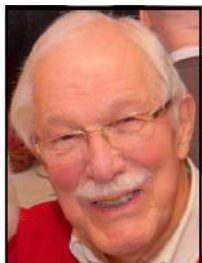
Singing Improvement – I would like to see every guy continue to make an effort to improve their singing, both individually and as part of our ensemble. Hopefully each of you would like to become better singers as well. We already have so much fun together, and we just plain owe to each other to give it our best effort and keep improving. We owe it to our audiences as well, particularly to those who pay to attend our Annual Show and Christmas Show.

So many guys (and gals) have worked so hard over the past 76 years (wow!) to make the Minneapolis Commodores what they are today and

have laid the foundation for such a great legacy of brotherhood and creating quality performances. The Commodores really have a great reputation not only in our local community, but throughout the Barbershop Harmony Society. I look around at our chapter rehearsals – and more recently during our virtual Zoom meetings – and I just think how fortunate I am to have such a great group of friends to sing with. Let's keep this train moving, so that legacy lasts far into the future!

As I sign off, I hope and pray that each one of you and your families are healthy and continue to avoid the COVID outbreak. I can't wait until we can be back together on the risers! **It's Great To Be A Commodore!!**

Musings from a Barbershop Curmudgeon



Bob Dykstra

It's April 1st as I write this which means that today I'm beginning my 68th year of membership in SPEBSQSA/BHS. I joined

the Junction City, Kansas Chapter in 1953 and competed in my first regional quartet contest two months later. I've spent more than half of my Barbershopping experience singing in active quartets, one of which (**The Hut Four**) competed regularly in Society contests even though it was best known as a "show" quartet. Hut Four involvement in competitions included five District contests, fifteen International Prelims, and ten appearances on the International Quartet Contest stage. We also found time somehow to perform on 1400 shows including two USO trips to Okinawa, the Philippines, and Japan to entertain service men and women who had been wounded in the Viet Nam war.

I also sang in a very entertaining show quartet, the **Salty Dogs**, who sang shows throughout the Midwest for sixteen years. So it's fair to say that I've had an active Barbershopping experience. I should also say that all of which I detailed above resulted from my remembering, accurately I hope, that when I joined the Society I could have obtained a life membership for \$75.00. As it turns out that would have been a

real bargain for me.....but who knew I'd be a member this long.....and who had \$75.00??

The Covid-19 lockdown has provided more than enough time for me to work my way through stacks and piles of Barbershop memorabilia collected during my 67 years of doing my best to create barbershop chords. One of the more interesting items I encountered was a CD of a show the Hut Four performed at Prudential Auditorium on June 4, 1970 as a fundraiser for the Minneapolis chapter. Ed Phelan, popular emcee from Menominee, Wisconsin, volunteered his services and had the audience in stitches with his stories. The Hut Four, meanwhile, sang 24 songs that delighted the audience and shared some new between-songs material, which met with mixed success. At any rate it was exciting to find the old CD and listen to our extensive entertaining repertoire of 50 years ago.

One of the songs we featured on all of our shows including this one was the Quartet from Rigoletto. The only other Barbershop quartet I remember doing this number was the Commodores' own **Atomic Bums**. With some prodding from **Caryl Hansen**, who also had just listened to the CD in question, I began to wonder where the arrangement and lyrics came from. It was/is obviously a take-off or parody of Verdi's operatic quartet but a great deal of "googling" failed to satisfy my curiosity concerning

its origin. I did find a quartet performing it in the "forties" with the lyrics that the Bums and we used but I could find no further information. I somehow have the feeling that the version we sang was available in published sheet music and that that's how we learned the song but I can find no verification nor denial of that supposition. And unfortunately I'm so old I can't find anybody to ask except **Bob Spong** or **Dan Howard**, and their memories are no better than mine. Is there anybody out there who can lend some information on the subject?

It's strange how things suddenly come to mind when you're sitting around with little to do. I grew up in Rural Sheboygan County, Wisconsin and was introduced to Barbershopping by attending shows put on by the very successful Sheboygan Chapter. Sheboygan was then a city of 40,000 people but its Barbershop chapter was regularly listed in the Harmonizer as one of the Society's Century Clubs. In fact, I was just browsing through some Harmonizers from the 1950s and discovered that as of October 31, 1954 the Sheboygan chapter with 159 members was second in Society membership only to Manhattan, New York.

The Commodores in 1956 not only boasted 142 members, second in the Society, they also boasted 12 registered quartets, pictures of whom can be found in that year's Harmonizer. I wonder if any chapter has ever matched that!

Another Great Northern Pines Harmony Brigade!



Dave Speidel

This year's Rally was just as fun as previous years and thankfully the weather cooperated fully. No major snowstorms to contend with and our visitors from far and wide had easy and safe commutes. One of the highlights every year is the trip we make to local high schools on Friday, organized by **Ken Wentworth**. This year was one of the most enjoyable experiences in my recent memory. The early Brigade arrivals meandered down south metro to Lakeville and Farmington area. We started at Lakeville South, moved up to Lakeville North and then over to Farmington. In every instance, the students and teachers (even **Jamye!**) were welcoming and engaging. The small contingency of Brigade singers put on a 45-minute program and then the students sang for us. The music was excellent, there were some stand-out soloists and it was so much fun!!! We all agreed that the choral music programs at those schools are in good

hands!

Steve Zorn pulled a trick out of bag of tricks and spiced up the quartet contest. After the final 10 was announced, Steve implemented a 'Wild Card' contest that permitted everyone who did not qualify for the top 10 – be put into another random draw quartet contest. The winner of that contest was then allowed into the finalist contest.



Yours truly was lucky enough to be in the Wild Card winning quartet along with **Matt Richards, Heath Mueller** and **Alan Coombs**, and propelled ourselves into a 2nd place finish in the finals. The winning quartet featured **Dale Bieber, Rob Hoversten, Ben Wangaard & Ricky Chaddock**. As always, the Commodores were well represented at the Rally. (**Paul P., Tony L.,**

Dick R., Steve G, Shawn H., Dave C., Dean L., Ben W., Matt R., Andy R., Nate W, Jeff B. & Bill M.). We were also blessed with the presence of our dear recently-exited director from Iowa – **Dave Bechard!**

The **Border Project** quartet thoroughly enjoyed participating as the judges, with lots of bantering going back and forth during the contests between MC Steve Zorn, judges and the Peanut Gallery. **Matt Hall** directed 2 songs and during our rehearsals offered some very good coaching suggestions that did help to solidify the NPHB Chorus songs for the Saturday evening show. The Boarder Project guys really did their part to hang around and sing with as many of us as possible throughout the Rally weekend.

Of course, the afterglow was a big hit, and its rumored that some guys didn't shut down the singing until 4:00 AM! Alas, that's even a little extreme for me!





Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, *Barricaded Baritone*



Jim Erickson

I have noticed, though, that as advanced as we like to think we are, utilities like Zoom or Facetime, or the transmission of those TV faces when they rely on laptop home broadcasts and the like to bring us together with others etc., reveal some relatively primitive technology for where we are today.

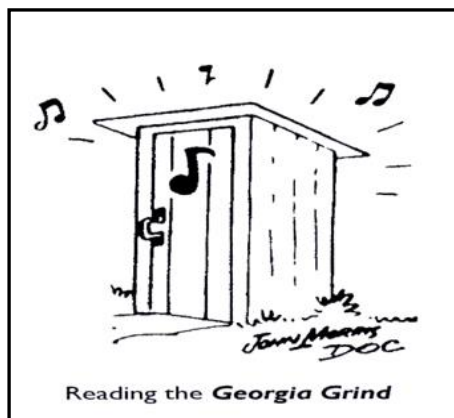
Some broadcasts are pretty mediocre by even the most technologically sophisticated. Missed connections, chatter interruptions during a presentation, hearing only one side of a question and answer session, long pauses between conversational speakers, and on and on. And, some TV personalities, like news people or weather persons, give us a hint of their family personalities by their homey dining or family rooms as backgrounds. Never mind that they have a white cable hanging from their ears and their nose appears much larger than the rest of their face. Ah, we are all in this together, but let's get those technology gurus on the forefront right now to improve communication equipment as we head into the twenties. Am I expecting too much? Really?

I do hasten to say that the creativity of the masses has produced some very interesting, moving, fun technology presentations. Like an orchestra of instrumentalists playing **Beethoven's Ninth** individually from their condos, apartments, homes, etc. Or choruses composed of individuals singing from their own remote locations to electronically come together to become a "chorus." Other groups (like the Commodores) that regularly met for their

unique purposes, now meet online in group laptop connections. All this gives an extra kick into gear even with our past rapid incorporation of technology into our everyday lives.

What do we miss in this Corona infused life right now? Well, for one thing, we miss watching **Paul Wigley**—now returned from warmer climes—straight-facedly expound on the obscure facets of the little addressed "Airy Epiglottic Sphincter." Or the camaraderie of just being in the presence of like-minded others from all walks. Or listening to voices immediately surrounding you to give you that live, uplifting feeling while singing in a group.

Here's what widely-awarded singer, **Linda Ronstadt**, had to say about



singing (edited to fit my article). "Singing is like skiing." When I (Me-author of the **Georgia Grind**) skied the lofty mountains of Colorado, I loved the crisp air in my face, the warm, unfiltered rays of sunshine, the stomach-tickling sensation as I lifted off rises in the terrain, all of which joined to give me an unparalleled high. After a great run, my heart would be beating, my breathing rapid, and I would be just full of ebullient feelings of wonder and excitement. Not unlike the high you get as you sing some challenging, moving song to its mountain peak apex.

And, as I vaguely recall, Linda likened singing in a group, especially a smaller one, as approaching the intimacy of sex. Need I say more?

We will adapt and once more find a

way to recreate the choral experience. Things may never be the same, but then, they never were. On the other hand, some things never seem to change, but just appear in different forms. OK, enough of Philosophy 101.

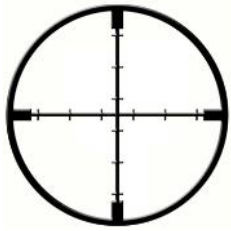
As you may recall, **Mark Ortenburger** won the personal slogan contest for 2019 with, "In twenty nineteen make music supreme." Being a man of many qualities, I can only assume he tried to do so. But this is 2020. Time for a new inspirational slogan. Since Mark won last year, he is ineligible, among other things, to win the exceptional prizes this year. He is however, allowed to submit a message again this year. A message like "In twenty-twenty, sing songs aplenty." See how that works? Please submit your message for the contest to me by May 1 and I will include in my next article. If I remember...

Closing now, but don't forget those members over 60 who are more susceptible to the Corona Menace. Keep your distance, be kind to them, hold fast to that which is good, and stay positive. This, too, shall pass.

And to appear more intelligent than you are and, at the same time, be admired by everyone who reads this (electronic) rag, remember you don't have to double space between sentences unless you are using one of those ancient devices known as a typewriter. That is so 1950-ish. Word processing programs now automatically insert enough space between sentences so double spacing is unnecessary. (and actually have done so for years) Only the ignorant, or the most stubborn among us, still double.

With practically everything on lockdown, I will be dressing as a fire fighter while prowling the sources from which I continue my research about the origins of the term, Georgia Grind. Will tell you more about that next time and will get to writing that up right after I answer the siren and hop on the Fire Truck running board. Wheeee! Wait a minute...where's my axe?

Hunter's Bullseye



Shawn Hunter

The February issue erroneously did not credit **Denny Maas** for the article about Crescent Cove. Thanks, Denny for the article and for your hard work on this project.

Although it is a shame to postpone the annual show and possibly other

things, it is vital that we all work together to beat this damn Covid pandemic. I truly hope that each and every one of you stays safe and hunkers down. We WILL get through this and emerge a stronger society and chorus!



Paul Paddock

Jim Richards Memorial Chord Candy # 127

Here is a sultry tag ending with a bass melody; note the melody is slightly altered, but has the same idea. This tune was sung by many greats including **Vaughn De Leath, Henry Burr, Jerry Macy** and **John Ryan** before **Elvis Presley's** recording in 1960 concluding his service in the Army. If the leads get a little jealous of the basses hogging the spotlight, leads can redeem themselves with the diddly at the end in the first ending. Allow it to be luscious & 'goodnight-sweetheart-like'. Oh, and yes there are two optional endings--your choice. If you're not comfortable ending on a major-7 chord, leads can just stay on C. If you'd like to do a repeat and cover both endings, maybe second one first before the first, that'd be even better! On 'come back again', notice how bass enacts the gentle guitar-strum in the background with quarter notes while the upper voices keep on with the serenade. The accompanying 'dee' in the beginning requires a tall (ee) not wide (ee), otherwise it sounds like a beehive on helium. The first ending (tonight) makes you feel like you're right near that stage with the 4 Tops doesn't it? It's a little jazz-like. Hope you enjoy!

Are You Lonesome Tonight

Turk/Handman
arr. Paul Paddock

1. *bass solo*

Is your heart filled with pain? Shall I come back a - gain? dee

Is your heart filled with pain? Shall I come back a - gain Tell me dear, are you

Opt. endings

7. (lone-some to) Are you lone-some to - night night

1. 2. 3.

lone-some to - night

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Logo courtesy of Bob Clark

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- EASY LISTENIN'
- Dan Slattery..... 651/747-6384
- JUST ONE MORE
- Nate Weimer.....316/204-8756
- SWYPE
- Mark Bloomquist.....952/541-0232
- SILVER SCREEN
- Steve Grady.....952/334-7500

To:

LOOKING AHEAD

- Jun ? - Como
- Jul 21—Eden Prairie
- July 30—Hopkins
- Aug 10—Barbershop Open (golf)
- Sep 12—Annual Show (rescheduled)
- Dec 5—Christmas Show

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