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WHOLE WORLD SINGING

CHORD-INATOR

BARBERSHOP
HARMONY
SOCIETY



MINNEAPOLIS
COMMODORES

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

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O'LAKES

JUNE 2020 - VOL. 76 - NO. 3



President's Corner



Dave Casperson

Just as we had started becoming accustomed to dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, our local community, and

subsequently communities across the country and world, have been jolted by yet another horrible event. Of course, I'm speaking of the events surrounding the death of **George Floyd**.

I think that it's a good time to do whatever we can to let our camaraderie and our music be a healing force. One way to do that is to continue to strive to be a welcoming chapter to everyone, and I think it is important that we each

reflect on the things we are fortunate to have. Speaking for myself, it is impossible to relate to many of the frustrations, concerns and fears that so many in all minority communities have on a daily basis. To a large extent, I also "don't know what I don't know."

I do know that I'm thankful for my personal circumstances and the blessings in my life, and I'm proud to be a member of the Minneapolis Commodores. This is a group made up of so many thoughtful, caring, compassionate people, including spouses and significant others. I hope that each of you can see how fortunate we are to not only have the opportunity to sing and perform (well, aside from our pandemic situation) and enjoy each other's company.

I know this is not the case for many people. It is my hope that starting with our "Summer of Stars" series of virtual events, we

can find ways to welcome people; people we haven't reached out to before. In our own way, maybe we can create a place where everyone feels welcome and safe, and can share a mutual passion for music and the healing properties that only music can bring.

If these seem like rambling thoughts, it's because they are. But I felt like it was something important to address with you because it has probably been on your minds as much as it has been on mine.

Let's share what we have! It's Great to Be a Commodore!



PEACE

Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, *Beleaguered Baritone*

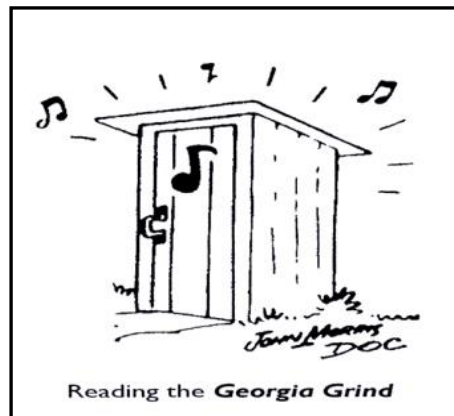


Jim Erickson

For over fifteen years, I have written articles for the Chord-Inator on too many subjects to begin counting. Probably most had something to do with Barbershop singing, the Commodores, and music of several kinds. Some wandered a bit off those subjects, but the whole point was to write about something other than “Don’t talk on the Risers” and “You need to work on, etc.” There were a few critically inept readers who said my articles were too long. One former Commodore baritone (rhymes with Sob Allwrecked) delightfully described my scratchings as a “Two-bathroom read.” (Can you scratch-out words on a laptop?) Subsequent to that quote appearing in my article, an editor of another chorus publication, he with an artistic bent, sent **Doc Olson** the picture of an outhouse surrounded by musical notes of some melody. That outhouse picture has appeared with each article ever since. Another famed Barbershopper and apparent regular reader of my column was **Jim Richards**. He said, “Erickson’s articles are the most ‘stream of consciousness’ writing I have ever seen.” Or something like that. I take that as a supreme compliment.

So, what does that have to do with this article. Perhaps a call for karma to take its foot off the disturbing occurrences pedal. In the last very few months, we have faced a few things that have echoed throughout the world. The first was the Corona Virus appearance

and rapid spread. Not that pandemics were unanticipated as they had happened before in history, but that this one through modern travel, etc., had spread to so many countries. Trying to keep a lid on exposure so that the medical system could begin to cope with new cases, many important facets of our lives were shut down in days. Not just barbershop, of course, but all sorts of group singing in enclosed spaces were determined to be particularly infectious. I hope this will all shake out over the coming months as alternatives like Zoom meetings serve as one means of maintaining some momentum, but suspect there will be a “new” normal that will be our future.



A second disturbing occurrence was the death of **George Floyd** while being detained by the police. This quickly led to spontaneous protests for which local authorities did their best to do their jobs. To make a point and gather the attention of long-standing police issues, some took up violence and destruction of neighborhood businesses to the chagrin of those dependent upon those very retailers. Following that, hundreds worked to restore the damage where they could, provided food and necessities, and all that would go to overcome everything these good people did not stand for. At this time, the hope is that cooler, smarter heads are working to pre-

vail in connection with the right to protest, but without damage or injury and work toward a common, positive goal. This world will never be perfect and there will be consequences to those things that are just going to happen in any society. But, the sadness, fear, anger and the rest are things we are destined to deal with if some sort of propriety is to be the world of the future. There seems no acceptable alternative, unless evil is to prevail.

Another topic, and this should maybe have been my second one above but I am continuing the sadness, fear, anger, etc., aspect. I have lost jobs due to downsizing, mergers, and the like. There are many life challenges, but the loss of income with a wife and two little children, is pretty devastating in all kinds of ways. There are some jobs (this changes from time to time) that are so short of job-seekers, that changing jobs is more of an inconvenience than a terrible event. But, when there is a massive hindrance to a functioning economy such as caused by this Corona Virus, and the workforce is drastically changed to millions and millions of unemployed, there is a superabundance of pain, anger, fear, sadness, loss and all, to go around.

So? I want to be optimistic of how this will eventually all turn out. But, in the meantime, we have a ton of work to do. Some things will require adjustments to the new normal. Some changes will need to be made. And, change is harder on some, than others. Nothing new there. I have to confess, however, that these tough events have made me sad. And the attitudes and actions of some people are very disappointing. You get it, I am sure, and I needn’t say more.

**Minneapolis, Minn. Chapter
Land O'Lakes District, BHS**
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House of Prayer Lutheran Church
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Richfield, MN 55423

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(Georgia Grind, cont'd)

Anything more? Yes. We, as singers and musicians, may have a distinct love of music. Not only do we sing, but we perform for others. And although we may not be able to rehearse or be in the presence of large audiences right now, we can still have much music as part of our lives. Keeping relationships with other singers through Zoom and other channels helps music to be a part of us. Practicing our skills is another way. Listening to our favorite en-

tertainers, songs, and music in other forms is still another way of keeping involved. But making and keeping music a common thread in the next months and years, will help us keep this as a special something to lean on as we move ahead.

As always, hold fast to that which is good (and that includes your music) as we see ourselves through these troubling times.



Douglas Lane Klemz was born September 15, 1950 in Monticello to **Wilbur and Margret (Borchardt) Klemz**. He graduated from Mounds View High School in 1968 and Anoka Technical School in 1970. He served in the United States Marine Corps from 1971-1973. In 1974 he married **Theresa Haneca** and was divorced in 1982. He was an electrical draftsman for Ellerbee and Michaud Cooley Erickson and Associates where he retired as an Associate in 2013. He was an avid hunter, fisherman, world traveler, and charter member of Wolf Track Archery Club.

He was a member of the Barber-shop Harmony Society since 1997

and sang in the choruses and two quartets, and awarded **Barber-shopper of the Year** in 2007. He also sang in several church choirs, lastly with Christ the King Lutheran Church in New Brighton. He married **Nancy Elias** in 2014. He died May 14, 2020 due to Covid-19, while in hospice care after a long battle with cancer.



Musings from a Barbershop Curmudgeon



Bob Dykstra

While paging through a stack of Barbershop memorabilia recently I came across an article from about

five years ago describing the renovation of Northrop Auditorium on the University of Minnesota campus. I was especially struck by the information that the major renovation would reduce the seating capacity of this wonderful structure from 4800 to 2800 albeit while improving greatly its acoustics. My immediate thought was that had the original Northrop Auditorium only held 2800 souls, the Minneapolis Commodores would have had to produce two shows for many of the 34 years the chapter used the facility as its show venue, in order to accommodate its loyal customer base.

Perhaps a bit of history is in order. The Minneapolis Chapter was chartered in 1944 and held its first annual show in 1948 at West High School. Beginning in 1951 annual shows were moved to Northrop Auditorium where they remained through 1977. Following nine years of using Orchestra Hall as a show venue, we moved back to Northrop for seven years (1987-1993). During all the years we performed at Northrop we produced an evening show only.

Our initial negotiations with the

University of Minnesota's Department of Concerts and Lectures resulted in our chapter's agreeing that we would (1) provide a professional skit as part of the show; (2) bring in at least three outstanding "outside" quartets for the second half of the show; (3) provide an all-male show, unless we received permission to do otherwise; (4) conduct an extensive ticket-selling campaign; and (5) donate a portion of the show proceeds to the Special Equipment Fund of the Variety Club Heart Hospital.

From the very beginning we more than lived up to four of the five stipulations with regularity. We always prepared a skit, usually with elaborate staging, as the entertainment vehicle for the first half of the show. We always had elaborate stage sets, for many years compliments of **Merri and Mel Leipke**. We always hired three or more outstanding quartets to supplement the chapter's own excellent four-somes. We contributed in the neighborhood of \$400,000 over the years to support research efforts in cardiovascular health and treatment. And we sold tickets! During our early years at Northrop, show attendance routinely exceeded 4,000 and chapter membership was responsible for a significant portion of ticket sales. We even reached sellouts on a few occasions, so we needed all of those 4800 seats in the auditorium to avoid putting on an additional show.

We apparently received special

permission very early on to disregard the stipulation that we produce an "all-male" show because our skits always included female characters and as early as our second show (in 1952) we hired the Chordettes, a popular women's quartet from Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and the **Arthur Godfrey** radio and television shows, as one of our headliners. I have no idea why the University of Minnesota requested (insisted on?) an all-male show, nor why we agreed to that stipulation, but it's apparent that it carried little weight in actual practice.

That 1952 show, incidentally, truly lived up to its billing as a Parade of Quartets. It featured six chapter quartets including the Atomic Bums; the Chordettes; the Schmitt Brothers, reigning SPEBSQSA International Quartet Champions; the Four Mor from Madison, Wisconsin; the Gay Nineties from Montevideo, Minnesota; and the Four Corners from Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Then, at the last minute, the Four Teens, an Air Force quartet that four months later was destined to be crowned the 1952 International Quartet Champions, found themselves in the area and were added to the list of performers. And..... just in case you're wondering.....the Commodore Chorus also sang a few numbers. I'm sure that that show, like many others that were to be held at Northrop, exceeded three hours in length. But in that day and age, nobody seemed to mind.

(Dykstra, cont'd)

One other aspect of our shows held at Northrop is that for many of our loyal attendees it was a daylong experience. We held a Pre-Glow starting at 1:00 PM at a local downtown hotel, the same hotel where we would stage an After-Glow following the show. (A unique aspect of the pre-glow was that chapter members, if they wished, could have two drinks on the house, compliments of the chapter, but had to pay for

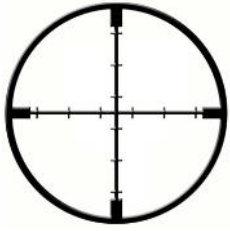
any additional drinks themselves). Many of our ticket buyers would attend both the Pre-Glow and the After-Glow in addition to the show. Our After-Glows, in fact, were held in a huge ballroom with seating for hundreds of Barber-shop enthusiasts to accommodate those who wanted to hear more Barbershop harmony. A significant portion of our show clientele would park their cars at the hotel and use chapter-provided buses to travel back and forth to Northrop Auditorium. I can only imagine these many years later what time

the After-Glow must have ended with all of those quartets ready to sing some more, and with the show, which started at 8:00 PM, running for more than three hours. But it was a real thrill to be an integral part of those many shows and I look back with much affection to our glory days at Northrop Auditorium.

More Brigade pictures....just to remind you what you missed!



Hunter's Bullseye



Shawn Hunter

My Brothers in harmony. This is a tough issue to be sure. As others have mentioned, with Covid, the economy, and major civil unrest, it is hard to even think of other things. I am truly blessed to be alive and well and still singing with my Brothers, albeit at a healthy distance. I just want to note that come hell or high water, the CHORDinator will continue to go out!

continue to offer up great memories of the 75+ years of our Chapter. I want to encourage any and all of you to also send in your thoughts for future issues.

I sincerely hope you all stay safe and healthy. It really IS great to be a Commodore. I look forward to singing with all y'all in person soon.

A special thanks to **Bob Dykstra** for stepping to the plate to con-

Jim Richards Memorial Chord Candy # 128



Kevin Keller

This month's tag is submitted by **Kevin Keller** (THANKS, Kevin. **Paul Paddock** could use a break!)

April in Paris is a little tricky harmonically in spots but worth the effort. Has a screamer of a tag and is a throwback to the way tags used to end

11. APRIL IN PARIS Tag by KEVIN KELLER

Tenor Lead

Bari Bass

A - pril in Pa - ris, Now, whom can I run to? Oh,

what have you done to my heart? My heart?

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Logo courtesy of Bob Clark

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- SWYPE
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- SILVER SCREEN
- Steve Grady.....952/334-7500

LOOKING AHEAD

- Jul 21—Eden Prairie
- July 30—Hopkins
- Aug 10—Barbershop Open (golf)
- Dec 5—Christmas Show
- May 15—Annual Show

The *Chord-Inator* is available on the Minneapolis Chapter's website minneapoliscommodore.org

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