

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

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O'LAKES

AUGUST 2020 - VOL. 76 - NO. 4



**President's Corner** 



Hello, Commodores!

This is going to be a very brief article, as this tends to be "busy season" at

**Dave Casperson** 

work (since I sell digital/online curriculum for K-12 schools, you can perhaps imagine the reason we can't keep up with demand right now).

Anyhow, I wanted to share a couple of thoughts with you as we head into the second half of summer 2020. First, how thankful and proud I am to be a Commodore; and secondly, how excited I am about the future of our chapter.

Every one of you have made it possible to have meaningful weekly get-togethers using the Zoom meeting platform. It's really good to see all of you each week, even though we are limited in our ability to see each other inperson. I've also really enjoyed the Summer of Stars sessions that we have been producing and making available to the rest of the Land 'O Lakes District (and beyond). These are ways that we have made it possible to maintain the connection with fellow Commodores – and other friends – and for that I'm truly grateful and proud to be part of the camaraderie our chapter is spreading.

Partly because of current events, our board and music committee have been forced to think of things in new ways. Although we have had to cancel in-person rehearsals and performances since March, there has been a lot of other planning taking place, for when things get back to "normal." Also, I had mentioned this past Tuesday, the music committee is beginning to plan for a fun (and revolutionary?) way to bring our Christmas performance to our audience, while they stay safe at home. More details on that to come.

We are also thinking of ways in which we can not only engage our members during these unprecedented times, but ways that we can grow our membership when our "normal" way of doing things is once again possible...maybe even while we are distancing!

These conversations are ongoing among your leadership teams, and I hope you all feel very confident and optimistic about the direction the Commodores chapter is heading.

I hope everyone has a great remainder of the summer, please remember to join us every Tuesday night for our zoom meetings (and maybe some modified inperson get togethers in the near future – Jamye has more word on that).

It's Great to Be a Commodore!

#### -Dave Casperson

## **Georgia Grind**

*By Jim Erickson, Quarantine Bubble Baritone* 



After about a half year, we are still in the miserable throes of the pandemic. It's amazing all we have already learned about Covid 19, but more amazing is how much more we need to in or-

Jim Erickson

der to return to a quieter, somewhat predictable way of life. My guess is that nothing will ever return to what we used to know as "normal" whatever that was to everyone. Some talk about a new normal and maybe that comforts them some, but with the disruption in healthcare delivery, school, social gatherings of all kinds, and all the rest, perhaps "normal" is a weak word to use for what will be a different world, especially for the younger generations. It will be up to them, with whatever help the rest of us can give, to seek and find the best way forward for them.

Enough! One thing that has risen to the fore is the way most people are finding creative, clever ways to stay in touch and interact socially. One person I know has a regular monthly meeting that is once again meeting (for the time being) in person. Oh yes, they do all the things recommended like distancing, etc., but for snacks, each person receives an individual food snack pack, single desserts, and separations of every item involved. And just this weekend, I witnessed on TV how one person may hug another slowly, carefully, heads tilted to the side and quickly "unhug" so as to reduce any chance of transmitting the "19." I am old enough to remember a member of the clergy, I believe, becoming famous for his insistence on hugging people. Reluctant to do so was the response of many, especially men as they might lose some of their stature as a man if they went around hugging others. But most felt safe opening their arms to this hugger and after a very few years, hugging among friendseven big, tough football playersalmost became an affront if you didn't hug those you knew. We may have to learn how to hug all over again. And, talk with someone face to face.

So, what does this have to do with Barbershop singing? Well, I have to commend those who have put together the "Summer of Stars" Zoom meetings. So much entertainment, talent, knowledge, wisdom and more on parade across our screens. We spend a lot of time (or we used to in the pre-19 rehearsal days) learning the music, perfecting each passage, working with nuances, and on and on. But missing was the type of thing Summer of Stars has brought to us. A more personal look at more than just the songs. Through 19, we have been forced to embrace an enriched choral experience.



OK, I do realize this Zoom experience is not a rehearsal due to limitations of technology, 19, and recommended isolation. Frankly, I wonder what rehearsals will look like in the future. I don't know what the statistics are, but I suspect a good majority of Barbershoppers (or any general chorus for that matter) are middle age or older. And those are the most vulnerable of the singers. By the time some progress is realized to overcome or control 19, more will have become part of that group. And fewer younger singers will have had a choral or any organized singing exposure in school or after graduating.

Perhaps that's where offerings and programs such as the Summer of Stars give an indication of what may be the way we go. And if the techies can find a way to eliminate the lag on the internet and other hindrances that get in the way of directing, that may be another path.

It is of little comfort to see the number of performers struggling to find an outlet for their talents and make a connection with an audience. I guess performers of almost every type will be in this together and need to find the way forward.

I apologize for this being a pretty "down" article, but right now I am missing getting together in person, the singing as part of a close group, the joking, camaraderie, and everything we have enjoyed as performers. Treasured are those "yesterdays" and hope and hard work is what we must pursue. I, for one, look forward to those days when "19" is of little consequence. You, too?

You know what I am going to say next. That is to "hold fast to that which is good." And Barbershopping is one of those good things. We value it most when we have to somewhat set it aside for now. Too, with all of the lockdowns, it has become almost insurmountable to perform in-depth research on the Georgia Grind. Never fear, though, as I am using my Indiana Jones techniques to fathomly reach the depths of revelations. More on what I have discovered next time. And I am looking into developing a line of Georgia Grind masks. The idea is that everyone will want one and my goal is to "Mask Up America." There may even be a Barbershop ballad along the lines of "Keep America Masking." We will see.... Stay Healthy!

Almost forgot. Remember when **Paul Wigley** was expounding on his **Airy Sphincter**? Well, he has now introduced the concept of the **Bernoulli Principle** in singing. Something he may have learned from his knowledgeable and gifted daughter, **Sarah**. I had hoped to interview him about this, but like when I tried to talk with him about his sphincter, he keeps avoiding my calls. I am going to borrow **Mark Ortenburger's** cell phone and maybe that disguise will get me past Paul's caller ID. More on this next time, I hope!

## NUT TIME!



Hello fellow Commodores! In these Covid 19 Pandemic times it's time once again to start the annual Commodores Nut Sales

**Dick Riemenschneider** 

dores Nut Sales Drive. It is an

understatement to say that things are different with our lives and our chorus in these pandemic times, and it is no different with the nut sales effort. First off, let me say we will have a sales effort this year. But, IT WILL BE A DRASTICALLY CURTAILED SALES EF-FORT!

Typically, we have around a ton of nuts pass through the nut central headquarters. With "social distancing" in full effect processing that amount of product is not possible this year. The chief bagger (CB) and I are not willing to allow assistants in our HQ for the bagging effort due to the aforementioned "social distancing ", therefore the CB and I will be doing all the measuring and bagging without outside help.

How will this method affect the sales effort you ask? Well, there will be a guideline as to how much product each Commodore will be allowed. That guideline will be 25 pounds of nuts per Commodore. This limit should allow individual Commodores to replenish their dwindling supply and may allow some distribution to other family or close friends. The limit being stated, it is not a rigid, cast in stone, limit, but the CB and I ask that our Commodore friends do not over-whelm us with orders.

If there is a good time to have a diminished sales effort this pandemic time is a good time. Our bills are greatly reduced so the typical \$11,000 or so dollars to the chorus is not so greatly needed this year. My estimate of income to the chorus from the nut sales this year is in the neighborhood of \$2,500.

Now for some good news: I have talked to the nut supplier and the supplier has agreed to allow minimum order amounts to be sus-



pended this year plus the supplier will offer the usual quantity discount and prices will remain the same as last year. One difference is the Dried Apples are not available this year. The apples come from a different vendor and we will not meet their quantity amounts for wholesale pricing.

We will still accommodate vendor nut sales and our biggest buyer has already signed on for somewhere north of 225 pounds, the exact amount to be determined.

The sales effort this year will not be as long as usual, starting on Tuesday, September 1 and ending on Tuesday, October 13. There will be absolutely no extension of order acceptance after October 13. Delivery is still questionable depending on whether the chorus is meeting at St. Pete's or not. We will cover delivery when we get that far.

I will author a short letter for our salespeople to distribute to their customers explaining the curtailed sales effort this year.

As long as the chorus is not meeting, all orders will need to be forwarded to me via email, snail mail, or phone. Payments will need to be delivered via snail mail. As usual nut order payments need to be made as orders are submitted to at least

cover the cost of the product.

There is a Nut Sales Order Form attached to this article reflecting the changes for this year.

Thank you all in advance for continuing your nut ordering. Also, remember that I will not be out front with constant badgering to continue ordering but don't let that stop you

from ordering within the product limitations.

I leave you with "It's Great to be a Commodore ".

## Minneapolis Commodores

Customer: required field				Phone: optional		
Address:	optional				Work: options	ai
City / State	optional				Zip: optional	
Descr	iption	Quantity (pounds) (Apples are per bag)	Price/Lb.		Foil Gift Bag (Add \$1.50 per bag)	Total Amount
Deluxe Mixed Nuts (no peanuts)			@ \$13.00	+		
Cashews Medium			@ \$13.00	+		
Honey Roasted Peanuts			@ \$5.00	+		
Butter Toasted Peanuts			@ \$5.00	+		
Almonds (natural whole raw)			@ \$10.50	+		
Almonds (salted & roasted-whole)			@ \$11.00	+		
Pistachios, V	White		@ \$12.50	+		
Trail Mix, I	Deluxe		@ \$7.00	+		
Pecans, Ma	mmoth					
Walnuts, Ch	opped					

#### TOTAL:

All orders must be prepaid Please make checks payable to : Minneapolis Chapter

Orders submitted by October 13th will be available to customers prior to Thanksgiving

Delivery to Chorus on Tuesday, November 10th and 17th - Or delivery to be announced

Salesperson: required field

Revised August 2020

#### Minneapolis, Minn. Chapter Land O'Lakes District, BHS Meetings every Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. Church of St. Peter 6730 Nicollet Avenue South Richfield MN 55423

#### **Chapter Officers**

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Past PresBlake Wanger
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VP Music /Perform Carl Pinard 612/927-9363
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Program VPBill Dahl 605-595-5172
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Harvey Weiss	763-439-4447
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Bari Section LeadersDave Speidel							
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## **THANK YOU, Summer of Stars!**



Kevin Keller



Nathan Gunn



Sarah Wigley



**Bob Dykstra** 

Mark Ortenburger

## Virtual Barbershopper of the Year (BOTY) a huge success!

Thanks to everyone who came together to make our Family & Friends and BOTY Celebration such a success. In no particular order (and hoping I haven't forgotten anyone):

**Blake Wanger** - For "*stepping up to the plate*" as our MC. A fine job as usual in all his sartorial splendor.

**Dick Riemenschneider** - For "*legging it around the bases*" with all the up-front work on the mailed invitations.

Andy Richards, Dick Riemenschneider, Paul Wigley - For the wonderful, "you gotta have heart" presentations for our special honorees - Ebie Richards, Marge Riemenschneider, and Becky Wigley.

#### Tony Lapakko, Matt Richards, Ben Wanggaard, Nate Weimer -

The *Basses* were loaded and, with one mighty swing, **Just One More** put 4 RBIs on the video scoreboard with their inspired and pitch perfect performance, all serving to remind us just how lucky we are to have four Commodores who continue to inspire us with their music and friendship. And, if I'm not mistaken, I think we all heard the *Bari "make the tag"*.

The "Extras Innings" - Dave Casperson, Jackson & Dave Bechard, Judy Olson, Paul Wigley, Eric Dalbey, and Lynnay Wanggaard - For their help with the video

**Steve Grady** - For "*hitting it out of the park*" and making everything run smoothly in his Zoom Command Center. Steve epitomizes what it means to give back as a Commodore as he ably demonstrated why he is our new **2020 BOTY**.

Congratulations! and special thanks to **Jodie Grady** for helping make things come together "behind the scenes".

It's GREAT to be a Commodore!



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Barbershoppers everywhere are familiar with many songs we sing that extol the virtues of smiling. Our honoree this year must always have a song in his heart because the joy of singing is writ-large upon his face. Truly a wonderful gift to everyone he encounters during the day.

Our newest BOTY has been very generous in donating his time and multi-talented skill set to the chapter including, serving on the Board of Directors, as Show Chairman, and leading a number of key high-value initiatives. His inspired thought - "let's be unconventional and put the fun back" in the LOL District Convention, not only made a difference here but has gone viral and generated strong interest throughout the rest of the Barbershop Harmony Society.

Even though his Dance Card is always full, he never fails to light up the Silver Screen with his enthusiastic attitude. He's even worked a few choreography miracles with the strange notion that one can sing, smile, and dance at the same time. And, as we hit that final soaring chord, makes sure our audience knows that there's none better than the Commodores when it comes to lifting that Sacred Watermelon. In grateful appreciation of his many contributions and dedication to our chapter, the Minneapolis Commodores are very pleased to proclaim:

## **Steven C. Grady**

2020 Barbershopper Of The Year

## Summer of Stars!



The Minneapolis Commodores are very fortunate to have lots of members that take the good old "when life gives you lemons, make lemonade" approach! This has

never been more evident than the evolution of the "Summer of Stars" concept. The music committee was looking for ways to enhance the 'online' 'virtual' 'Zoom' experience, and through some interesting discussions, the Summer of Stars concept was born.

The best thing about online, Zoom rehearsals is the fact that it enables us to connect with virtually anyone in the entire world! So, we have been able to take advantage of this with some very interesting evenings featuring guest presenters.

We DO have a strong connection to the first presenter that we used - Sarah Wigley has been a part of the Commodores' family since I started directing about 20 years ago. Luckily for us, she has seen her career take her in a direction that even she could not have predicted. Through a series of life events, Sarah has become a bit of an expert on musical theatre vocal techniques. It's not that different from 'traditional' vocal production, BUT it does deal with some of the extreme voice ranges and volumes that musical

theatre performers are required to use. Sarah was able to share some of those ideas and show how it connects to barbershop singing- it's a vibrant, resonant, lyrically driven, exciting sound! **Tony Mason** was a terrific guinea pig, and hopefully all of us found new ways to increase range and vocal freedom.

The second presenter was a very close friend that has led the BHS through all sorts of stylistic evolution. We were extremely lucky to get Kevin Keller to spend an evening with us, sharing his topic of "How is THAT Barbershop?!?!" (...cleaned up for family reading...) As a Music Category judge, I still find that every time I hear Kevin talk...I listen! His comparisons of performances through the years, and his philosophical approach to what the barbershop style really IS, are spellbinding. The evening with Kevin Keller was uplifting, and gave us new appreciation for the history of our style, combined with new excitement for the creativity that is now being embraced by our singers. It was a truly wonderful evening.

The 'dream' presenter is a colleague of Sarah Wigley at the University of Illinois. **Nathan Gunn** has had a very successful career as an opera singer in basically every major opera house in the world. I won't go into his accolades here, but I will say that I was mildly surprised when Nathan said "sure!" after I asked him if he would be willing to talk to the Commodores for about 30 minutes (which actually ended up being more like 90 minutes!!) Nathan shared everything from basic tips on breathing, to how to deal with performance anxiety, to...anything else that we asked. It was a great evening to share questions and answers with a performer that has won a Grammy award, and now shares his experiences and knowledge with University students at Illinois. After his session he simply said "I had a blast!"

And who better to give a history of barbershop, and the Commodores, than our very own **Bob Dykstra**. Bob is truly a treasure to all of us, and I do not think I have ever met a more dapper man...that could be so funny! Bob graciously tackled his trepidation of all the technology involved with Zoom, and enlightened the entire Commodore audience.

There are still some upcoming events in our Summer of Starslook for an evening of some of the most memorable International contest performances from the viewpoint of....well, ME. And then the super fun virtual contest of the best quartets never to win International.

So, let's "make some lemonade" until we can sing together LIVE...hopefully soon!

#### Paul

(Director Emeritus...I think that means 'old')

#### **Musings from a Bar**bershop Curmugeon



Today I got to thinking about the early days of Barbershopping and the role played by

**Bob Dykstra** 

"crows" in the development of our beloved hobby. The label was affectionately given to men who joined not necessarily because of a desire to ring chords themselves, but because they enjoyed barbershop harmony and the camaraderie involved in the fledgling hobby. I've had little success researching the topic on a broad scale so I'll have to depend on my own experience as a longtime member of the Minneapolis Chapter.

I joined the Commodores in June of 1955 when the Hut Four decided to reunite in Minneapolis and continue our musical journey. At that time the Commodores had a membership approaching 150 but far fewer attended chapter meetings, which were held upstairs at the Elk's Club on 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Some never made it past the barroom downstairs for a good part of the evening. Gang singing under the directorship of Luke Sletten while comfortably sitting on chairs occupied a good part of the evening's activities. There was also a good deal of quartet singing, both organized and impromptu. (At the time, believe it or not, the Minneapolis Chapter boasted an even dozen registered quartets.) Recall that chorus competition was in its infancy (the first international competition had been held in Washington, D.C. just one year earlier in 1954), and no meeting time was

spent on vocal warmups, vowel matching, interpretation and the like. We and many other chapters had not yet caught the "contest bug". We just "let it all hang out" and sang.

In such an environment "crows" probably felt comfortable singing even if they were musicallychallenged, and nobody asked prospective members whether or not they could sing. I remember basses who simply sang the melody an octave lower and leads with limited ability to sing in tune. I assume "crows" seldom declared themselves baritones or tenors because of the obvious challenge to their musicality.

The chapter as a whole did sing a few songs on the annual show but shows at the time were accurately labeled "Parades of Quartets." And I do remember a most unforgettable chapter member, **Doc Browne**, who contributed mightily to the chapter in ticket sales, ad sales, set construction, donations of sweet corn to the annual chapter picnic and the like. In appreciation of his multiple efforts the chapter named him Permanent Advisor to the Board but as a chorus member he sang so loudly and unmusically that Director Luke Sletten allowed him on show risers only if he promised to lip-synch and not make a sound. So even Crows had to operate within certain limits.

Things changed a bit a few years later when we became more interested in contests. But still there were no auditions and most everyone who wanted to sing in chorus contests was welcomed on the risers. The few exceptions I recall were the aforementioned Dr. Browne and an occasional member who was "over-served" prior to the competition and was asked not to participate.

Our first international chorus competition was in Chicago in 1959. Regs Ellefson had taken over as director and we put approximately 70 men on the competition stage placing tenth out of fourteen contestants. I recall there was a fair amount or griping while getting ready for the contest because we occasionally were asked to spend a half hour or so on the risers. Minneapolis chapter membership at the time was twice the number of those who competed so perhaps many chapter crows chose not to compete or perhaps there was some effort put into eliminating those who were musically challenged. I simply don't remember.

I also wonder how many members of our active chapter quartets (remember we had 12 just three years earlier) sang with the chorus. If most of them did I would have expected a higher finish. At any rate, this 1959 Chicago convention signaled that chorus competition was becoming a basic part of Barbershopping even in chapters like ours that had been so quartetoriented. Chapter meetings would be changed forever and in many/most cases would become chapter chorus rehearsals. Barbershopping was never to be the same!

# **BOMP and Just One More shine in summer concerts**

With COVID still raging, our usual slate of summer chorus concerts has obviously been impacted. But the show must go on! Two of our most popular quartets have braved the pandemic and ensured that the Commodores continued the summer tradition. At 2 events this summer, BOMP and Just One More warbled their way into community hearts by delivering great evenings of music which delighted audiences to no end. On top of it all, we helped raise \$650 for the PROP food shelves.

Way to go, boys! Congrats and THANK YOU!



### From Fearless Leader...



I spent the month of July at the virtual version of Harmony University. There are many extremely talented presenters and educators that are a part of Harmony University. I enjoyed many of the

Jamye Casperson sessions offered virtually. This, like almost everything else, isn't as enjoyable in a virtual video format. However, I enjoyed being able to watch the videos on my own schedule and rewind and re-watch parts that I found interesting. Here are the top 5 things I learned, re-learned or were reminded of during VHU.

1. **Tension** is the enemy of the free voice a. Tension in the body means tension in the voice

b. If you can freely move something, there is an absence of tension.

2. Alignment: The voice is an instrument and needs to be put together the right way

a. Intonation issues are almost always a physical issue

b. The body needs to function efficiently

Give your best and not your all
a. Good healthy, supported singing

4. **Match** your performance to the lyrics/be genuine when you tell the story

a. We must be storytellers

b. We have the capacity to impact our audience

5. To blend is not the objective in a chorus

- a. Sing with more beauty in your sound
- b. Every singer is important
- c. Use your best instrument
- d. Don't need to conform your sound.

e. The most blended sound is when each singer is singing their best NOT altering their sound

I am looking forward to the day when we are singing together in person. Until then, I will look forward to all the things we can do separate, yet together, to make our chorus better and our connections stronger.

Jamye

## Hunter's Bullseye



Shawn Hunter

My Brothers in harmony:

First, CONGRATS to our newest BOTY, Silver Screen's very own **Steve Grady**. Way to go, Steve.

Just to be a broken record, I can't tell you how much I miss seeing all of you. Although Zoom is great, it is no substitute for personal interaction and certainly no substitute for ringing chords with all y'all. We WILL get through this and come out strong on the other side. I sincerely hope and pray that you and your families are safe and healthy. Special thanks to all those who continue to share their talents by submitting great CHORDinator articles!



**Paul Paddock** 

Jim Richards Memorial Chord Candy # 129

Here's a take on a gem from The Music Man (1957). Librarian Marian Paroo (performed by Barbara Cook on Broadway, and by Shirley Jones in the film) sings this song to "Professor" Harold Hill (portrayed on Broadway and in the film by Robert Preston) toward the end of Act Two. For this you can pretend you're one of her backup quartet singers in a slightly more 'nuanced' format and you've just completed the rest of the song. It means a lot to her that he came into her life and had brought the music back, so you can be part of the music-bringing movement as well when singing this tag! I actually was introduced to the tune by way of the Beatles off of their 1963 al-

bum 'With the Beatles'. You can almost hear the baris foreshadow where the melody goes in the first line. For baris and basses, some of the note movements can be a bit tricky since they'll go a little bit 'outside' the path to the resolve at the end, or half-diminished for you fellow music theorists out there. Tenors taste some sweetness--well everybody tastes the sweetness--on the notes for 'saw them at all', with the chromatic romanticism (and musical geomorphism?) happening there. It doesn't have to be fast, but ballad-like and easy. Enjoy!"



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

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#### **Chapter Quartets**

BOMP	
Dan Cole	612/940-4554
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



This logo is neither shared with the Girl Scouts nor dumped by the Sweet Adelines. Logo courtesy of Bob Clark

## 1st CLASS POSTAGE HERE

#### **RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

To:

#### LOOKING AHEAD

Dec 5—Christmas Show (may be later in Dec as virtual show)

The *Chord-Inator* is available on the Minneapolis Chapter's website **minneapoliscommodores.org**  May 15—Annual Show

CHORD-INATOR MINNEAPOLIS COMMODORES Minneapolis Chapter of BHS MEETING EVERY TUES –7:00 p.m. Church of St. Peter 6730 Nicollet Avenue South Richfield MN 55423 <u>GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME</u>