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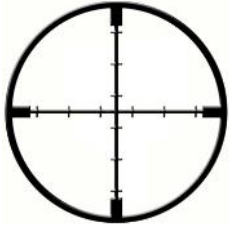

MINNEAPOLIS
COMMODORES

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

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O' LAKES

NOVEMBER 2021 - VOL. 77 - NO. 6

Hunter's Bullseye



Shawn Hunter

Commodores BACK in action at LOL District Convention!

In typical first-class fashion, the Commodores took the stage and did us all proud at the October Land-O-Lakes district convention. Over 40 Commodores entertained the convention audience with the beauti-

ful ballad "Sourvenirs" and the great up-tune "Good Luck Charm". The judges agreed with the audience and gave the boys a nice score, just barely finishing behind an impressive showing by the Fargo chorus.

Congrats to our fearless leader, Jamye Casperson, who did an admirable job at her first convention with the Commodores.

As we (hopefully) wind down our COVID nightmare and get back to normal, I look forward to getting lots more of us back on the risers to thrill audiences and have an even better showing at next year's convention. Congrats and thanks to all of you.

Stay safe and take care!



**Minneapolis, Minn. Chapter
Land O'Lakes District, BHS**
Meetings every Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
Mayflower Congregational Church
106 Diamond Lake Rd E
Minneapolis, MN 55419

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President's Corner



Dave Casperson

Commodores,

I feel like I'm picking up where I left off with my last Chordinator

article – I'm grateful! Now we have not only pulled off a successful annual show, but now we have performed and competed at a district convention. Wow! Although we didn't get the results we may have hoped for in terms of score, I was proud to be a Commodore because we have represented this hobby so well, and on stage at convention we performed up to the best level we have reached in rehearsal. That's a great deal to build on!

As we prepare for our 2021 Holiday show and our next annual show, and all performances to come, I anticipate great things for our chapter. We entertain our audiences, we sing well, and we enjoy performing with one another.

What a worthwhile way to spend our time and efforts! I want to thank each one of you for your perseverance over the past 18-20 months, and for staying committed to the Commodores. We truly have something special to offer those for whom we perform, and each other as well.

We have so much to be thankful for, and my hope for all of you is that you can carry that with you into all parts of your life. I would encourage you to try to regularly find something in your life to be thankful for – maybe that's daily or weekly, or even monthly. Simply being cognizant of the blessings we have in life, and being thankful for them, is a wonderful way to just feel good.

It's Great to be a Commodore!!

Dave Casperson

Its Great to be a Commodore!

In Sorrow...



Spong, Robert "Bob" 87, passed away October 3, 2021. Son of Frank and Alice Spong, he is preceded in death by infant sister and brothers Gerald and Donald, sisters-in-law, Patricia and Lorraine Spong and Yvonne Lohmann. Bob was born in St. Paul and lived his entire life in the Twin Cities area. After graduating from Minneapolis Central HS in 1952, he went on to earn a Masters Degree in Music Education at Macalester College in St. Paul. (He also played foot-

ball and hockey during his years at Mac.) Bob taught vocal music in the public high schools in Lakeville, St. Anthony Village and Brooklyn Center followed by a long, distinguished career as a financial advisor/stockbroker with John G. Kinnard and Piper Jaffray. He continued to pursue his love of music as a singer in the "Par Four Quartet" at Mac, the "Hut Four Quartet" including making two 3-week USO Hospital tours to the Far East during the Viet Nam conflict and with the "Happiness Emporium Quartet", earning the title of 1975 International Barbershop Quartet Champions. He also directed the Minneapolis Commodores Barbershop Chorus and his church choir for 26 years. He served on many Boards during his life and was still a Board Member of the Minnesota Orchestra at the time of his

death. Bob lived life with passion, commitment, integrity and love. His Faith, Family and Friends, young and old, near and far away, were top priority with him. His wife, Jean, shared her husband's priorities and many will remember what a great team they were in organizing social events, producing concerts and musicals and planning and leading trips around the world with their family, friends and friends of friends. A year ago, Bob and Jean moved to Trillium Woods Independent Living in Plymouth and found more new friend opportunities. We will miss Bob, as husband, father, grandfather, great-grand father, in-law, uncle, leader, colleague, mentor, philanthropist, fellow traveler, musician, sports lover, life-of-the-party, friend.

Jerry Koch

Passed about in early November, 2021. Obituary and picture not available at press time. Look for these in a future issue.

Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, Bemused Baritone



Jim Erickson

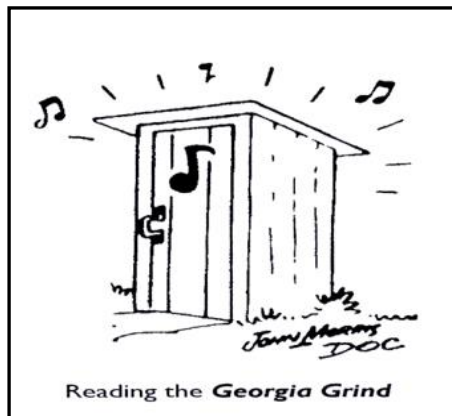
Some time ago, **Jerry Koch** and his wife, **Bev**, attended an event at the same church my wife, **Mary**, and I went to. It was a seniors group that put on the gathering and Mary and I were leaders. From that first encounter, the four of us became friends and were involved in many good times together. Jerry and I also belonged to the traditional church choir, but occasionally, a much smaller group performed music styles quite different from the usual. I sang with Jerry in that smaller group and we got to know each other even more.

Then, as time passed, I joined the Commodores and at some point, was encouraged along with others, to up our recruiting efforts. Thinking of Jerry's interest in singing, I gave him a call. Shortly thereafter, he visited a rehearsal and soon joined us. There is much to reveal about what he experienced over the ten years he belonged, but one adventure at a Barbershop contest was especially exciting. Afterward, Jerry told me the details of what had happened and I wrote a Georgia Grind article about it. The following is a slightly modified repeat of that Chord-Inator column of October, 2013.

In Jerry's memory and reflecting his clever ingenuity, here it is. Please note that I did not mention his name in the telling. I don't recall whether he requested that, but I am sure he wouldn't mind my sharing it now. And, I hope you enjoy this connection with Jerry as we celebrate his life and contribu-

tion to the Commodores.

"Where to start? Well, at the Friday night quartet contest at the recent LOL District contest in La Crosse, WI, we were being entertained by the competing quartets and at about intermission, a Commodores Barbershopper, with a morbid and ashen look on his paling face, approached a couple of us. Now in the interest of protecting the innocent and contest-readiness challenged, I will not divulge the name of that Barbershopper. Also, as any man can easily do, he considered blaming his wife for his predicament or at least being a factor of distraction since men can't multitask, you know.



Reading the Georgia Grind

Why the ashen face, brother? Well, this otherwise upstanding (That strikes me as funny since our rehearsals and performances find us always up there standing on the risers) Commodore managed to utter the words, "I forgot my contest tux costume at home." Ever trying to be helpful, we suggested calling any friends, children, relatives, or Commodores who had not yet left the Twin Cities, to see if they could pick up the outfit and bring it down for the Commodore contest appearance at about 11:30 the next morning. It became readily apparent that no such contacts were going to be forthcoming.

What next? Well, as the story got around, our esteemed apparel director, **Dan Williams**, who is always at the top of his game, offered that he had the foresight to pack a couple extra vests and matching ties just in case in a rare occurrence, someone might have spilled pancake syrup on vest and tie moments before the contest. Or even more rare, someone might have forgotten to get their outfit into their soon to depart car. Dan, in his wisdom, doesn't inquire as to why vests/ties are needed at the last minute. He doesn't even have to hear that, in this case, the seats of the vehicle transporting the necessary outfit, were put down, or put up, or whatever, and not being in their usual position, those very seats assured the performer and his wife that everything, yeah the outfit, too, were properly packed ready for the trip. Deceptive seats aside, Dan needed to hear none of it. He just said, "I have the vest and tie, so see if you can come up with the rest of the suit."

Another Commodore, **Peter Jarnberg**, volunteered the use of his extra black shirt that he brought along just in case. Apparently, Pete has encountered devious, leaky pancake syrup dispensers or those squirry ketchup bottles that require the strength of a cow-milking set of hands to forcefully squeeze the damned bottle until a typhoonic blast of the red stuff erupts on everything but the intended "American" fries. Apparently a survivalist, Pete, nonetheless, offered up his black shirt for a comrade in a bind.

That left only a pair of tux pants, black socks and shiny shoes to make the singer's ensemble complete. Of course! Why didn't we think of it earlier?

The hosts of the event, the La Crossian chorus members, would certainly have a pair of tux pants that we could borrow. So, off to the registration desk. As abundant good luck would have it, a really on-her-toes woman was keeping track of things with her clipboard. But she explains that the LaCrosse chorus wore gray pants, not black, and would not be a quick source of pants. Upon a bit of pressing (no pun intended), she admitted that she had fairly recently worked for a men's formal attire business nearby. She knew that since it was getting to be about 9:00 pm, the store had long closed for the day. But, it would be open at 10:00 the next morning. With a full hour and a half before entering the contest stage, it seemed a shoe-in (I'm not going to apologize for this pun!) to stop at the store and complete the outfit

with pants and shiny shoes.

So.....Our hero just has to stop by the formal attire rental shop, pick up some pants and shoes and he is complete. Except on the way to the shop, he gets lost. Time is running really short. His only choice is to race to the contest center. In what seems to be an unexpected turn of fate, he encounters someone who has an extra pair of black pants. That fit! They aren't "tux" pants, but like they say at the winery, "Any Port in a storm."

But shoes are nowhere to be found. What to do, what to do? Now most know that necessity is the mother of invention, but did you know that desperation is the Cesarean delivery of the panic-stricken? Sitting with his black socks in hand and his brown shoes on, our hero looks at

his socks, then his shoes, then his socks. Brain lightning strikes and with seconds to go, he grabs a sock, wiggles it over one shoe and repeats with the other. Looks black enough to me, he muses, even if not shiny.

Padding carefully onto the stage in his socks under the dimmed lights, no one expects or sees the deception. Only a few of his fellow Commodores actually know. The songs are then sung, the choreo done, the turn to the audience thanking them (and the judges) and then the lights are dimmed again. The cloak of darkness once again hides the desperate act until the shoe fraud has carefully padded off the risers. A musical Hail Mary pass for the touchdown, if I ever heard of one.

Thank you, Jerry, for becoming a Commodore and all the good times.

Jim Richards Memorial Chord Candy # 141



Paul Paddock

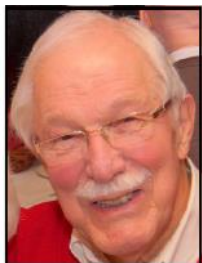
Here is a reharmonization of a simple Burt Szabo tag. Disclaimer: this is in no way meant to overshadow the original or do it injustice in any way; just merely offers a different harmonic idea for the piece. As you can see, the tenor retains the melody while some other stuff happens in the harmony. I lead with inverted modified flat-9 & 6 chords, much like when a lover is pleading and trying to convince their beloved that they love them (BELIEVE me!), then deepen the love going on by flipping to stacked 5ths in the upper 3 voices with bass a 6th below them for a couple words. On the first "true" we come to a fork in the road then during the tenor post, find our way chromatically resolutio to the end. I kept close to the overall structure of the original tag rhythm-wise and in part chordally, as the original tag also begins with chords C-F on 'believe' and a G relative on the first 'love'. You'll notice another similar chord pattern to the original during the post, except instead of the scissors and upside-down U, it just goes down to F. I switched out the 'you know I do' to 'I love you true' for emphasis and following vowels, though either way works just fine. Enjoy!

BELIEVE ME I LOVE YOU TRUE

BURT SZABO
ARR. PAUL PADDOCK

The musical score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: BE - LIEVE ME I LOVE YOU TRUE (I LOVE YOU TRUE). The score includes various chord markings and accidentals, such as B-flat, F, and G, and uses a mix of note heads (black and red) to indicate specific harmonic choices.

Musings from a Barbershop Curmudgeon



Bob Dykstra

The Minneapolis Commodores lost one of their most beloved and productive members on September 3, 2021 with the passing of **Bob Spong**. Bob was a 64-year member of the Barbershop Harmony Society who has been relatively inactive for the past quarter century because of severe vocal problems. For that reason, many younger members of the chapter may have no real sense of what a dynamo he was during his first forty years of membership. You'll soon find out!

Bob Spong joined the Minneapolis Chapter of SPEBSQSA in 1957, shortly after joining the chapter's **Hut Four** Quartet as its tenor. He proceeded to sing 15 years with the Hut Four, during which according to his own superb record-keeping, he, **Bob Dykstra, John Hansen, and Don Sundt/Dan Howard** traveled 400,000 miles in the process of performing on more than 1400 shows. The quartet was also very active competitively. They won the Land O' Lakes District Quartet Championship in 1958, and earned the right to compete internationally ten times, qualifying as semi-finalists on seven of those occasions. So he was extremely active in his new hobby from the day he joined. It would have been completely understandable if he had chosen to limit his participation in Barbershopping to his busy quartet schedule.

But that was not in Bob Spong's DNA. To make my point I'd like to share some data from the printed program prepared for the Minneapolis Chapter's Golden Anniversary Celebration held on April 29, 1994. I served as a member of the Golden Anniversary Committee (along with Co-Chairs Bruce **Churchill** and **Jim**

Richards, Hardin Olson, Mike Stump and **Wes Hatlestad**). We agreed that the major objective of the printed program was to honor those Commodores who had made outstanding contributions to the welfare of the chapter during the first fifty years of its existence (1944-1994).

We ultimately decided to provide a listing of: (1) Chapter Barbershoppers of the Year; (2) Chapter Presidents; (3) Annual Show Chairmen; (4) Choral Directors; (5) Chapter Quartets Which had Earned Gold Medals in International or District Competition; (6) All Chapter Quartets which had qualified to compete at the international level.

A few days ago I browsed through that 1994 printed program, and was struck by how the name, Bob Spong, kept coming up over and over again. Closer examination revealed that his name appeared in every category I identified in the last paragraph. He was the only Commodore from the first fifty years of chapter membership for whom that was true. And it should be noted that for most of its first fifty years, if not all, the Minneapolis Chapter had more than 100 members. (We still had 146 members in 1983, the last membership data I've uncovered). For one man to take on so many responsibilities in a chapter of that size is truly remarkable.

Let's review Bob's contributions. While singing with the Hut Four, he was a very active member of the Commodores. He competed with the chorus in Chicago in their first appearance in international competition in 1959, and three years later helped them win their first international medal (fifth place) in Kansas City.

In 1968 Mr. Do-It-All took on the responsibility of Show Chairman when he produced "Tunes in Toonerville" complete with an authentic "Toonerville Trolley" which was built in the Spong garage. Needless to say, it was a great show! He then was elected Chapter President in 1969 and

designated Barbershopper of the year in 1972. How's that for a busy three years!?

But there's more! A lot more! In 1971 the Hut Four decided to disband. Almost immediately, Bob joined Bob **Dowma, Jim Foy, and Rod Johnson** in organizing the **Happiness Emporium**, a quartet in which he took over the baritone slot. The quartet won the Land O'Lakes District Quartet Championship in 1973 and just two years later were crowned International Champions in Indianapolis. I should also point out that Bob's two chapter quartets, the Hut Four and the Happiness Emporium, have both been enshrined in the Land O'Lakes District Hall of Fame.

It's hard to imagine the time and effort that must go into winning the International Quartet Gold Medal no matter how talented a foursome may be. Nevertheless, at about the same time the Happiness Emporium organized, Bob decided in 1970 to add the title and responsibility of Commodore Music Director to his already bulging resume.' He directed the Commodores from 1970-74 and then again in 1978, during which they qualified for International Competition three times, earning a fifth-place medal in 1978. He was called back to directing duties in 1982 when he and Rod Johnson as co-directors led the Commodores to a sixth-place finish.

I trust you now understand why I have referred to Bob Spong as Mr. Do-It-All Commodore. His contributions to Barbershop music, the Barbershop fraternity, and, most specifically, the Minneapolis Barbershop Chapter are truly mind-boggling. Those of us who knew him well also knew him simply as a Great Guy! He will be missed!

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**1st CLASS
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Logo courtesy of Bob Clark

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To:

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- EASY LISTENIN'
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- Steve Grady.....952/334-7500
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LOOKING AHEAD

- Dec. 11—Christmas Show
- May 14—Annual Show

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**CHORD-INATOR
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