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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

JANUARY 2022 - VOL. 78 - NO. 1

From Fearless Leader...



Happy New Year!

Instead of the typical New Year's Resolutions article, I'm going to go with a quote from **Betty White**...just as trendy right now. My mom used to laugh and laugh at the **Golden Girls** show and now my sister and I watch it just for the nostalgia of it. Good ole **Rose** from St. Olaf; a bit dim witted but giant heart. (I'd take a big heart over a big brain any day) Anyhow, I decided to look up some famous quotes by

Jamye Casperson

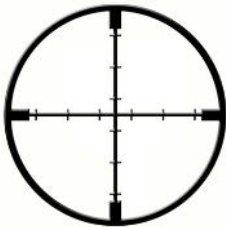
her to see if one worked to inspire me and sure enough, there were a whole bunch of them. I'll just use one so that this article isn't too long.

"Everybody needs a passion. That's what keeps life interesting. If you live without passion, you can go through life without leaving any footprints."

Amen, my Norwegian sister!! Commodores, our shared passion is barbershop singing. Barbershop keeps our musical life interesting; there is always something to learn. There is always a chord to tune or,

once in tune, then ring! There are friends to care for, people to connect with, shows to plan, shows to perform, tags to learn, people to recruit into the barbershop family of singers and people to become a part of our enthusiastic audience. Let's each take a step toward filling our barbershop passion as well. Let's leave a larger barbershop footprint in the Twin Cities and beyond! I look forward to partnering with you in this endeavor. Happy New Year!

Hunter's Bullseye



Shawn Hunter

Happy New Year, y'all. Despite Covid, 2021 was a great year for our favorite pastime. We returned to live singing after many

months and performed in parks, two major shows, and the fall LOL convention. Man did it feel good to sing live and actually hear my brothers in harmony. If I had to suffer through another Zoom rehearsal, I think I would have taken to the bottle!

I especially want to thank and congratulate **Jamye** and all those who helped put together the

Christmas show at Lakeville. What a fun show and fantastic, "just right" venue. I heard many positive comments including "this is the best the Commodores have ever sounded". You can't beat that!

Here is looking forward to continuing our "recovery" into 2022 and 100% resuming our fun and ringing of chords!

**Minneapolis, Minn. Chapter
Land O'Lakes District, BHS**
Meetings every Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
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President's Corner



Harvey Weiss

I am going to have some big shoes to fill (**Shaquille O'Neill's** Nike's, size 18FF?) as the next President of the Minneapolis

Commodores. This is no less daunting than jumping out of an airplane and skydiving for the first time; scary, but fun and challenging.

But, just as a ship's captain can't run the boat by himself, the Commodores also need many hands-on board to keep our ship afloat. The captain has to depend on his fellow crew members.

The list of our past presidents and all their "shipmates" have given us an illustrious 77-year history to live up to, which has been well documented by our **Hut Four** historian, **Bob Dykstra**. We have our work cut out for us.

Our 75th Anniversary show in 2019, also displayed our history back from the 40's to the present, as read from our original scrapbooks kept diligently over the years. It is a long, illustrious and successful history. The barbershop world has a warm and respectful place for the Commodores, and we will diligently try to add to that legacy this year. Hard work ahead.

So, our job in the coming year is to continue honoring the memories and accomplishments of ALL the past presidents and their shipmates. As our mission says on the back of our nut

sale bags, we will continue to "Bring men together in harmony and fellowship to enrich lives through singing." We will strive to fulfill our mission again this year, as manifested in our up-coming show in May, summer sing-outs, the district convention and Holiday Winter show. Hopefully we will continue to make them proud.

The Commodores are blessed with risers full of dedicated singers, seasoned and fun directors, and a Board of conscientious, hard-working men. (Lest we leave out the many hard-working people who are not officially listed on any Board assignment) We have the right stuff to keep our ship moving forward.

Let's all work together to add another iconic chapter to our history in 2022!

It's Great To Be A Commodore!

Christmas Show—2021



Special Moments—by Mark Ortenburger

Our recent Holiday Show created a special moment for **BOMP. Jim and Judy Johannsen** were in the audience as the Now and Then Singers (and Friends) put on a highly entertaining show, at least according to a number of our highly partisan fans. For those who aren't aware, Jim has been dealing with some memory issues the last few years that have prevented him from singing with the Commodores. However his love for music, Barbershop as well as Doo Wop, is as strong as ever. One of the wonderful gifts that singing gives us is that somewhere in the deep recesses of our memory, music tends to find a quiet place to reside until called upon for an encore. We hoped that such would be the case with our good friend Jim.

After the show, BOMP found Jim and asked him if it would be ok for us to sing a few songs to and with him. Jim, the founding baritone for BOMP, joined us on “Boardwalk” and “Breaking Up is Hard to Do” and didn't miss a beat. His wonderfully rich voice, on pitch, and with all the words in the right places, was a very special treat for us all. The power of music to bring joy into our hearts is a precious gift indeed.



Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, Brrrrr Baritone



Jim Erickson

Oh, I am not really complaining about the “Brrrrrr” Baritone reference above. Probably more so in September when winter is starting to hint at its arrival. And it comes on as no surprise as the days get more rapidly shorter. My mother’s birthday was on the shortest day of the year, so I am always reminded that that day is almost the start of the light once again really gaining momentum. Just wish that the warmer weather took hold upon the start of Daylight-Saving Time. (emphasis added for hope)

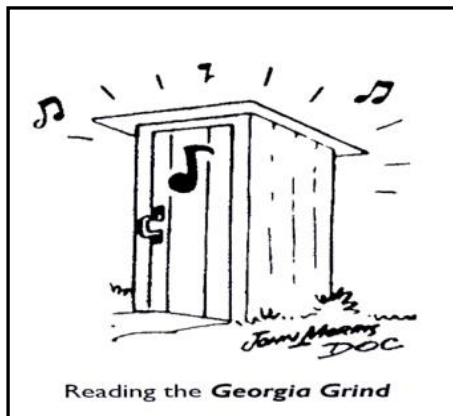
But maybe these short days and the post-Christmas time now give me a chance to sit by the warming fire and quietly contemplate some things that I have had to set aside in the rush to the holidays. Like should I have the amazingly simple surgery to reduce the size of my love handles. They show it right on TV! Don’t blush, unless you have no control over that when such subjects are broached. (Have you used the word, “broached,” lately? Neither have I.) And, as the fire grows a bit, it must warm my brain to soften and delve deeper.

Deeper, like where does **Paul Wigley** get all of that obscure music theory stuff? Like the **Airy Epiglottal Larynx**, or whatever that is and how he spells it, Remember? A few months ago, he smoked us with that and blamed his wonderful, musically gifted daughter for compelling him to lay that term on us. We hold him in high esteem, but he’s pushing the limits when he keeps pontificating musicwise. Why my smoldering concern?

The term he smashed us with a short time ago was “**Relaxed Expiratory Level.**” (I think that’s what he called it) Whoa! What does that mean? It

sounds a bit like the level at which most leads sing right before they cross that last river of life. Or any time, as far as tenors go. I do know that baritones will have no part of it even though the purveyor of this term is a baritone himself. Baritones are never intentionally unrelaxed; they are just cool. And never sing as though they are about to expire. No matter if it’s on the level or not.

Oh, I kinda know... “Expiratory” may have something to do with breath and breathing out air no matter what it is laced with. And I think we have no choice but to breathe, relaxed or not. Although, some tenors may prove me wrong on this by holding their breath until they sometimes unregrettably expire. I guess I will have to leave that refinement to Paul. As well as what basses do! Basses have, as you can tell if you look closely,



only recently started losing their gills and still long to live their life at sea. And do fish expire? They do when I catch them, but when they breathe, are gills really inspiring and then how do they un-inspire? Aaaaagghhh. My head is beginning to throb...

Paul, can you see the intellectual turmoil you create when you drop a few terms like REL. Too much of this and Barbershoppers will just languish in the murky world of enforced **relaxation** and their hopes and dreams **will expire**. I’m **leveling** with you. (I was afraid, dear reader, that in your languishment, you would skip over my clever re-use of Paul’s Phrase) So, Paul, next time you feel you need to consult your obscure musical Thesaurus, you might want to run it by me. I

am your friend and will help you maintain your esteem in the face of excessive, opaque phrase dropping.

As a regular **GG** reader, you can fathom how the pandemic has sapped many of the subjects I could write about and I have resorted to using the rather weak premise that lays some phony blame on our former director. I don’t mean to offend anyone, but what the heck, Paul has retreated to the deep south where his WIFI is inch-worm slow and he’ll never see this anyway. You may not want, however, to mention it to him when he returns after the winter.

I now put a “fini” to this respectfully small rant. So, in the meantime, remember to “hold fast to that which is good.” Barbershopping is one of those good things and the virus conflagration may affect how we practice it for some time to come. We were forced into using vehicles like Zoom to continue to meet, at least virtually. That has had some benefits it turns out. Some of us, for many different reasons, have been able to remain part of the Commodores even when absent from home, on vacation, ill and more. **Steve Grady** and others have seen to it that this will still be a part of rehearsals and may even be here to stay. For those of you who still are aware of the reason behind the **Georgia Grind**, I want you to know the research on the origins of that term continue on behind the walls and scenes of an unforgiving world. But it does continue.

Until next time, protect the truth, mask and boost up. Respect your fellow Barbershoppers by staying healthy and taking necessary precautions. This sickness respects no boundaries whether you are tenor, lead, bass, or even baritone. But, here’s to all of you for the New Year, 2022.



Paul Paddock

Jim Richards Memorial Chord Candy # 142

This tag's tune comes from an 1849 poem and holiday carol written by Edmund Sears, pastor of the Unitarian Church in Wayland, MA. In 1850, Sears' lyrics were set to 'Carol', a tune written for the poem the same year at his request, by hymn composer Richard Storrs Willis. This pairing remains the most popular in the US, while in Commonwealth countries, the lyrics are set to 'Noel', a later adaptation by Arthur Sullivan from an English melody. The song has 5 stanzas and several variations exist to Sears' original lyrics. Here we have the tenor part

designated as the melody. We also have the bass part shadowing the melody's slide on 'upon', so each of those notes would need to be clearly dictated since the Bb & B are 'defining moments' for each chord. For the chords' pattern in the tag's latter half, I drew inspiration from a part of René Clausen's newly commissioned arrangement of the Sussex Carol--which I had the pleasure of partaking in its post-Thanksgiving premier with the Great River Chorale in St. Cloud, MN. This tag can be taken fast or slow, but nice and easy. You'll note that almost every downbeat is set with major-7th chords. When those chords are heard, for many, they tend to resonate in that familiar easy-jazz contentedness. Picture yourself on the porch on a clear quiet (Minnesota) night with the stars and moon shining brightly above you at a (comfortable) 26-degrees... away from any highways.... Having the echoing 'midnight clears' and ending on straight 5ths completes the effect, say if you're on one side of a valley, or in the open with the slightest sounds bouncing off the distant barn walls; whichever peaceful picture you choose. Best not to 'murdelize' the inverted chord on the first 'mid-', even though that acts as a dome-like apex of the tag's phrasing. Enjoy and happy holidays!

IT CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR

SEARS/WILLIS

ARR. PAUL PADDOCK

The musical score is presented in two staves: Tenor (T) and Bass (B). The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are: "IT CAME UP - ON A MID - NIGHT CLEAR MID - NIGHT CLEAR". The score includes green notes for the melody and red notes for the bass line. Red lines indicate chord changes, and a red bracket highlights the 'UP - ON' phrase in both parts. The bass part features a slide on the 'ON' note.

Commodore members at Mid-winter convention

By Bill Shaw

Once again, the Minneapolis Commodores will be represented at the BHS Midwinter Convention this January in Pasadena, California. **Bill Shaw**, 58 year member of the Commodores will sing bass in quartet #17, “**Midwest Connection**”. The quartet is made up of **Grant Fox**, tenor; **Curt Struyk**, lead; **Brion Grant**, baritone and **Bill Shaw**, bass.

Grant and Curt are Arizona winter resident from Michigan. Grant, from Traverse City and Curt from Grand Rapids. Brion splits his time between Flagstaff, and Surprise, AZ and All four are also members of the Sun City Desert Aires Chorus.

Bill and his wife, **Marsha** and Brion and his wife, **Jessica** sing in a mixed quartet, **Mixed Meta4**, and will be performing at the Festival Event of the convention.

It's Great to be a Commodore!



Musings from a Barbershop Curmudgeon



Bob Dykstra

BURT MUSTIN

My Hut Four Quartet competed in 10 International Barbershop Harmony Society con-

tests during the years 1958 through 1969. These contests were held in Columbus, Chicago (twice), Dallas, Philadelphia, Toronto, San Antonio, Boston, Los Angeles, and St. Louis. A welcome perquisite for each competing quartet was the assigning by the host chapter of an aide who was responsible for picking up the quartet at the airport (if necessary), getting them registered and established in their hotel, helping them to manage the intricacies of the competition schedule, and transporting them to the airport (if necessary) to facilitate their trip back home once the convention ended.

We always had wonderful aides but I especially remember the one assigned to us for the 1967 International convention held in Los Angeles. I still have the letter of introduction he wrote to **Bob Spong**, our quartet contact person:

“First let me introduce myself. I am **Burt Mustin** and I have the good fortune to have been named as ‘Aide’ to your quartet during the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th of July for the International Contest to be held in Los Angeles-----
-MORE OF HEAVEN IN '67!!

‘It will be my very pleasurable task to meet you when you arrive in our Wonderful town, take you to your accommodations, see that

you’re settled and comfortable and recommend some place to get that real tasty sandwich.

“You’ll be contacted by the Chairman of the Aides Committee with regard to your travel plans, etc., but I’d like to invite you to drop me a card personally and give me any pertinent details as to your proposed plans that you feel might contribute to your comfort and convenience while you are our guest and in my charge.

“If your quartet does not plan to arrive at the same time, it will, of course, be very difficult to meet you all. However, I would like to make sure of at least making contact with you so that we may compare notes and determine just how I may best serve you.

“I will be in possession of your complete schedule before you arrive. I’ll be able to give you a close accounting of the best way to get to your appointed activities and will see that you have every assistance in keeping those appointments on time.

“I’m anxious to be of every assistance and with your cooperation, I’m sure that I will be able to.”

The letter was signed by Burt Mustin and it included his home address and phone number along with a scribbled request that we “say ‘howdy’ to my pal, **Maynard Saxe**.” (Maynard was the tenor of the popular Minneapolis quartet, the “Atomic Bums”, 1948 Land O’Lakes District Champions and eight-time International quartet competitors. His Barbershopping resume’ also reflected a great deal of involvement in our local chapter: 1951 Chapter President; 1956 Barbershopper of the Year; and 1957 Show Chairman).

Any International competing quartet would agree, I’m sure, that Mustin’s letter could well serve as a model letter of introduction. It was welcoming, informative, thorough, very well written.....and by all accounts composed and type-written by Mr. Mustin himself.

Why, you might ask, am I surprised that our contact would write his own letter of greeting? Let me explain. Recall that he was appointed to serve as our quartet aide for the 1967 International Barbershop Harmony Society Convention in Los Angeles. Although the name, Burt Mustin, may not register with many of you younger Barbershoppers, it is likely quite familiar to those of you who were Society members at that time. He was a very well-known television and movie character-actor and I’m impressed to this day with his volunteering to help his local Barbershop chapter by serving as a quartet aide for the convention. To me that illustrates a level of humility not always associated with those who shared his celebrity status.

Also he indicated that we would be contacted by the Chairman of the Aides Committee concerning our travel plans so it was beyond the call of duty for him to contact us himself.

So who was Burt Mustin? When we met him in 1967 he was 83 years old having worked 16 years in his second career, that of a professional actor. He spent most of his “working years” as a salesman while participating in amateur theater and opera. He also in his early years sang in a Barbershop quartet and actually competed in some sort of national quartet contest in California in 1925, years before

Dystrka (Cont'd)

our beloved Society was formed. (Lion's Club competition perhaps?)

When he retired from his career in sales, he moved to Arizona and later California and began his professional acting career. His first professional screen role at age 67 was in the 1951 film version of *Detective Story*. That same year he debuted in television with a role in the western series, *The Adventures of Kit Carson*, and he was off and running; his new-found career exploded.

I am unable to provide an exact total of Mustin's television and film roles. My research suggested, on the one hand, that he appeared in more than 150 film and television productions. Other sources reported that he appeared in more than 350 television shows and more than 85 movies. Suffice it to say that Burt Mustin was a very busy retiree!! Remember that all of these TV and film roles occurred during the 25-year period between 1951 and 1976 when he ranged in age from 67 to 92. His last appearance was on an episode of the TV series, *Phyllis*, which aired in December 1976, a month before he died.

Examples of Mustin's television roles included appearances, some recurring, on *Leave it to Beaver*, *Dragnet*, *Bonanza*, *Gunsmoke*, *The Jack Benny Program*, *Ben Casey*, *Abbott and Costello*, *Loretta Young*, *Bewitched*, *All in the Family*, *The Brady Bunch*, *Johnny Car-*

son's Tonight Show, *Fireside Theater*, *Peter Gunn*, *Our Miss Brooks*, *The Twilight Zone*, *Alfred Hitchcock*, *Get Smart*, *Outer Limits*, *General Electric Theater*, and *The Andy Griffith Show*....just to name (quite) a few. I remember him best for his recurring role as Judd Fletcher on the *Andy Griffith Show*. He even got the opportunity for his character to sing in a Barbershop quartet in a 1966 episode.

Mustin's film credits are less imposing, but still impressive, including roles in such films as *Detective Story*, *Man with the Gun*, *Cat Ballou*, *Sex and the Single Girl*, *The Cincinnati Kid*, *The Shakiest Gun in the West*, *Mame*, *The Desperate Hours*, *The Great Bank Robbery*, and *What a Way to Go*. His final film role came in the 1976 western movie entitled *Baker's Hawk* which was released shortly before his death.

Earlier I expressed surprise that Burt Mustin, celebrity that he was, had volunteered to host a quartet at the 1967 International Barbershop Convention. As I've continued to learn more about him (thanks primarily Google) I've come to realize that he was not just a celebrity, he was indeed a Barbershopper. He competed in a national Barbershop quartet convention in 1925. He was an avid card-carrying member of SPEBSQSA and an enthusiastic quartet man. He was likely the inspiration for the Barbershop Quartet episode on the Andy Griffith show. And I just finished reading about his being recruited to be a regular on a TV show entitled *The Funny Side* which aired from September to

December 1971. He signed on but only after making sure that rehearsals would not interfere with his attending the 1971 Barbershop Convention in New Orleans. Now that's a Barbershopper! And after 69 years of active participation in this wonderful hobby, I can attest to the fact that Barbershoppers in general are the "salt of the earth."

Based on the Hut Four's experience with Barbershopper Burt Mustin, I can attest that he certainly fit that description. He could not have been friendlier, more accommodating, or more down to earth. He even drove our baritone Dan Howard's wife and two of his young children to Knott's Dairy Farm during the convention to provide them with a change of pace from the bustle of Barbershop bedlam. And although I don't recall specifically, I'm sure we didn't miss the opportunity to sing a tag or two with him. Thanks to him and all the other wonderful quartet aides and hosts who played a large part in making our years of Barbershop quartet singing so enjoyable.

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

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