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CHORD-INATOR

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

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O' LAKES

MARCH 2022 - VOL. 78 - NO. 2

Introducing our new Co-director...



Dave Bechard Early in 2022, the Board decided to acknowledge the current and on-going musical and directorial contributions of **Dave Bechard** by making the Commodores a co-directed chorus. Therefore, meet our new Co-Director, **David Bechard**!

David Bechard started his barber-

shop career in 2007 while attending Central Michigan University for his degree in Music Education. Since then he has been active in both quartets and choruses, and has been blessed to compete on the International stage 6 times.

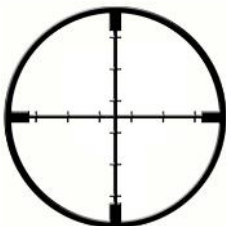
Dave has been conducting barber-shop choruses in some capacity since 2011 with the Sioux Emperians (Sioux Falls, SD), a stretch as Assistant Director for the Commodores in 2016-2019, and a brief stint with the Music Men of Dubuque, IA. Dave is thrilled to be back in the Cities and able to stand alongside - and in front of - the Commodores once

more, and is very excited to work with his friend and colleague, **Jamye Casperson**.

Dave is currently the Director of Bands at St Francis High School, and lives in Blaine with his wife, kids, dogs, and fish.

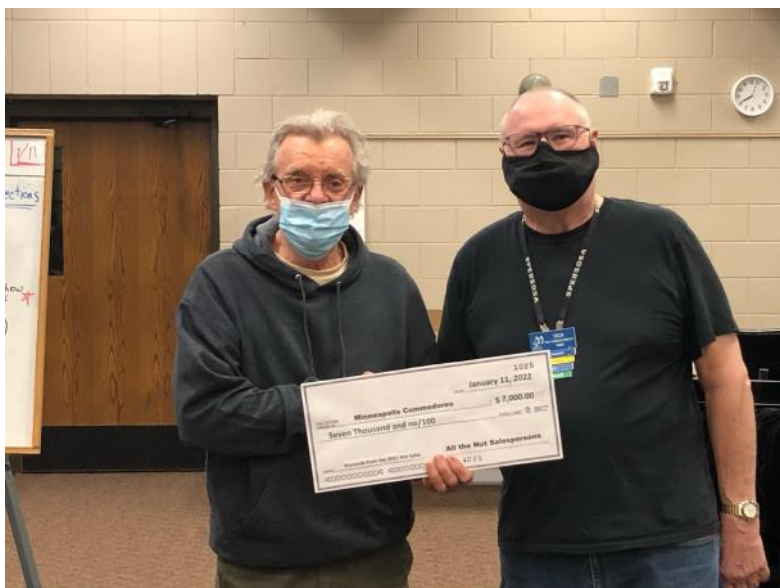
*It's Great to be a
Commodore!*

Hunter's Bullseye



Shawn Hunter

A big thanks to **Dick Riemenschneider** for his many, many years of tireless leadership on the nut sale. Despite COVID, here he is delivering a \$7,000 check to to **Harvey Weiss**, President.



**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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Co-Director..... Dave Bechard
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President's Corner



Harvey Weiss

**NEVER A DULL
MOMENT!!**

This is the phrase I will use, to describe the activity level of the Commodores for the first 6 weeks into the New Year. Reason being, is that there seemed to be a flurry of activities, as well as some new rehearsal issues that kept the pace of involvement in high gear for everyone.

First off, the officers for the new year were installed by **Dan True** of the LOL District. Next, Commodores and wives were present at the Crescent Cove Gala (our designated charity). Finally, the 3 Minutes to Excellence experiment has gotten off to a good start, with lots of ideas being offered. I am thankful for the great cooperation of my fellow comrades in song have shown for this project.

On the music side of our rehearsals, our directors have laid out a time frame for having our songs off-paper for the May show. It really helps to have a roadmap to work with. We are on schedule for the first deadline. Feels good. A

Platoon very-large-quartet has been opened up to anyone to wants to sing a couple of new songs on the show. **Blackbird**, performed by **Ringmasters**, and **This is the Moment** by **Acoustix**. You want inspiration, this will do it for you.

And most recently, Zoom members are now shown on a large movie screen facing the risers. There were about 15 there this last rehearsal. This life-size look makes it feel like they are actually with us in person. Finally, the best news of all, is that we are adding new members. Welcome aboard **James Kiehne**, with two others who will be named next time after the paper work is completed.

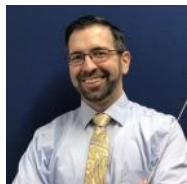
This is a really busy “hobby”, with chances for fun and singing a constant reality every week. Thanks to everyone for keeping our great hobby **ALIVE AND WELL**.

**IT'S GREAT TO BE A
COMMODORE!**

From Fearless Leaders...



Jamye Casperson



Dave Bechard

(actually, this month's article was submitted just from Jamye)

March Madness

We all know what this refers to...college basketball. Brackets, last second heroics, skipping work to watch the game, underdogs winning big games, inspiring stories, selection Sunday, Sweet Sixteen, Elite Eight, Final Four...it's all part of March Madness. It is a time of year that basketball fans, and actually sports fans, really look forward to. People, that haven't watched a single college basketball game, start watching during March Madness.

What in the world does that have to do with barbershop? Nothing really.....wellllll except:

Underdogs: These are our Baritone--always working hard, underappreciated by those that don't know much about barbershop and their value is underestimated but can outplay the favorites every time with their preparation and accuracy.

Sweet Sixteen: that could be our basses or our leads...you choose!

Elite Eight: These are our Tenors. Enough said.

Final Four: For our upcoming annual show, that would be myself, **Dave Bechard, Steve Grady and Judy Olson**. Oops, can't forget **Blake Wanger, Dave Casperson, Harvey Weiss, Doug Johnson, Paul Wigley**... uhhhhh, this metaphor didn't work well at all.

Selection Sunday: Hmm, well the Swipe comes out on Sundays and it has the directors' selections for the week so...

Skipping work: only if it is to listen to tracks and some of you (cough cough Paul Wigley) don't work anyway.

Inspiring Stories: We can all think of Commodores that are persevering through extraordinary circumstances and still stay connected and engaged with our chorus.

March is definitely the key month for our success at the annual show. By the time we hit the end of the month, our show should be mostly prepared so that we can polish, memorize and perform our songs to help tell the story. We need to start spreading the word in March about our May 14th show so that we have a robust audience present to enjoy all of our work!

In addition, March is the first month that Commodores will be led by a co-director team of **Jamye Casperson and Dave Bechard**. I am so excited to have Dave as a co-director of the Commodores. Think **Pat Sum-**

mit and Mike Krzyzewski.

Let's march forward into bigger and better days of the Minneapolis Commodores!

Support Our Charity

Crescent
COVE



Charity Gala at River Centre in St. Paul

By Harvey Weiss

Crescent Cove, located in Brooklyn Center, MN. held its annual fundraiser on January 29th. Their business is a hospice for children with a shortened life expectancy and a respite for the families. It is only one of 3 other facilities like it in the U.S. There is no cost to the families, which totally depends on donations and contributions.

The Commodores have been giving them 25% of our annual show profits over the past several years. A number of our leaders attended the Gala and got to see and hear all the glowing testimonies and heart-breaking stories of what a gigantic impact the Cove has on the residents and their families.

A big part of the money-raising came from hundreds of items for their silent auction, of which The Commodores donated 2 pairs of tickets to our Annual Show May 14th. The corridor outside the ballroom was lined with products and services for the worthy cause.

Commodores attendees included, **Dave and Cassie Bechard, Harvey Weiss, Dave Casperson, and Ken and Karen Wentworth.**





New Board swear-in ceremony

On Tuesday, January 25th, **Dan True** of the LOL District installed the Minneapolis Commodores Officers for this year.

(From left to right) **Dan True**, installer; **Steve Grady**, Marketing; **Dan Cole**, At-Large; **Neal Mortenson**, Membership; **Bill Dahl**, Program; **Dave Casperson**, Music Committee and Immediate Past President; **Andy Richards**, Treasurer; **Bill Walkowski**, Secretary; **Harvey Weiss**, President; **Dan Williams**, At-Large. Not in picture, **Tony Mason**, Executive Vice President; **Paul Swanson**, Technology, Dan Slattery.

The Board meets on Zoom on the third Thursday of the month. All are welcome to join in the festivities by notifying the Secretary.



Paul Paddock

Jim Richards Memorial Chord Candy # 143

Here is a good tag to access your inner Scot & Irish! Also known as 'Purple Heather' or 'Will Ye Go, Lassie, Go?', the lyrics and melody are a variant of the song 'The Braes of Balquhither' by Scottish poet Robert Tannahill (1774–1810) and Scottish composer Robert Archibald Smith (1780–1829). These were adapted by Belfast musician Francis McPeake (1885–1971) into 'Wild Mountain Thyme' and first recorded by his family in the 1950s. Tannahill's original song, first published in Robert Archibald Smith's 'Scottish Minstrel' (1821–24), is about the

hills (*braes*) around *Balquhidder* near Lochearnhead in Scotland. Traveling through the Scottish Highlands, you'd understand their majesticness and wish to write tunes about them too! I decided to adapt this tag in a canonical fashion where the melody gets handed off from tenor to baritone to lead over an alternating set of chords to the end, as though you're standing at an overlook, echoing into those highlands. This is an exercise in taking turns, making the transitions as seamless as possible so the C tone remains continuous, which means interaction and, you guessed it, *listening louder than singing!* Basses act like a swaying rocking chair between C & Bb all the while. Note how the slurs shape the main melody. To really reenact that mountainous sensation, sing the whole tag on a slow, gradual decrescendo. See if you can guess where the only dominant-7th chord is in the tag and who has the note that makes it so!"

Wild Mountain Thyme

Music by Frank McPeake & Robert Tannahill
arranged by Paul Paddock

Will ye go, — las-sie, go, go, las-sie, go, go, (las-sie, las-sie go) go, go, — las-sie, go, go, —

Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, Bored Baritone



Jim Erickson

WARNING:
This article is not directed at anyone living or dead. It is simply intended to make a point about what may be obscure to tenors, leads, basses.

And chart arrangers. So, let's get to the point...

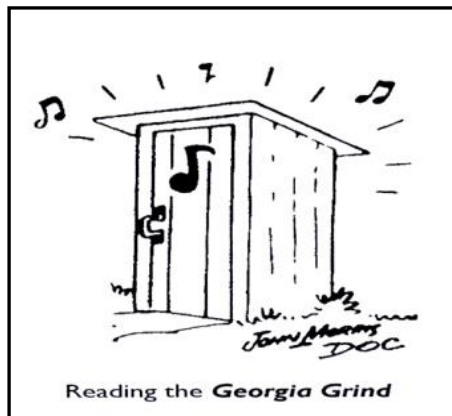
And the point is: I am a baritone. Although I have a pretty good range from quite low to almost squeaky high like the tenors, I am very pleased to sing in the baritone range, if there actually is such a range. Arrangers write the three non-baritone parts for a song under construction (arrangements) and then, lest they forget that there are four parts, search for any missing notes to create a pleasing harmony. Matters not one whit to them that those notes may be scattered everywhere with no logical path to the next note. Just stick 'em in where there's a gap.

(Actually, that is one reason I thoroughly enjoy singing baritone as it gives me a chance to face the huge challenge of hitting all the correct notes no matter how illogically arranged.)

It's kind of like the arranger was in a deep sleep after finishing his arrangement of three of the parts and was awakened by two raccoons fighting in a tree nearby. Stumbling from his bed to the family room where he began to shuffle across the 9 x 12 white rug with the five-line black stripes that some decorator convinced him he should buy because—well, being in the music business and all, it would show how hip he was. (Kind of like the selling point of the popcorn ceilings in houses a

few decades ago) In the darkened room, he moved past the coffee table almost missing it, but catching a leg and spilling the contents of an unusually large ash tray. (Remember those and what they were used for?) Spilling those contents right on top of the white rug. And those contents were?

Black jellybeans! Oh, he had eaten a couple handfuls the night before, but there was still quite a pile remaining in that tray. Hoping he wouldn't step on any of the beans and stain his expensive decorative element, he clapped his hands twice thus turning on a table lamp with his "**Clapper.**" To his sleepy astonishment, he was thrilled to see stains nowhere.



But wait! Even added to his first astonishment, there was a much greater one. The black beans had catapulted off the table into the air and landed for the most part in a shotgun pattern (#2 shot) between the black lines of the rug. Closer inspection jarred him wide awake and he felt compelled to observe the beaned rug as a large sheet of music. You know...black lines and marks on a white sheet. And realize that the bean pattern fit exactly with the missing baritone part he had hoped to come up with the next day. Oh, most of the beans fell in between the five lines in a pattern that was more haphazard than he had ever seen, but there were some that were way

below the lines and some quite above them. He didn't flinch! Baritones are used to singing shotgun patterns all the time and who cares if some of the notes strain them to sing too high. And sometimes are lower than even the rumbling bass, **Lance Johnson**, would easily sing. Never mind...the baritones will just have to do what they are always so good at. Loving the Challenge!

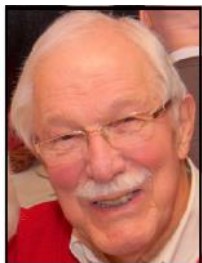
Grabbing his **iPhone** and shooting a picture of this extraordinary baritone part, he retired once again to his bed where even the raccoon screeching would be a soothing lullaby that persuaded his eyelids to flutter no more. "**Into the arms of Morpheus,**" as my father-in-law, **Fred**, was fond of saying.

A second point. Although most songs have fun and challenging Bari parts, some are just plain boring. Want to be bored stiff? Try singing Bari along in long stretches of practically identical notes. Maybe an occasional move up or down a note to keep a Bari from drifting asleep and happily falling off the stage. That may be the remedy! A kind fall to put them out of their misery. And if they do break a leg while performing and falling, well, you know what they do to horses.

Here's to no more boring parts! Good! So, get out there and remember to "hold fast to that which is good." Barbershopping=good things. **Zoom** like nobody's watching! And I hope the above made you smile, **Steve Grady**. And all who are still aware of the reason behind the **Georgia Grind**, I want you to know research on its origins continues to mushroom in places you wouldn't believe.

Remember to protect the truth, your voice and health and begin to feel the excitement of the upcoming annual concert.

Musings from a Barbershop Curmudgeon



Bob Dykstra

The Rise of Choruses in a Quartet Society

It is clear that **O.C. Cash** and **Rupert Hall** envisioned their newly-created organization in 1938 as a quartet society. The name says it all: The **Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America**. It wasn't long, however, before chorus-singing became a staple of chapter meetings everywhere. As early as the first mid-winter meeting of the fledgling society held in St. Louis in 1940, the host chapter members directed by **Norman Rathert**, who was to become the Society's second president, serenaded visiting Barbershoppers with a choral performance. Rathert's counsel to Cash regarding the virtues of chapter chorus development was equally prophetic and persuasive: "If you get a group of men together and teach them to sing their parts, look at how many quartets you are bringing into being real fast."

A brief look back at chapter activity in our Land O'Lakes District illustrates the evolution of chorus activity in the Society. I grew up in Southeastern Wisconsin and first became familiar with the Barbershop organization when the Sheboygan, Wisconsin chapter

was founded in 1945. They presented their first Parade of Quartets the following year and I attended their annual show a few years later. **O.H. (King) Cole**, later to become President of SPEBSQSA, was the organizer and first chapter president. The new chapter had 75 charter members and put on its first show in 1946. (I actually sang Barbershop harmony with a group of men in nearby Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, although we never officially joined the Barbershop Society. That experience was pivotal in my joining the Junction City Barbershop Chapter in the Central States District while stationed at Fort Riley in 1953).

But I digress! King Cole, who was to become International Society president in 1948 and 1949, simultaneously organized a Barbershop chapter in nearby Manitowoc, Wisconsin. This chapter also chartered in 1945 and boasted 80 members. They put on their first show that same year featuring 15 quartets including international gold medalists, the Harmony Halls (1944) from Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the Misfits (1945) from Chicago. The show also featured the Manitowoc Chapter chorus, so clearly the chapter was formed with chorus-singing as one of its planned activities, a mere seven years after the Society was formed to preserve and propagate "barber shop *quartet* singing."

I should also mention that King Cole's daughter, **Ginny Cole Osborn**, demonstrated her own organizing skills by putting together the soon-to-be-famous female quartet, the **Chordettes**, who began their rise to fame by singing and recording Barbershop harmo-

ny. Moreover, even though they never became members, their rise to fame coincided with the establishment of the **Sweet Adelines** Organization which attracted thousands of women to the art and the thrill of ringing Barbershop chords. It's interesting to note that the Chordettes appeared on the Minneapolis Chapter's initial show in 1948. The Minneapolis Chapter had chartered four years previously, the first Minnesota chapter to do so.

At any rate, the Manitowoc show program makes clear that by 1945 at least, Barbershop chapters were involving choruses in their public performances. The old standard Parade of Quartets was more and more setting aside a time slot for the chapter chorus, and chapter members started campaigning for chorus competition similar to that set up for quartets. According to **Harry Purinton**, longtime Land O'Lakes District Historian, the Society's first chorus contest was held in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on July 21, 1946, which interestingly ended in a first-place tie between Milwaukee and Manitowoc.

The international office also lent support to the growing interest in chapter choruses. In 1948 it made available to chapters materials to help with chorus development. This was followed a few years later by the publication of barbershop harmony song folios designed to ease the problem of what to sing.

Dystrka (Cont'd)

The next step involved setting up the framework for chorus competition at the international level. Each district was invited to send to the 1953 international convention in Detroit up to two choruses each of which had to include at least 20 singers. Since not all districts at the time had set up the mechanism for selecting their top competitive choruses, the winner of the Detroit contest, the Grand Rapids Michigan chorus, was named the 1953 International *Convention* Championship Chorus. Naming an International Chorus Champion would have to wait until next year.

By 1954 all districts had set up qualifying procedures and 22 choruses showed up in Washington, D.C. to compete for the first international chorus gold medal. The Land O'Lakes District was represented by the Madison Chapter Chorus directed by **Joe Ripp**, baritone of the popular Cardinals quartet. The Washington, D.C. chorus became the first international chorus champion.

Prior to the 1955 Miami Convention rules had changed a bit. Each district was allotted only one chorus slot. Unfortunately, only ten of the Society's districts sent a representative to Miami. (Central States, Evergreen, Far Western, and Michigan districts failed to compete). The primary reason for their absence appeared to be the high cost of participation, especially for choruses which had to travel significant distances to district

contest sites, not to mention the host city of the international contest.

There were serious questions about whether or not chorus competition would survive given the cost issue. Our Land O'Lakes District took immediate measures to reduce travel costs associated with chorus competition by adopting what they called a "divided chorus contest." In 1956 two chorus contests were held to select the district champion. The Sheboygan Chapter hosted the eastern contest on July 29th; St. Paul hosted the western contest on August 19th. The same judging panel was used for both contests and scores from the two contests were combined to select the champion. The Sheboygan chorus won the eastern division and the overall contest. Eau Claire outscored its rivals in the western division but finished third overall. (To the best of my knowledge the "divided chorus contest" was put to rest after its one-year trial).

Because of the financial issues associated with chorus competition, serious consideration was given at the 1955 meeting of the Society Board of Directors to discontinue the international chorus contest. Moreover, a motion to do just that was defeated at the 1956 Midwinter Convention held (believe it or not) in Minneapolis. However, a motion was approved to present the same motion to the House of Delegates at their meeting at the 1956 Convention held in Minneapolis. Needless to say the motion to abolish chorus competition failed; it's still going strong today. As far

as I know there has never been another serious challenge to that aspect of Society competition.

In 2004 moreover, the Society changed its name from the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America to the Barbershop Harmony Society. Barbershop *quartetting* was no longer singled out as a point of emphasis; Barbershop Harmony, whether sung by foursomes or larger groups, clearly became the focus and remains so today.

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This logo is neither shared with the Girl Scouts nor dumped by the Sweet Adelines.

Logo courtesy of Bob Clark

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LOOKING AHEAD

- May 12—Tech Rehearsal for show
- May 14—Annual Show
- July 19—Richfield Band Shell
- Aug 25—Hastings

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minneapoliscommadores.org

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Minneapolis Chapter of BHS
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