

KEEPING THE
WHOLE WORLD SINGING

CHORD-INATOR

BARBERSHOP
HARMONY
SOCIETY



MINNEAPOLIS
COMMODORES

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

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O'LAKES

NOVEMBER 2024 - VOL. 80 - NO. 5



From the Prez.

Maybe it's because we've begun singing holiday songs that have me all warm and fuzzy (though I suppose "warm and fuzzy" could also be attributed to the 75 degree weather and the fact I need a shave)? Maybe it's because we've already enjoyed a tremendous fall season together (annual show -> convention -> holiday prep) and we continue to evolve, accelerate and grow together?

Or maybe it's something much more worldly, what with the weird election cycle, unfortunate rhetoric from all sides and the onslaught of sad and oftentimes disturbing news?

No matter the reason, harmony is, and has been, on my mind.

Harmony? From BHS: "The Barbershop Harmony Society under-



Tony Mason

stands and embraces the transformative power of harmony. More than a treasure for our own enjoyment, barbershop harmony is a force for direct impact on society."

Lofty!

Many of you know, for now at least, I have a job that almost criminalizes harmony. As Norm (NORM!) once said, "It's a dog eat dog world, and I'm wearing Milkbone underwear." So to me, Tuesday nights and any other night or day or spare few when we sing together, laugh together, serve together becomes my happy time in my happy place. This community is my Xanadu. Mecca. Shangri-La.

We join on the risers or in quartets or VLQs and this thought rings true: "When we create peace, and harmony, and balance in our minds, we will find it in our lives" (Louise Hay)

We get past the notes, start feeling the music, and are carried away by the sound waves, and this hits me right in the feels: "Happiness is

not a matter of intensity but of balance, order, rhythm, and harmony." (Thomas Merton)

When I realize the culture we have - where men of all ages, background, training, and ability come to sing together - lead by amazing directors and boards who truly love this Chapter and value each member - I agree with this truth: "This world belongs to all of us, and all people should be able to live in respect and harmony" (Michelle Yeoh)

Ed note: How many of us past a certain vintage read that last quote and started to hum "I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony?" That's the song I hear, anyway - HA!

Can the Commodores by ourselves cure what ails the world? Nope with a capital "N." But I know my world is better because I know you. Life is more balanced, more joyful, more harmonious. How I want that feeling to extend to hundreds of other men around us who need what we need, and have what we have!

Here's to you. Here's to Harmony!



Minnehaha Academy Chamber Singers
and the Minneapolis Commodores
present

Good News! Holiday Concert



SUNDAY DECEMBER 8, 2024 4:00 PM



Featuring Spirito, MCX and Chapter Quartets

Minnehaha Academy Upper School Hognander Chapel

3100 West River Pkwy, Minneapolis, MN 55406

Tickets - Adult \$10 & Student/Child \$5



For Tickets - Scan QR
or [Minneapoliscommodores.org](https://minneapoliscommodores.org)



Commodores have a BLAST at the LOL Convention!



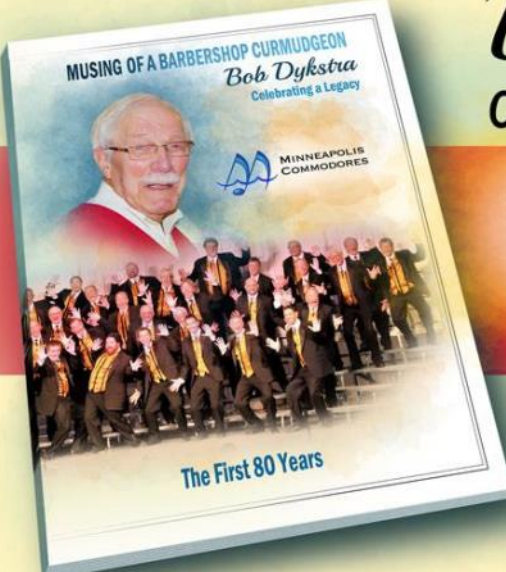
MCX kicks off era of Great Music at Convention!



The Perfect Stocking Stuffer!

\$20

MUSING OF A BARBERSHOP CURMUUDGEON



Bob Dykstra

Celebrating a Legacy

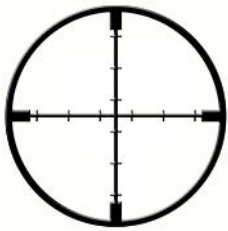
A collection of Bob's articles originally published in the CHORDINATOR 2014-2024

75 pages of Barbershop history

HARVEY WEISS (no credit cards) \$20

harveyw137@gmail.com

Hunter's Bullseye



Shawn Hunter

As always, what a great time at the LOL convention. Congrats to all the quartets fielded by the Commodores. I think they all sounded great, as did MCX and the Commodores!

I want to especially thank **Steve Grady** who not only handles marketing, but puts together the Fun Squad each year, encouraging everyone

to sing tags and polecats. It is fun to hear polecats ringing in the hall all hours of the day and night!

As we wrap up the year, it is time to remember the things we are thankful for. I am thankful for each and everyone of you guys (and gal). Ringing chords is fun, to be sure, but just singing, laughing and hanging around this group makes one feel better....no matter what your problems might be. THANK YOU!

Finally, as I announced a few weeks ago, this will be my last issue as Editor of the CHORDinator. I took over for **Hardin (Doc) Olson**

way back starting in 2018. It has been a wild ride and lots of memories. A sincere thank you to all of you who have contributed articles, pictures, blood, sweat and tears to provide the content.

We still need a new Editor! I challenge one of you "new guys" to step up and join the fun. I look forward to showing you the ropes.

Thanks, all.

It's Great to be a Commodore!

From Fearless Leader 1



Jamye Casperson

To Quartet or Not Quartet, That is the Question! (part 2)

As promised, here is the second half of my article on quartet singing. Singing in a quartet is a deeply rewarding experience that offers musical, personal, and social benefits. It challenges you to grow as a musician, fosters close relationships, and provides a platform for creative expression and performance. Whether you're seeking to improve your skills, build lasting friendships, or simply enjoy the beauty of harmony, quartet singing is an invaluable part of the barbershop tradition.

I asked the Commodores chapter quartets to give me some insight into their quarteting experience. The three quartets featured in this issue are Just One More, Ear Doctors (the quartet formally known as Four of a Kind) and Hall Pass. Here are their comments unedited:

Just One More (submitted by Matt Richards):

Just One More got an opportunity to start back when the Commodores used to do two shows. We had a lot of downtime between the two shows and figured we'd find some of the other guys of a similar age and sing some tags. We instantaneously gelled, both in our singing and our friendship. Since that time, we've

tried to build a quartet brand that matches our personalities: laid back and fun. We've also tried to continually push ourselves with difficult music, grateful to the Minneapolis Commodores for giving us a venue to sing our bucket list songs.

We have three pieces of advice for anybody that's new to quartetting:

- 1. Find guys you like to hang out with - if you have a fun time at a four-man afterglow it's a good start!*
- 2. Sing. A lot. Coaching can help a lot, but it's no replacement for just singing together as much as you can. Once you get to the point where you can intuit how your lead is going to interpret a piece of music you wouldn't believe how fast you can move.*
- 3. It's not worth it if you're not having fun. The volume level of the crowd matters infinitely more than a score.*

Ear Doctors (submitted by Harly Lentz and TJ Striblen):

Harly: We started singing together in February and it came from all of us wanting to quartet and wanted to quartet with other young guys and we just kept talking about it and finally made it happen. For me, the best part is just getting a chance to sing with guys that I enjoy spending time with. You grow so close as a quartet just because you are relying on the other three so much but also, it's awesome because they are there to support you in song but also in life. It is also so cool to know the music backwards and forwards because you really must know your part so that it sounds good. And ringing chords in a quartet is probably

one of the best things in barbershop. My advice would be to just get together with three other people and do it, make mistakes, laugh, and just have a good time singing songs that you think will be fun and work hard to make them sound good.

TJ: We started singing together at break during chorus rehearsals. We would sing a tag together and say, "we should make a quartet". This went on for months until we finally did a full rehearsal outside of the chorus rehearsal break time. After that we were all in.

Singing in the Ear Doctors has helped me feel more connected to the chapter. The support we've received from the other members has been overwhelming and representing the chorus at our first district convention was a really cool moment for all four of us.

I think each of our members has grown tremendously as singers, barbershoppers, and friends. I'm so glad we eventually got going after talking about it for so long.

Hall Pass (submitted by Dave Bechard and Tony Mason):

Tony Mason: In the beginning, there was darkness. And then light. And then air, land, seas, fire, mountains, trees. And then there was life. And then much, much (much) later, there was Hall Pass.

(continued on next page...)

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

Oak Knoll Lutheran Church
600 Hopkins Crossroad
Minnetonka, MN 55305

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Dave Bechard, Tenor:
Energy of a supernova, pipes of Freddie Mercury, moves like Savion Glover. With a range that is near-dangerous to any not yet experiencing presbycusis.

Paul Wigley, Baritone:
Q: What's a Wigley? A: Judge, jury, and executioner of some of the most flawless baritone to ever pass through the upper esophageal sphincter.

Tony Mason, Lead:
What he lacks in talent he makes up for by singing very loud. Lives by Hans C. Andersen's famous original axiom, "When words fail, music speaks... which is a good thing 'cause the words are gonsta fail."

Dave Casperson, Bass
Mr 20-70Hz. Herr Do Do Do Bah Bah Bah Do. More runs than Kelvin Kiptum. More fills than Phil Lesh (RIP). Hall Pass' sure foundation and the subwoofer that adds boom to any room

United by an almost-feral need to perform at LEAST 2x per year, as long as they don't over-rehearse. Driven by an almost-maniacal desire to eventually learn at least 1 more song that doesn't end with a High G post. These 4 husbands, fathers, friends, and barbershoppers (Ed note: Who are we kidding? Mostly barbershoppers. Their banks will never be overdrawn) used to fight fate, but have now accepted the Thanos-esqe reality: Hall Pass was inevitable.

*Was it kismet that they met? Was it proximity to and participation within Lakeville Schools? Or was it just a **Bob Rossian** "Happy Accident?" That's a question for*

philosophers, historians, theologians, or their very patient wives. "Experts" may never agree on Hall Pass' origins or impact, but all people everywhere have to admit: This happened.

Dave Bechard:
Hall Pass seemed like it was destined to form when Dave moved to Lakeville and started singing with the Commodores. The biggest concern we had was getting permission (Paul and Dave have a history of 'over-drawing from the barbershop bank' at times ...). BUT, luckily, we were all able to secure a hall pass from our wives, and the quartet was born - and named!

One of the most important things for a quartet is aligning your expectations about performing, competing, rehearsing, etc. And, while we cherish the moments that we get to sing together, there is never a concern of Hall Pass being over-rehearsed. Our only expectation is that when we get together, we will have fun singing with good friends. (Oh, also, we more or less expect that we'll sing something where Tony will post a 'G' at the end.)

Barbershop quartetting is not just being in musical harmony; it's about building interpersonal harmony--building lifelong friendships and creating a connection through music. Quartet singing not only refines your vocal skills but also enriches your life with camaraderie and the joy of shared performance.

Soooo.....let's all get out there, form a quartet (or at least try one). It is FUN, it is thrilling, and you will live longer! I guarantee it!

Member Spotlight

Neal Mortenson



Once you hear his signature opener - **Welllllllllll** – you know we’re about to hear from our current V.P. of Membership. **Neal Mortenson** is one of those unsung heroes who puts in many behind-the-scenes hours working on our behalf. In addition to his membership duties, he has also taken on, like the proverbial duck to water (maybe a loon in this case), an unofficial role as chapter historian. He is definitely the go-to guy if any information is needed on current or past members. He was a

huge help in pulling together the definitive list that included every Commodore member since our inception in 1944. This list was the one that was used for the wonderful poster that **Kayden** created celebrating our 80 years as a chapter.

Neal started his Barbershop journey in 1970 in San Diego and immediately found a place on the stage with his chapter that won the district convention that fall and finished second at the International competition in 1971. Following his discharge from the Navy in 1972, he came home to Minneapolis and decided that singing Barbershop was something that he needed more of. He heard that a group called the Minneapolis Commodores were having their annual picnic and decided to visit. He was initially greeted by **Jim Richards** and **Bob Spong** and they both were more than happy to help him continue his Barbershop journey.

Over the years Neal has been very active in the chapter leadership with significant roles; Annual Show ticket Chairman, At Large Board Member, Membership VP, Valentines Program Coordinator, and last but not least, doing all he could to make the Commodores look as good as they sound as the Maestro of Makeup Kits.

When you see Neal, please pass along your thanks for all he has done, and continues to do, on behalf of the chapter.



Paul Paddock

Jim Richards Memorial Chord Candy # 151

Here's a fun tag based on the beloved song from Disney's "Lion King" (1994 animated & 2019 live-action) whose lyrics mean no worries, just in time for the prequel feature "Mufasa" this upcoming Christmas! Picture Timon the meerkat and Pumbaa the warthog lifting up young lion-cub Simba's spirits when all seemed lost from losing his father and having his evil uncle and hyenas

take over his home and chase him out. This tag sports great advice in times of worry and stress, especially with the dark winter months coming around the corner. These wouldn't even be bad lyrics to have in light of the increasingly polarized political environment these days, what with elections underway! The song was written by **Nathan Lane** and **Ernie Sabella** and guess what? Bases have the melody this time! Starts out on the tonic, with inverted Bb chords, switching to the dominant F7, and switching back home to the Bb. Bases, you own the ending phrase swinging down on F-G-Bb, or 5-6-1 if you prefer numerical notation. Have fun with this one!"

Hakuna Matata
from Disney's "Lion King" arranged by Paul Paddock
Music by Nathan Lane, Ernie Sabella

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Logo courtesy of Bob Clark

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To:

- BOMP
- Mark Ortenberger.....952-250-0968
- JUST ONE MORE
- Nate Weimer.....316-204-8756
- SWYPE
- Mark Bloomquist.....612-325-9349
- CINEMATIX
- Steve Grady.....952-334-7500
- HALL PASS
- Dave Casperson.....651-247-6319

LOOKING AHEAD

2024
Dec 8 Christmas Show

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

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Minnetonka, MN 55305
GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME**