

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

FEBRUARY 2023 - VOL. 79 - NO. 1



Tony Mason

I think **Plato** said it best when he said, "Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything."

From the Prez.

We all know that singing is good for the soul. But it's important to remember that singing is also excellent for physical health. According to Healthline (Nov, 2020):

Singing:

- Relieves stress
- Stimulates the immune response
- Increases pain thresholds
- May improve snoring
- Improves lung function
- Develops a sense of belonging and connection
- Enhances memory functionality
- Helps with grief
- Improves mental health and mood
- Helps improve speaking abilities

We are so ridiculously blessed to be a part of this community! And it's time for this community to expand. We are absolutely committed to providing new performance opportunities, new service opportunities, new growth opportunities, all while preserving our strong heritage and culture.

I have a personal ask of each of you: As we continue to evolve our offerings and expand our Chapter - starting with our newly announced VLQ - please joyfully join us in this journey.

Please embrace growth. Be open to new opportunities. Be inclusive of new members. And get ready for even more good singing!

There are men who need to join us. There are community members who need to hear us. This is our

time to grow.

We can and will be a magnet singing organization for the Twin Cities.

- We can and will attract more men who want and need what we have: Camaraderie, better physical health, enhanced mental health.
- We can and will perform more and touch more hearts because our chorus will be big enough and strong enough to support more performance opportunities.
- We can and will ensure that this proud 80 year old chorus is strong enough to survive for another 80 years!

Now, more than ever, I'm proud to be part of this wonderful community. It is, actually and truly,

***GREAT TO BE A
COMMODORE!***

Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, *Backpedaling Baritone*



Jim Erickson

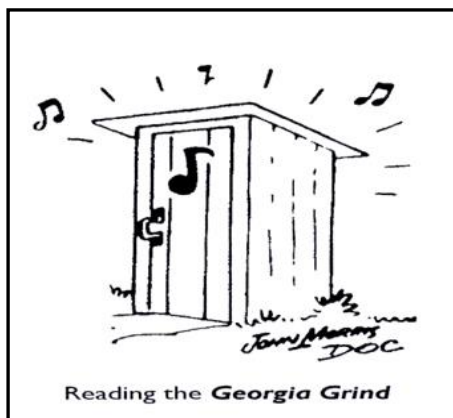
Oh, I'm not so sure "backpedaling" really tells what I am going to write about. But what the heck! I'm going back to my immedi-

ately prior article to expand that a bit. There I encouraged you to get with the potential wave of others seeking kind of what used to be, but maybe just a desire to be out and around people. Doing things with individuals of many interests and talents, not only to avoid loneliness, but to seem more alive once again.

I will be frank about the matter of misinformation, divisiveness, polarization and the rotting funk of the hateful crop of fruit they produce. We have stepped in it, gotten stuck in it, and now must do whatever we can to get out of the kind of quicksand it has produced. I used to wonder how the "Dark Ages" ever came about with so many thoughtful, talented, energetic (Oh, I won't go on much longer) good souls present to face the darkness. But so many bad elements developed that the better ones struggled for decades just to exist, much less become a beacon of light to the best in society at that time. Perhaps by sheer momentum, conditions over time swung in a more hopeful direction. Whether it will begin to swing now in a better direction, we will just have to wait and see. It can only go on long enough until one day, people will just stand up and shout, "Enough! Stop it!" as loud as they can. Then begins the struggle toward some kind of livable normalcy.

I don't anticipate any grandiose movement by what I have to say, but it seems like we are seeing some hints of a longing for better relationships and associations. Not to be a Pollyanna, but I am hoping for a future of generations valuing coming together again in groups to promote the best uses of their talents and interests. And when I sense the possibilities of a singing group like the Commodores being an outlet for associating with others, it encourages me.

And you and I can have a part in such a movement. Please do not misunderstand me, though. There may be a tough struggle ahead as living gets sorted out and on with it. But to consider the alternative is to take us back into the dark. So



be serious about exposing others to the joy of Barbershop singing and spending time with some very talented people. Encouragement of new members is vital, so you are in a position of making a difference. So, do so!

Whew! That was a lot to deal with. I am switching gears to reflect a scattered mind by sharing some miscellaneous thoughts, ideas, tips, etc., I have come across from time to time over the last several years.

Don't know where I got this, but in the opera (I think), **Billy Budd**, there are premises of the good, beautiful and strong. (I am really going out on a limb here, so take

no pride in pointing out any ignorance you detect.) The base message of the opera in a nutshell is that "Something has to die before something beautiful can come out of it."

Someone else said, "I'm strong and I know it and that is enough." Mean anything to you?

Here is something someone preached to a group of us. "I'm not the person being moved. I am here to move others." This reminded me of an admonition Paul **Wigley**, our esteemed former director, told us just before a large funeral for a Commodore many knew as a good friend and fellow singer. Paraphrasing of what he said, "We are here to perform part of the funeral service. This is not the time for you to express your grief, but rather to be the singers you are and perform respectfully for the others listening to you." That was hard, but it was what we were there for.

On another tack, someone passed on this pearl. "Perfection is just for the rehearsal. Not for the performance." Or as someone else said, "I've done the work. Now I am going to perform!" For nerves, they said, "Use a part of your brain that can't be hurt." With my brain, it would be a small pain, anyway. And "Get out of your head. Just do it!"

On audiences, they give you their love and their time. So, focus your eyes and thought on what you are doing. Draw the audience into you. Welcome them and bring them close, taking it easy, but not being scary. Invite them to relax and release. Meanwhile, pay attention to the members of the audience by looking from one side of the room to the other. And don't worry about breathing. An audience wants to see you do so as part of being alive.

**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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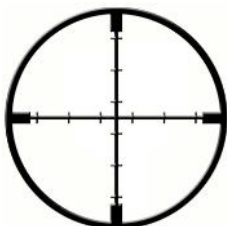
Well, I hope I have given you some things to think about. Quite a jumble, I admit, but perhaps something will strike you and stay with you a bit. And now that I have typed the above, I can release and toss my scribbly notes taken over the years to the universe. Kind of, it seems, like a lot of the emails I write. They must go somewhere other than to the recipient. Don't they? Beamed up and gone?

Well hey, the Commodores are off to a tremendous start for 2023 and there are "good vibrations" in the

air. So, keep working on that Barbershop bucket list of yours. There are so many opportunities. And remember to hold on to that which is good, value and protect the truth, and give being kind a whirl. You never know! And one last thing, this is a great chorus so keep up the good work! One last, final thing, a few good laughs wouldn't hurt either. Oh, one last, final, ending thing—ZOOM—it offers some of us a chance to be a part of rehearsals, otherwise not available. Great!

Commodorewise, it's great to be one...

Hunter's Bullseye



Shawn Hunter

Well, here goes another year of fun times singing with all y'all. Sorry that your favorite Editor has been missing a lot as of late. Between a 3-week kick-ass cold and a couple weeks of Florida vacation, I have missed plenty right out of the 2023 gate. I vow to do better!

Regardless, it is GREAT to see the new and improved energy at rehearsals. It is especially fantastic to see all of the new, young faces and hear those strong voices! In my 9 years with the chorus, I have

never seen so many new guys and I am thrilled. THANK YOU to the Membership guys, the Board, and especially our new Prez, **Tony Mason** for his leadership and challenge for us to improve and grow.

This year is going to be really great and we have a tremendous start on our 2023 music. Let's keep the momentum going, my Brothers!

It is GRRRREAT to be a Commodore!!!!



Bob Dykstra

Musings from a Barbershop Curmudgeon

I was rifling through a stack of Barbershop memorabilia a few days ago when a yellowish-brown single sheet of music caught my attention. The music was titled “Leave Me a Little Bit of Sunshine” with words and music by **Vaughan Horton** and **Sammy Mysels**. The tattered music sheet carried a 1954 copyright but was clearly a working copy of the song and not a published version.

My mind went immediately back to the late summer of 1954 when I was completing my two-year hitch in the army. Our quartet, the **Hut Four**, was in New York city to sing on an army recruiting show, Soldier Parade, scheduled for July 21 on one of the major television networks (I’ve forgotten which one). As was common at the time, the show was to be televised live.

But this trip was unusually memorable. Our quartet had sung what we considered to be our “swan song” a few weeks earlier and had bade farewell to our tenor, who had been discharged and returned to his home in Ohio. Meanwhile, quartet baritone, **Bob Moksnes**, and I (quartet lead), were home on furlough. Nevertheless, **John Hansen** (bass), who worked in Special Services in the army, accepted an invitation for the Hut Four to perform on the show. He then scouted out a tenor, **Johnny Wheeler**, at our home base at Fort Riley, Kansas, to round out the quartet for the Soldier Parade appearance.

John’s next move was to call Moksnes and me to tell us the quartet had re-formed and was headed to New York. We were to return to Fort Riley immediately, pack a bit, then meet Hansen and our new tenor at the airport in Manhattan, Kansas, to catch our flight to the Big Apple. We did just that! So here we were heading to New York to perform on live national TV with a tenor whom we met for the first time as we boarded our flight. You had to know John Hansen to figure that one out!

So when we arrived in New York we had only a few days to decide on a song to perform on our television appearance. Having never sung with our new tenor, we obviously had no repertoire from which to choose. Our leader, John Hansen, had brought some **Tom Tjornholm** arrangements he had acquired from Tom when the two of them formed the Par Four Quartet during their college years at Macalester College in St. Paul. We spent a lot of time singing through those arrangements looking for the “right” one to sing on our upcoming Soldier Parade appearance. As I write this I wonder why we didn’t sing something from our quartet repertoire, which certainly would have simplified things.....but we didn’t. All I remember is that we finally settled on Tom Tjornholm’s arrangement of “Dream” which we sang accompanied by a small instrumental group quite satisfactorily as I recall.

Now let’s return to the tattered yellow song sheet that caught my attention. One evening we were “woodshedding” some songs in a New York bar when a gentleman approached us with a request. He introduced himself as Sammy Mysels, a song-writer, and asked

whether the quartet would be willing to record a new song of his so that he could “peddle” it to the appropriate people. Without hesitation we agreed to do it. I don’t recall getting paid for the recording work but we signed a contract assuring us a fee if someone purchased the rights to the song, a lilt-ing simple little song titled “Leave Me a Little Bit of Sunshine.”

We scheduled a brief recording session for a day or two hence and set about “woodshedding” the song. The music sheet provided only a lead line, so we created the harmony. We even threw in a Barbershop tag. All of us Barbershoppers at the time were singing the Orphans’ (1954 National Quartet Champions) tag to “Sweetheart of Sigma Chi” so we simply adapted it for our song. We recorded the song with the accompaniment of a small instrumental group and were given a disc which I still have.

That was it. We never talked with Sammy Mysels again. We joked for a few days about getting rich when the song reached #1 on the Hit Parade, but we all realized what a long shot it would be to sell an original song, especially one composed by an unknown song writer. So we forgot about the song, never sang it again.

But my curiosity was piqued when I came across the tattered song sheet the other day. I decided to do a bit of research on Sammy Mysels who was listed as co-writer of the song and was the man who approached us almost seventy years ago in the New York bar.

(Dykstra, cont'd)

A google search told me immediately that our mysterious song-writer, though unknown to us, was far from unknown to popular music enthusiasts. I quickly found a list of songs attributed to him. What really caught my attention was that Mysels was one of three song-writers who composed one of my all-time favorite songs, "We Three", as recorded by the **Ink Spots**. The recording was released in 1940 but retained popularity many years thereafter. I was interested to learn, moreover, that Frank Sinatra also recorded the song in 1940 and that more than two dozen other performing artists later covered the song. So Mysels was certainly not a song-writer without credentials when he composed "Leave Me a Little Bit of Sunshine" in 1954.

Two other songs composed by Mysels were of special interest to me. He was also a member of a songwriting team that published "Mention My Name in Sheboygan" in 1947. The song was recorded at that time by **Edmundo Ros** and his orchestra, then some years later by the **Everly Brothers**. The "hook" for me with this song, of course, is that I grew up just a few miles from Sheboygan, the home of the **Chordettes**, some wonderful sausage makers, and a wonderful Barbershop chapter. The Hut Four sang this song for a number of years including appearances on the Sheboygan Chapter Show using our own set of "barbershoppy" lyrics.

I was even more surprised to discover that a mainstay of our quartet's repertoire, "Chocolate Whiskey and Vanilla Gin" was published by **Bob Hilliard** and **Sammy Mysels** in

1949. I don't recall hearing the song on the radio, but we learned and performed it during our army days at Fort Riley (1952-54). I also don't recall ever seeing any sheet music for it so I don't remember how we learned it.

Just imagine, however, that our original tenor had been with us in 1954 in the New York bar doing the impromptu singing that caught the attention of Sammy Mysels. We might well have been crooning "Chocolate Whiskey and Vanilla Gin." Wouldn't that have been a small world event??!!

IT'S GREAT TO BE A BARBERSHOPPER!!!!



Paul Paddock

Jim Richards Memorial Chord Candy # 147

"When the River Meets the Sea" is a song written by composer and lyricist **Paul Williams** for **Jim Henson's** 1977 TV special *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas*. **Emmet Otter**, the title character, and his mother, **Alice Otter** sang this song together. The song was later sung by **John Denver** and **Robin the Frog** on the 1979 album *John Den-*

ver and the Muppets: A Christmas Together. Though written for one Christmas story and featured in another, the lyrics are not holiday-related, but symbolic of death as a peaceful transition to an afterlife. The deeper winter months following the holiday season can be a time of contemplation and reflection, especially when we've been buried under a couple feet of snow! I grew up listening to the John Denver and the Muppets tape set, always

listening to it in the car during the holidays; I'm sure this can be sentimental to many of you as it is to me. Here we have a miniature post by the leads at the end. There is some doubling up going on between lead and baritone and even bass a couple times, but it's not meant to be overly complex. The tag can be done with or without meter, but as the tag wraps up, it naturally can ritardando like the Muppets track. Enjoy singing this nice easy tag in your comfortable range."

WHEN THE RIVER MEETS THE SEA

PAUL WILLIAMS
ARR. PAUL PADDOCK

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To:

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- EASY LISTENIN'
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- JUST ONE MORE
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LOOKING AHEAD

- Jul. 31 Concert at Maple Grove
- Sept. 23 Annual Show

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**CHORD-INATOR
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Minneapolis Chapter of BHS
MEETING EVERY TUES -7:00
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LOCATION TBD
GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME**