

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

APRIL 2023 - VOL. 79 - NO. 2



Tony Mason

of tremendous stress and turmoil in my personal and professional life. And from Day 1 the Commodores have provided me with the 3 things referenced in these quotes: Happiness, Friendship, and Inclusivity.

From the Prez.

Famed musician **Robert Plant**:
"The whole idea of music, from the beginning of time, was for people to be happy."

Nobel Peace Prize winning author and poet **Herman Hesse**:
"Making music together is the best way for two people to become friends."

Top 10 Greatest Keyboardist Of All Time **Herbie Hancock**: "It's not exclusive, but inclusive, which is the whole spirit of jazz."

(Top 10 according to experts in case you're wondering: 1. Art Tatum, 2. Thelonious Monk, 3. Bill Evans, 4. Herbie Hancock, 5. Oscar Peterson, 6. McCoy Tyner, 7. Bud Powell, 8. Keith Jarrett, 9. Chick Corea, 10. Ahmad Jamal')

Many of you know that I joined the Commodores during a period

I love the Commodore culture. I am grateful to those who paved the way for this Chorus to be a place for singers of all ages and musical ability to, in the words of the Beatles, "Come Together".

There are so many men out there like me. Men of all ages who need a safe space, an oasis, a break. They need friendship and laughs and afterglows and tags and every other benefit of this culture and our scene.

We need to find these men. And we need to make room for them. And welcome them with big smiles, warm hearts, and open split-move-down-tiles-sacred-watermelon-pose arms.

As we grow and add men and opportunities:

For those who have been regular attendees for years (or decades), please continue to join with us.

We need you.

For those who haven't been to Chorus rehearsal lately, please come back soon. We are all richer when you are with us. We need you. We miss you.

For those who may be concerned about the addition of a new performance opportunity (Code Named VVLQ for now): Please don't be! This is not a shift in culture. This is not a shift away from inclusivity to exclusivity. Just the opposite, actually. It's simply another way to invite men to come join our ranks.

For all: Happiness, Friendship, Inclusivity.

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

Go-4's Rock the Singing Valentine Circuit!



Rest easy, Dr. Michael James (“Jim”) Scheller

- by Lou DeMars



Sadly, we lost another Commodore pal – with the passing of **Dr. James (Jim) Scheller** peacefully at home January 31, 2023, in Colorado, CA.

My wife, **Nan**, and I were pals of **Jim** and **Patty** for over 40 years – on and off the golf course. **Mark Sathe** and I recruited Jim and he loved singing bass with the Minneapolis Commodores for many years. Jim particularly enjoyed woodshedding at the afterglows where his wit, sense of humor and wonderful storytelling shined. He was also a regular attendee of the Friday Lunch Bunch That Meets on Thursday.

Born in Minneapolis, Jim attended school in Wayzata and served in the United States Army, 82nd Airborne, with the military police and as a paratrooper. Jim went on to attend the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul where he played football. He accepted a commission as an officer in the United States Air Force (USAF). As a Forward Air Controller overseas, he met and married a young teacher, **Patricia**. Later, Jim became a fighter pilot

flying the F-4. Jim always excelled above and beyond and was noted for parachuting from the highest altitude allowed.

After serving in the USAF, Jim pursued a civilian career in dentistry, graduating from the University of Minnesota as Doctor of Dental Surgery. While practicing dentistry for 32 years in St. Louis Park, Jim continued to fly helicopters and provide dental support in the Guard. Jim was noted for “working magic” in the dental chair. In addition to his creative dental wizardry, Jim was known to have saved several patients’ lives with early diagnoses of cancer, etc.

Jim’s passion was golf, a sport which he more than excelled at. He had the distinction of winning both the Minnesota State Men’s Senior Open in 1990 and the Minnesota State Amateur in 1991. I recall Jim telling us that, during the last few holes of these two tournaments, he felt like his mouth was full of cotton!

We golfed (and socialized) with Jim and Patty for many years both on and off the course at Golden Valley Golf & Country Club where Jim was “royalty” for all of his golfing achievements. Jim had a total of 15 Holes-In-Ones in his career. And, in 2002, he accomplished the feat of TWO (back to back) Holes-In-One at GVGCC – (#14 and #17)!! This was reported by ESPN as having the odds of 67 million to one! I recall the cable TV shows ran this ticker tape for 24 hours – “*Dr. James Scheller, Plymouth, MN has TWO back to back Holes-In-One!*” And, *THE*

TODAY SHOW invited him to New York City to appear on their show – but Jim refused. He probably had a golf game scheduled!

Jim was part of a large musical family. In addition to singing bass with the Commodores, Jim played the bass and a mean harmonica! Being the competitor he was, I recall when Jim participated in his first Commodore competition on stage, he told me he was more nervous than his first parachute jump!

Jim was an incredible husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother, friend and mentor to many. And, many will miss his infectious personality and wonderful storytelling (in addition to his golf lessons). He is survived by his wife, Patricia, of 59 years, daughter **Denise** and son **Michael**, six grandchildren: **Seth, Natasha, Larissa, Mackenzie, Ella Rae** and **Tyler** and four great grandchildren: **Lucas, Aubrey, Addison** and **Sophie**. Jim is also survived by sisters, **Mary Jo, Denise** and **Elizabeth** and brothers, **Bill** and **Rich**.

Jim will have a military funeral and private interment at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. Memorials may be sent to Disabled American Veterans. Funeral is on Friday, April 28, 2023 – 10:00 visitation and 11:00 Service, The Chapel of St. Thomas Aquinas, University of St. Thomas.

Jimmy – we hope you’ve already played several rounds “up there”.

Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, *BackThen Baritone*



Jim Erickson

OK, this article will take a bit of explaining. I began writing articles for the Chord-Inator a little over 18 years ago. (2005) For years, the newsletter was published in print form every month. Not long ago, it became a quarterly and was electronic instead of the hard copy, mailable version. Through all of that, I think I missed only a couple of issues, one of them being when I had heart surgery although even then there may have been a very short article.

It all started when the chorus was learning one of its concert songs and in that song, there was a reference to a “Texas tommy wiggle” (I am too lazy to look it up, but I believe the song was “At The Ball, That’s All.” Pester **Paul Wigley** if you really want to know which song. He needs to keep occupied.) I researched the phrase and then wrote about it. In my endless hours of research on Tommy, I came across the term, “Georgia Grind.” That struck me as a great title for my articles, but even more so, a term worthy of finding its origins. And so I set about revealing what I had discovered and my quest for as much as I could uncover about the Grind.

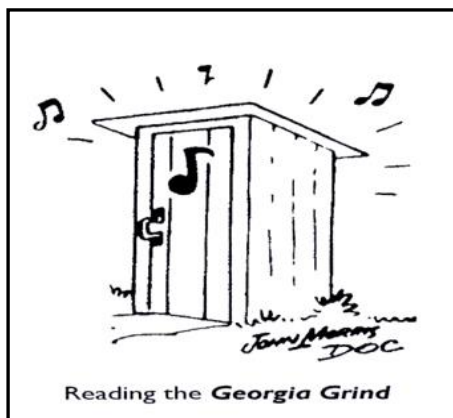
Taking an approach used by the Gay Nineties (A comedy quartet of Minnesota started in the 1950s I believe—**Bob Dykstra** can tell you all about them.), I began exposing what my research had turned up, but due to my “Stream of Consciousness” form of writing (As **Jim Richards**, father of **Matt** and **Andy**, once called it to my face no less) and a completely disorganized (but cleverly, subtly organized?) writing form, I often apologized for my inability to quite get to the meat of the subject before running out of column space. Requiring the promise to tell the reader what I had found if only they would wait to find out in the next, future article. One would think by now that all would have been revealed. Silly reader! Wait until the next article though, where I will keep my promise. Or will I be able to?

In the meantime, what follows is my second article from those many years ago and my first attempt to tell you all I had found about the origins of the name and

background of “Georgia Grind.” Here it is:

“Now that you know from my last article what a “Texas Tommy Wiggle” is, I’ll tell you what the “Georgia Grind” is that I mentioned there. Presumably your daydream about the wiggle has faded sufficiently so that you can tackle an even more engaging topic. As you have come to realize, I am much too young to know this information firsthand so you will have to accept what has been passed on to me by word of mouth. Which, in itself, is a funny turn on a figure of speech. Do we say, “song of mouth” when contrasting it to written music? Or “song of ear” when we listen? And, when we listen to music on the radio, is it “song of radio?”

Speaking of radio, that’s where I first heard a barbershop style quartet. Every year to raise money for a good cause (I have forgotten what it was), the local radio station, KWAD in Wadena, MN,



would have a show at the local auditorium where listeners could call in a pledge. The caller would ask that someone perform in some way to earn the pledge. The performance, of course, would be broadcast over the radio. What I remember every year is someone pledging an amount (and others could join to raise it) for a certain local quartet to sing. I have no idea how they ever got together, how often they practiced, if they had a name, or what their inspiration, other than singing, was. Who were they? One was a local bakery shop owner, another a painter, and I don’t recall what the others did in their real life. But, when the pledges started rolling in, the quartet would drive over to the auditorium, walk up to the microphone and sing a harmonized version of something like “My Wild Irish Rose.” Of course an encore with more pledges was always demanded. To everyone’s delight and perhaps forgiving ear, the performance was always a big hit and we would chuckle in envy at four men who were brave enough to risk their

identity and image, in those days, to do something so neat. And I think they did a pretty good job!

I next encountered something about barbershopping when, as a Junior in high school, I attended Boys State one spring at the U of MN Farm Campus. We were learning about government and politics at this conference and for a break we were to go to a Twins game, I believe. Cancelled due to rain, the planned alternative was to go to the huge Northrop Auditorium at the main campus and listen to a barbershop contest. Who, of the high schoolers, had any idea what that was going to be? (Some of the Commodore elders may be able to tell me what that contest was in June of ‘56, but I believe it may have been at least district.) I just remember one quartet after another appearing on stage in bright sport coats or wild pants or some other striking outfit and singing and ringing the roof off the place. I couldn’t believe my song of ear experience. To my present dismay, I didn’t have much of anything to do with barbershop singing for years after that, except to see “Music Man” and hum its tunes.

“Oh Mercy” as my father-in-law used to say, I’m afraid I’ve used up more column space than I intended so I’ll just have to tell you about the dark and sensational past of the “Georgia Grind” later. And remind me to tell you sometime of my role in the play, “The Perfect Idiot.” Stifle your thoughts as it has nothing to do with my being a baritone!

Commodore Baritones Rock!”

So, once again I have run out of space. At least you now know why I named the column as I did. And for newer members, you no longer have to say, “Huh?” when you first encounter my scribbblings. And if you have the fortitude, perhaps you will be among the first to discover what I have found. Someday. Maybe soooome day...

Remember to hold fast to that which is good, value the truth, keep growing the chorus, and most of all, have fun! Your audience will know you really are loving it and so too, will they!

It’s Great to be a Commodore!

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Land O'Lakes District, BHS
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Mayflower Congregational Church
106 Diamond Lake Rd E
Minneapolis, MN 55419

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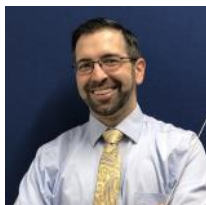
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Dave Bechard

News from the Front

I received my 17-year BHS membership card in March ... and it got me thinking. At times, it feels like just yesterday that I started my Barbershop Career in the PIO District with the MountainTown Singers (Mt. Pleasant, MI). At other times, it feels like a few lifetimes ago as I remember singing with the Sioux Emperians (Sioux Falls, SD), the Music Men (Dubuque, IA), and of course – my Minneapolis Commodores family.

But, “17 Years”? What was it that made me start ... why did I keep seeking it out?

For me, it was a bit of good fortune. I had a close encounter with a local Michigan-based quartet (My Three Friends), and I was immediately hooked by the sounds they were creating together – so they took me into the lobby and taught me a tag. Easy as that! And, about a month later, I was hearing similar sounds come out of the choir room at Central Michigan University during a MountainTown Singers rehearsal ... so I made a plan to stop by and sing some. I CAME for the Music – as most of us did! But, why have I still been coming for the last 17 years (and what continues to bring YOU back)?

Personally, I was inspired by the degree of musicians that I got to sing with on a weekly basis. I was mentored by some of the ‘more seasoned’ barbershoppers. I made close friendships with my chorus- and quartet-mates. I’ve been supported and encouraged by barbershoppers and their families (from Home Inspection discounts ... to plenty of babysitting!). I COME

BACK for the people. Of course, the music is a great bonus – but so many of us come back each week to see our friends and family, and to lift each other up (and be lifted up ourselves).

And that’s why I get SO excited to see the number of new faces we’ve gotten onto the risers in the past 12 months. We have had, at least, 6 or 7 new guys join our ranks this year, and they have been great additions. It is fun to see them singing tags at break or create their own quartets. I love getting to know them and what they do and what brings them in on a Tuesday.

We have a great gift here with the Minneapolis Commodores – Barbershop Music is something very special and very attractive. Let’s continue to bring in new guys for the music. And, once they’re here, let’s show them the love and respect we have for each guy on the risers so that they will keep coming back.

It’s GREAT to be a Commodore!

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Logo courtesy of Bob Clark

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To:

- BOMP
- Mark Ortenberger.....952-250-0968
- EASY LISTENIN'
- Dick Riemenschneider.....651-487-9993
- JUST ONE MORE
- Nate Weimer.....316/204-8756
- SWYPE
- Mark Bloomquist.....952/541-0232
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- Steve Grady.....952/334-7500
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LOOKING AHEAD

- May 28 Twins Game
- June 4 BOTY
- July 11 Como
- Aug 28 Maple Grove
- Sept. 23 Annual Show

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

**CHORD-INATOR
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MEETING EVERY TUES -7:00
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GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME**