

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

JUNE 2023 - VOL. 79 - NO. 3



## *From the Prez.*

### Something Good:

Some families were into watching sports. My family watched just enough sports to be deemed "socially acceptable." But we were - and are - a musical theater family.

Years before I knew I could sing, I knew the words and music to many beloved musicals: Fiddler on the Roof, Damn Yankees, Guys and Dolls, 42nd Street, West Side Story, and so many others. Even though I like them all, my favorite has always been The Sound of Music.

So while we still have MUCH performance polish to apply, when we sing "Something Good" it's a powerful and emotional experience for me. Every. Single. Time.

To be honest, it's a song I disliked as a kid. I used to think, "No smooching! Bring on the Nazis!"



**Tony Mason**

But as a man? I connect with this song in a deep way.

Georg Von Trapp: Here is a man who harbors unresolved grief after the loss of a spouse. He is working (and largely failing) to adjust to home life after years at sea. He has imposter syndrome after many attempts to be an approachable father to a big family while dealing with anger and unresolved loss. He is rebounding from a busted relationship of convenience, not love, and is now in love with a young governess / Nun... but has been completely unable to vocalize his feelings about that love - or almost anything else that matters - for many years. And on top of all of that he knows he is about to be drafted to fight and most likely die for a cause he bitterly detests as he watches his country - his beloved homeland - become absorbed by the Third Reich.

It's an amazing thing to watch and hear as, right in the midst of these stresses and challenges and before the wedding and the Nazis and the concert and the graveyard and the race to leave the homeland, this grizzled and emotionally-puckered-up father and military man sings

to his Maria and finds peace and hope and love.

I don't think I'm alone when I admit that I, like Cap'n Von Trapp, sometimes grapple with unpleasant past memories, concern about the present, and fear (or at least deep angst) over an uncertain future. We all do. We are human.

How I love it when Tuesday rolls around. My life can feel uncertain and unstable coming into the building. But when I get on the risers unpleasant memories and concerns and fears temporarily abate. It's just me and dozens of the best people I know coming together in harmony as the world's cares melt away for a few hours a week.

It IS great to be a Commodore! I hope we can all take personally and seriously the prescient need to expand and share what we have. There are so many people around us who deserve this experience. They, like Captain Von Trapp and like all of us, need Something Good.

Thanks,

TM

## Barbershopper of the Year (BOTY)!



MC Blake Wanger



CHORD SMASH!



President's Award: **Neal Mortensen**  
(presented by President **Tony Mason**)



President's Award: **Carl and Diana Pinard**



Lifetime Achievement Award:  
**Dan Slattery**



Barbershopper of the Year: **Harvey Weiss**



## From Fearless Leader 1



**Jamye Casperson**

Writing articles about barbershop or music is not my thing (as evidenced by how seldom there is an article from me in the Chordinator). Music/singing/choir has been my professional and personal life since I was a child. I teach it, I participate in it, I have studied it (and continue to do so), I have a great passion for it. I have always believed in its' ability to connect people; I think children **MUST** have it as part of their education. Music is part of who we are...my grandson can't talk yet but he does sing and he stops what he is doing to "dance" when music comes on. Music represents special events... we play certain songs for weddings, funerals, inaugurations. We have a national anthem, school songs, rousers for college teams... songs that identify us with a group. TV shows have theme songs...I grew up with Dukes of Hazzard, CHiPs, Love Boat, Cheers, Family Ties, Three's Company. I can "name that tune" in 5 notes when those songs are played. In 30 years of teaching, I can identify a group of students by a song that we worked on together.

But in my over 50 years of being in music, I experienced one of the most touching and emotional moments I have ever had in music last week. The acapella group from the high school I taught at went to sing at The Moments in

Lakeville (this is a memory care facility). I went with them because my dad is a resident there and, to be honest, I missed hearing them sing. They sang for three different groups of residents...each group heard about 4 songs. Some residents smiled while we sang; some sat still; I could hear a couple of them humming. We ended each set with "My Way" by **Frank Sinatra**. It is basically sung by one young man with the other kids as his backup instruments. During the first performance of this song, two residents started mouthing every word as he sang. I know these residents and they don't communicate much at all on a day to day basis, but this song touched them and they sang right along. Two of the students in the performing group noticed them "come alive" and immediately became very emotional. We finished singing and those kids were in tears. We sang it again for the group that my dad was in and these residents are in the memory care unit that needs a high level of care. Again, we closed our set with "My Way" and the reaction was similar...smiles and rocking back and forth, toes tapping, one resident grabbed the hand of the nurse sitting next to her and just beamed with joy. Music affects our brain like nothing else can.

Google "music and the brain" or "music and emotions" or "music and memory". There are pages and pages of quotes and information. In closing, here are just a few....

*Music replays the past memories, awakens our forgotten worlds and make our minds travel.*

*Music has real health benefits. It boosts dopamine, lowers cortisol and it makes us feel great. Your brain is better on music.*

*I've found that no matter what life throws at me, music softens the blow.*

*Levels of the hormone oxytocin (in the bloodstream) are raised when people are signing together. Oxytocin is associated with empathy, trust and relationship building.*

*Music engages your brain's reward system, releasing a feel good neurotransmitter called dopamine – the same chemical that is released when we taste delicious food, see something beautiful or fall in love.*

*Music is such an effective tool for therapy because it is an incredibly complex phenomenon. Music is one of the only things in life that processes information on both sides of the brain at once.*

**"Moral of the story?": Keep making music whenever you can! Invite others to make music; we are all busy but no one regrets the time spent while singing! Share music with others; it will make a difference!**

# Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, *BeSmilin' Bari-tone*



**Jim Erickson**

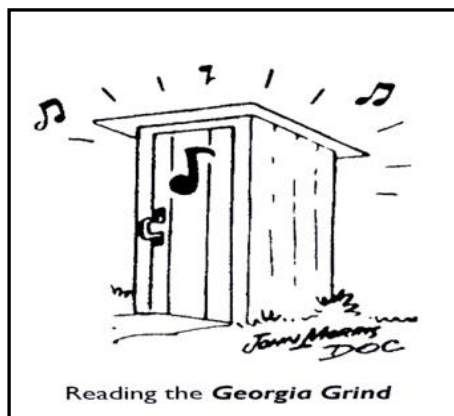
Had any good smiles lately? Even sometimes difficult when you are singing? I just remember the late **Gary Jacobson** continuously reminding the chorus, and by that I mean each individual singer, to smile for whatever audience there was. He was more of the sort, if I recall correctly, that believed one should smile all the time while singing whether in a performance or even just rehearsing. Maybe even when practicing alone.

Exceptions, I would imagine, depending on the song and the related appropriateness of a smile, but generally, yeah. Now, I could never really buy into the all the time smiling. I think I am aware enough of my performance setting that I will not forget to smile. Bring the lights up, and I smile! Doesn't seem to matter if I am singing to one or hundreds, when the time comes, I smile.

But here's what I learned when I first started singing with the chorus where it was emphasized. When asked to smile, I was told I had a relatively nice smile, but nice smiles get lost and fade in the distance between the singer and the audience person(s) you are singing to. So, I found a mirror and smiled at it. Right! I had an innocuous "milquetoasty" but pleasant smile but when seen from a distance, well, it just didn't make the leap to the listener (if you can put up with my mixed metaphors). So I smiled a bit more. Ah nuts! That wasn't going to make it either.

Feeling a bit foolish and insincere, I pumped and cranked my face into the smiliest clown smile I could muster risking tearing an Achilles cheekbone if there is such a thing. Don't want to lose even that milquetoasty smile if my face becomes my mortally wounding spot. A heel is one thing but a face like mine. That would be a tragedy.

Anyway, I smiled my best, best, biggest smile and I saw the wisdom of really exaggerated smiling if you want to make that connection. Also, I learned that in signing to more than one, it helps to sing to one individual for a little and then move to another. You get to see their reaction and the two of you enjoy a moment. Back to that



biggest smile. I found I could engage that smile in performing wherever and whenever it was called for. And also, I found it came in handy when someone says, "cheese" for a photo. Too often we think we are smiling when it really comes across as the painting, American Gothic!

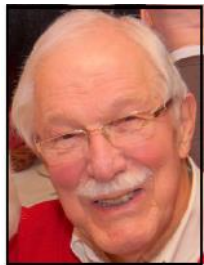
Now, in my further study of the smile, I found not everyone has the same capacity to move their face in such a way that a broad smile emits. Sometimes that is just due to an overgrown mustache, or the massiveness of a beard gone wild which hides even the most handsome devil's face. Perhaps those can work on it to achieve something with their sparkly eyes.

Other times, some faces just won't do it. Maybe they could paint a clown's smile on if it could be done subtly. Obviously, I have no ready solutions for this problem except to encourage the straight smiler to curl the corners up as best they can.

My parting words are "Smile, darn ya, Smile!"

Oh, and remember to hold fast to that which is good, value the truth, keep growing the chorus, and most of all, smile and show them you ARE having fun! As I said last time, your audience will know you really are loving it and so too, will they!

## It's Great to be a Commodore!



## Musings from a Barbershop Curmudgeon

**Bob Dykstra**

I had just finished my "musings" column for the

April issue of the CHORD-INATOR when I received a call from good friend and fellow member of the LOL Association of District Champions, **Rudy Zarling**. (I should also mention that he was the tenor of the 2001 Senior's' International Quartet Champion, HARMONY). I've known Rudy since I became a member of the Minneapolis Chapter and the Land O'Lakes District in 1955. Our quartets, Rudy's Lakeshore Four, and my Hut Four, immediately started facing off in district and regional competition, which did not go well for us. Rudy's quartet qualified for International Competition in 1956 and 1957. We didn't. Both quartets competed for the LOL District Quartet Championship in 1955, 1956, and 1957. Neither won in '55 or '56, but The Lake Shore Four beat us out in 1957. We won the district gold medal in 1958 and also were a semi-finalist in international competition that same year.....but the Lakeshore Four didn't compete that year, and I could never find any evidence that we ever outscored them. Oh, well.....

Since reconnecting with Rudy in recent years, I've learned that he and I shared quite similar experiences in our introduction to this great hobby. Rudy was in the Air Force from 1951-55; I was in the army 1952-54. Both of us had the good fortune of spending our military years stateside rather than seeing tours of duty in Korea.

And both of us spent a good part of our service time involved in singing in Barbershop quartets as part of our military duty.

I've shared aspects of my early quartet experiences many times. Rudy had a significant position of responsibility in the Air Force but was bored by the free time associated with his job. So he visited a Special Services officer seeking ideas of how he might become involved in spare-time vocal musical activities. He was introduced to the Air Force's Tops in Blue, a touring performance ensemble created in 1953, the primary purpose of which was to perform for U.S. military personnel and their families throughout the world. Rudy was captivated by one element of the Tops in Blue program, the Barbershop quartet competition. The contests were not affiliated with SPEBSQSA, but were judged by members of the Society. The high caliber of competition is illustrated by the fact that the 1955 Tops in Blue quartet champion, the Air Fours, were fourth-place International Quartet Medalists in Miami that same year. (The Air Fours were obviously members of SPEBSQSA and qualified for the International through Society regional competition). I should also point out that Rudy's Air Force quartet, the Six-Foot Four, finished second to the Air Fours in the Tops in Blue contest that year.

The reader will recall (I hope) that what has become a tribute to Mr. Zarling, began as a mention that he had called me almost immediately after I had completed my "Musings" for the April CHORD-INATOR. Recall also that I had mused about the Hut Four's chance encounter with a songwriter named **Sammy Mysels** in a bar

in New York City. Therein lies a story.

Rudy called me with a question. He related that he had lain awake a good part of the previous evening trying to remember the lyrics to a song which his Air Force quartet included in their show repertoire. He wondered whether or not I could help him. "What's the song?" I asked. He started singing, "Man with face like totem pole, Paint pretty pictures on a pottery bowl....." I quickly finished the verse: "Work all day 'til he finish one. Him gets a salary when he's done." "Do I know it?" I responded. "The Hut Four sang the song on virtually every show on which they appeared for almost twenty years."

The song that had kept Rudy awake was "Chocolate Whiskey and Vanilla Gin," a song composed by Bob Hilliard and Sammy Mysels and published in 1949. Both of our quartets had learned the song but neither Rudy nor I remembered how or when or where. Interestingly, Rudy's sleepless night trying to remember the lyrics came completely "out of the blue." He had no idea how he fixated on the lyrics to that particular song nor, of course, did he know before he called me that I had just written about the song and its songwriter for the yet-to-be-published issue of the CHORD-INATOR. Almost scary!

I told Rudy that the song was an important part of our repertoire and that I likely had a CD or audio tape or cassette of our performing it somewhere. Rudy was excited about hearing the song after all of these years so I started looking and I struck gold. The one recording of "Chocolate Whiskey and Vanilla Gin" in my collection was on the disc of a show the Hut



## Dykstra (Cont'd)

Four performed in 1970 shortly before we "hung up the pitchpipe." And what a show it was! Following is what I wrote about it in my comprehensive history of the Hut Four.

"The Minneapolis Commodores were scheduled to sing in International competition in June of 1970, but were worried about coming up with the money to fly to Atlantic City in order to participate. We, the Hut Four, offered to put on a special show with all proceeds going to the travel fund. The show took place at Prudential Auditorium on June 4, 1970 with old friend, **Ed Phelan** from Menominee, Wisconsin, who also volunteered his services, as guest emcee. Younger

friend, **Mary Dick**, who joined us in singing "Lida Rose", was the only other person to hit the stage that evening."

Consequently we sang almost everything we knew. We actually sang 24 numbers including the "Chocolate Whiskey" song that kept Rudy Zarling awake. Because of the familiarity of the audience (many chapter members, their friends, and families), quartet members agreed to prepare new material for our between-numbers attempts at entertaining our patrons while giving our voices a bit of a break. This turned out to be very entertaining (for us at least), our never having heard what was going to come out of the mouths of our quartet mates.

I enjoyed immensely listening to the disc and reconnecting with the show. I don't recall the size of the audience but the disc vouches for their enthusiasm. I think many attendees viewed the show not only a fund-raiser for the chorus, but a farewell performance by the Hut Four. And I'm happy to say that show proceeds helped the Commodores to get to Atlantic City six weeks later where they finished a respectable 12<sup>th</sup> under the direction of **Bob Spong**. And yes.....I sent a disc to Rudy Zarling, who lost his sight a few years ago, so he could enjoy and relearn the pesky lyrics that had induced his insomnia.

## Welcome, New Peeps!

### Mark Johnson

New Commodore bass, Mark N. Johnson and his wooden-headed sidekick, Rusty Hinges, have entertained for TV commercials, county fairs, corporate events and at Valley Fair. In "real" life, Mark has been an associate housewares buyer, managed an ad department, written national magazine ad copy, and played violin for Unity South Twin Cities streamed services. For a corporate Las Vegas merchandise show crowd, Mark made a mule talk (even though the jackass refused to appear; talk about "throwing your voice"!)

### Thomas Mondry

Thomas is brand new to barbershop since joining the Commodores in August. Originally from Wichita, KS, he moved up to the Twin Cities last summer after graduating from the University of Oklahoma with degrees in economics and piano performance; while at OU, he served as president of the OU Men's Glee Club and was the group's accompanist for 4 years. Thomas lives in northeast Minneap-

olis and works as an actuary in St. Paul.

### Sten Wall

Sten Wall is excited to be joining his father **David Wall** in the Minneapolis Commodores. Sten previously sung under Paul Wigley at Lakewood High School 20 years ago. After singing in college choir, he is excited to return from a 18 year hiatus of singing. He is excited to show off his new skills to his much more talented wife, **Sarah Friday**.

### Steve Selin

My wife **Cathy** and I are transplants from Michigan. I grew up in Muskegon and she in the city of Detroit. We met in college at Michigan. All of our siblings went to Michigan as well. Don't hold it against us because we love the Twin Cities but, GO BLUE!

I am really a trombone player. Singing is new to me. Because of some dental issues, I had to stop playing for a while so I decided to take some voice lessons. I am now almost addicted to it. In fact, it

turns out I retired around the same time. Singing now feels like my new career.

Barbershop is SO fun. I have been around it my whole life through my Dad, uncle and cousin. Delmer and Dan Doctor from Muskegon were very active nationally in the past. I have always wanted to get involved but was too busy to take on something new. Now, I would give anything to find 3 other guys who seriously would like to work at being in a high level quartet and take a run at qualifying for international! Please, if you know anybody who might also be interested, let me know.

We have grandkids in other states that need/want us and we are very active in our church, so I seem to have constant conflicts with Commodore activities. Please don't give up on me, I want to be a Commodore!

## Say Hello to our New Members!



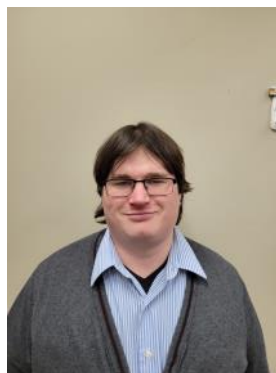
Sten Wall, Michael Colon, Seth Babrow, Morgan Baumbach, Thomas Mondry, Vincent Trainer, Tim Trainer, Mark Johnson



Mark Johnson



Seth Babrow



Sten Wall



Steve Selin

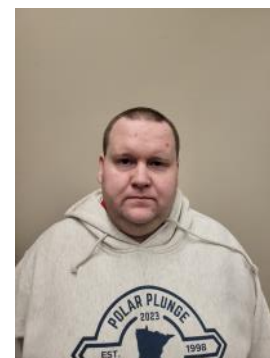
The Commodores have had a great start to the new year. Over the past few months we have added many new talented men. Although their histories, age, and experiences are varied, they have all come to love thee Commodore's friendship, camaraderie, and of course the music!

Please join me in congratulating these new members and continue to welcome and help them. With our new members we will continue to grow and bring the satisfaction of the barbershop music to our world of friends and supporters in the Metro area and beyond!

**Its great to be a Commodore!**



Kevin Wall



Alastair Hunter

*Harvey Weiss, Immediate Past 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

## **Parade of Quartets!**

### **Chapter Officers**

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Past Pres. ....Harvey Weiss  
Marketing/PR VP.....Steve Grady  
VP Music /Perform.....Dave Casperson  
VP Membership.....Neal Mortenson  
Program VP.....Bill Dahl  
Secretary.....Bill Walkowski  
Treasurer .....Andy Richards  
VP Technology.....Paul Swanson  
Executive VP .....Ken Wentworth

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Dan Slattery  
Dan Williams  
Dave Wall

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Co-Director.....Jamy Casperson  
Co-Director.....Dave Bechard  
Assistant Director.....Paul Wigley

### **Section Leaders**

Tenor Section Leader .....Steve Grady  
Lead Section Leader. ....OPEN  
Bari Section Leaders .....Matt Richards  
Bass Section Leaders.....Dave Casperson

### **Committee Chairmen**

Altruistic Programs Chairman.....Denny Maas  
2023 Show Chairman.....Nate Weimer  
2022 Show Chairman.....Steve Grady  
Attendance/Sgt.-at-Arms.....**Vacant**  
BOTY Party Chairman.....Mark Ortenburger

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Chorus Performance Managers.....John Lloyd  
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Grants Research.....Harvey Weiss  
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Harmony Foundation.....**Vacant**  
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Northern Pines Brigade President.....Dave Speidel  
Presentation Chairman.....**Vacant**  
Quartet Promotion.....**Vacant**  
Riser Boss.....**Vacant**  
Singing Valentines.....Neal Mortenson  
Sunshine .....Mark Bloomquist  
Swipe Editor .....Bill Dahl  
Uniform Committee Chairman.....**Vacant**  
Uniforms (Dress & Casual).....Dan Williams

What: Parade of quartets/90 year birthday

When: Sunday August 20th 1 - 5 PM

Where: Royal Cliff Event Center 2280 Cliff Road Eagan, MN

Featuring: Hot/cold appetizers, coffee, soda, cash bar and entertainment by:

Just One More  
St. Croix Crossing  
Vocality  
Happiness Emporium  
The Benson Family



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### Chapter Quartets

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  
 SILVER SCREEN  
 Steve Grady.....952/334-7500  
 HALL PASS  
 Dave Casperson.....651/247-6319



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*Logo courtesy of Bob Clark*

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### LOOKING AHEAD

July 21	Eden Prairie
Aug 15	Como
Aug 20	TWINS
Aug 28	Maple Grove
Sept. 23	Annual Show
Oct 13	Convention

The *Chord-Inator* is available on the Minneapolis Chapter's website  
[minneapoliscommadores.org](http://minneapoliscommadores.org)

CHORD-INATOR  
 MINNEAPOLIS COMMODORES  
 Minneapolis Chapter of BHS  
 MEETING EVERY TUES -7:00  
 p.m.  
 LOCATION TBD  
GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME