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# CHORD-INATOR

BARBERSHOP  
HARMONY  
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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

OCTOBER 2023 - VOL. 79 - NO. 5

## From Fearless Leader 1



Jamye Casperson

We have new music to learn... now what?

I've decided to share an article ([Rehearsing at Home | Barbershop Harmony Society](#)) that was in the Livewire issue and explain some of the vocabulary in it with our members that may not have formal music training so that this extremely well-written article can be used by our entire chorus. We all LOVE singing; we care a LOT about our fellow chorus members and getting smarter in this "thinking man's hobby" makes the entire experience better!

The article ([Rehearsing at Home | Barbershop Harmony Society](#)) was written by Steve Scott and Rob Mance in 2020 when rehearsing at home was all we could do. However, the Commodores are a strong chorus and we are back in person GROWING in numbers and moving forward. Using this information, we are able to use

rehearsing at home to augment our rehearsal time and make us even better.

We are now starting our holiday music. Some of it will be familiar to some of us and some of it will be new to some or all of us. Here are some suggestions (from this article) of what to do when you first start learning a new piece of music. I have put simple explanations of some of the vocabulary in bold.

1. Note the major parts—or form—of the song: introduction, verse(s), chorus(es), bridge, tag, etc.
2. Note key signatures (**tells what pitch to blow**), meters (**tells how the music is divided into patterns**), metronome markings, and any other tempo-related markings (rubatos (**where to stretch the tempo**), ritardando (**slow down**), accelerando (**speed up**), etc.).

3. Highlight when your parts sings perfect intervals with another: octaves (**the same pitch but higher or lower**), fifths, fourths, unisons. This will build awareness and will aid in tuning. Music leaders

can help you here! **Intervals are the number of steps between two notes and can be talked about in numbers (for example, 1 to 4) or solfege (do to fa) or letter names (C to F)**

4. Note any duets, features, and voice crossing (**when one part goes lower or higher that the part on that side... for example when the baritone sing higher than the leads**).

5. Try to determine your note's function in the chord. Knowing whether you are on the 5th or 7th of the chord can affect tuning. Music leaders can help you again here. **The 5<sup>th</sup> is the note that is 5 steps away from the pitch that is blown at the start of the song...if Do is the pitch blown, then the 5<sup>th</sup> is So...if A is blown then the 5<sup>th</sup> is E (ABCDE).**

Minneapolis, Minn. Chapter  
Land O'Lakes District, BHS  
Meetings every Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.  
Benilde St Margaret's  
St. Louis Park

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## Fearless Leader (Cont'd)

6. Discover any special chords requiring attention to tuning or balance, e.g. Basses on the 3 (aka church chords), "chimey" sevenths (when Tenor is on root and Lead/Bari is one full step below on 7th), etc. **This is the director's job to tell you (or Wigley will if we forget)**

7. Note any key changes or difficult harmonic passages (sections of a song where the chords are difficult, for example "maybe your friends think I'm just a stranger" in **Man of Constant Sorrow**), including ones with tritone substitutions.

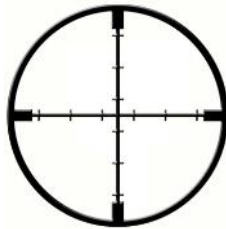
8. Highlight challenging sections due to range and tessitura (**the part of the vocal register that the majority of their part sits in**).

9. Make comments on lyrics, especially how the arrangement highlights the text (**when we talk about how the music reflects the words like in Ebb Tide or when silly syllables remind us to be instruments like in "Have a Little Talk with Myself"**)

I hope you read the entire article many times over. It has so much good information in it beyond just this list.

*It's Great to be a Commodore!*

## Hunter's Bullseye



Shawn Hunter

CHORDinator. The newsletter would be nothing without your contributions!

I can't believe that I have been the editor for 5 years. Seems like just yesterday that I was sitting down with Doc to go over the nuts and bolts of putting together our favorite barbershop publication. Thank you to all for your continuing help and suggestions.

Finally, a big thank-you to **Dick Riemenschneider** for all your years at nut sales leader. The chorus would be in a world of hurt without your leadership and hard work year after year. THANKS!

What a great annual show at Bethel. **Nate Weimer** and his team really put together a great show and we all received rave reviews from the audience. I am proud of all the work we put in and grateful to the entire chorus and helpers like **Judy Olson** who pulled this complex show together in beautiful form. THANKS!

I also want to thank the folks who took pictures at the show and all the on-going contributors to the



Annual Show



## THANK YOU, JUDY OLSON!



The Minneapolis Commodores would like to take a moment tonight, partially so you can take a breath after a rousing, energetic song finale, but mostly to honor a very special person who has been a part of the Commodore family for many years – **Judy Olson**. She has been the behind-the-scenes production genius for our past 45 Annual Shows, starting in 1977. Wow! You may not have seen her before because she spends her time on show day back in the control booth. We however get to see plenty of her in the months leading up to the show as she brings her wealth of talent to help us understand and then experience the joy of performing.

We wanted to provide Judy with a memento that would help express our gratitude. We turned to one of our multi-talented members, **Blake Wanger**, who also happens to be a Lego Master, to see what he could come up with. And he definitely came through with a very elegant, miniature section of risers.

And as with any artistic creation, there isn't another one like this anywhere in the world. It's unique. Kind of like our very good friend Judy Olson.

*To our legendary production wizard  
Thank you for everything Judy  
Seriously!*

*Proudly presented with truly EPIC gratitude  
**The Minneapolis Commodores Chorus***





Judy Olson

## SERIOUSLY!?

What a ride these last 45 years with the Commodores has been! From Northrup Auditorium to Orchestra Hall to Bethel (with a few stops in between), it's been an amazing journey. District Contests, International Contests, annual shows, afterglows and crazy rehearsals – **REALLY!**

There was always something new – overalls with red and white checked “Purina” shirts, bare feet and greasy kid’s stuff in the hair, rose colored suits to sing Meet Me in Rose Time Rosie, panama hats (great routine) with striped vests and spats, tuxedos, and glitzy vests. Wow – where does the time go?

It all started when **John Hansen** called me to help with SP (Stage Presence) for their annual show at Northrup Auditorium. It was a crazy show with circus acts of all kinds. The mayor of Minneapolis was a special guest. There was a guy on a big wheel bike that was to ride across the stage. Well, he

didn’t know how to stop and almost pinned me to the wall.

Thanks to **Bob Dowma** for grabbing me or I would not be writing this!

Did you know that the Commodores was the chorus who started the movement to allow women backstage at contest? **Bob Spong** was directing the chorus and wanted me to be backstage for their performance on the international stage. **Jim Richards** went to work, and after a lot of “pushing and shoving” got approval from “International” for me to be with the chorus. Well, that turned out to be lucky .... backstage in the sing room, Bob realized that he had left his huge “Lil Abner” boots back in his hotel room. I said that I would go and get them. So – down the escalator and past security, who wanted to know if I was going to come back, I went to the hotel, grabbed his boots and raced back to the security guard. He asked how many times I would be doing this. I was up the escalator and running down the hall to the room when I saw another security guard on a golf cart coming down the hall toward me. I rushed past him and heard him say, “My God, it’s a woman!” I heard a crash and realized he had driven into the wall. Told the chorus – we all had a good laugh as they walked by the damage. The guys had a great time on stage

placing 5<sup>th</sup>.

From there the contest packages have soared with great music and heart. The shows have evolved to more detailed productions including magic, mystery, sound effects, slides, special staging and even a flying gorilla named Gloria. (*The Bethel crews still ask about Gloria every year*)

I have enjoyed working with all of the directors who put up with me – **Harold Ulring, Bob Spong, Richard Dick, Rob Johnson/Bob Spong, Doug Miller, Dwight (Wylie) Mennenga, Jim Halvorson, Dr. Bob Peterson, Paul Wigley** and now **Jamye Casperson** and **Dave Bechard**.

It’s been an amazing journey of friendship and music. And that’s as it should be. Although I am retiring from producing your shows, I look forward to continuing to be one of your greatest fans and will help, coach, and support you when needed. It has **REALLY** been great to be a part of the Commodores and I thank you sincerely for every moment we have shared.

**SERIOUSLY!!**

- **Judy Olson**

## It’s Great to be a Commodore!

**Paul Paddock**

### ***Jim Richards Memorial Chord Candy # 148***

Here is an adventurous-feeling tag that I wrote in college for some passersby on their way to class. I enjoyed how musical their laughter was, living life in springtime on a sunny day at this peaceful little mountain college in the Appalachians and they inspired me to write a tag about it--not to be confused with the Mary Poppins song, "I Love to Laugh"! It starts off in unison. Baritones, it's a tad low at the beginning, but do your best. It can be easy to miss the 'laugh' note, but picture yourself going toward the middle 'love' chord for the phrasing. Lead has the hanger at the end. The second 'you love' is like an echo at the conclusion of the tag.

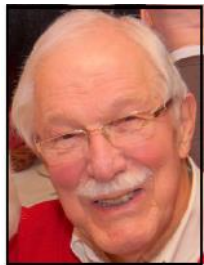
The minor-7s are bold, but help with the pioneering-effect sound of the love of it, same with the inverted G-add-9, second chord from the end. Sounds best with a breath after the first 'you love'. I don't exactly recommend it be treated as a screamer tag, but the key of A has a knack for making things end strongly; perhaps keep the sound solid. I might even suggest a slight decrescendo to the end. **ENJOY!**

## **Love of the Laugh**

Score

**Paul Paddock**

**Break a leg at District,  
Commodores!**



## Musings from a Barbershop Curmudgeon

Bob Dykstra

I have been privileged to attend 52 International Barbershop Conventions in my 71 years of Society membership. The first was the 1954 Get-Together in Washington D.C. where my quartet, the **Hut Four**, was invited to attend as the official Army quartet. We, of course, were not eligible to compete, but were excited to follow the competition progress of our friends from the Central States District, the **Orphans**, whom we were told were among the favorites to capture the Gold Medal.

The contest format at the time started with the semi-final contest in which all quartets competed. The fifteen top-scoring foursomes moved along to compete in the finals contest, which narrowed the field to the five highest-scoring quartets. That quintet of harmonizers advanced to the medalist contest, the winner of which was proclaimed champion. And to our delight the 1954 champions were the Orphans. What a thrill!!

My next trip to the “big dance” was four years later when the Hut Four earned a trip to Columbus, Ohio to compete against the best barbershop quartets in the world. We found that that very year the contest pattern had changed from the typical format which we had observed at Washington, D.C. All competitors now faced for the first time a quarter-finals contest to narrow the field to twenty semi-finalists (as opposed to fifteen

finalists). The twenty semi-finalists then competed to select the ten (not fifteen) finalists. And the separate medalist contest had been eliminated. Quartet medalists, including the quartet champion were now selected in the finalist contest.

In this, our maiden contest at the International level, we sang well enough to qualify for the semi-finals but went no further. Among the forty quartets competing we finished 19<sup>th</sup>. We represented the Land O’Lakes District of SPEBSQSA at the “Big Dance” nine more times during our active quartet years. The contest format remained the same as we had experienced in Columbus. We added final contest rankings of 11, 16, 15, 32, 25, 15, 16, 13, and 34 to our Columbus ranking of 19. Collectively, we ranked as semi-finalists seven times (rankings 11-20) and quarter-finalists the other three times (rankings of 21-40

As I examined the contest data for the first time in decades, I was struck by one thing. Even though our international competition record wasn’t particularly eye-catching, the Hut Four were clearly the dominant quartet in the LO’L District during the late 50s and the ‘60s. In the nine international quartet contests in which we competed from 1958 to 1967 we out-scored every other LO’L international quartet competitor each and every year. Moreover, our “victims” during this period included eleven LO’L District champions.

(I’m sure some readers are wondering why I provided data for only nine of the Hut Four’s ten trips to the international contest. You’re right!! The Hut Four’s final trip to the “Bigs” had quite

different results from those of the first nine years. Forget that I talked about our quartet dominance. In 1969 the Hut Four were out-scored by all three of our fellow LO’L quartet competitors, all former district champions. Oh, well.....)

I was looking through these data the other day when it hit me! I can milk these data a little more. Why not play the “What-if game”? What if the barbershop contest and judging gurus had waited a dozen years or so to implement the changes I’ve described rather than putting them into effect the very year of the Hut Four’s first participation in the “grand-daddy” of barbershop quartet contests? Hmm. Let’s find out. I simply slotted our ranking for each of the ten international contests in the appropriate category in the old system: Medaist(1-5); (Finalist((6-15); (Semi-Finalist(16-40). Voila!! Our quartet resume’ suddenly became much more impressive. Our composite international quartet contest record would now report that the Hut Four quartet were FINALISTS four times, semi-finalists six times. Quite a difference! Wow! Wouldn’t that have looked good on our quartet resume’?

I know! I know! Anybody who has bothered to read this far is doubtless saying, How about one more “What-if” question? “What if the Old Curmudgeon didn’t have so much free time on his hands?”

**Good point!**

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*Logo courtesy of Bob Clark*

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**To:**

***LOOKING AHEAD***

Oct 13	Convention
Dec 2	Christmas Show

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