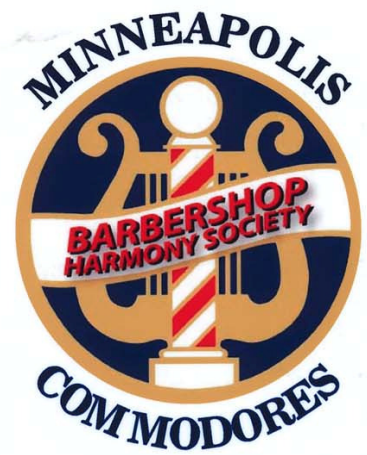


# MINNEAPOLIS COMMODORES

# CHORD-INATOR

## BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY



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

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O'LAKES DISTRICT

NOVEMBER 2013 - VOL. 69 - NO. 10

## 'Tis the season for sharing!

On Sunday, November 10, The Minneapolis Commodores joined with the Minnesota Mormon Chorale, the Farmington Lutheran Choir, and the Grace United Methodist Choir for a Thanksgiving Concert & Food Drive. This event benefited *Community 360*, a non-profit group that each year provides hope and support to more than 14,000 individuals. *Community 360* has 11 programs in over 40 locations, including a network of five food shelves, two domestic-violence shelters, two resource centers, and three programs supporting school success virtually from birth through high-school graduation.



A portion of the Commodore contingent: (left to rt.): 1st Row - Ken Glover, Tony Mason; 2nd Row - Denny Maas, Paul Martz, Jim Richards, Gene Heupel; 3rd Row - Mark Bloomquist, Pete Villwock, Marc Duran; Last Row - Tom Dahlen, Mark Ortenburger, Larry Nelson

Bill Ward Photo

The event was hosted by the Lakeville congregation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (The "Mormons"), and it was, by all measurements, a successful evening. An estimated 700 people attended the event! Those concert-goers donated 2161 pounds of food, and hundreds of dollars (with still more coming in). All of the proceeds will go directly to *Community 360* and will be used to bless those thousands of lives during this coming holiday season.

Beyond the astounding attendance and donation success, this was a wonderful evening to be a Commodore. Our chorus was in great form. We performed with excitement and enthusiasm, and received a standing ovation

for our efforts. As I met with audience members after the show, I heard many comments along these lines, "I had no idea Barbershop music could be so much fun," "You guys were my favorite," "It makes me want to sing again," and my personal favorite from a nine-year-old

(with a blushing and rather embarrassed mom), "YOU OLD GUYS ROCKED!"

On a very personal note: Thank you, Commodores! You are good men who are willing to be engaged in worthy causes. I am proud to know you, and to be associated with this group.

In all honesty: If someone would have said, even in October 2011, right before I joined, that I would spend much of my drive-time learning lead lines, that I would force my kids to watch Barbershop performances on U Tube, that I would voluntarily wear bright satin vests and ties, that I would put makeup on, dance and sing with a whole bunch of men, and that I would be willing to expend time, money, and energy on this hobby, I would have told him/her that they were crazy.

And yet, here I am, loving every minute of this association. Thank you! Thank you! Here's to many more years of good singing, and many more worthwhile and meaningful events.

**Tony Mason**

(See Page 10)

**Minneapolis, Minn. Chapter  
Land O'Lakes District, BHS**  
Meetings every Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.  
**House of Prayer Lutheran Church**  
**7625 Chicago Avenue South**  
**Richfield, MN 55423**

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Bass Section Leaders.....Jim Richards  
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**On Yewer Behalf**

*By Dan Cole, President*



**Dan Cole**

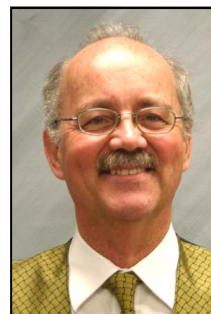
The District Convention and Con-  
test is over. We sang better than ever, but it's hard to make the judges happy. So what's new? I had a great time socializing with other Barbershoppers and attending the events. I'm very excited that *A Mighty Wind* is going to be our annual-show guest quartet. I thought they were very entertaining. But I especially liked spending time with the Minneapolis Commodores members, whether it was at lunch at Big Al's, dinner at Piggies, cocktails at the District President's lounge or at the Born's hospitality house. Then again, maybe it was connecting over biscuits and gravy at breakfast times.

I've thought about those brief connections, and how every one of us has something to share when we come together each week mostly to sing, but also to be with a growing group of guys who we want to spend time with. I notice when someone is missing and wonder where they are. And I want to make the rounds and talk to more guys than there is time for. Even at afterglows, the group is so large that I don't get to say hello to everyone. Often times on my way home, I'll remember seeing so-and-so at rehearsal and kick myself for not getting around to them to talk about such-and-such or maybe just to ask "Where've you been?" or "How's it going?"

I know we all have different levels of sociability, but I also know that the levels among Barbershoppers are higher than a lot of other organizations. For instance, when was the last time you got your back rubbed at a meeting or locked arms and sang a song at the end of a choir rehearsal? Have you ever asked or

**A Winning Spirit**

*By Paul Wigley, Director*



**Paul Wigley**

*"If you have nothing to be thankful for, make up your mind that there is something wrong with you."* I love this anonymous quote, because it always puts me back on track to more positive thinking. As another holiday season approaches, I again look at the Minneapolis Commodores and see how thankful I am for such a great group of men.

The performance at the Thanksgiving Concert and Food Drive Benefit was a perfect example of the spirit of the Commodores. It was so rewarding to be able to use our collective musical gifts for a worthwhile cause. I think all of us that were there also would say without a doubt that we received much more than we gave. We gave our singing, and we received gratitude,  
*Go to Wigley, Page 3, Column 1*

been asked to sing a Barberpole Cat song by someone you barely knew? Have you gotten personal with a new acquaintance or someone you've just met, perhaps even a stranger and asked them "Where do you like to sing?" Barbershoppers do that! I've come to know and appreciate this high level of sociability. I like it and as I tell Sheila (aka Honey) frequently, "I need a Barbershop fix." It energizes me and I'll share that energy with every new or seasoned freshman or more senior member of the Commodores.

But alas, there's only one of me. So, I'm asking for your help. I'd like each of you to make a point of talking to so-and-so, who I didn't get a chance to say hello to last week, or at least ask them, "Hey, where have you been?", "How's it going?"

Isn't it great to be a Commodore?

*Wigley from Page 2*

warm wishes, hugs, and the knowledge that we were part of an altruistic event to help out people who are truly in need.

I'm thankful for a chorus that finds a way to balance great music-making with lots of social activity. Many of us spend much time outside of chorus rehearsals just enjoying each other's company. I can honestly say my best friends are members of the Minneapolis Commodores. Barbershop singing is a hobby, not a business, and although we are dedicated to making ourselves as good at our hobby as we can possibly be, we also realize that friendships and personal connections will be the most important things in our lives.

When I hear stories about our quartets singing for guys having health problems, or other shut-ins, I just feel humbled to be around men that put such a priority on giving music and joy to others! These are stories of thankfulness—men who share their gifts of music and their voices with others.

I had such a great eye-opener during our first rehearsal after District contest. We did a great job in La Crosse, but the next week we had great attendance, and everyone was ready to prepare for our next events- the Food Drive and our Christmas Show. Diving right in to new Christmas music was such fun, but then we sight-read "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing", the massed chorus piece for the Food

Drive. As we were singing these gorgeous, celebratory, spine-tingling chords with such words of thanks...I was simply overwhelmed. The power of music once again became crystal clear to me, and I realized how much I have to be thankful for.

Every man that walks into our chapter meetings is entering a place that he will be thankful for. I love those of you who find the positive in everything we do! It's contagious! Don't you feel that being positive in your life is just another way of giving thanks? So, *make up your mind that you have something to be thankful for!* I'm certainly thankful for the Minneapolis Commodores, and it's GREAT to BE a Commodore!

SUNSHINE HOTLINE



By Rich Ongna, Sunshine Chairman

Phone: 952-829-7009 Email: ddongna@usfamily.net

The Commodores extend their sympathies to Loren Berthilson, his daughter and family, in the death of Loren's son-in-law, Timothy, on September 7. He was diagnosed with cancer a very short time before his death at the age of 56.



Rich Ongna

Kaleb Smith was in the hospital a short time dealing with kidney stones. The doctors have been able to eliminate one with a laser; however, they were unable to access the other one. It's wait-and-see for him at this time.

Char Bauer, wife of former Commodore, Carlton, had her hip prosthesis removed because of a serious infection. Doctors have been packing the operative site with antibiotics for some weeks. Once the infec-

tion is controlled they will install a new prosthesis.. She is currently residing at the Masonic Home in Bloomington.

Bill Ashley's wife, Connie, had a hip replacement on October 7. Bill reports that she's doing very well and is pain-free for the first time in many months. He said, "It's really a miracle."

The Commodores extend their sympathies to the family of Merrill Miller who passed away on October 21<sup>st</sup>. He was the lead in Grandma's Beaus quartet along with Jim Richards, Bob Griffith and the late Mike Stump. They won the 1990 International Seniors Championship.

Pat Griffith, Bob's wife had a knee replacement on Monday, October 28 [early enough to allow Bob to attend Merrill's funeral]. Bob said that the surgery went well. After a few days in the hospital she, too, moved to the Bloomington Masonic home for rehab of her new knee.

Mary MacLaughlin, Dale Lynch's good friend, is undergoing rehabilitation at Bloomington's Masonic Home following complex hip surgery. She will be unable to bear any weight on the affected hip

for a total of six weeks.

Remember: Please keep me informed about who is ailing and don't assume that I already know because generally I'm in the dark. Help me brighten the days of our ailing members. Just a short note of encouragement or a brief phone call can make the day of a person who's not feeling well.



October Re-enlistments

- Conrad Ward.....4 yrs.
- Bill Ward.....4.yrs.
- Gene Huepel.....5.yrs.
- Ken Jones.....9 yrs.
- Tom Dahlen.....14 yrs.
- Dale Lynch.....14 yrs.
- Larry Nelson.....17 yrs.
- Jim Johannsen.....18 yrs.
- Vern Johnson.....21 yrs.
- Wes Hatlestad.....29 yrs.
- Bill Ashley.....39 yrs.
- Rollie Neve.....46 yrs.
- John Hansen.....62 yrs.

# WELCOME ABOARD!

**Marc Duran**, aged 14, resides with his parents in Minneapolis and has attended North Star Academy for six years. He has sung with the boys' choir where he was first introduced to Barber-shop. In addition he plays piano, guitar, and violin.



During Marc's tenure at North Star Academy, the choir has earned two World Choir Games medals, has recorded six albums, and has been inducted into the Minnesota Music Hall of Fame.

Music is not his only interest. Computers, robots, and just plain "tinkering" fill in the gaps in his busy schedule.

Marc sings the baritone part and will soon be joined on the Commodore risers by **Michael**, his bass-singing dad forming another father/son combination.

**Andy Cook** and his wife, **Nancy**, live in Eagan and have three grown children. He was born in St. Paul and graduated from Cretin High School where he had a role in the school's production of *Oliver*.



Andy went on to technical school to learn masonry and bricklaying which he worked at for 35 years.

Church choir has been Andy's main musical pursuit for 40 years but he also sang with the Dakota Valley Chorale for six years.

His other interests include hunting, motorcycling, and golf. He made his first hole-in-one last summer.

Looking for a new challenge Andy found himself at the 2013 Harmony Brigade and was bitten by the Barber-shop bug. He sings lead. **Ken Wentworth** is his sponsor.

**Walter Macewicz** lives in Eden Prairie and is probably the only Commodore to have been born in Bermuda. However, he is a graduate of Bloomington Kennedy High School. Walter has a bachelor's degree in computer Science and works for himself in computer support.



Church-music ministry and choir have been his primary musical interests. Reading is another favorite pastime.

Since Walter has always enjoyed singing, **Kaleb Smith** invited him to spend an evening with the Commodores. Liking what he saw and heard Walter, too, was impressed by the harmony and the gracious amity of the Minneapolis chapter members.

Walter joins the *incredible* basses.

## Board Highlights



Chapter members are always welcome to attend the Board meetings.

### From the meeting of October 17

- All regular monthly reports reviewed and accepted.
- **Music/performance:** the *Wave-box* principles have been put to good use with positive results.
- **Program:** The upgrade of the chapter website is on schedule. An updated photo-shoot of the members was discussed
- **Groupanizer:** The program is up to date. However, the Board is searching for a replacement for retiring Administrator, **Gene Heupel**.

If interested please inform the Board.

- **Marketing:** Activity in the area of the social media increasing. It is hoped that all members will try to increase their use and support of their personal accounts as well as the Chapter's.
- **Membership:** Plans are progressing to implement a *Chapter Orientation & Retention Team (CORT)*.
- **Christmas Show:** Bloomington-Jefferson High School is the site; Sunday, December 15 at 3:00 p.m. is the time.
- **Service:** Should a suitable local-community effort of some kind be chosen to complement that of the Harmony Foundation?
- **Old Business:** The truck needs repair and repainting. Should it be replaced?

No action items at this time. Next meeting November 21 at Wooddale.

## Happy Birthday

- 11/10 Bob Ostergaard
- 11-15 Don Bartels (65)
- 11/19 Susan Krekelberg
- 11/23 Barbara Aumann
- 11/23 Bonnie Dahlen
- 11/24 Russ Born
- 11/26 Jim Johannsen
- 11/26 Diana Pinard
- 11/27 Kelly McKown
- 11/28 Pete Villwock
- 11/29 Jim Foy
- 11/30 Branden Martz (30)
- 12/02 Sheila Cole
- 12/02 Linda Speidel
- 12/03 Jeanne Bloomquist
- 12/05 Judy Knutson
- 12/06 Ben Waggard

## Happy Anniversary

- 11/15 Dan & Beverly Slattery
- 11/19 Ken & Karen Wentworth(25) 25 years
- 11/27 Larry & Martha Smalley (60)

# Remembering Merrill Miller

## Bob Griffith Reminisces

I first became acquainted with Merrill Byron Miller in 1964 when I was singing in the Hillcrest Methodist Church Choir and Merrill was appointed choir director. It was soon apparent that:

- He was a fine choir director.
- He was a perfectionist.
- He had a fine solo voice.

Another member of the choir, baritone **Chuck Oberg**, who was also a Barbershopper, and I tried to convince Merrill to join the Barbershop Harmony Society [nee SPEBSQSA]. At first he said he was too busy directing three choirs at Hillcrest Church and being band director at Kennedy High School.

But after a while we wore away his resistance and the three of us along with **Mike Stump**, who also was a Barbershopper singing in the Hillcrest choir, became the *Hillcresters* quartet. In 1968 Chuck was forced to step aside because to health reasons. Most fortuitously, in an effort to keep singing together Merrill switched from bass to lead, I switched from lead to bari and along with newly-recruited bass **Paul Will** we became the *Knights of Harmony*.

Merrill did not enjoy competition. His big thrill was entertainment, but he reluctantly agreed to many competitions in order to keep our quartet before the Barbershop public. He fully enjoyed entertaining in hospitality rooms.

He also was a very prolific arranger. He would pump out two or three arrangements for the quartet every week despite his busy schedule. We obviously couldn't learn them all, but would pick the best of the bunch to include in our repertoire, which sometimes consisted of as many as 35 songs, many of these being Merrill's arrangements.

Merrill loved pop music and had a knack of arranging unusual songs in the Barbershop style. Who would have believed that songs such as *Cocktails for Two* (complete with Spike Jones-type sound effects), *Gun-*

*slinger*, and *Shut the Door* as sung by a Barbershop quartet, could be instant hits with an audience?

*Dueling Banjos*, as arranged by Merrill, became our signature song for many years. We received many requests from other Barbershop quartets for its chart but Merrill refused to give it up until the *Knights* [who had by then morphed into *Grandma's Beaus*] had retired.

In our early days Mike Stump was our main spokesman on stage, but Merrill soon asked to try his hand at warming up the audiences. He developed a huge repertoire of Ole and Lena jokes (complete with Norwegian dialect) that were always quite well received.

Merrill became the Commodores' lead-section leader and Assistant Director in the early 80s. He later became the full-time director for the Commodores for a short time after **Doug Miller** ended his tenure as Director.

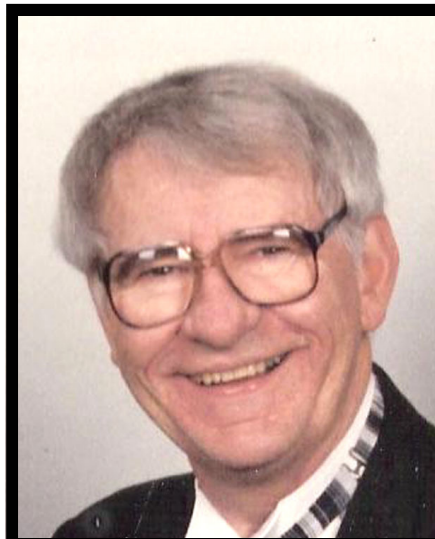
In 1990 Merrill led the quartet that had become *Grandma's Beaus* to the International Seniors Championship in Tucson, Arizona. That summer, as recent champions we were asked to sing three songs at the 1980 International Convention (held in the Cow Palace in San Francisco) as the judges were tallying the scores of the competing quartets.

**Jim Richards**, as recent Society president, felt we should do only straight Barbershop numbers but Merrill was able to convince Jim that for our final number we should do *Dueling Banjos*. We did...and we received an instant standing ovation before the song was half finished. I must admit this was one of my biggest thrills as a Barbershopper.

Merrill continued telling Ole and Lena jokes long after the quartet retired in 2000. Although his health had deteriorated in recent years, he entertained anyone who would listen with anecdotes about Ole and Lena almost until his death on October 21, 2013.

Merrill, his humor, and his face-filling smile, will surely be missed by his family, his many friends, and the Upper-Midwest Barbershop community.

**Bob Griffith**



**Merrill B. Miller**  
1926-2013

**Why not consider a donation to Harmony Foundation in Merrill's memory—and keep him smiling!**

## Quartet Quaffs

### Four Seasons

“Happy birthday, Grandpop!”, said Andrew, my eight-year-old grandson. “Thanks, Andrew.”, I replied. After a little pause he asked, “By the way, Grandpop,



Rollie Neve

how old are you?” To which I responded, “Eighty-two.” Obviously impressed with the huge size of that number and thinking a bit, he asked, “Did you start at one?”—to a youngster, a number that big seems to be beyond belief. On the other side of the spectrum, those with major maturity cease to be amazed with how fast life flies by—all of which brings us to the memory of a former Commodore as we reflect on his life.

I was four years old when **Stanley Wynne Gilbertson** was born in Minneapolis. The Roaring Twenties gave birth to most of our men who served in WWII, and Stan was no exception. He earned a Bronze Star

and a Purple Heart during his service in the Philippines. Returning home he married, earned bachelors and masters degrees in education, became locally and nationally recognized as an educational innovator and, can we say capped all of his achievements by joining the Minneapolis Commodores.

His tenor voice blended beautifully as a member of the *Jubilaires* quartet [then as a member of the Bloomington Chapter] as they went



The Jubilaires (left to rt.) Stan Gilbertson, Bob Rainey, John Charn, and Harry Tickner. Archive Photo

on to become the Land O' Lakes District Quartet Champions in 1966 (see picture). Stan also appeared in the Bloomington Theater production of “Music Man” in 1964. In retirement, Stan enjoyed Barbershopping, golf, jogging, and cross-country skiing.

You may wonder why all of the above has anything to do with the *Four Seasons Quartet*. It is because of our participation in Stan's recent burial service. We were asked by Stan's family to sing a song at his interment ceremony held at the Fort Snelling Cemetery. As a quartet we have sung at many church services and funerals but that setting was especially unique—different from all others. We gathered in a small area in the middle of the cemetery, amongst the thousands of gravesite headstones, on a sunny October afternoon under a canopy with an intimate group of about twenty family members.

Following the priest's remarks and prayers we sang *Precious Lord*. The impact was dramatic and deeply felt. It was an experience that is hard to describe and left the four of us with a feeling of being blessed to be participants. It was a performance that will live on in the “Seasons” memories. We might even ponder how many memories Stan had in his Barber-shopping experience. It's great to be a Barbershopper and a Commodore.

### Rollie for Dan, Rich, and Tom



## “Oh! No! Not Fargo Again!”

For the second consecutive year, Fargo's *Great Plains Harmony Chorus* at the LOL District Contest eked out close decision (three points) for third place over the since disgruntled and perhaps overconfident *Minneapolis Commodores*—all because, I am quite sure, our otherwise compliant director (name withheld for legal reasons) unequivocally refused to appear on stage wearing a figure-enhancing skirt. *No guts, no glory!*

Disappointing as our showing was to us, the La Crosse contests were otherwise quite memorable in a most positive way. As expected the *Great Northern Union Chorus* overwhelmed its competition with a remarkable performance just short of a 90-percent score that will certainly improve with further polish of their up-tune's most-recently-added choreography package. *Midwest Vocal Express* placed second with an 80-percent score.

The exciting quartet contest produced a surprise winner,

a young, virtually unknown quartet, *Kordal Kombat* from Willmar, that from the outset took command of the stage and never relinquished it. Not only did they win the contest but also took home the Novice award.

*St. Croix Crossing* from Greater St. Paul, Hilltop, and Frank Thorne, was a close second and also will represent the LOL District in the Seniors' Contest at the 2014 Long Beach Midwinter Convention.

The Minneapolis Chapter's only representative in the quartet contest, *Hot Commodity*—with tenor, **Paul Swanson**; lead, **Tony Mason**; bari, **Dave Speidel**; and bass, **Ben Wanggard**, placed a respectable fourteenth, particularly considering this was their first appearance on the contest stage. Undaunted and unabashed they are looking forward to their next competitive challenge.

Go to *La Crosse*, Page 7, Column 1



Staff Photo

The Commodores on stage in La Crosse.

**La Crosse from Page 6**

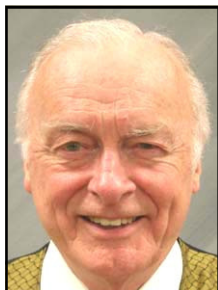
In other convention highlights the LOL Hall of Fame Committee introduced the three newest selectees for the 2013 honor, **Bob Fricke, Joe Liles, Clary Reinhardt**—three gentlemen well-known to all of us in LOL.

Friday night’s ADC show was highlighted by the final appearance of the Commodores’ own **Happiness**

**Emporium** (75% anyway), who after 40 years of virtually uninterrupted performing, at last decided to retire while still in top, still-in-demand, form. Their performance was as inspiring as it was melancholy and, all things considered, they are indeed unique and a great credit to our Society and to the Minneapolis Chapter. Thanks for the memories

**Chord Candy #116**

By Dr. Jim Richards, Der Tagmeister



Jim Richards

*The Curse of an Aching Heart* (Will Oakland with Henry Fink and Al Piantadosi in 1913) is celebrating its 100th birthday this year and yet remains popular with woodshedders today. That enduring property was recognized by Oliver Hardy in the film; *Blotto*, by *Fats Waller & His Rhythm* in 1930, *Julia Lee & Her Boyfriends* in 1936, *Gary Shelton* in 1947 and even the great *Frank Sinatra* in 1961. The song was also recorded by *Jimmie Davis*; *Monty Sunshine*; *Rick Fay*; *Ralph Sutton* and others. Here is one particularly nice rendition of a tag to that song offered by an anonymous donor. It is easy to sing once you get started. I would recommend that you tune up and start on Chord number 2. It is an Ab Major chord with the bari doubling the root with the bass. Once you get the hang of it try starting on the G7 chord that occurs prior to the A-Major. The half-step move upward will feel very comfortable and natural. Enjoy this gem. It is a beauty.

that's the

And tho you're not true may God bless you. That's the curse that's the

curse, of an ach - ing, my ach-ing, my break-ing heart. \_\_\_\_\_

of an ach - ing heart. \_\_\_\_\_

curse, of an ach - ing, my ach-ing, my break-ing heart. \_\_\_\_\_

# Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, Bemused/amused Baritone

Sometimes I really have to dig long and hard to come up with article material. (I am smirking and silently, wildly laughing! Me having trouble coming up with something to write about?



**Jim Erickson**

Never! OK, you really did not have to mention that some articles have no content whatsoever, and if they do have a smattering, the themes meander more than the Mississippi River only to end in the Gulf of Esoteric Sludge (Doc Hardin loves to call my stuff esoteric.). But truthfully, articles sometimes almost write themselves. Like a fat, red apple falling from the top of the tree right into my lap, this article just *done so!*

Where to start? Well, at the Friday night quartet contest at the recent LOL District contest in La Crosse, Wisconsin, we were being entertained by the competing quartets and at about intermission, a Commodore Barbershopper, with a morbid and ashen look on his paling face, approached a couple of us. Now in the interest of protecting the innocent and those whose contest-readiness was challenged, I will not divulge the name of that Barbershopper.

Also, as any man can easily do, he considered blaming his wife for his predicament or at least being a factor of distraction since men can't multitask, you know. Women love to lord that over us men folk.

So, why the ashen face, brother? Well, this otherwise upstanding

(That strikes me as funny since our rehearsals and performances find us always up there standing on the risers) Commodore managed to utter the words, "I forgot my contest tux costume at home." Ever trying to be helpful, we suggested calling any friends, children, relatives, or Commodores who had not yet left the Twin Cities, to see if they could pick up the outfit and bring it down for the Commodore contest appearance at about 11:30 the next morning. It became readily apparent that no such contacts were going to be forthcoming.

What next? Well, as the story got around, our esteemed apparel director, **Dan Williams**, who is always at the top of his game, offered that he had the foresight to pack a couple extra vests and matching ties just in case in a rare occurrence,

fit, too, were properly packed ready for the trip. Deceptive seats aside, Dan needed to hear none of it. He just said, "I have the vest and tie, so see if you can come up with the rest of the suit."

Another Commodore, **Peter Jarnberg**, volunteered the use of his extra black shirt that he brought along just in case. Apparently, Pete has encountered devious, leaky pancake syrup dispensers or those squirty ketchup bottles that require the strength of a cow-milking set of hands to forcefully squeeze the damned bottle until a typhoonic blast of the red stuff erupts on everything but the intended "American" fries. Apparently a survivalist, Pete, nonetheless, offered up his black shirt for a comrade in a bind.

That left only a pair of tux pants, black socks and shiny shoes to make the singer's ensemble complete. Of course! Why didn't we think of it earlier? The hosts of the event, the *La Crosse-ian* chorus members, would certainly have a pair of tux pants that we could borrow. So, off to the registration desk. As abundant good luck would have it, a really on-her-toes woman was keeping track of things with her clipboard. But

she stopped in her exacting duties long enough to explain that the La Crosse chorus wore gray pants, not black, and would not be a quick source of pants.

Upon a bit of pressing (no pun intended), she admitted that she had fairly recently worked for a men's formal-attire business nearby. She knew that since it was getting to be about 9:00 pm, the store had long closed for the day. But, it would be open at 10:00 the next morning. With a full hour and a half before entering the contest stage, it seemed *Go to Grind, Page 9, Column 1*

**LOL District  
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&  
Lakes Chord College  
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January 3-4, 2014  
Contact: Dave Sylte (507) 433-0004  
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"Something for every Barbershopper!"**

someone might have spilled pancake syrup on vest and tie moments before the contest. Or even more rare, someone might have forgotten to get their outfit into their soon-to-depart car.

Dan, in his wisdom, doesn't inquire as to why vests/ties are needed at the last minute. He doesn't even have to hear that, in this case, the seats of the vehicle transporting the necessary outfit, were put down, or put up, or whatever, and not being in their usual position, those very seats assured the performer and his wife that everything, yeah the out-



*Grind from Page 8*

a shoe-in (I'm not going to apologize for this pun!) to stop at the store and complete the outfit with pants and shiny shoes.

Cinch, right? Oh, my simple and trusting reader, that is never the case. Never! Never! Never! Just like when my wife, **Mary**, and I had to replace our kitchen-sink faucet recently. A breeze, right? Turn off the main water, remove the old, install the new and turn the main water on again. Got it? (Except when you have a faulty shutoff valve that only partially shuts off the water.) When the faucet pipe was cut, water immediately covered the sink cabinet and kitchen floor.

Further, a miniature **Niagara Falls** began in the basement. Wouldn't it have been fortunate to have had a bunch of empty buckets at hand? But my good wife, during an intensive cleaning binge, commanded that I get rid of all my extra buckets. "What on earth are you ever going to do with all those buckets? You can keep one, but no more!" Well, through a tiny deception, I hoarded the extras in various secret places and when the water spewed, I was able to grab them at a moment's notice, place them under the cool cataracts (along with a waste basket I had commandeered), and catch gallons (?) of water. In the meantime, the real main was shut off and soon the new faucet was installed.

Gone grocery shopping, my wife had missed the excitement, but when she returned, she exclaimed, "Wow, look at all the buckets. Lucky I didn't have you throw those out." Sometimes a man is at his smartest when he just keeps his mouth shut except to say something like, "Not every man is lucky enough to have a wife like you who sees the value in keeping some extra buckets around."

Since this article is writing itself, I'm not sure where it is going or even what the subject is anymore. I

can't just add, "The End" so I'll wait it out. (Lengthy pause while I watch the latest episode of The Big Bang Theory on TV) Oh, I hear the laptop whirring again, so we must be back at it. So.....Our hero just has to stop by the formal-attire-rental shop, pick up some pants and shoes and he is complete. Except on the way to the shop, he gets lost. Time is running really short. His only choice is to race to the contest center. In what seems to be an unexpected turn of fate, he encounters someone who has an extra pair of black pants. That fit! They aren't "tux" pants, but like they say at the winery, "Any Port in a storm."

But shoes are nowhere to be found. The chorus is in the last warm-up room before the stage entrance and still no shoes. What to do, what to do? Now most know that necessity is the mother of invention, but did you know that desperation is personified as the Cesarean delivery of the panic-stricken? Sitting with his black socks in hand and his brown shoes on, and bemoaning his sad state of affairs, our hero looks at his socks, then his shoes, then his socks. Brain lightning strikes and with seconds to go, he grabs a sock, wiggles it over one shoe and repeats with the other. Looks black enough to me, he muses, even if not shiny.

Padding carefully onto the stage in his socks under the dimmed lights, no one expects or sees the deception. And thankfully our man, now with sox appeal, is not positioned in the first couple of rows on the risers. Only a few of his fellow Commodores actually know. The songs are then sung, the choreo done, the turn to the audience thanking them (and the judges) completed, the pictures taken, and the lights finally dimmed. The cloak of darkness once again hides the desperate act until the shoe fraud has carefully padded off the risers. A musical Hail Mary pass for the touchdown, if I ever heard of one.

The article muses have whispered that they are finished now, so I'll

*Paula pens à prize!*

Inspired by her everlasting love for her family and our Savior, **Paula Pettis** has authored a stirring chronicle of the final journey of her beloved Barbershopper dad, **Russell Anthony Pettis**. Incorporated in and leading off the volume is Russ's diary-like compendium of memories from early childhood through his adult life, through

## God Signs & Dad Stories



written by  
**Paula Marie Pettis**

school, military service, and courtship and marriage.

Paula's work is a compelling endorsement of her faith in the Lord. A book release/signing was held at Christ the King Lutheran Church in New Brighton on November 17.

She has a brand new website at [www.Bluedragonflies.net](http://www.Bluedragonflies.net)

Her books may be ordered through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Xulon Press. An eBook is available at the Apple Store. Xulon Press will be showing her book at trade shows in London, New York, and Atlanta in the spring.

just add that next time I'll do the article-writing and bring you up to date on the latest research on the origins of the Georgia Grind. Thanks, muse!

Until then, don't forget to create your personal **Barbershopper Bucket List**, do hold fast to that which is good, and keep on recruiting!

# LETTERS

This is just a "for-your-information" letter. If any of you guys are retiring and planning on spending time in the Phoenix area, I'd like to direct you to some Barbershop-singing opportunities so you don't have to go "cold turkey"!

In the Phoenix area there are several such opportunities—something for everyone. Here are some options from which you may choose.

- *Spirit of Phoenix*, a Grade "A" chorus with about 75 members that meets evenings and competes at the International level.
- The *Lamplighter Chorus* in Mesa, very good singing and socially-oriented group of about 30 members that also meets evenings.
- The *Leisure World Chorus*, a group of about 40 retired "B" barbershop singers that meets during the day (without risers) and performs at a dozen or more retirement communities each winter.
- The *Arizona Quartet Chapter*, about 20 Barbershop singers who like to woodshed and sing in pickup quartets. They meet twice monthly. They, too, eschew risers.

If any of you are interested, contact me and I will help you find a Barbershop home here in the Southwest. E-mail: [zwolf888@juno.com](mailto:zwolf888@juno.com)

## Norm Wolfe

*Editor's Note: Norm is a through-and-through retired Commodore alumnus and was the bass of the much-loved Roadrunners, the 1972 LOL District Quartet Champions and entertainers extraordinaire. He also was a co-architect along with Judy Olson [nee Ode], of the stage presence plan for the Commodores' 5th-place-medalist performance at International in Cincinnati in 1978.*

*The above piece is reprinted from Norm's submission to LOL net this past August.*

*(Thanks, Norm, old buddy!)*

Thursday, November 14, 2013

Dear Paul [Wigley],

I have been trying to put my thoughts together since Sunday night in hopes to adequately express my gratitude for the involvement of your chorus and yet I still feel I won't be able to come close to what is in my heart! Thank you SO MUCH!

It was an extremely successful event! We just found out that we collected 2,161 pounds of food which is AMAZING and by far the most we've ever collected at this annual event! Thank you!

Your chorus was so much fun! I loved all of the pieces, especially *What a Wonderful World*. Seeing the joyful expressions on their faces and hearing their gorgeous harmonies really does cause one to marvel at this wonderful world! It was truly apparent that their hearts were unified in that great cause and that is such a beautiful thing to see from the audience! I know that their sound and expression is also a reflection of your hard work and dedication. Congratulations on all you have done! I am also especially grateful for getting to join together on *Come Thou Fount* and I felt like I got a small glimpse of what heaven will be like. Please express my sincere gratitude to the Commodores. You are all truly instruments in the hands of God.

I've received a request from our public affairs representative (Cindy Curtis) who would like to submit an article to the local newspapers. If you have time and are willing, we'd love to get a quote from you or perhaps one of your singers (please list names) about their experience. I've cc'd her on this-mail so you have her contact info.

We will give you a CD of the concert as soon as it becomes available. I will be in touch!!! Thank you again for freely giving of your time and talents to make Sunday so successful. I hope to work together again soon!

Warmest regards,

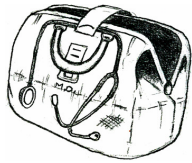
Erin Gray

Minnesota Mormon Chorale, Artistic Director



Performers' view of the audience during the rendition of *Come Thou Fount* (with Commodore Bob Dillon's magnificent coiffure in the right foreground).  
Bill Ward Photo

# Doc's Bag



By Dr. Hardin Olson, Editor

Personally I was quite pleased with the selection of the 2013 inductees to the LOL Hall of Fame. I have had memorable encounters with all three.



Hardin Olson

Clary Reinhardt, when a Commodore, edited the

Chord-Inator for several years be-

tween my initial and my current runs as Editor. Since then he edited the Fox Valley bulletin with great success and recently won the International Electronic bulletin Contest. For several years running, Clary and I had a hard-fought battle in the LOL Hard Copy Bulletin Contests.

Bob Fricke, current editor of LOL's bulletin, *The Pitch Piper*, has always been helpful to me if I needed a photo of other bit of information and has always been ready to publish in the *Pitch Piper* articles that I submitted voluntarily or by his request.

I first met Joe Liles in 1989 in

Hawaii at the Midwinter Convention. It was at an International Board breakfast and Del Ryberg from Rochester had helped a small group of us to arrange a presentation to International President-elect Jim Richards. The presentation (Jim's TAGNE1 Minnesota license plates) went well and shortly thereafter I introduced myself to Joe.

Some months later Jim Richards' Red Barons quartet blazer became a traveling trophy among the International Board members who would bid on it at annual meetings to see which "unlucky" one would have to take the jacket home for the next year. How I got involved I don't remember but I wound up giving the jacket to Joe so the bidding could begin.

Hence began my routine of greeting Joe each time we attended the same convention venues. Whether he remembers me or not, he has always been most gracious and greets me as though we were old friends. God bless you, Joe!

\*\*\*\*\*

How about that Willmar Chapter and their director, Todd Mattison. Not only were they the LOL Plateau A Champions but they ran away with the Most Improved Chorus trophy to boot. Then to top the weekend off, Willmar had two quartets in the top eight, the winners, *Kordal Kombat*, and the eighth place finishers, Todd's quartet, *Sound Image*. Not bad for a chapter that marshaled only 20 men on stage while finishing a mere two points behind the Commodores in the chorus competition.

However, this was not just blind luck, for you see Todd Mattison spent several of his early Barber-shopping years as a Minneapolis Commodore. *The cream always rises to the top.*

## Happy Holidays!

### December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 - 3:00 PM

Jefferson High School, 4001 102<sup>nd</sup> St, Bloomington, MN 55432



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**MEETING EVERY TUES -7:00 PM**  
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*Neither shared with the Girl  
Scouts nor dumped by the  
Sweet Adelines.*

*Logo courtesy of Bob Clark*

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**To:**

**LOOKING AHEAD**  
**Chapter Level**

• December 15, Sunday - **Christmas Concert**, 3:00 p.m., Bloomington-Kennedy High School

• **March 22, 2014**, Annual Show

**District Level**

• January 3-4, 2014 - **Leadership Training Academy**. UW River Falls, River Falls, Wisconsin

**International Level**

• January 28 - February 1, **Midwinter Convention**, Long Beach, California

**Barbershopper Of The Year**  
***John Carlotto***

**Commodores and others \*  
contributing to this issue.**

- Dan Cole
- Jim Erickson
- Erin Gray\*
- Bob Griffith
- Tony Mason
- Rollie Neve
- Hardin Olson
- Rich Ongna
- Paula Pettis\*
- Jim Richards
- Paul Wigley
- Norm Wolfe



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