

KEEPING THE
WHOLE WORLD SINGING

CHORD-INATOR

BARBERSHOP
HARMONY
SOCIETY



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

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O'LAKES DISTRICT

MARCH 2014 - VOL. 70 - NO. 2

"Together again, Helen."

(As eulogist, Bob Dykstra, says, "Timing is everything!")

We lost a good friend and a loyal Minneapolis Chapter member on January 31, 2014 with the passing of Ed Peterka. Ed, who died at age 92, joined the chapter in 1956 and was a loyal member ever since then even though he joined the inactive ranks many years ago. He insisted on paying chapter dues rather than dropping his membership or transferring it to the Frank Thorne Chapter out of respect for what he said the chapter had done for him over the years.

When Ed committed himself to his newfound hobby in 1956 he jumped in with both feet...something Ed always did. He was not merely a joiner; he was a doer. During his first ten years of membership in the Minneapolis Chapter I've been able to document the following positions of leadership he assumed. I'm sure there were many other less visible ways in which he served. In the late 1950s he took on the responsibility of editing the chapter newsletter, the *Chord-Inator*, and at the same time served as chapter correspondent for the Land O'Lakes District Newsletter, which was then called the *Harmony News*. In 1960-61 he served two consecutive terms as chapter president and, just for good measure, agreed to serve as 1960 Chairman for the annual show, then held at Northrop Auditorium on the University of Minnesota Campus and affiliated with its Artist Series. (I should add that our chapter shows at

that time attracted upwards of 4,000 people and hundreds of those attended post-show Afterglows).

But that's not all! In June 1962 and again in June 1964 Ed served as chair of Land O'Lakes District Jamborees held in Minneapolis. And in 1964 he was named Region IV Vice-President for the district. So it was no surprise when in 1964 he was honored by the Minneapolis Chapter as its Barbershopper of the Year. It's fair to say that no one ever was more deserving of our chapter's highest honor. He continued his commitment to chapter leadership in 1969 by chairing the Silver Anniversary Committee which celebrated our 25 years of significant involvement in what was then the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America.



Edward T. Peterka

1921 - 2014

How is that for a decade of commitment to a hobby? And it must be emphasized that while this was going on, Ed managed a very successful business....Arnell Business Forms. He also was very supportive of his wife Helen's heavy involvement in the St. Paul Chapter of Sweet Adelines International. Ed emceed many of her chapter's shows while at the same time serving as #1 stage hand.

Following his decision to back away from his active part
Go to Tribute, Page 2, Column 2

**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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Past Pres.....	Dan Cole 612/376-0779
Exec. VP.....	Gordy Aumann 952/935-8869
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V P Membership.....	Harvey Weiss 763/439-4447
Program V P	Peter Jarnberg 651/765-9580
Secretary.....	Bill Warp 763/531-2290
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Through 2015

Ken Jones.....	612/790-1013
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Tribute from Page I

ticipation in the chapter and the Commodore Chorus, Ed continued his involvement in the *Friday Lunch Bunch that Meets on Thursday* where he satisfied his need to sing and to stay current with what was happening on the local and international Barbershopping scene.

He attended his first Land O'Lakes District Convention in many years in October 2012 to witness first-hand the battle for Barbershop chorus supremacy between his beloved Minneapolis Chapter and the Fargo-Moorhead Chapter, the chorus of which was directed by his niece, Sheila Childs.

At a meeting of the Lunch Bunch a few weeks previously, Ed had wagered \$100 that the Fargo-Moorhead Chorus would outscore the Commodores, a bet which was enthusiastically covered by a few Minneapolis loyalists in attendance. It was agreed that whoever lost the bet would contribute the \$100 to Harmony Foundation.

As regular readers of this newsletter will remember only too well, the Commodores were edged out by Fargo-Moorhead by a mere one point and went on to compete in Toronto last July at the International Barbershop Convention, when Greendale, the District gold-medalist chorus, decided not to represent the Land O'Lakes District. I'm sure that Ed was happy that his niece led her chorus to the win, but I'm also sure that he was not happy to see the chorus to which he belonged for almost sixty years go down to defeat.

Ironically, Ed passed away peacefully on what would have been his wife Helen's 100th birthday. He will be

WHERE ARE YOU—WHERE ARE WE GOING?

By Dan Williams, President

Last night [February 22] I attended the *Northern Pines Harmony Brigade Show* WOW! What an experience. All who were there were treated to a great Barbershop evening.

Dan Williams Thanks, to all of the Commodores who organized, participated, or attended the event. Two thoughts keep running through my mind as I reflect on the evening—the “sound” that was generated by the Brigade chorus and—what is my vision in the coming year for the Commodores.

First let's consider the “sound” of the chorus. Consider a group of some 60 guys, give or take, that had experienced horrible weather conditions to just arrive at the Brigade venue; had suffered several hours without power, and had only a limited amount of time to rehearse—and most of whom had never sung together before. Yet the incredible sound created by those guys was rich, full and a delight to the audiences' ears.

Why? Because, these men came prepared to sing those ten songs as though they would be singing their part **alone**, in a quartet. It stands to reason, that each member knowing one's part cold goes a long way in producing the “sound” called Barbershop that we all love and enjoy.

Do you know your part cold for all of the music for *What a Wonderful World?* Showtime is approaching. I

Go to Williams, Page 3, Column 1

greatly missed by us old-timers who had the great pleasure of calling him friend.



Williams from Page 2

challenge every participating Commodore to review his music and learning tracks—WHERE ARE YOU, DO YOU KNOW YOUR PART?

As for my vision for the Commodores, well that becomes more complicated and challenging. **Jim Richards** posed that very question to me while enjoying dinner, along with **Lou DeMars** and **Russ Born** prior to the brigade show. I wasn't sure how to answer. I touched on the subject in my last article, to ensure the Commodores have the opportunity to create peak moments for our audiences and ourselves through the Barbershop experience.

We have a committee looking at altruistic purposes – if we want a new one and if so, what should it be? We have another committee working on grant opportunities. Each entity will have an impact on the other, and both will factor into defining our future. But I'm only in a position to help make the future happen. The Commodores—one and all—will need to determine *our direction*.

Well, I'm off to Florida. I have my music packed; a few hours on the plane (each way) should solidify **knowing my part**. And what better place to work on the vision of **where the Commodores are going** than sitting on a warm beach, with a cool beverage in my hand and watching the sun slowly slide into the sea with my sweetheart by my side!

It's great to be a Commodore!



Chapter members are always welcome to attend the Board meetings

Meeting of February 20 canceled due to inclement weather.

SUNSHINE HOTLINE



By Rich Ongna, Sunshine Chairman

Phone: 952-829-7009

Email: ddongna@usfamily.net

Ruthie Mikkelson, wife of long-time Commodore, **Lloyd**, passed away at age 93 in Salem, Oregon, last month. Condolences may be sent to Lloyd at 4425 75th Avenue SE, Salem, OR 97317.



Rich Ongna

Alice Pettis, wife of the late **Russell Pettis**, broke her left leg before Christmas and spent two days in

Happy Birthday

- 03/17 Ken Jones
- 03/17 Dan Krekelberg
- 03/17 Tony Mason
- 03/17 Carol Smith
- 03/18 Judy Johannsen
- 03/22 Bob Griffith
- 03/24 Bill Shaw
- 03/29 Joel Rumsch

Happy Anniversary

04/09 Hardin & Judy Olson



February Reenlistments

- **Kaleb Smith**..... 5 yrs.
- **Bob Duncan**..... 10 yrs.
- **Jim Erickson**..... 12 yrs.
- **Dan Williams**..... 12 yrs.
- **Mark Ortenburger**..... 13 yrs.
- **Guy St. Martin**..... 23 yrs.
- **Dan Smith**..... 27 yrs.
- **Dave Speidel**..... 39 yrs.
- **Pete Villwock**..... 40 yrs.
- **Bob Griffith**..... 51 yrs.

Abbott Northwestern. Their daughter, **Paula**, informs me that Alice is now residing at Walker Methodist in the Transitional Care Unit.

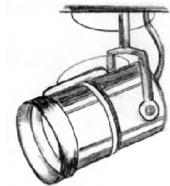
John Hansen had his lower teeth pulled and a follow-up surgery as well, so while his mouth is healing he's laying low. He is projecting that he will not be singing with the chorus until after the Annual Show and Spring Convention.

Kaleb Smith has been enduring migraine headaches for several weeks. Doctors are trying to determine what will help diminish them.

Kaleb's mother, **Judith**, has been diagnosed with Bell's palsy. Both Kaleb and his mother would appreciate your thoughts and prayers.

Remember: Please keep me informed about who is ailing and don't assume that I already know. 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.

Commodore Spotlight



Bill Warp is...

that ever smiling Commodore who has been diligently publishing the *Swipe* for the last few years. His work takes him on the road frequently but the travel rarely deters him.

Undaunted, Bill, an accomplished multi-tasker, has taken on an added responsibility, that of the ever-challenged Minneapolis Chapter Secretary.

As Cyril Northcote Parkinson professed in *The Economist* in 1955 (to paraphrase): Work expands to the time available for its completion—a dictum that Bill Warp will follow to the best of his ability.

Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, Brigadier Baritone

In my last article I reported sitting in an ice fishing shack taking shelter



Jim Erickson

from the snow and cold while doing something enjoyable and exciting. That last weekend, with one of the worst winter storms in 25 years, I spent my time in a larger, fancier, glutton-

satisfying shelter which kept the mountains of snow outside, kept the cold at bay and erased memories of the very treacherous, ice-packed freeway drive to the facility.

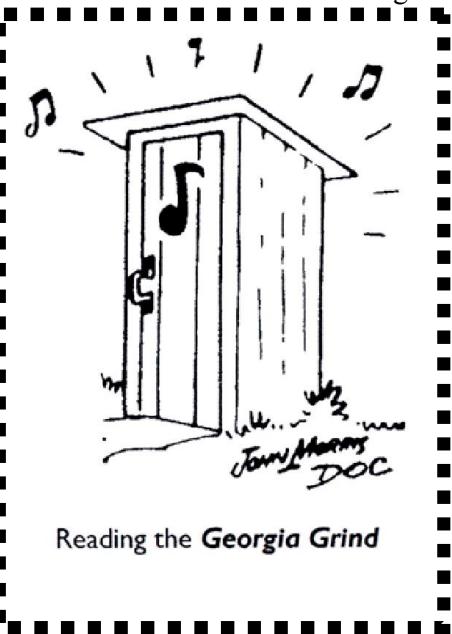
Where was I? At the **Crowne Plaza West Hotel** in Plymouth, Minnesota. Why? Attending the **2nd Annual Northern Pines Harmony Brigade Convention**. There is a great team of local Barbershoppers who put this event together for the official second year. No small feat! And, with the second of two successful Brigades, the NPHB qualified to become an official, chartered Brigade. Nicely done, Guys.

In a nutshell, the Northern Pines Harmony Brigade weekend attracts accepted Barbershoppers from all over the US and Canada and last year, one from Belgium. On Friday, the singers register, get assigned to a randomly chosen quartet and of the ten or so songs they must memorize perfectly, they are assigned one to compete with in the contest that evening. The winning quartets receive a new song for a final competition after the Saturday evening Brigade chorus concert.

At registration, singers get a sheet listing all of the attendees broken up into tenor, bass, etc., groups. A prize is awarded for the person(s) having sung in quartets that, in toto, include all singers (of other parts than theirs) on the list. So, as soon as you walk in

the door and get your sheet, you are bombarded with quarteters wanting to sing with you and get signed off on their sheets. This sheet filling goes on until the awards Saturday night, so you can expect to be continuously invited to join a quartet at any time and place. That is a ton of fun singing and good practice for the quartet contest, too. Enough said, except I should emphasize that there's a good chance singers are singing with people they have never sung with before in an ever-changing quartet and making acquaintances with singers from all over.

Not all went well with the Brigade



Reading the **Georgia Grind**

weekend, though. No fault of the planners. With the impending storm, many arrived earlier than planned to avoid weather delays and to be available for a very busy all-day Friday pre-Brigade community outreach. The plan was to arrive at the hotel at 7:00 a.m., head out on a bus to six different high schools for singing to their choirs, and end up singing in a couple of retirement homes.

As no good deed goes unpunished, Mother Nature decided to see how flexible these Barbershoppers really were. She laid down a sheet of heavy wet, icy, snow to begin with during Thursday night and packed on top of that even more snow. Then she dropped the temps so that there was

little chance of thawing, or even being effectively plowed. And with the temps so low, the road salt wouldn't work even if it didn't get plowed off the road.

I was up at 5:30 a.m. to allow for slow driving, but the high schools in question finally decided to close, the bus company said they closed when schools closed, and calls were coming in from those who had hoped to drive to the hotel, but now were snowed in. I got a call from **Ken Wentworth**, administrator of the singouts, saying that the performances were called off. I replied that he could at least have a cup of coffee or go back to bed. Not so fast brash baritone. Ken said that the hotel had suffered a power outage which had not yet been fixed, that his room was cold and getting colder, and there was no electricity for coffee. To his chagrin during the day, the power remained out, except for an emergency generator, I am guessing, as the essential lights kept flickering from time to time. Everything else was in a conservation mode—rationed heat, lights where they were absolutely needed, votive lights elsewhere.

Now I have been in some very romantic settings in my life, but I was breath-stricken (?) when I entered the men's restroom. No surprise that this hotel has restrooms with very nice granite sink-settings, big mirrors, attractive tile floors, gold here and there, and more. But, when I walked in the door, I was softly assaulted by seeing a glowing votive candle at each sink. The only light in the room. Walking past them, I turned the corner to approach the urinals (sorry for the graphic description). Once again I was presented with a neatly placed burning votive at each urinal.

The functional facilities were appreciated for meeting my physical needs, but even those white, porcelain fixtures had taken on a certain warmish, flickering charm. It was soooooo romantic. What could make

Go to Grind, Page 5, Column 1

Grind from Page 4

it even more romantic? Well, it just so happened that a tenor, bass, and lead were answering Nature's call at about the same time and so, after drying our hands, we recognized we had the makings of a quartet and proceeded to sing one of the loving Brigade songs. Aaahhhhhh, thoughts of romance in a porcelain appointed room! Does it get any better?

Now, I really don't know how I could replicate that unique setting for a nice, romantic liaison with my wife, **Mary**. And, she probably would not appreciate being wooed in a men's restroom. I know! I know! It wasn't exactly one of those dimly lit, fine dining boutique restaurants that she longs for. But I haven't entirely given up on the idea. Maybe best, though, to just keep it at the idea stage.

Sam Johanneck lives in Plymouth. Born at North Memorial Hospital [where your Editor was working at the time], Sam later graduated from Main Street School for the Performing Arts before going on to the University of Minnesota. He is employed as a technical writer.



Sam has a long and diverse musical background, singing and performing in high school, the Aldersgate United Methodist Church Choir and Theater, and the U of M Men's Chorus. He is also an accomplished violinist.

A movie buff and video-gamer, Sam also is an avid reader; mainly novels but also a mix of non-fiction.

Intrigued by the sound of tight harmony, Sam has been warmly welcomed to the vaunted lead section.

Only late on Friday did real power come back on. But with uncertainties, very late arriving singers, and the rest, the leaders came up with a fun, "alternative plan" evening and rescheduling of events. Not that the original plan wasn't a very good one, but I kind of liked the impromptu response to bring a bit of energy to the whole event.

All worked well and, again, congrats to those in charge. Oh, and I have to mention that not only was the facility one that form-fit a Harmony Brigade weekend, but also, the food was the finest with many options and, best of all, a grand selection of desserts. I could only take a small sample of each and still my plate was filled. Couldn't be better!

Keeping their good humor in the face of the big storm, icy roads, and power outage at the hotel, the com-

peting quartets came up with some clever names reflecting their quandary. The *Snow Cones*, *Drifters*, *Lights Out* were some. My quartet was *Polar Fourtex*, and one other, with an obvious longing for an early spring and start of the gardening season, chose *Plant Yer 2 lips Here...* Or was there another meaning?

Well, all in all, a great Harmony Brigade weekend. The kind of which you might want to add to your **Barbershop Bucket List**. So for now, keep making that list, keep recruiting and hold fast to that which is good.

(Afterthought. Not pointing any fingers, but somehow I think lead **Rollie Neve** is to blame for bringing all this harsh weather upon us. I try and try, but he is a real bugger to reform.)



Welcome aboard!"

Bob Junghans and his wife **Kathy**, live in Apple Valley. A native Californian, he graduated from high school in Wisconsin, from Winona State College, and then from Harvard School of Law. He is a practicing attorney.



Locally Bob sang with the MacPhail Singers and has played the trombone. He also has performed in church theater at the Colonial Church of Edina.

A writer and inventor of some note, Bob also fishes, plays golf, and reads, especially history. He also is a modest oenophile and I am sure would be willing to compare notes on the subject with those who might be interested.

Lou DeMars earns a Man of Note award for recruiting a fine bass.

Jeremy Reynolds and his wife, **Barbara**, are residents of Florida but will summer here in Minnesota. He was born in Washington DC and graduated from Washington-Lee HS in Arlington, Virginia [as did your Editor] before moving on to George Washington University [as did your Editor]. A US Army veteran, Jeremy is a computer consultant.

A genuine icon of sorts, Jeremy has experienced an odyssey, although Barbershop, rivaling that of Homer's ancient classic. He is a founder of the *Southern Part of Africa Tonsorial Society*, webmaster of the World Harmony Council, has been a member of 12 different chapters, a former member of BABS, and a winner of seven International medals (one gold). And oh...by the way, he plays the ukulele (and sings tenor).



Chord Candy #119By Dr. Jim Richards, *Der Tagmeister*

Jim Richards

What is a “hanger tag?” That is a tag in which one voice holds one note steady throughout the tag while the harmony singers sing a whole bunch of chords, each of which contain the “hanger” note. This is a wonderful way in which you can introduce a newcomer to the joys of making Barbershop harmony without having to learn a whole bunch of notes. It is the “hanger’s” responsibility to hold his note without running out of breath until the harmony singers have properly “worshiped” all of the chords until the final resolution. It is especially satisfying when the sequence of chords lead creatively and harmonically from the starting chord to rest on the final tonic chord. This offering, used by permission, is one of 50 tags contained in “Burt Szabo’s Book Of Tags,” Vol III. I’m sure Burt would be willing to part with a copy for a small fee. Vol I and II contain another 100 tags. Enjoy!

If You Love Me, Please Come Back To Me

me.

The musical score consists of two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The lyrics "If you love me, please come back to me." are written below the notes. The music includes various chords and rests, with some notes sustained over time.

The following appeared in Chord-Inator's April 2012 issue and is reproduced here to add some detail to Dr. Bob Dykstra's splendid eulogy on the front page.

Ed Peterka is [was] that irascible, fun-loving, gregarious, former lead-singer who for 57 [59] years has been a proud Commodore.

His harmonious odyssey began in Fargo in 1956 when his wife, **Helen**, an avid Sweet Adeline, suggested that he get interested in Barbershopping. Helen's brothers were members of the *Gate City Four*, a Barbershop quartet well-known in the Fargo area at that time.

Apparently Helen's suggestion took root in Ed's memory bank and sometime later back in Minneapolis, his work with *Arnell Business Forms* brought him near the Minneapolis Elks Club where he spotted a shiny, top-down Cadillac convertible with a

license plate framed in bright chrome on which was emblazoned the original (old, old, non-lyre) Society logo.

Whipping out his pen and a business card he scrawled, “Call me, I am interested.” and slipping the card under the horn-ring, proceeded to his next appointment. Very shortly thereafter his phone rang and on the other end was none other than **Dr. Ed Hamlet**, Minneapolis Chapter president in 1953 and soon to be BOTY in 1958. “We meet tomorrow evening at the Elks Club,” he said, “and I'll pick you up.” Ed was hooked and signed up that first night. (Since there was a chapter membership-drive going on at the time, Hamlet received a hand drill for recruiting our Mr. Peterka.)

The rest, indeed, is history. Taking the administrative track in the chapter, Ed worked his way up to the presidency in 1960 and 1961 and was selected as the 1964 Barbershop-

per of the Year having served the minimum (at that time) of eight years to be considered for that particular honor.

Having some spare time in 1959 he assumed the editorship of the Chord-Inator through 1962 when he passed the job off to **Bob Dykstra** (who later became the first Commodore to win the LOL District bulletin contest).

In the late 60s Ed climbed on the risers for the last time but continued on the rolls as a life member of the Minneapolis Chapter and the Society. More recently his failing eyesight limited his social life but he rarely missed a meeting of the Friday Lunch Bunch That Meets On Thursday (TFLBTMOT) at the *Moose On Monroe* in Minneapolis.



Honor Ed Peterka: Support Harmony Foundation

Going nuts in 2013

By Dick Riemenschneider, Nut Administrator

It has been an extremely successful Nut Sales Campaign for 2013. When the dust and nut hulls finally settled, the 2013 campaign was able to contribute \$10,500 to the Commodores treasury. That amount is \$3,000. more than was earned last year and the largest amount since 2007. Many kudos to the 69 Commodores who sold nuts to achieve that amount of support for the Commodores' mission.



Dick Riemenschneider aka *Nut Guy* (left) presents the final check for the 2013 Nut Sales receipts to President Dan Williams.

The tale of the tape this year is as follows:

- 40% revenue increase over 2012

- 2,520 bags of product sold this year versus 2,253 in 2012, a 11.8 % increase

- 69 Commodores sold product this year and 47 last year, a 46.8 % increase in participation

- 62.7% of the membership sold nuts this year as opposed to just 45 % last year

- 81.2% of active members sold nuts this year

The effort given by all those who sold nuts was really great this year. But, this year and in this sales campaign, several members that deserve special mention for their sales efforts:

- **John Carlotto** was the top salesman this year selling 154 pounds of product for overall cash sales of \$1,382.50. John single-handedly sold 6.3% of the gross cash sales and total pounds. Way to go, John!

- **Jim Richards** was the first runner-up in cash amount and bags sold at \$1,270.50 and 136 bags. Jim gives his wife, Ebie, the lions share of the credit for his outstanding sales effort.

- **Denny Rolloff** claimed second runner-up honors with \$1,187 and 132 bags.

- Earning admission to the very exclusive "100 bag club" were **Ken Wentworth, Dan Cole, and Carl Pinard**.

- In the "I knew I should have bought that extra pound of Honey Roast Peanuts" category was **Jim Johannsen**, with 99 bags sold.

This nut-sales campaign has been a chapter endeavor for many years. Just in my eight years as Nut Administrator the Chapter's treasury has been enhanced significantly by this effort. But, apart from just the nut sales, the amount of time and effort that members expend in all facets of the chapter operations to make this a first rate organization simply amazes me. When I observe the work that is put in to make this chapter function I can say proudly and truly "It's great to be a Commodore."



John Carlotto cradles his 1st-Place award.

The Minneapolis Commodores
are proud to present:
What A Wonderful World

Saturday, March 22, 2014
3 & 7:30 P.M.

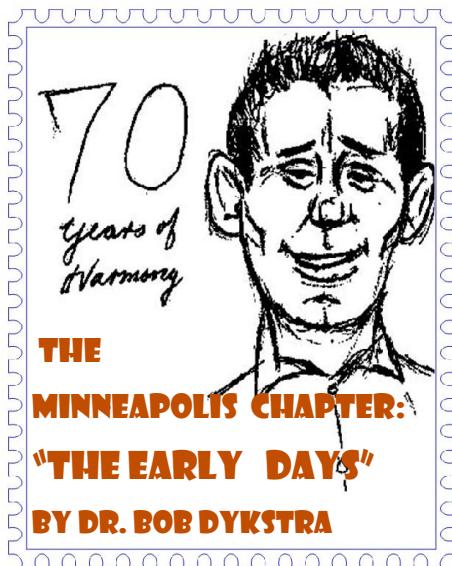
Come join the Minneapolis Commodores at Benson Great Hall, Bethel University, St. Paul, as we present *What A Wonderful World*. Our 4th consecutive annual show will fit that hat with a broad variety of familiar music featuring the warm, rich a cappella stylings of our 80-man Barbershop chorus and six of our chapter quartets. Let us engage your senses in a musical story set in electrically charged and joyful levels of Harmony Hills, Minnesota. The proud citizens of Harmony Hills, with a healthy dose of fun and humor, will help promote the wacky day-day folks about those things in life that truly matter.

If that isn't enough to whet your musical appetite, consider that you'll also have the pleasure of listening to our feature guestlist - A Mighty Wind - one of the premier male quartets in the country. They are currently the #1 team in the world and are fresh off a second consecutive 3rd place finish of the International Barbershop Quartet Competition. Prepare yourself to be thoroughly entertained.

Get your tickets TODAY, and we'll look forward to seeing you at our show.

Ticket Ordering Information:
Please contact Dan Pinard
5831 Knox Ave S., Minneapolis, 55428
612.527.3963 / pmarbtbds.com
Ticket: \$25, \$30, \$35

What a Wonderful World
Benson Hall at Bethel University
March 22, 2014
ONLY DAYS AWAY!
Polish your repertoire;
SELL THOSE TICKETS!



Note: Your editor has asked me to review certain aspects of our chapter's history. I'll start by recounting how it all began.

What is now known as the Barbershop Harmony Society was founded by **O.C. Cash** and **Rupert Hall** in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1938. The Minneapolis Chapter was chartered six years later in 1944. Only Racine of what is now the Land O'Lakes District had an earlier birth date.

History records that in January of 1944, **Norman Curtis** from the Minneapolis area was out of town on business (I'm not sure just where) and he attended a Parade of Quartets. He was so enthralled he called the president of the fledgling Barbershop Society, **Phil Embury**, and asked for information about the organization that had sponsored the wonderful concert he had become so excited about. Embury responded by suggesting that a Barbershop chapter be organized in Minneapolis. Mr. Curtis contacted a friend, **Ken Goit**, and the two of them invited a small group of acquaintances to meet at Ken Goit's house to harmonize.

That first meeting was so much fun that they decided to invite more

friends and meet for a second time at the home of **Joe Williams**. His house was packed with enthusiastic harmonizers. They then decided to meet at the Fifth District American Legion Club at 607 Second Avenue South. According to Joe Williams, the bar was "too good" there so they started meeting in the Mayor's Reception Room at City Hall.

Mayor **Marvin Kline** was, in the language of the day, a "crow" (he couldn't sing very well) but he enjoyed the singing and camaraderie. In fact, a Barbershop Quartet Contest was held at the Lyceum Theater during July of 1944 in conjunction with the Minneapolis Aquatennial and Mayor Marvin

Kline sang in a competing quartet. Well... actually...he didn't sing. He mouthed the words and Judge **Luther ("Luke") Sletten**, later to gain fame as the bass of the well-known *Atomic Bums Quartet*, and as director of the Minneapolis Commodores, sang the bass part using an off-stage microphone.

So in July 1944....six months after the chapter held its first organizational meeting—there were already quartets, a contest, and it appears a judging system not unlike that used by the Society for most of its first fifty years.

Judging categories included Harmony Accuracy, Arrangement, Voice Expression, Stage Presence and Costume. These categories were the

Mayor Just Mugs, Ghost Voice Dubs in With Harmony



"No silver-throated tenor is Mayor Marvin L. Kline of Minneapolis (seated and wearing handlebar mustache) no matter what appearances might have conveyed to Lyceum theater audiences...While Klein's colleagues, (l. to r.) Al Sanders, Bob Cochran, and Kermit Steensland batted out close harmony, the mayor just went through the motions. The missing voice was supplied by Luther Sletten (lower right) of the Hennepin County Attorney's Office.



Archive Photo

core of the judging program for the next quarter-century with the addition of attacks and releases. Quartets were also limited way back then to six minutes of singing time and a maximum of three numbers. No minimum singing time was mandated.

Given the time frame it's quite likely that many of the quartets that competed in the Aquatennial Contest predated the establishment of the Minneapolis chapter and perhaps joined the chapter as organized foursomes. Incidentally, quartet contests held in conjunction with the Aquatennial continued for many years, at least through 1959 when Harold Ulring, soon to be named Director of the Commodores, and his *Croix Chords* Go to Early Days, Page 9, Column 1

Early Days from Page 8

Quartet won their second consecutive Aquatennial Quartet Championship.

I mentioned earlier that Mayor Kline was an avid supporter of the new local Barbershop chapter, even though he was basically a non-singer. I have no evidence that he ever joined the Minneapolis Chapter but his lack of singing ability would not have disqualified him. The 1947-48 chapter president, **Tom Hastings**, for example, freely admitted that he was not a singer and that he had been recruited for his administrative ability. **Alfred Sanders**, another officer in the early years, remembered that "half of the membership in those days consisted of crows who like to hear good harmony. Anyone with a fee was invited to join. Those crows made an appreciative audience."

Some of the Minneapolis Chapter's most productive workers through those early years were crows. A few of us older members still remember **Doc Robert Browne**, later named Permanent Advisor to the Board of

This was a Valentine's Day gig in a split-level home with steps leading up and down from the entry. Our Valentine's husband was down the gated stairs with the baby. Behind that gate was a very large dog—a Boxer, the biggest Boxer that I have ever seen—more like a pit bull. He watched us, oh so closely, and I mean closely, through the gate.

As we started singing, the Boxer started twitching his ears; one up...one down...then switch. It was very difficult to look at the lady and not the dog.

We did three songs: *Heart of My Heart*, *Let Me Call You Sweetheart*, and *Honey/Little Eyes Medley*. When we did the medley and **Vern Johnson** sang his "Honey, Honey, Honey, Honey" solo, the dog's ears were doing aerobics. At the conclusion of our performance husband and baby appeared for the celebratory photograph.

In the thirty or so years that I have been doing these Valentine's Day gigs, I have never before sung with a dog in the audience. It was fascinating!

Directors, who was allowed by Director Luke Sletten to stand on the risers and mouth the lyrics but only if he promised never to try to sing along.

The idea of auditions to test singing ability came into being much later. In fact, the only reference to membership criteria on our Society's Code of Ethics was as follows: "We shall accept for membership only congenial men of good character who love harmony in music OR (emphasis mine) have a desire to harmonize." In other words, crows were clearly welcome if they loved harmony whether or not they could contribute to that harmony.

It is also apparent that even among men with musical ability certain characteristics were deemed important. A 1946 newspaper article (I've lost the citation) quotes the national Barbershop organization (then the SPEBSQSA) as saying: "Soloists, exhibitionists, egoists, and plain drunks need not apply since successful quartet singing requires self-restraint along with abil-

ity." (Reference to drunks was probably in response to the popular conception of the time that Barbershop quartet singers were usually found encircling a lamp post at 3:00 a.m. in an inebriated condition. This was a common theme, for example, in the popular single-panel cartoon, *Our Boarding House*, with its main character, Major Hoople).

Records indicate that 11 men participated in the first meeting organized by Curtis and Goit in January 1944. By June 12 of that year the chapter claimed 52 members. A year later membership rose to 99. By June of 1950 the Minneapolis Chapter boasted 133 members and has retained its century club membership for a vast majority of its seventy-year history.

Editor's Note: It may be said that during the year 1975, your Editor's year as Chapter President, the Board was reduced from its then unwieldy 25-30 members to todays cadre of 16. Ironically, and with a measure of trepidation, the position of Permanent Advisor to the Board was eliminated.

4 Square (and the dog)

By Jim Jorgensen, Bari: 4 Square



4 Square Quartet with happy mom and handsome baby (left to rt.) Bari Jim Jorgensen, Bass Vern Johnson, Lead Steve Daniel, and Tenor Ken Knutson.

Northern Pines Harmony Brigade

2nd Annual Convention - Plymouth, Minnesota



The Brigade



Guests: Kordal Kombat

A little snow and freezing temperatures were not enough to keep 62 hardy Barbershoppers from flocking to the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Plymouth, Minnesota, on February 21-23, to the *2nd Annual Northern Pines Harmony Brigade Rally*.

The NPHB had its beginnings in 2009 when Dave Speidel was commissioned in November 2009 by the LOL District Board to attend an Indiana *Brigade* to experience what *eXtreme Quartetting* was all about.



Guests: Vocality

Beginning with a “Trial Balloon” at COTS in 2010, Dave, with the assistance of Gary Jacobson, nurtured the LOL Brigade movement into a fully registered and chartered brigade in 2014, a subsidiary (with a 501c exemption) of the Barber-shop Harmony Society.

Godfathers of the effort along with David and Gary include Commodores Mark Bloomquist, Paul Swanson, Ken Wentworth, and Steve Zorn, a dual member of the St. Paul and Hilltop chapters.



Show Emcee
Dan True



President
Dave Speidel



Contest Emcee
Steve Zorn



The Panel: Adam Woods, Tom Matchinsky,
Roger Stanfield, Paul Swanson (Secretary).



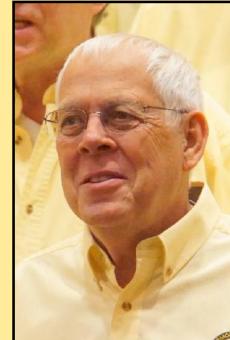
Ben Hancock



Bryan Langren



Gary Jacobson



Jim Erickson



Tony Mason



Ken Wentworth



Sam Johanneck



Jeff Culp



Bill Ward



Conrad Ward

The Commodore Platoon



1st Place: Low Voltage

Tenor
Jeff Schultz

Bass
Ben Wanggaard

Lead
Ed Herring

Bari
Roy Digges



Lance Johnson



Mark Bloomquist



Ben Wanggaard



Paul Swanson



2nd Place: Plant Yer 2 Lips Here



3rd Place: Snow Drifters

Bass
David Morris

Tenor
Paul Swanson

Lead
Joe Larson

Bari
Ricky Chaddock

Quartet Quaffs

Sounds of Renown

Each year Maynard's Restaurant in Excelsior puts on an event to raise funds for baseball, football, and softball Fields in the Minnetonka area. This year the event was held on Monday evening, February 3.

Rollie Neve *February 3. The Sounds of Renown* have participated in this gathering for five of the eight years of its existence. So we were not a surprise to the guests in attendance. Participating on that cold February evening was a solid double quartet of eight *souders* including **John Carlotto, Mark Ortenburger, Bob Ostergaard, Dan Williams, Dick Riemenschneider, Ken Wentworth, Jeff Sansgaard**, and yours truly. One might notice that we were shy a baritone, notably Gentleman **Jim Erickson**.

I'm not completely sure why Gentleman Jim Erickson, a foundational baritone, was missing, but some strange rumor rumbled 'round my head that he was working overtime trying to "brief up" his current rendition of the *Georgia Grind*. It is conceded that this endeavor would encounter countless cranium challenges that could cause other commitments to crash (pure speculation on my part as a reason for his absence).

In any event, the unified baritone section personified by the golden voice of John Carlotto carried the day, and no doubt was the reason the guest to whom we sang did not ask the question, "Where's Jim?" Let's face it, fame is fleeting. Since Jim also writes the *Quaffs* for the "Sounds," an added burden fell upon yours truly to fill his journalistically



Rollie Neve

jeweled shoes. My guess is he won't be absent again.

So on with the show. The evening was a delight for all of us; that is Barbershop up close and friendly. To one table we sang *Blue Moon*, shortened to fit the venue. We had toyed with doing our potentially show-stopping song for the Commodores March show, *For The Longest Time*, but conceded that it was not ready for prime-time and passed up that evening for its debut.

At those tables seating romantic couples we sang the Valentine songs, *Heart of My Heart* and *Let Me Call You Sweetheart*. To more



Valentine Judy Olson (ctr) flanked (left to rt.) by Dick Riemenschneider, Dan Slattery, Rod Vink, and John Carlotto.

diverse groups we sang "*Ten Feet Off the Ground*"; and to those of more adventurous minds, *Get Your Kicks on Route 66* filled the bill. Listeners who appeared to need some counseling on improving their relationships were treated to *Ain't Misbehavin'*—and when we came upon a table of beautiful women, there was no choice but to make them each an honorary *Mary Lou*.

The evening flew by and before we knew it, our time in the limelight had expired. We had a blast and the feedback showed we weren't alone. Bob's friend Ron wrote in an email, "We deeply appreciate your singing at this event. Your group is always the hit of the evening. Approximately \$12,000 was raised. The kids love all your support to make this happen. You are truly a bless-

ing to the community." What better endorsement can you get to confirm that it's great to be a Barbershopper? It's great to be a Commodore!

Rollie Neve for *Sounds of Renown*

Easy Listenin'

Easy Listenin' Quartet performed for about 200 employees of *Plus Relocation Services*. This company is based in Minneapolis and provides relocation services for major corporation employees when those businesses have staff to relocate. We performed at their annual meeting and holiday party, which is a part of a corporate-wide training and communication day. The event was held at the Golden Valley Country Club

on January 23. Most of those present were from the metro area but other company staff had flown in from offices in the USA as well as from Hong Kong and England.

We began the evening with a 30 minute set from a temporary stage. After a short break we performed while strolling through the party attendees. After the CEO gave a short presentation we wrapped up the evening with another short time strolling the crowd. We were very well received and had a chance to hand out many flyers for the annual Valentine's Day singing event.

Dick Riemenschneider for **Dan [Slattery], Rod, and John**

Four Seasons

What can the "Seasons" do in February when their bass has opted out of Minnesota for climate change in Florida and won't be back until March? Everyone knows that a Barbershop quartet can't perform as a trio. And what about singing Valentines? We can't quell Cupid's special day by not performing. It could subject ourselves to a cascade of

Go to Quaffs, Page 13, Column 1

Quaffs from Page 12

criticism created by our callous cancellation of singing chords catering to romance.

The answer is clear! We must find a fill-in bass; not just any bass, you understand. He must have a smooth, accurate bass voice and be good looking besides (to match the good looks of the rest of us, of course). The lead-bass match is key to a good Barbershop quartet, so who better to make the selection than our lead, **Dan Smith**? That's a challenge to be sure, but Dan came through approvingly by approaching **Mark Ortenburger** to join with us. Much to our delight, Mark agreed and our dilemma was resolved. A couple of rehearsals and an audition before the chorus sealed the deal, and Cupid's mission with the "Seasons" was on.

It was quite an Odyssey. Gathering at Dan's house, we mapped out route for the day. Alisha was our first stop at a gravel pit near Oakdale. We drove up to a guard shack and inside, all by herself, was Alisha directing traffic for the day. Before we could sing, a huge gravel truck pulled up and the driver came in. Alisha said, "Dump your load," but the driver, noting something unusual, said, "I can't miss this." So we sang our love songs to her, and the driver took part by taking the picture to preserve the moment. Without the driver I'm not sure how we could have had the picture taken.

Then it was off to Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, third-floor maternity ward, to sing to Robin. A friend of mine, Liz Sprenger, just happened to be there, surprised at our performance. She was there to be with her son and daughter-in-law who was about to give birth to her first grandchild. Down the hall we went and sang *Heart of My Heart* to the new mom and dad. Liz recorded it on her cell phone and later posted it on her Face Book page. Suddenly

we were on the internet. It was quite a treasured moment. Later in the day she did deliver a healthy, beautiful son.

It was on the second floor of a bank at Highway 7 and County Road 101 that we found our next Valentine, Kim, and sang to her. She was gracious and wonderfully moved by her Valentine gift.

Carlson Towers was next and Jennifer was the recipient. The receptionist at the front desk was excited about our appearance, and on our way out we sang to her. She was delighted and said we made her day.

Then it was off to Falcon Heights Middle School to sing for a teacher. Driving up we noticed a nearly empty parking lot—a bad sign. It turned out that conferences were conducted in the morning and everybody was dismissed at noon, including our teacher. Not to worry, the public relations lady for the school had us sing the two Valentine songs and recorded them for playing to the entire school the following Tuesday morning. All was not lost. The whole school viewed the performance through the magic of video technology.

It was then time for a lunch break and we stopped at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant in Burnsville. We decided to sing a Happy Birthday song to my valentine, Bonnie, and proceeded to do it over the iPhone. A gentleman at a nearby table complimented us profusely. He left before we lined up all the waitresses in the place and sang "Mary Lou" to them. The entire restaurant applauded their approval.

Prior Lake was our next destination to sing to Edie at her home where a grand piano sat in her living room. Edie is a music major and an accomplished pianist. Not knowing that, we sang anyway, and she enjoyed it very much, commenting on the beautiful Barbershop chords. It's fun to sing to music lovers.

We enjoyed a break in the action for

Letters

Dear Ed I. Tor,

Bill Ward has advised me re: improving my writing as follows:

1. Avoid alliteration, always
2. Prepositions are words not to end a sentence with.
3. Avoid clichés like the plague. They're old hat.
4. Comparisons are as bad as clichés.
5. Be more or less specific.
6. Writers should never generalize. Seven Be consistent.
8. Don't be redundant; don't use more words than necessary, it's highly superfluous.
9. Who needs rhetorical questions?
10. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.

Would it help if I follow this advice when writing my jokes for your super-doper, classy, extremely well-edited, highly-acclaimed publication? [Editor's Note: No!]

Jim Jorgensen, Fractured Baritone

a couple of hours because our next Valentine was at The Cheesecake Factory in Edina at 7:30 p.m. We found the place was jammed and people had to wait two hours for a table. On top of that, our Valentine recipient, Veng Xiong, was nowhere to be found. We made contact by phone and sang the songs by a railing overlooking Southdale Mall. It was well received.

Our Valentine adventure was completed by singing to Rich Ongna's brothers and their wives, and, of course, Rich's Valentine, Dianne, at Chicago Pizza in Eden Prairie—a festive way to end the day. So there you have it. Thanks to Mark for filling in and allowing us to have a memorable, enjoyable and rewarding Valentine's Day. What great fun this Barbershopping is!

Rollie Neve for Tom, Dan [Smith], and Rich

CHORD-INATOR

MINNEAPOLIS COMMODORES

Minneapolis Chapter of SPEBSQSA

**POSTAL RETURNS ONLY TO
THIS ADDRESS, PLEASE!**

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Minnetonka, MN 55305**

**MEETING EVERY TUES -7:00 p.m.
House of Prayer Lutheran Church
7625 Chicago Ave. S.
Richfield, MN 55423**

Chapter Quartets

EASY LISTENIN'	
Dan Slattery.....	651/747-6384
FOUR SEASONS	
Rollie Neve.....	.952/470-2129
HOT COMMODITY	
Dave Speidel.....	612-437-4325
MINNESOTA GO-4'S	
Harvey Weiss.....	763/439-4447
NOTESWORTHY	
Harvey Weiss.....	763/439-4447
SOUNDS of RENOWN.....	VLQ
Mark Ortenburger.....	.952/942-8382
TRIPLE Q.....	VLQ
Dave Speidel.....	.952/941-7153
TURNING POINT	
Judd Orff.....	651/439-3108



Neither shared with the Girl Scouts nor dumped by the Sweet Adelines.

Logo courtesy of Bob Clark

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

To:

LOOKING AHEAD

Chapter Level

- March 11, Annual show dress rehearsal, House of Prayer
 - March 20, Annual Show tech rehearsal, Benson Great Hall, Bethel University
 - March 22, *What a Wonderful World*, Bethel University
 - May 29, Division Contest, Mankato
 - June 14, Performing Arts Series Spring Lake Park
 - June 26, Coon Rapids Dam Summer Series, Coon Rapids
 - July 16, Summer Concert Series, St. Louis Park
 - August 12, Como Park

District Level

- May 2-4, **Spring Convention, Stevens Point, Wisconsin** Spring Convention,

International Level

- June 29-July 6, **International Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada,**

Barbershopper Of The Year
John Carlotto

Commodores and others * contributing to this issue.

Bob Dykstra
U.S. English

Bob Dykstra
Jim Erickson
Jim Jorgensen
Rollie Neve
Hardin Olson
Rich Ongna
Jim Richards
Dave Speidel
Paul Swanson
Dan Williams



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minneapoliscommodores.org
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issue

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