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MINNEAPOLIS  
COMMODORES

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

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O'LAKES DISTRICT

JULY 2014 - VOL. 70 - NO. 6

## Jes' me

### Bob Dykstra remembers the Hillman Hound.

I had the distinct privilege of sharing the stage with **Wes Hatlestad** for more than fifteen years in a quartet named appropriately... the *Salty Dogs*. But I knew Wes on a casual basis for thirty years before that. We first met in 1957 when the *Hut Four* quartet, with whom I sang lead, decided to get a bit more serious about Barbershop quartet competition and sought out Wes's mother, **Randine Hatlestad**, as our coach and arranger. That meant, of course, that we also received coaching from Wes's dad, **Jerry**, who at the time was a good friend and fellow Minneapolis Commodore, and the bass singer of the *Ewald Golden Guernsey Quartet*. He was also the chief mixologist for the *Hut Four*...but that's another story.

Wes was a teenager at the time and, predictably, we saw little of him. I'm sure that he was busy with school work and social contacts (probably was already wooing Pat) and doubtless thought we old folks in the quartet (we were all in our twenties) were pretty square...as he likely considered our music. So he largely disappeared when we showed up for rehearsals. Following graduation from Richfield High School and the University of Minnesota, moreover, despite his dad's and mom's urging, Wes chose not to get involved in Barbershopping at that time.

So I didn't really get to know Wes well until many years later when he, **John Hansen**, and **Marge Swaggert** formed

a vocal and instrumental trio named THEM. (I would guess that John Hansen came up with that name) At any rate, many of their gigs were Barbershop and Sweet Adeline shows so we Barbershoppers encountered them periodically and were immediately impressed with Wes's talent and his love for entertaining.



**Wesley B. Hatlestad**  
1941 - 2014

So in early 1984 when **Jim Richards** suggested to John Hansen and me that we put a quartet together for what was to be a Comedy Quartet Contest in Appleton, Wisconsin, as part of the spring Land O'Lakes District Barbershop contest we immediately decided to ask Wes to sing baritone and **Ron Thomley**, who had sung for years with the popular *Road Runners* quartet, to sing tenor. Both agreed to join us, we had a couple of rehearsals, chose the name SALTY DOGS, and headed for Appleton. We had a good time there, shared first place in the contest with all of the other entrants, and decided to stay together...a commitment that lasted more years than we planned on. The Dogs by and large created their own arrangements, quick-

ly agreed never to set foot on the contest stage, and proceeded to enjoy the time of our lives.

Without question, Wes Hatlestad was the heart and soul of the Salty Dogs. He illustrated his unique comedic talents in his role as the crusty pirate captain who viewed with *Go to Wes, Page 2, Column 1*

*Wes from Page 1*

considerable disfavor Thomley's fervent wish to *sing and dance*. He elevated *playing right field* to something to be appreciated...not viewed with disdain. He made all baritones everywhere proud with his enthusiastic rendition of a *baritone solo*. He was always on the alert for new material for the quartet and took a leadership role in expanding our repertoire. And...of course, we greatly appreciated his talent on the guitar...his axe as he often called it.

Wes immediately proved himself to be a consummate Quartet Singer...the first to learn his music, a self-less team player, a veritable joy to spend time with, outstanding in all aspects of entertaining, and demonstrating for all to see what an absolute ball he was having on stage. Wes and I used to discuss what it was about the Dogs that people seemed to enjoy. Just a week or so ago, he told me that he thought audiences appreciated the fact that we didn't take ourselves too seriously. I think he was right. Moreover, I think that was a big part of HIS charm and likeability as well. Everybody liked Wes.

Quartet trips were always an adventure. Wes loved to drive, was an accomplished driver, and loved to demonstrate to the three of us his prowess at backing his over-sized vehicle into a parking spot instead of taking the easy way in. He did most of the driving on quartet trips which was fine except for the fact that we quite often traveled further and in a different direction than we intended.

He had a curious habit of missing exits and turns as he blithely cruised along the highway chatting with the three of us or with other drivers on his CB radio. We came to call this behavior the *Bena syndrome* because of our surprise arrival one time in the little town of Bena, Minnesota, considerably east of Bemidji, the intended destination. Another major example was the time we pulled into Milwaukee rather than Chicago because he made a wrong turn in Madison. I

guess not even Wes was perfect!

Wes's performing with the Salty Dogs also resulted in his joining the *Minneapolis Commodores* and the *Barbershop Harmony Society*. Thus it was that his dad, Jerry, before his death in 1986, experienced the thrill of seeing his son enjoying his beloved Barbershop hobby and singing in an entertaining quartet as well. And, as anybody who knew him would expect, Wes stepped right in and got involved in the affairs of the chapter.

He was a loyal chorus member, he accompanied the chorus on his guitar, he used his computer skills to produce printed programs for our annual shows and for our fiftieth-anniversary celebration as well as other chapter materials, he wrote the client mailing list program and maintained it for many years, he played leading roles in our shows, he had a ball playing his trombone before shows and during intermission, and he spread his brand of sunshine wherever he went and whatever he was called upon to do.

Wes was simply the most upbeat person I have ever been around. And the Minneapolis Commodores demonstrated their appreciation for these myriad contributions in 2000 by naming Wes their Barbershopper of the Year.

His enthusiasm for and commitment to Barbershopping also led to his election to an exclusive group within the Barbershop Society called the *Sage Lake Roundup* where he early on was asked to take over the job of Chief Webmaster for the organization. His quick acceptance of that responsibility again demonstrated his belief in the Biblical admonition, "It is better to give than to receive."

He was also thorough and creative. When the Salty Dogs took their Caribbean Cruise in 1986 Wes documented the trip by putting together a slide show complete with appropriate music. When the Dogs were honored in 1999 with a well-attended retirement party organized

by a committee of friends under the leadership of **Bob** and **Jean Spong**, Wes produced a wonderful DVD of the event. He also insisted that the Dogs record their repertoire before calling it quits, something I personally have appreciated more and more as time goes by. It's comforting in a way to realize that Wes's technological expertise will allow us to continue to enjoy his talent and personality for many years to come.

We will all miss Wes greatly. I'll miss his loyal friendship; his sentimentality (he was a real "softie" at heart); his asking me to review and comment on projects he was working on...like a player's guide to shooting craps, just to name one example. I'll miss the hearty laugh; his enthusiastic greeting..."**How you doing, my man?**"; his representing the human version of perpetual motion; his grumbling about having to drive John, Ron, and me to ADC dinners at the fall Barbershop Convention even though he couldn't attend *because he wasn't a champion*; the parade of stories he sent my way via email.

It is ironic that I received an e-mail from Wes on Tuesday with a time designation of 1:31 p.m. sharing with me an Ole and Lena story. I almost always responded to such e-mails telling him whether or not the story was new to me. If he hit me with one that I acknowledged not having heard before his response was immediate..."Dyke, you just made my day." For some reason on Tuesday I didn't respond immediately, probably thinking I would do it the next day. After all the Ole and Lena story he shared was an old familiar one to me. Little did I realize that that particular e-mail would be the last one I would ever receive from him.

So farewell old friend...you left your imprint on this earth and you will be greatly missed by all of us. Rest in peace...it's been a **real kick** knowing you.



**Minneapolis, Minn. Chapter  
Land O'Lakes District, BHS**  
Meetings every Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.  
**House of Prayer Lutheran Church**  
10725 Chicago Avenue South  
Richfield, MN 55423

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**WELCOME ABOARD**

**Andy Richards** and his wife, Karen, live in New Brighton. A native of Milwaukee, he moved with his family to Minnesota in 1958, is a graduate of Mounds View High School and has a BA from the University of Minnesota. Andy is an account manager for Comcast Spotlight.



Andy recently has been a regular attendee of our annual Commodore shows. At age 9 he even participated as one of the town's children in our 1966 show, *Tunes In Toonerville*,

His familiarity with contemporary popular music as a guitarist and vocalist in a 60's era rock band coupled with his appreciation of the superb Barbershop treatment of the Beatles music as sung by *Storm Front* quartet did much to kindle his interest in Barbershop. Andy is singing Lead.



**Matt Richards**, son of Andy (above) and grandson of Jim and Ebie Richards lives in Blaine with his wife, **Allison**. He recently completed his graduate studies in computer software engineering and is working in that field for Infinite Campus.

He plays guitar but his specialty is snare drum. He is the head drummer of the Minnesota Vikings Skol drum line. Matt is currently singing baritone. His hobbies are that of brewing specialty varieties of beers and enjoying their dog, Gris.

Having three generations of Richards together in the same chapter is a treat for each of them. Who knows what the future may bring?

**BOARD HIGHLIGHTS**

*Chapter members are always welcome to attend the Board meetings.*

**From the meeting of June 19**

*By Bill Warp, Secretary*

- Credit cards may now be used for ticket sales, etc. by our patrons; except when ordering by telephone. .
- Stipend approved for Diana Pinard for managing ticket sales.



**Bill Warp**

- **Andy Richards** approved for membership.
- **Denny Maas** encourages Commodores to donate at the *KARE 11 Blood Drive*
- **Paul Swanson** is working to update the chapter website.
- A search has begun to replace the truck with a suitable trailer.
- An ass't Sergeant-at-Arms is needed to work with **Loren Berthilson**.
- **Dan Smith** also is in need of an assistant to ease his chapter burdens.

*Happy Anniversary*

- 07/13 Bill & Marsha Shaw
- 07/20 Brooks & Sandy Bergersen
- 07/20 Dave & Jamye Casperson
- 07/22 Jim & Mary Erickson
- 07/23 Tom & Bonnie Dahlen
- 07/29 Bill & Connie Ashley
- 08/05 Larry & Kathy Nelson
- 08/05 Dan & Carol Smith
- 08/06 Jim & Romana Jorgensen
- 08/08 Fred & Ardis Von Fischer (60)



**June Re-enlistments**

- **Gordy Aumann** ..... 11 yrs.
- **Dick Hartmann** ..... 13 yrs.
- **Rod Hall** ..... 14 yrs.
- **Leo Odden** ..... 24 yrs.
- **Russ Born** ..... 40 yrs.

# June Guests

**Chuck Guthrie** was a long-time member and director of the Rochester Chapter and was the bari in the 1967 LOL District champion quartet, the *Gemini Crickets*. Chuck has an unlimited Barbershop repertoire.



**Fritz Herring** is contemplating returning to our risers after a long hiatus from the bass section. His low bottom has been missed and hence will be most welcome when he returns to grace our risers.



**Dean Lambert** is a practiced veteran of Bloomington's now-defunct Good Time Chorus who can't stop singing and has decided to continue, as a bari, with the Commodores. Welcome Dean.



**Harlan Mellem** is another refugee from Bloomington, this time from the tenor section. His somewhat diminutive stature belies the magnitude of his fine voice...even in the Bass Clef. Welcome, Harlan.



**Alan Matchinsky** is a well-travelled Barbershopper, a baritone and oft-time director most recently with the Bloomington Chapter. He will be an asset to our oft-maligned bari section. (His Uncle Bob and Cousin Bob Jr. were



Commodores in the nearer-distant past.)

# Doc's Bag



By Dr. Hardin Olson, Editor

Sad was the day when the members of the Bloomington Good Times Chorus recently announced the surrendering of their charter and the dissolution of their chapter. For years those men have epitomized the primordial spirit of the early Barbershop Society, that of good friends gathering to harmonize to the old songs.



Hardin Olson

When it comes to examples of that spirit, there are none to compare with Bloomington's signature quartet, *Random Sample*. This group with tenor, **Harlan Mellem**; lead, **Jerry Larson**; bari, **Darrell Egertson**; and bass, **Jim Hedding**, was virtually always available to perform at all varieties of events—with happy, smiling faces at the lighter venues and with heartfelt solemnity at those of a more serious nature.

At the advent of the Barbershop Harmony Open in August 2009, *Random Sample* was there bright and early helping to setup and then to man a closest-to-the-pin hole. At lunch following the tournament they



Harlan and Jerry at the 2009 BHS Open.



*Random Sample* at the 2013 BHS Open (left to rt.): Harlan, Jerry, Jim, and Darrell.

sang for the crowd. Since then they have been a part of all five Opens and will continue as such at the 6th Annual BHS open on August 11,

The quartet plans to continue together although some Bloomington members may not join other chapters.

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By practically all accounts the 2014 BHS International Convention and Contests were the best in many years, perhaps of all time.

The chorus contest, although viewed on my 26-inch computer monitor, was truly amazing. Upon seeing and hearing the 158-man *Vocal Majority* perform a magnificent set there was little doubt in my mind who would win.

However, then came the *Masters of Harmony* and LOL's own *Great Northern Union*, neither one willing or wanting to be denied.

GNU in particular had come off of a relatively lack-luster contest-package performance at their *On to Fame* show the previous Sunday. Although singing in the penultimate chorus position they rose to the occasion and finished a brilliant third only 18 points out of second place behind the *Masters* and 67 points (2.3%) behind the first-place VM. (What is it that **Doug Miller** always says...one point per song per judge?...15 judges, 30 points...you do the math.)

GNU will be taking a year off and will prepare to qualify for the Nashville competition in 2016.

# Chord Candy #123

by Dr. Jim Richards, Der Tagmeister



Jim Richards

Those of us who have been Barbershopping for any significant period of time have discovered that this passion we share is a lot more than just the thrill of ringing chords. In the process of attaining the skills to enjoy the benefits of making harmony we form lasting friendships that enrich our lives. Should circumstances separate us it only takes a song to recreate the magic. This month's Chord Candy by an anonymous composer has a lyric that speaks to these times. It features a melody that is easy to sing and that fosters satisfying supporting harmony. Sing this one with three of your friends and reaffirm your conviction that "It's great to be a Barbershopper!" Enjoy!

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the first three measures. The lyrics are: "Is there some-time we can get to-gether and sing an old-time". The second system shows measures 4 through 6. The lyrics are: "an old time song? an old time song? an old time song?". The piano accompaniment features a steady harmonic accompaniment with some melodic lines in the right hand.

## "Thanks for the memories!"

By Jeremy Reynolds, Peripatetic Tenor

It's great to get back home after my snowjourn in Minnesnowta. I arrived there on February 6 and the temperature was minus 10 degrees and it was snowing and the wind was blowing. On May 14, it was only 42 degrees. Then, Summer appeared the next day. No Spring! My work days were fun and I felt good that at the age of 74, I hadn't lost my abilities.



Jeremy Reynolds

I had the option of singing with either *The Great Northern Union* or the *Minneapolis Commodores*. I had pre-

viously been a member of the GNU but I had already decided not to go to International this year and I knew that that would be their focus, so I sang with the Commodores. Incidentally, it is the twelfth BHS chapter in my Barbershop career. I've also belonged to two in England and one in South Africa. As a "technogypsy", I've had the opportunity of living in many places. My habit is to join the local chapter and get my weekly harmony fix.

The Commodores welcomed me with open arms there. I had visited that chapter many times when I was in Minnesota 10 or 11 years previously, so I knew several of them already. They asked me if I was going to sing with them in their show and competition. Of course, I said yes. They have **Paul Wigley** as their prin-

cipal director along with three assistant directors. Paul is not only a judge, but the Music Category Specialist. Even though they seldom get to go to International (mostly because both the GNU and Greendale are in the same district), they sing at a very high level garnering scores around the low eighties. I felt privileged to be welcomed there.

Since I was all alone in Minneapolis, I had lots of time to work on their repertoire and six weeks later, I sang on their show. The hardest part, of course, was learning the moves. You can't really study them at home. And when it was time, I knew enough of them so as not to embarrass myself. Just one week later, I sang with them in their division competition which they won.

Go to **Thanks**, Page 6 Column 1

## An Unselfish Love of Harmony

By David Speidel, Ass't Director



Dave Speidel

On May 30, Steve Zorn and I made a trip to Okemos, Michigan, to attend the *Great Lakes Harmony Brigade*. Normally I would tell you how great the Brigade experience was, the meeting of old friends, the challenge of learning all that music and so on. But the story you are about to read really isn't about the Harmony Brigade. It's about one person's unselfish mission to enrich and influence the lives of others at a time when others might be consumed by self pity or depression.

To be honest, I didn't know the story about Paul Teska when I went to the Okemos. I guess I missed it somewhere along the way. Steve had briefly mentioned Paul's health issue

### Thanks from Page 5

One thing I can say for our hobby is that you feel welcome wherever you go. I look on BHS as having thirty thousand friends, most of whom I haven't yet met. I encourage each and every one of you to visit the local chapter whenever you go travelling. If you're a snowbird, join a chapter at your other home. Find the nearest chapter by going to the BHS website at:

[ebiz.barbershop.org/ebusiness/](http://ebiz.barbershop.org/ebusiness/).

This takes you to a site where you can look up individual members, quartets, or chapters.

*Editor's Note: Jeremy and I graduated from Washington-Lee High School in Arlington, Virginia, I in 1951, he in 1957. His sister was in my class but was one of the many of the other 538 that I never met. Still...a rather small world.*

to me but I knew little of the significant details. The full picture came into view towards the end of the Brigade weekend when they announced an award given out at each and every Brigade, the recipient selected by vote by all of those in attendance for *The Guy You Came to Sing With* award.

This is quite an honor, because it usually means that the recipient of the award was really prepared with the music and is most likely a good singer willing to share his talents with all! On this particular occasion it was a unanimous vote for Paul Teska. When Paul came up to get his

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award, the story that everyone else except me seemed to know, unfolded. I was then able to fully understand the magnitude of what had transpired. You see, Paul had been informed in September of 2013 that he had esophageal cancer with the poorest prognosis and an estimated maximum of two years to live.

Upon receiving the award, Paul didn't talk about his own condition. Instead he related how he wanted to do something meaningful, how important Barbershop was to him, and how it has helped him through these difficult times, while regretting that he had not known about Barbershop

## Happy Birthday

- 07/10 Brooks Bergersen
- 07/10 James Souhan
- 07/12 John Hansen (85)
- 07/14 Beverly Koch
- 07/14 Paul Wigley (60)
- 07/15 Harvey Weiss
- 07/16 Dianne Ongna
- 07/17 Lou DeMars
- 07/17 Jim Lee (75)
- 07/19 Bill Ashley (75)
- 07/27 Ken Glover (75)
- 07/27 Larry Nelson
- 07/28 Marsha Shaw
- 07/30 Brenda Duncan
- 07/30 Barbara Reynolds
- 08/01 Karen True
- 08/07 Debbie Mason
- 08/07 Connie Miller
- 08/09 Jean Warp



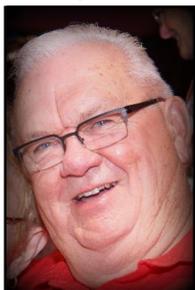
a gazillion years ago, rather than just during his short seven years in the Society.

Paul then went on to describe the event he has planned that he thought would make a difference to young singers, a benefit concert in his home town of Pinckney, Michigan, for our Society's *Harmony Foundation*—the specific objective being to raise \$10,000 to underwrite the expenses of an entire young-men's chorus enabling them to compete in the 2015 Youth Chorus Festival at the Midwinter Convention in New Orleans next January. At the final tally Paul's friends and neighbors had contributed over \$11,000 for Harmony Foundation, surpassing his goal and thus fulfilling his dream. (A great video of Paul's story can be seen on the Society website at [barbershop.org/news-a-events-main/970.html](http://barbershop.org/news-a-events-main/970.html).)

So many times all of us may be consumed by our own selfish needs and wants. Reminders like the Teska story bring us down to earth. I hope and pray that I can sing with Paul again. He is a fantastic human being and sets a noble example for all to emulate

## My First 50 Years

By Gary "Jake" Jacobson



Gary Jacobson

This year marks for me 50 years of the *Barbershop Experience*. (That's a lot of BS!) When I think back on those years it seems like yesterday but let me begin at the beginning.

I have always been involved with music. My whole family sang. As a pre-teenager I sang solos and was in several vocal ensembles. In high school my music teacher was **Flora Fallon**, a very strict and talented teacher, instructing us about time signatures, about interpreting key signatures, and how to read music. We even sang harmony in her classes. Ms. Fallon continued as my vocal teacher all through high school where I sang in several small groups and in a quartet called *The Four Cards*. Singing was not my only musical interest so when **Mr. Cermak**, the band teacher, learned that I couldn't afford to buy my own instrument, he suggested I play a baritone horn, one of the instruments provided by the school district.

In 1956 after finishing basic training in the Marine Corps and my superiors learning that I could toot a horn, I was assigned to the Department of Pacific Marine Corps Band. During the next two years we performed all over the western United States, I, playing the baritone and singing in a quartet called *The Dress Blues*.

My next stop was college in Yankton, South Dakota, where I met the love of my life, **Marilyn Hall**, a comely coed from Northern California. She and I loved to sing together performing in choir and school plays.

Following graduation I got a job as a child-welfare worker in Mandan, North Dakota, and after two years of experience applied for graduate school in social work. When I received approval to attend University

of California-Berkley, we jumped at the chance to be in California near Marilyn's family for two years. Since I had been given a stipend by North Dakota I had a commitment to return to the state for at least two years to fulfill my obligation. I was assigned to Grand Forks County Social Services as a Child Welfare Supervisor. It was in 1965 that my Barbershop journey began.

One afternoon the county sheriff came into my office and told me he was going to pick me up at 7:00 p.m. for a very important engagement, a chapter meeting of the Valley Chordsmen Chorus. Three weeks later and having memorized 13 songs, I was on my first Barbershop show and singing in my first official Society foursome called the

**BHS OPEN**

August 11, 2014

**Elk River Golf Club**

Tee time 12:00 noon

Register at

[bhsopen.com](http://bhsopen.com)

Benefits

**Harmony Foundation**

*Sodbuster Quartet*. In 1969 I was named the Chorus Director and while in Grand Forks performed in three quartets, the other two being *Harmonious Agreement*, and *Music Gallery*. When a Sweet Adelines Chapter was chartered in East Grand Forks I became its first director and then in 1969 was named Associate Professor in the Social Work Department at the University of North Dakota remaining there until 1978 when we moved to Fargo where I taught Social Work at Moorhead State University.

After moving to Fargo in 1974 I joined the Fargo-Moorhead Chapter of the Society as Musical Director during which time I sang in three quartets; *Lectric Chord Company*,

*Red Carpet Alliance*, and finally, *The People's Choice*, the 1992 LOL District quartet champions. *With 'Lectric Chords* and *People's Choice* I sang in three International competitions. Later, in a quartet called *Naptime* we sang in two Senior International contests. In different quartets, of course, I have sung all four parts in district competition and was a "3rd-place quartet bass" in the *Been There Done That* foursome.

On the Barbershop trail I had served as a Chapter President, a Music Vice President, a Red Carpet Division Vice President and on the side directed both the men's and women's Barbershop choruses at different times in Fargo. For diversion Marilyn and I built 65 or more show sets over the years. Induction into the LOL District Hall of Fame followed in 1992.

In 2004 the Jacobsons moved to the Twin Cities [of Minnesota] where a well-known a cappella couples group called *Friends* invited us to join. The ladies were all Sweet Adelines and the gentlemen were members of the Barbershop Harmony Society. *Great Northern Union* was my first Society stop in the Cities but the most-welcome addition to the Minneapolis Chapter of incoming-director, **Paul Wigley**, convinced me to establish dual membership with the Commodores where all of my Barbershop energies have since been focused.

As a Commodore I have sung in two International Senior Contests in *AARPS-a-Chord* with the late **Mark Conlon**, **Bob Griffith**, **Lance Johnson** and **Dick Plaisted** before he passed on—and have had the pleasure of being one of Paul's Assistant Directors, Annual-show Chairman twice, and with Marilyn have acted as set designers for several shows.

So, that is a rundown of my 50 years as a Barbershopper. I must say it has been a real trip and Marilyn and I will always cherish our memories and the special love of our Barbershop friends. Thanks for *all* of those memories.

Jake

# Georgia Grind

By Jim Erickson, Bifurcated Baritone

Bifurcated Baritone? Meaning? Erickson's essential definition of "bifurcated" is to split or fork into two parts. Wait! If bifurcated means fork in two, what does *furcated* mean? Fork into one part? Does that make any sense at all? Whatever, I think right now I would rather be furcated. Being bifurcated would mean that I would have to continue to make the BIG REVEAL about the Georgia Grind. That while feeling that I was being stripped bare against every last pulse beat of my baritone body in having to make that treasured revelation. (note the clever alliteration of "b's.") In other words, some want the reveal. I am reluctant to do the reveal. See the *dilemnical* bifurcation?

But here's a stab at continuing the reveal. Maybe if I stick my big toe into the literary lake, eventually I will be aswim in confessional words. That would be a seeming perfect solution. And speaking of perfection, there are so few of us who ever come close. But there are glimpses of perfection from time to time from even the most unlikely individuals. Take, for instance, what happened at a recent **Sounds of Renown VLQ** rehearsal.

There, one individual sang a song and for his part, exercised his own unique brand of tuning and showed that everyone else was singing to a different pitch. In an attempt to correct the underperformance, this individual then, in his excessive exuberance, overshot the pitch and once again contrasted his unique pitch to the pitch of the rest of the VLQ. In trying to be compassionate to Rollie's adventurous pitch seeking (Whoops, the cat is out of the bag about the identity of the individual – Sorry Rollie) one of the other members said that Rollie's singing was "perfect!"



Jim Erickson

Well, what he really said was that "On average, Rollie was perfect." You know, I guess we are all perfect if you average out our long-comings and shortcomings. Just keep that in your back pocket if your singing is ever "constructively criticized" and you need a critique-stopping retort.

Sorry for the digression, but let's get back to the Georgia Grind Reveal. It amazes me, but after the last article on my revelation to be, I was flooded with questions of every kind. Maybe not a Tsunami, but enough to be of concern. You see, with my making a *revelation* that everyone might find not to his/her (hate that) liking, the whole project



Reading the **Georgia Grind**

took on a biblical perspective. And then with the recent flooding in Minnesota overwhelming streets, streams, basements, lakes and highways to biblical proportions, I am becoming reluctant to speak on any subject, even the Grind. Maybe I am in the running to become a modern day **Noah**. Have you seen the signs pointing to another ark, too?

First, were the foreboding wet weather predictions this spring. Then the blockbuster movie, *Noah*, was announced, only to be followed by drenching rain after drenching rain. Loons were abandoning their nests and even the ducks were saying, "Hey, we know the trite phrase about water off a duck's back, but this rain crap is really starting to soak in. And we will have reached our wits end if we hear one more jokester remarking about the weather being 'just ducky.'" Based on

these foretellings, I hope you can see my growing trepidational outlook.

With "trepidation" in the back of my mind, I recently found myself filling out an application for a job. No, I'm not going to start my career all over again. It was just to get the Type A's off my back about doing at least some small industrious thing in my retirement. The Human Resources ace wondered in what kind of job I might have an interest. "Doesn't make any difference," said I. "It's all just a ruse anyway." Not wanting to be complicit in my endeavor, ace backed away and handed me off to a bored-looking secretary. (Is that term still non-offensive?) She handed me what has to be one of the last paper employment application forms I may ever see, especially when it has the four carbon copies attached. Future applications will probably be completely by app on a smartphone. Got to get me one of those some day.

Anyway, I was talking about the application form. Name, address, side of the bed you like to sleep on, etc. But, I was unsure about one blank. It essentially said that "In case of emergency, contact: \_\_\_\_\_." Doc Hardin has always been a source of critical information. So I used my one call to find out what he suggested. After a long, pondering thought, he said that he always puts "Doctor" in that kind of blank. Sounded good to me! Earned me some worried looks from the otherwise bored secretary, but I must have looked harmless enough because rather than Security, she only called someone from the janitorial staff to escort me from the building.

(Get back on the clock, Erickson!) OK, I promised to reveal more about the Georgia Grind. And I keep my promises. I learned something about that several days ago when I met with **James Souhan**, Commodores warmup coach and assistant director supreme, for a much-needed voice lesson. Oh yeah, I learned some singing techniques, but we got to talking about rules for some reason. (He may

Go to **Grind**, Page 9, Column 3

## Quartet Quaffs

### Four Seasons

Often times the *Four Seasons* arrive at a performance site that presents problems with performer positioning, audience arrangement, and the sound system. Such was the case facing us at the Walker Methodist Hazel Ridge Home. The room layout left us in an awkward corner leaving little room for quartet, speakers and microphone. Fast adjustments including relocating a piano and creative speaker-spotting set the stage and it was on with the show. All of these antics were taken in stride by the alert and lively 45 seniors that were gathered for harmony and humor.

With a wet June, what better song to start off with than *Wait Till the Sun Shines Nellie*? You'll have to take my word for it, and also trust my memory, that the sun began to shine during and after that opener. You doubt that? Just use your imagination and ponder the power of properly-produced-and-placed ringing Barbershop chords. The capacity of ringing Barbershop 7th chords to vaporize the cloud cover and let the sun shine through cannot be underestimated. Of course, a Baritonia-brainwashed baritone would have no problem with this concept; but I digress.

The performance went well, and this group of seniors distinguished themselves with their youthful alertness. One gentleman whose 97th birthday was one day away looked like he was hardly 75. He did, however, have trouble with the pronouns in *Let Me Call You Sweetheart* when directed to omit them—he sang every one of them. But it's hard to argue with an elder that old.

They were a super audience. Not only did they like the harmony, they laughed at all the jokes. That's always a plus in my book. The alert-

ness of the audience was demonstrated with the following joke: A cop pulled over an elderly gentleman at 2AM. "And where would you be going at this time of night?" asked the cop. "I'm on my way to a lecture on alcohol abuse and its effect on the human body plus smoking and staying out late," he replied. "Really," said the cop, "and who would be giving a lecture like that at this time of night?" Before I could deliver the punch line a lady to my right blurted out the answer, "That would be my wife." It was a delight to compliment her on her quick mind and accurate answer. It was a fun-filled afternoon for all.

**Warren Wayne Larson** was singing Barbershop before the BHS was founded. In the 1930's his quartet won a WCCO talent contest and earned the prize of singing every day for one week on WCCO Radio. [Editor's Note: Sometime later in the 50s Warren sang in **Joel Kleschold's** first Barbershop quartet.] Although he didn't become a member of the Commodores, Barbershopping was a big part of his life. He is singing to a new audience now, as his earthly voice has been silenced. The *Four Seasons* were honored to sing at his funeral on Wednesday, June 25, at Messiah United Methodist Church in Plymouth. In memory of his love of Barbershop harmony we sang *Honey-Little Eyes/Let Me Call You Sweetheart* medley, *Precious Lord*, and *Step Into the Water*. The Barbershop Society is family, and one of the special benefits it offers is the opportunity to be a part of a member's funeral service. We were pleased to be a part of remembering Warren W. Larson.

One advantage of gaining senior status is that you don't have to worry about telling secrets to your contemporaries, because they won't remember them either. This fact may require rethinking, however, because in the last installment of the Georgia Grind, by our beloved baritone Jim Erickson, it was reported that your writer, me, knew the Texas Tommy Wiggle. Since Jim is a baritone, it

reinforced my belief that he wouldn't remember this secret, obviously an erroneous belief. I'll have to "research" this event more intensively before I can comment on it, especially the "flapper" reference.

### Grind from Page 8

have as much problem staying on-track as I do. Hope not.) Regardless, and I quote him, "Rules are made to be broken!"

That perplexed me a bit. I mean if rules are made to be broken, why not just start with broken rules and save the hassle and effort of intentionally breaking them. Too much for my little mind to handle. But I did try to think this through some and realized that if rules are made to be broken, what about promises? "Promises are meant to be kept" is what I have had pounded into my brain from a very youthful age. Is this another one of those *dilemnical* bifurcations like the one mentioned earlier?

Let me see. Using reverse, transcendent bifurcation, maybe rules should be kept and promises be made to be broken. I mean look at marriage vows. "Til death do us part." That little promise is being broken at hypersonic speed. You might want to look into buying stock in a coffin/cremation-oriented company, as the future looks bright if you are one of those not having taken on such an obligation of death. And what does this have to do with the Big Reveal. Well, I made a promise to make the reveal (under duress as I'm sure you are aware). Here's another promise from me. I promise to keep you in suspense as to whether, under the Souhan Rule of Indeterminate Breakage, I am keeping or breaking the Grind promise.

Whatever the case, I have more than used up my word allotment for this month and I hear Doc's editorial weeping in the background, so MAKE THAT BARBERSHOP BUCKET LIST, keep on recruiting, and hold fast to that which is good!



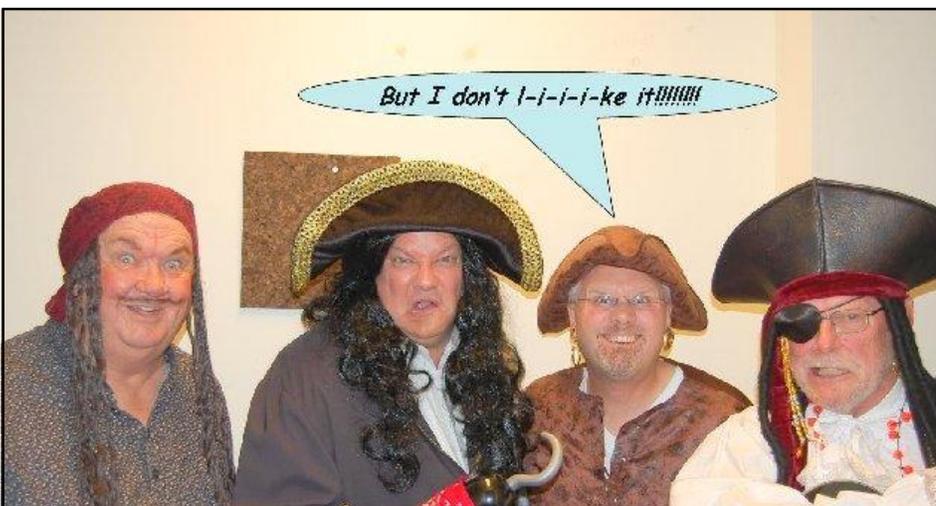
Rollie Neve

# An Ode to Wes

By Brent Gerber, *Treasured Friend*

I learned this morning that my dear friend, **Wes Hatlestad**, passed away and I am just heart-broken. Truth is, the world is a lesser place today because of this loss.

District Barbershop conventions won't be as good. How can we replace his enthusiastic support for the participants with that firm hand shake and genuine, excited smile? An after-glow without Wesley's loud laugh and tasteful guitar licks? Not as good.



The *Pillage People*, his cut-throat crew: (from left to rt.) Grinnin' Goombah Gary Jacobson, Black Brent Gerber, Twinkle Toes Jeff Irwin, and the Captain, One-Eye Wes Hatlestad. *Gerber Photo*

And who will leave the traditional "dirty limerick" on my telephone in the hotel room at the contest site? When I checked in I could always count on that light blinking on the phone. What fun will it be to go to the ADC banquet (or that "three-letter dinner" as Wes called it.), when we can't rub it in to Wes that he can't join us?

Performances won't be the same and surely rehearsals will be less fun. In the last couple of years I got the opportunity to collaborate with Wes on a couple of projects and as we rehearsed, I discovered that the true joy of any performance is truly in the preparation. Perhaps that was the "creative juice" that always accompanied rehearsals—at least 80-proof worth of creativity for sure, Wes wanted it to be right and took pride

in his performance but the pursuit of that quality had to be fun and no one could do that like Wesley.

My e-mail box will be relatively empty now. I could always count on Wes for some good humor (and some questionable stuff, too) and who could forget his ever-changing tag lines at the bottom of those e-mail forwards. They were always original, always humorous and usually pretty accurate, too. Who will spread that good humor now?

And what of Wesley's family? How will they go on without this man whose love, support and faith were

so strong? I will never, ever, forget the look of sheer joy I witnessed on his face when he introduced me to "little Wesley", his grandson and pride and joy (like that of all of his family). He truly beamed.

Wes cared about everyone he met. He knew that any fun event or gathering was better with a little music and he was more than willing to share. He was an enthusiastic audience member and an even more enthusiastic performer. He understood more than just about anybody I have known, the importance of, and best way to entertain an audience. And they always wanted more! I want more! We all want more! And I miss him terribly because he truly leaves the world a lesser place.

One last story. About a year ago, I invited Wes to join me in a duo gig

to perform for my Rotary club in Detroit Lakes as I ended my year as president. As referred to above, the rehearsals were just a blast and I enjoyed his talent and wit. I marveled at his ability to select the right mix of tunes from humorous to genuinely touching. And he just enjoyed it so much. The mutual respect we had for one another is just such a comfort today. I am so glad that I had the opportunity to share this time with Wesley.

Anyway, one of the songs that Wesley insisted on my singing to close the show was a Gaither Tune, entitled *Old Friends*. To assist me in learning it, he sent me the attached track. Listening to it today made me smile and remember how much he loved me and all of his "old friends". I hope this brings a smile to your face as you think about our dear "old friend" Wesley and that you remember how much he loved all of you, too.

## Brent

*Editor's Note: Brent Gerber is a long-time Barbershopper from the Fargo area who has sung in two LOL District-champion quartets, in 1992 (with Gary Jacobson) in Peoples Choice and in 1998 with Breakpoint.*

*Brent has so eloquently expressed his highest regard for our beloved friend, Wes. Undoubtedly Wes's passing has left an aching void in the hearts of all who knew and loved him. Friends like Wes are rare indeed.*

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## Quaffs from Page 9

In the meantime I'll have to invigorate my memory to recall what other secrets I told him. Stay tuned. Maybe this will turn out to be another reason why you should look forward with great anticipation to the next issue of the CHORD-INATOR.

**Rollie for Dan, Rich, and Tom**

## LOOKING BACK

This excerpt is from the May 1981 *Chord-Inator* [Guest Editor, *Hardin Olson*], commemorating **Bob Spong's Silver Anniversary with the Minneapolis Commodores.**

### *The Eyes Have It*

It has been for **Bob Spong** a quarter century seasoned with satisfaction, disappointment, joy, pathos, supreme fulfillment and yes, sorrow.

One doesn't have to know Bob Spong very long to recognize his gregarious self-confidence arising from the inner satisfaction at being an accomplished musician and a master Barbershopper. The sparkle of his eyes whether on the contest stage at Indianapolis or in the wee-small hours woodshedding at the Atlanta Hyatt-Regency, betrays his boundless affection for our special form of musical expression.

Disappointment is an inseparable part of this hobby of ours since there can only be one first-place winner at a time. No one takes not winning any harder than Bob Spong, but his ability to conceal these feelings with expressions of genuine good wishes and shining-eyed admiration for the other competitors is a trait to be emulated by all of us.

Who could miss the aura of pure joy around Bob and Jean after that day in 1971 when **Jeff, Karen, and Jenny** joined the Spong family? A long-missing link was added to the Spong "life-chain" and again the Spong eyes were glowing.

In 1972 after 17 years together, the *Hut Four* decided to make their final encore. Others may equal the "Huts" fondness for singing with one and other but none surpass them. If you are extremely fortunate some time you may hear **Bob, Bob Dykstra, John Hansen, Dan Howard** (or **Don Sundt**) off in a corner somewhere singing *Egyptian Ella* or *The Old German Band*. Look in their eyes and see that glimmer of

pathos. You see, times must change and things can never quite remain the same.

What is the supreme fulfillment that a Barbershopper can attain? For openers you might say, "Singing in an International Champion Barbershop Quartet." No one in his right mind will dispute that statement...Most [International] champion quartets adhere to that idea. Some have even retired after donning the coveted gold medals, but not the *Happiness Emporium*. Like a vintage wine they get better as time passes. Unquestionably the challenge is still there, betrayed by four pairs of twinkling eyes.

And then there have been the sad times. Remember that beautiful evening in Plymouth when the Commodores shared billing with *Mitch Mil-*


  
**Let's put the**  
**capital**  
**"B"**  
**in Barbershop**

*ler and His Orchestra*. The *Happiness Emporium* was our featured quartet but Bob Spong's mother had passed away a few hours before. Bob and the "Happiness" performed superbly that evening and every Commodore eye was shining because we knew that Bob's mother would have been the first to insist that, "The show must go on!"

Our fondest regard goes out to you, Bob, and may we all enjoy with you and yours your next 25 years as a Minneapolis Commodore.

[Correction. So it is now...**"58 years as a Minneapolis Commodore."**]

*Editor's Note: Our Sunshine Chairman, Rich Ongna, has been away in Canada on a fishing trip with his son and was unable to craft a Sunshine report this month.*

So be aware that **Bob** was recently

## LETTERS

Hi, Hardin.

I have a couple of items...

FIRST...I continue to be amazed and delighted at the wonderful job you do on the Chord-Inator! It is really GREAT!

NEXT...I noticed that one of your readers, who was out of town or something, sent you some money for their copy of the Chord-Inator...I thought this was a great idea...

Enclosed is my check for \$20 for postage for the Chord-Inator ...thanks for your great works.

Yours Truly,

Marv Spears

*Editor's Note: Marv was an active Commodore in the distant past; a fine tenor, annual show chairman in 1972 (Alice in Wonderland), chapter president in 1978, and BOTY in 1980. He has a keen sense of humor but tends to be over-loquacious at times (Blah, blah, blah!)*

*Thanks, Marv for your unsolicited largess but why aren't you visiting us on Tuesday evenings?*

*admitted to Unity Hospital for a severe cellulitis of his foot that required a course of intravenous antibiotic therapy and incision and drainage of an accompanying abscess. He has been home now for a week or so but must wear a protective boot until healing is complete.*

*Bob and Jean will most certainly be appreciative of your thoughts and prayers.*



*You will be pleased to know that Rich Ongna will be back on the job for the next issue of your favorite bulletin, the Chord-Inator. However, he may intermix in his next Sunshine report the saga of the 30-inch walleye caught by his son on their trip. (Perhaps by then it will be a 40-inch walleye.)*

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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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- 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
- SKYPE  
 Mark Bloomquist.....952/541-0232
- SOUNDS of RENOWN.....VLQ  
 Mark Ortenburger.....952/942-8382
- TRIPLE Q.....VLQ  
 Dave Speidel.....952/941-7153
- TURNING POINT  
 Judd Orff.....651/439-3108

**LOOKING AHEAD**

Chapter Level

- July 16, Wednesday, **Summer Concert Series, St. Louis Park**
- July 20, Sunday, **Lake Harriet with TC Show Chorus**
- August 4, Monday, **Centennial Lakes**
- August 11, Monday, **BHS Open, Elk River Golf Club**
- August 12, Tuesday, **Como Park**
- November 2, **Lakeville**
- December 7, Sunday, **Christmas Show with TCSC**
- December 9, **LDS Food Shelf Performance, Lakeville**

District Level

- October 24-25, **Fall Convention, Rochester**

International Level

**2014 Barbershopper Of The Year  
 Rod Vink**

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

- Bob Dykstra
- Jim Erickson
- Brent Gerber\*
- Gary Jacobson
- Rollie Neve
- Hardin Olson
- Jeremy Reynolds
- Jim Richards
- Marv Spears
- Dave Speidel
- Bill Warp



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