



International Medalist
GREAT NORTHERN UNION
CHORUS

HILLTOP CHAPTER • SPEBSQSA



10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O' LAKES DISTRICT

BARBERSHOP
HARMONY SOCIETY

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GNUsNews

March 2005

Valentine's Day Barbershop Style



"**Live Wire**" came out of retirement to do Singing Valentines this year. We started off our day at White Bear Lake High School to sing for Kevin Anderson's girlfriend, Beth Boehne. Kevin is Steve's son. We then were asked to sing for the choir who just happened to be having a rehearsal. We were being used primarily for marketing purposes as Loring Harrop called several seniors residences and had us sing for them throughout the day. We also made a trip to the courthouse in downtown Minneapolis for Judge Steven Aldrich who purchased 3 Singing Valentines for his staff on 3 different floors of the building.

Singing Valentines, a fund-raiser for the barbershop choruses in the area, had over 200 "gigs" in the Twin Cities this year. Under the coordination of GNU member **Tom Semple**, a total of 32 quartets, participated, 7 of which had GNU members. Most of the quartets are "pick up" quartets formed just for this event. The GNU quartets included:

ShirtTails - Bob Cannella, Harvey Berwin, John Babbs, John Kleiber

Apple Pie - Roger Meyer, Bob Barnes, Chuck McKown, Don Knecht

HeartThrobs - Jim Higgins, Kevin Lynch, Mark Sathe (quartet blended with Mpls)

Combined Quartet - Mike Franssen, Jeff Hickman (quartet blended with St. Croix Valley)

PRISM - Steve Nolte, Cleon Wahlin, Alan Matchinski, Darren Hoehne

Nouveau - Jim Olson, Tony Blackwood, Duane Rygg, Dave Boyd

Live Wire - Brent Buresh, Steve Hardy, Scott Kvigne, Steve Anderson

The effort was enhanced by lots of media coverage including TV appearances by **Quest** on Kare 11, **MN Go 4's** on NW Metro cable and **Keepin' Outa Mischief** on WCCO. There were also radio spots by **The Wilde Quartet** (Marty Monson, Loring Harrop, Tom Semple, Steve Anderson) on Air America 950AM and we had a spokesperson on talk radio WCCO. Congratulations to everyone who made this years Singing Valentines a success.

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Last Thursday, Marty gave a great presentation on the "State of the GNU" with the main theme being commitment. The most exciting part for me was listening to your feedback and "buy in" afterwards. We all seemed to be in agreement with an understanding of at least some of the things we need to strive for in order to reach our potential as a championship chorus.

Okay, then, it's time to put our money where our mouths are! At this point we have a somewhat ineffective system to determine who is committed for certain upcoming events. It is a sign-up sheet. I would prefer to do away with that and just make the assumption if you're part of the GNU, you'll perform with the GNU. We're not there yet, however. For now, I am asking you to please use the sign-up sheet so I know what chorus I will be directing at any given performance.

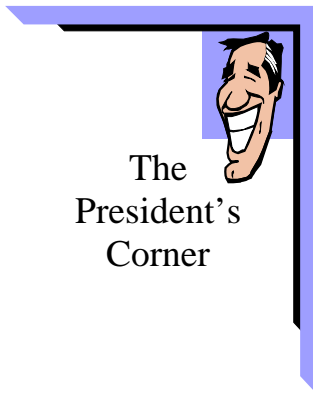
Please bring your calendar and do not leave on Thursday night until you have signed up for the following events. It's all about COMMITMENT!

- 3/12 - Luther
- 4/3 - Mt. Olivet
- 5/13 - Duluth
- 6/11 - On to Fame
- 7/9- Salt Lake City

Thanks.
PETE



In recent issues, I have commented about the interlocking issues of membership and attendance. Those of you who heard Marty Monson's presentation at UMCP on March 3 heard hi9m mention attendance several times. Like most chapters, we would benefit in many ways from an influx of new members. However, we also need current members to be active participants in the chapter and chorus. If you look at the attendance sheets Roger Meyer has been showing us, there is far more red and yellow - indicating low attendance - than we might expect.



a decline - percentage and absolute numbers - since we dropped the attendance requirement about 2-3 years ago. While not a record low in recent years (several rehearsals have had fewer than 40 show up), the attendance of 43 for Mark Hale's most recent session was extremely disappointing, especially since we are working on methods to move us up several places in the SLC contest.

Each of us needs to ask what his level of commitment, and whether his attendance pattern is helping or hindering what Pete and the music team are trying to accomplish. The plan is there - but it requires each of us to carry our share of the load.

Would it surprise you to learn that Hilltop has over 100 members? Some live too far away to be active. Others are only quartet singers who have no interest in singing with the chorus. Others have dropped out - temporarily or long-term - due to family commitments, job demands, age, physical limitations, and other causes. Some have apparently just chosen not to sing with the chorus.

I have belonged to 7 chapters during my years in SPEBSQSA. Some members of each of the previous six showed an attendance pattern which I did not expect to see from Hilltop members, given the level of commitment expected from us. Yet that pattern does seem to be there. What is it? The tendency to reduce attendance when a member is not able to appear with the chorus at an upcoming contest or performance. That pattern suggests the attitude of "I won't be in that event, so rehearsals are less important. I'll attend again in time for the next event." Unfortunately, that way one gets out of the habit of coming to UMCP on Thursdays, and what sometimes results is a reduction in overall attendance in the future. In addition, missing rehearsals can and does get the member behind the development taking place in the rest of the chorus.

Another part of that pattern is a drop in attendance for several weeks after a major contest or performance. "I've worked really hard in recent weeks, so I think I will take a vacation for a few Thursday nights." And of course, other activities intervene, and restarting a regular pattern on Thursdays turns out to be harder than expected.

Mark Hale said that Masters of Harmony leaders become concerned when attendance drops below 90% for more than a week or two. Our music team would be delighted if we were to get 90% of us there for even one rehearsal. Based on some graphs prepared by Tom Sample, it seems clear that our attendance has been on



Live Wire had a little extra time after a high school performance to "play" in the snow! They also had the pleasure of singing for Julia Holzemer on her 104th birthday later in the week.





A quartet made up of GNU and St Croix Valley members had 22 singing valentines in a variety of locations. The members of the quartet were:

Tom Kurkowski ,Tenor, "Croix Chordsmen"
 Michael Franssen, Lead, "GNU" & "Croix Chordsmen"
 Art Warnke, Bari, "Croix Chordsmen"
 Jeff Hickman, Bass, "GNU"

Clockwise from the top are some of the pictures taken during their day.

- A 98 year old woman in the New Richmond "Deer Field Assisted Living"
- A counselor at Hudson Middle School
- A student in class at New Richmond High School
- Michael's mom, MaryAnn Franssen at the Good Samaritan Center in Mounds Park
- Jeff's Wife, Cathy Hickman at work in Plymouth





We (Don Knecht, Bob Barnes, Roger Meyer and I), pictured at left, had a fun, but less busy day with 5 gigs. We had one no-show at WCCO-TV who was late coming back from lunch and was told on the phone that there was a surprise waiting for her. She called back a bit later, saying she wasn't coming back today. We speculated she didn't want her surprise, so we ended up giving the rose to the receptionists, and sang for them. Then one said, why don't you come and sing for the newsroom? So we did and I recognized a couple of the anchors/reporters present. We got a nice hand and left the card and photo for our missing "victim". That was the highlight of our day.

Since Roger has always sung tenor on Valentine's Day, I got to sing Bari, which I enjoyed very much. Thanks, guys!

Chuck Mc Kown



John Babbs, Harvey Berwin, Bob Cannella and I (pictured bottom left) did 10 gigs yesterday. Lots of happy ladies got the chocolate rose, photo and a song serenade!

We drove all over the west side of town (how many times did we cross I-494?) from 11:30 am to nearly 9 pm. We sang for friends (my work officemate's wife, and one of my former co-worker's wife), a church choir director, a teacher, barbershoppers (a Minneapolis Commodore came out of the woodwork at one gig to joke "more bass, more tenor!"), retirees (two PR freebies were at senior citizen residences) and more. We also ran into another S.V. quartet from the Commodores at a break at Perkins. It was great. We wore out the "Just Plain Barbershop" polecat book while waiting between gigs.

So if you didn't get to participate this year, mark your calendar for next year! Don't miss it!

CU@GNU!

John Klieber



JIM JOHANNSEN



**Members:
Get to know "em**

Jim, who has been performing with us for about one year, sings baritone. He is also a Commodore. Although he grew up in Faribault, he has also lived in Chicago as well as Charleston, South Carolina. Together with his wife, Judy, they have two kids; and now, two grandkids, age 8 and 10. Retired in 2001, he was an

electronics engineer. In the 60s, he served on Polaris Nuclear Submarines. I doubt any of us know someone else who has **that** on the resume!

And now, for the impressive musical resume of this fine addition to Great Northern Union. His experience in that realm includes playing a mean trumpet in high school; and marching band at the University of Minnesota. This talented guy had the



privilege of playing in sunny California at the New Year's Day 1961 and '62 Rose Bowl Parades & Games! As for singing, Jim did that in high school; and while in the Navy, like others of the era, he sang in a fun little folk group. Then later, when he joined barbershopping, he sang in Elgin, Illinois. Illinois has so many chapters that the one state is the entire district! He also sang with a group in Charleston. His (now inactive) Senior quartet was "Boundary Waters", whose members are also Commodores, here in the Twin Cities.

Jim's main reason for joining the Great Northern Union was because he wanted to compete Internationally. Like all good members, he has selected a position of responsibility where he can contribute in addition to standing on the risers. He currently serves as Baritone Administrative Section Leader. Jim, nice resume! We are glad you are with us.

Barbershop Harmony Society releases new graphic identity



"Our new logo is a marvelously elegant statement of who we are: singers of four-part harmony," said Society President Rob Hopkins. "It brings to mind a quartet, but it also could be four men in any row of a chorus," he explained. "The different colors of the facial profiles reminds me that our members come from all different walks of life, yet share the core elements of singing, fellowship, fun, enrichment, and creativity. I love the way that the facial profiles add depth to the design, and the clean, uncluttered, contemporary look is great"

Upcoming Special Events

March 19th 10,000 Lake Division Contest

April 3rd Mt Olivet Lutheran Church

May 13th - 15th Duluth Coaching weekend

May 18th Twins Star Spangled Banner and O Canada

June 17th "On to Fame" show

July 4th - 11th Salt Lake City International Contest



Luther College Mens Chorus joins GNU in Concert

Saturday, March 12, 2005, was a great musical day in Mahtomedi. Eighty hand-picked students from the Freshman class of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, along with our Great Northern Union chorus performed in concert. Devotees

journeyed, in some cases, for hundreds of miles to be surrounded by soul-enriching sound, which reverberated inside the cathedral-like facility and spilled over into the scenic outdoors. Luther choral director Timothy Peter and Great Northern Union director Peter Benson, along with assistant GNU director Scott Kvigne took the stage at various portions of the evening.



The magnificent and recently restored "antique" 1927 Casavant pipe organ is the centerpiece of the newly built very large Danish modern church which sits on a beautiful tree-filled acreage. Bill Chouinard masterfully presented the capabilities of the beautiful instrument; by accompanying both choruses on selected pieces with unsurpassed full-bodied sound.

GNU members Marty Monson and Wally Brink, both Alumni of Luther, anticipate eventual new GNU members from among their "younger brothers". The GNU marketing team, and others, headed up by Loring Harrop did a fine job in helping to orchestrate the affair. All look forward to repeat joint performances.

Newer member Sam Sather did a fine job on his first solo for this occasion; and "BRAVO!" former LOL District Champion quartet, performed, with Marty singing tenor, lead Dan Schroeder, bass Mike Faris and baritone Dave Roessler,. Also singing was college quartet, "Late Night Serenade" from the Norsemen.



Our own Peter Benson directed the combined chorus in "This Train - When the Saints Go Marching In Medley"; while Dr. Timothy Peter directed the grand finale Battle Hymn of the Republic. Sharing the stage for that closing song was a fine Luther College brass quintet and snare drum. As the audience enthusiastically joined in for the last chorus, the rafters literally rang and people wept with joy!

By all accounts, the exciting day was a resounding success. Folks who had never heard us before now know what good entertainment is; and for sure, our members found it to be a peak experience! It was such fun to encourage young men in music appreciation. Let's do it again, and soon.



Big thanks to Theresa Meyer for all the Norsemen concert photos



Luther College Norsemen (top) and a shot of the combined chorus and that magnificent pipe organ (below)





Mark Hale, singing judge and director of the Masters of Harmony came to coach us on 'When the Midnight Choo Choo leaves for Alabam' and our new ballad 'Young and Foolish'. His main focus was on energy. As you can see, it sure got Pete fired up. As if he needed it!

After Midnight
A Barbershop Quartet

Contact:
Tom Matchinsky
952-931-9715
tom_bbshop@hotmail.com

Got Music?
Have a
Nouveau
Experience
with
Dave Tony
Duane Jim
A Barbershop Quartet

Contact: Jim Olson
14466 Everest Avenue
Apple Valley, MN 55124
Phone: 952-431-3110
email: olsoncrew@aol.com

Ellis Jones, Tenor Bruce Gray, Lead

MAGIC
Barbershop Harmony & Sleight of Hand

507-934-2372
bgray@gustavus.edu

Don Miller, Baritone Bill Lydecker, Bass

PRISM
A SPECTRUM OF SOUND

STEVE - CLEON - DARREN - ALAN
2404 McNair Dr., Golden Valley, MN 55422
prism_gnu@hotmail.com
612.281.5609

—ROD JOHNSON - Lead— JIM FOY - Bass—
—RICK ANDERSON - Bari— BOB DOWNHA - Tenor—

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1308 Blue Phlox Court
Northfield, Minnesota 55057
507.645.5750

E-mail: dougmtr@aol.com Tax I.D. #41-1903683

Special Alliance

GLENN, DAVE, LANCE & DOUG (Barbershop Quartet)

Contactman: DOUG MILLER 4822 Rutledge St.
612-447-8265 Prior Lake, MN 55372

Support
these
GNU
quartets!

Quest
BARBERSHOP
QUARTET

JAY
MIKE
BRENT
TIM

Tim Milbrandt
833 Balsam Ct. NE
Pine Island, MN 55963
507-356-2993
tkjm@earthlink.net

MIKE MARTY DAN DAVE

BRAVO!
A
BARBERSHOP
QUARTET

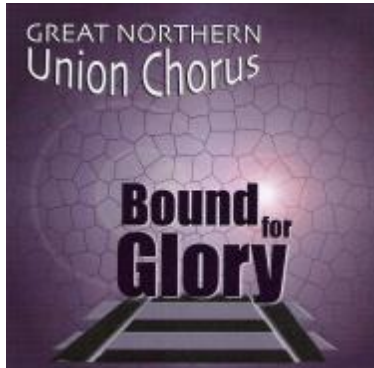
DAN SCHROEDER
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(H)763-633-5280
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dschrades@msn.com

Hey guys,

I'm Vinny Haynes from the Big Apple Chorus. Some of you guys know me as the NYPD officer who sang with you guys on November 2001 at the Metrodome after 9/11. I am also one of the hosts of The Harmony Network.(Barbershop Radio) We received a copy of your new CD, "Bound For Glory" and my buddy Marty Israel, Music Judge and a host of "Tuesday Night Swipes" will be debuting the CD tonight March 8 at 7:00 PM.

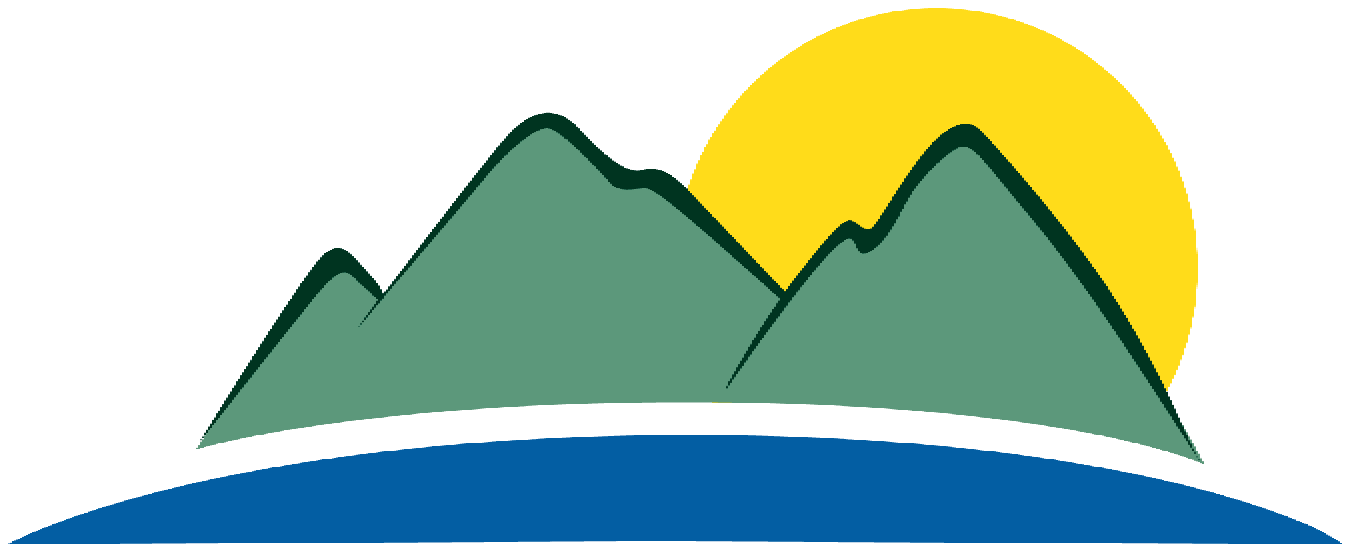
..
Come and join us at www.harmonize.com/thn as we bring you the best in barbershop and a cappella music. We are on 7:00 P.M.- 11: 00 P.M. New Jersey Time.(E. S. T.)

Thanks...see you guys at SLC



The Great Northern Union Chorus meets every Thursday from 7:00pm to 10:00pm, at the United Methodist Church of Peace, 6345 Xerxes Ave S, Richfield MN 55423

“Early-Bird” rehearsals are held at 6:00pm for practicing choreography. Members are urged to call the GNU Hotline at 763-476-7383 weekly for the latest word on rehearsals, performances, and other pertinent information. Also find us on the web at www.gnunion.com



Salt Lake 2005

The best you'll ever...Here!