



International Medalist
GREAT NORTHERN UNION
CHORUS

HILLTOP CHAPTER • SPEBSQSA

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O' LAKES DISTRICT



Volume 10 # 5

GNUsNews

July 2005

GNU Medals in Salt Lake



Congratulations are in order for the **Great Northern Union** (pictured above) as they took 5th place in International Competition in Salt Lake City on July 9th. It was especially sweet for the chorus as this was the 1st year for medals with the new Barbershop Harmony Society logo. The medals will be engraved on the back with Salt Lake City, 2005 and the members name. The engraving is being done free of charge as a gift by Bruce Watson.

The GNU was also represented by 2 quartets at the competition. **Quest** made the "top 20" finishing in 20th place and **After Midnight** did well placing 37th. Also representing the GNU was the collegiate quartet, **Expose**"



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Dear Medalists of the GNU,

We finally made it home (temporary home) last night. I've been wearing my medal every day in the car and sometimes even my conductor hat! Am I a nerd?



This first thing I want to say is Thank You. Thank you for believing you could do it and for making it happen. There are a few leaders who deserve special recognition for their outstanding dedication in getting us prepared, but in the heat of the battle it was each and every one of you on the risers who earned the medal. You are the core of the GNU and your individual commitment and attitude got us a medal. We couldn't have done it without all light bulbs burning.

9th, 7th, 5th..... Can you see yourself winning a GOLD medal in the near future? What will it take? The key for us right now is to take advantage of our new position in the ranks and ride the wave of momentum. We need to post a huge score at the fall District contest, which means we will continue to make the package even better by October while preparing for our November show with REALTIME! I am very excited about our new yearly schedule which is set up to maximize momentum.



What's coming up? New music.

- A couple of new songs for Nov. Show. First will be "Annie's Song" (70's tune by John Denver) Look for an email to download arrangement.
- 2006 International Uptune (Another Aaron Dale chart with a dance feel)
- New Opener (In process by Tom Gentry)

Leadership is also in the process of making improvements to our evaluation and attendance standards. I appreciate your eagerness to help make this group even better.

Once again, a heartfelt Thanks. I'm so proud to be the director of the Great Northern Union.

PETE



The
President's
Corner



Chorus Manager Kent Erlandson does a superb job for us. We would be in dire straits without him or someone like him to carry out a myriad list of often thankless tasks. In fact, the better the job he does, the less we are aware of what he does. It is only when glitches and problems develop that we become aware of many of his duties. A partial list of his duties reads as follows (some of these may be delegated to others, but Kent is still responsible for seeing they are carried out):

- 1) Serve as project manager for chorus.
- 2) Arrange logistical details for rehearsals, performances and competitions - for example, rehearsal times/space, risers, etc., and communicate this information to chorus, including schedule, map, room locations, etc.
- 3) Plan, coordinate, and delegate details for chapter functions, such as annual banquet.
- 4) Inspect International hotel, rehearsal, and performance sites.
- 5) Locate and inspect alternate rehearsal sites (when UMCP is not available.)
- 6) Handle hotel and ticketing arrangements for contests.
- 7) Serve as contact person for chorus.
- 8) Attend Production Team and Board meetings.
- 9) Coordinate maintenance of risers and trailer.
- 10) Assist with ordering, maintenance, and distribution of uniforms.

His list of "to-do" items for the On to Fame show includes at least:

- 1) Confirm date and site, distribute directions, coordinate with school staff.
- 2) Prepare info for technical rehearsal.
- 3) Arrange for risers to be delivered and set up.
- 4) Go to site, walk through, and determine room assignments for performers.
- 5) Walk routes from room to stage.
- 6) Purchase supplies and make signs for rooms, hallway directions, etc.
- 7) Arrive early to post those signs.
- 8) Get rooms, passageways, restrooms and entrance doors unlocked.
- 9) Arrange tables, etc, for marketing display, cd sales, ticket sales.

Each event has its own unique list of duties, which he does extremely well. Take a few minutes to thank him for all he does. His job does require many hours each month. You see why it was easy to decide that he should get a medal, even though he was not on stage in SLC.

Bill Lydecker – GNU President



Kent Erlandson and Roger Stanfield received their well deserved 5th place medals at the pizza party after International. Neither man was able to be in Salt Lake City but had done so much for the preparation of the chorus' performance there.



Pictured above, **After Midnight**, Tom Matchinsky (tenor), David Bailey-Aldrich (lead), Steve McDonald (bass), Jim Emery (bari), placed 37th in the competition.

Pictured below, **Quest**, Jay Althof (tenor), Mike Laurel (lead), Tim Milbrandt (bass), Brent Graham (bari) place 20th in their 1st International. (pictures by Lorin May)



From the Judges Pit

The Great Northern Union is very fortunate to count 9 judges among our members. Through this column, we will get advice from these experts on how to improve our individual performance.



Because there are no evaluations sessions at the International level of competition, Jim Emery talked with some of the judges that were on the Salt Lake City panel asking them for their thoughts on our performance. The following is what he heard.



One Music judge on the Salt Lake City panel, came over to me in the judging area Saturday night (I was on the practice panel for the finals) and thanked us for "the song of the contest". We didn't have time to really discuss it, but he said we did a wonderfully musical job, especially on the ballad.

A Singing judge on the Salt Lake City panel, also came over and commented on our "wonderful, rich sound", again especially on the ballad. I also didn't have enough time to get any more details from him.

Another Singing judge on the panel, responded to my e-mail inquiry saying the following things (all are direct quotes):

1. You guys are singing better and cleaner every time I hear you
2. The ballad for me was very artistic and sung with so much rich quality. You guys cranked it up when it needed and then brought it down when the music called for it. Nicely done.
3. The uptune was solid right out of the gate.
4. Good solid hit and presentation plan and great delivery and lots of lock and ring for me.
5. Keep up the good work. It is very evident in your steady improvement year to year at the BIG show.

Another Singing judge on the panel, responded briefly to my e-mail inquiry saying, "Excellent approach to the nuances of the diction; thank you."

One more Singing judge on the panel responded to my e-mail inquiry. A few of his comments are below (again these are direct quotes):

1. I really enjoyed your performance. I thought that Young and Foolish was probably the most artistic song sung at the contest. Thank you for that.
2. The delivery of the "f" on the word "foolish" was really nice.
3. The excitement you generated in this song [uptune] was pretty neat. Thanks.
4. Nice overtone on the word "town", near the beginning.
5. Again, some really nice stuff. Great excitement and artistry.

Another Singing judge made the following comments:

1. "very artistic singing at the top, internal word swells, classy singing." [on the ballad]
2. "Overall, a solid performance, very listener-friendly, no 'apparent effort' or pervasive problems." [ballad]
3. "I liked what I heard." [uptune]

A Presentation judge, made the following comments:

1. "Absolutely brilliant exposition in the [ballad] intro. Throughout the piece, the constant usage of effective inflection and tone color without drawing attention to the techniques was just terrific."
2. "The beautiful use of hand gesturing [on the ballad] was something others could learn from, for it was not overdone nor repetitive."
3. [uptune] "Very exciting and lots of visual support of the text AND the subtext. The front row movements were highly energized and effective as the song began. Lots of good development in the "choo-choo" move. The bags were a kick! Stomp tempo really handled well."

Another Presentation judge, made the following comments:

1. "A terrific performance with masterful singing in song 1."
2. "Midnight Choo Choo was fun and slick, with good characterization."

Jim Emery
Singing Judge
Hilltop, MN
Great Northern Union chorus
After Midnight quartet



Salt Lake City Comments

I have had the pleasure of singing in 14 International Chorus Contests with the GNU. We medaled 4 times out of the 14 and worked hard every year to medal.

This year the attitude and commitment was better and more focused than many of the other times. We were responsive to all the coach's demands and followed Pete wherever the moment lead him. The way we handled the pre- contest hassles at the LDS Center was truly medal worthy.



In the old days we had an underwear contest before we went on and that helped people relax and laugh a little before hitting the stage. The focus we had in Salt Lake City was as relaxing to me and centering, as any of the methods used in previous years.

My hope is that we will retain all our guys as we head to La Crosse in the Fall, and add 15 to 20 dedicated singers to our ranks. I'm not sure how many of our guys are aware of the Society's September membership push, but "UCANSING2" will be a big deal. The top membership getting chorus can get as much as \$10,000 in prize money for signing new members in the contest period.

Our performance schedule is full of opportunity's to reach out, lets keep the edge and move ahead behind our GREAT music team.

Judd Orff
Presentation Judge

Well, I'm at home still on a HUGH high from our trip to Salt Lake City. What a week it was...



Wednesday night 10pm rehearsal...WOW did you deliver! We may have to do that again, but start after the Quartet contest is done...

Thursday morning, Gospel Sing... Warm-ups were incredible. I like hearing new sounds come out of our chorus...Like Mark Hale stated on Friday morning, he wishes he could get our Midwest choral sound shipped over to MOH. If we continue to

produce sound like that...I predict our own Pete Benson will be traveling around the country coaching choruses like, MOH! Pete, is your name trade marked yet? Performance...WOW, the applause after each song was incredible. The faces and reactions of the people in the front pews were amazing. The standing ovation at the end certainly didn't hurt! How about Joe Liles genuine comments about our director...we truly have a special director!

Friday morning, walk-thru...thank you for getting up early and attending the on-stage time. It was beneficial for the entire chorus to get accustom to the stage prior to Saturday's performance. I think it paid off.

Friday morning, rehearsal...how about our coaching team Mark Hale, Bob and Rosemary Calderon, Brent Graham, Erin Dale, Scott Kvigne and Pete Benson! (Roger...we were spinning the DVD!) We are on the right track for a gold medal some day! Thank you for the 3 1/2 hour rehearsal!

Saturday morning, prep...what a feeling to be standing along side 69 dedicated performers! How about those Gold Shirts!!! They look pretty good...thank you Roger!! Again the warm-ups were incredible. They even got better from the day before...it must be that "center" concept Tom has been teaching us. Thanks Tom! Saturday's transition mess...champions don't allow those distractions to interfere with the performance readiness and focus. Thank you all for a VERY special moment singing Lonesome Road in the corridor of the mini theater. Pete directed the first chord and I couldn't sing after that...it was the best choral moment since my Luther College days. THANK YOU!

Saturday's performance...I'll let the scores speak to that!

	M01	M02	M03	M04	M05	Ave
Y&F	91	94	90	90	91	91.2
MCC	89	93	88	90	88	89.6

	P06	P07	P08	P09	P10	Ave
Y&F	90	88	89	92	91	90
MCC	87	89	91	91	90	89.6

	S11	S12	S13	S14	S15	Ave
Y&F	87	89	86	91	86	87.8
MCC	84	90	84	90	85	86.6

Song Ave
Y&F 89.7
MCC 88.6
Total Average: 89.1

What a thrill. Thank you for the ride AND, more importantly, the journey that lies ahead.

Marty Monson
Music co -VP

Hi All,

WOW. Wasn't that a "weekend" to remember? An amazing facility, a fine city, good fellowship, making new friends, etc etc etc.

A few of my thoughts:

Roger Stanfield was on stage with us - I managed to find his convention name tag and I carried it on stage in my suit pocket. And thanks to Roger one more time for all the work he put in to get us there!



When I got back the hotel to change clothes, I thought I had lost my Kansas City medal. I had it pinned in the same suit coat pocket as Roger's name tag. I reached into the pocket and thank goodness the medal was still there. I now know it fell down inside in order to make room for our new medal!

No need to be a triskaidekaphobic! This was my Lucky 13th International Contest (all with GNU) and it brought a medal - just like my first one (Calgary).

Watch the contest video closely during the up tune. Just after the "Oh Lordy" move, I mistakenly pushed out with the right hand move during the "I've been yearning every day" two hand move. I did just what Roger & Scott have told us to do - made that error proudly as if all the rest of YOU were wrong! Then I got to do it a second time - in the correct spot! <wink>

LEADing you on,

John Klieber

Gentlemen,

While out in the hall on Saturday afternoon just after we had sung I passed another singer who looked at me and said, "Outstanding". And how right he was. We stood out in the quality of our singing, just what we had been working so hard on. We stood out in the way we told the story of our songs from our heart to the hearts of the audience, and the judges. We stood out in the attitude that we could do it and we got our first medal since I joined. Thanks to all of you for that.

Now the momentum will need to build. We will have changes in our chorus membership and we will need to find new people not just to maintain our membership but to increase it. And we can do it!

Thanks to all of you,

Don Knecht
Membership VP
Great Northern Union



Dear Men of the Great Northern Union & Friends,

Brent Graham said on the Webcast right before you sang--"Hilltop is Back". Everyone knew it by the time you were done with your performance. The singing was so clean.(If we can say that listening on the Web, what was it like there?) You told the story with so much emotion. You left no doubt GNU is Back!

The Webcast announcer placed you in 5th, we hoped!! The competition was tough this year, your hard work towards excellence paid off! Keep up the great work.

Congratulations, again to Pete, Scott, the Leadership Team, the Men of the 5th place GNU and especially to Jack Stansfield Brent Buresh, & Art VandeWater, WAB(Winona Area Barbershoppers) recruits!

Leadingly,
Duane (Linda, too)

P.S. Congrats GNU from Sarah



Odd thoughts on our SLC experience:

I decided over the last few years that winning a medal is less important to me than getting a genuine enthusiastic response from the audience; that if there are 6 or more choruses that really "wowed" them, and at least 5 of them did better than we did in the eyes of the judges, then congrats all around! But, it is better to medal than not (I know, I have a flair for the obvious).



I like the pattern of 9th (Montreal) 7th (Louisville) 5th (SLC)..... better than the pattern: 1995 medal, 2000 medal, 2005 medal

Bad membership drive slogan: "join the GNU and once every 5 years hug dozens of sweaty guys!"

It's interesting to see the game of variable expectations play out. Both the 5th place quartet and chorus were thrilled with the results; both 2nd place finishers....uh, not so much. While I understand that 2nd place finishers are still focused on an improvement goal, and it's got to be disappointing to repeat at silver, I hope it's possible to balance that drive with an appreciation of what an achievement that is. I'll be glad to face that problem in a year or 2.....

Chuck McKown

Dear Brothers of the Great Northern Union,

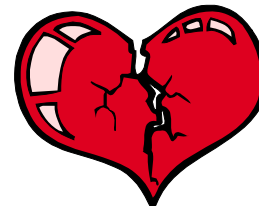
CONGRATULATIONS!!!!!! Can't tell you how thrilled I was to get calls from Tom Semple (from the convention hall) and Jim Barloon! I couldn't be more proud of the Chorus, and more happy for you guys! For all of us that couldn't make it, thanks for Stepin' Up! Hope to see you soon!



Mark Jurgenson

Congratulations GNU on a wonderful performance in Salt Lake City. It looked wonderful and sounded even better. It should have been at least a 3rd place.

As many of you know, **Vern (Hal) Halvorson**, father of former GNU members Larry (our son-in-law) and Jim Halvorson had a **heart attack** while the BYU men's chorus was singing on Friday evening. His heart stopped beating completely. Five barbershoppers seated around him carried Hal out to the entry where a 19-year-old young lady started CPR on him. A doctor seated one row in front of him and down a few seats came back and had the "house nurse" bring out a defibrillator unit which he used to get Hal's heart going again. This doctor worked out in New York in a trauma center. The ambulance crew arrived and took him to BYU hospital. He had a defibrillator/pace maker installed will be at the hospital housing (like Ronald McDonald housing) until everything is OK for traveling back to Minnesota. We want to thank those involved for their support and prayers.



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A special thanks to Doug Miller for his involvement when we needed him the most. Any additional prayers are welcome until everything is stabilized.

John & Marguerite Bergren



Midwest Vocal Express from the Greendale, WI chapter made it through the preliminary round and into the finals of the chorus competition. Although they scored better than last year, they fell from 8th to 10th place with their "County Fair" set. (picture by Lorin May)



Another special evening with our fellow barbershoppers was had at the beautiful Como Park in St. Paul. Sponsored, as always, by our friends of the St.Paul chapter, a nice crowd of families and neighbors witnessed the fun of music in the pavilion.

Our many chapters in the area each had a chance to show off their varied talents; then the show closed with a mass sing, which left performer and audience alike feeling "all- aglow" with good thoughts, as they donated a few dollars on the way out for the good of music education in the schools.

Thanks, St.Paul, for inviting us!



In a 3 part series, **Loring Harrop** shows us how we market the **Great Northern Union**. This is part 2 of 3.

"Tickets, getcher Tickets!"

TicketWorks (aka Uptown Tix) is a ticket distributor similar to TicketMaster, but based in the Twin Cities. TicketWorks also has the distinction of offering clients the option of 'subscribing' to their service, meaning we could choose to pay an upfront fee to have them distribute GNU tickets online and even provide workers to sell at our concerts with no fees charged to our customers.



For the moment, GNU hasn't the cash resources to pay these fees and we've chosen to go with the more traditional approach of making tickets available online where buyers pay Uptown Tix an added fee of \$2.50 per ticket to process their order. GNU offers repeat customers who have subscribed to our e-mail fan list a special discount code: "GNUDIRECT". Users who type this in when ordering receive a discount of \$2 per ticket, which means they only pay an extra \$.50 to order a ticket online and GNU still pays no upfront fees. Ideally, we'll eventually move to the subscription service, but that requires much higher sales volume before we can afford the investment.



Ticket Works / Uptown Tix (same company, two different services) also provides online sales reporting so our marketing team is able to track sales from day to day.

Why are online sales important? People mostly buy from our members, anyway, right? Consider what happens when a GNU leaves the group, perhaps relocating as Jim Higgins did for many years (we're sure lucky to have him back). Who makes sure to sell to his Minneapolis customers? Hopefully, he placed them on the mailing list so they get reminders before each show. If not, we run occasional ads in community and regional media to spread the word, but we're certain to lose some of them.

In addition, not everyone likes to use mail-order anymore. Many have grown used to the convenience of services like E-Bay and Amazon.com. For these people, GNU now has a service to meet their needs and Jim can tell his customers to either order through him, via mail or online. And getting them online means they see all the

great things GNU singers have been up to lately, not to mention what's coming in a month or even a year from now.

This opens our concerts up to broad new audiences. Remember the Norsemen from Luther College? They were able to refer friends and family to our web site to order at their leisure. Between Norsemen and GNU customers, we sold more than 70 tickets online for our March concert. That's \$840 added to the GNU bottom line that we might not have otherwise made.

Last of all, this is a great way to handle the use of credit cards. People are able to order online virtually up to the last minute (the day before the concert, in any case).

Remember, the important thing is that GNU works hard to put on a musical and entertaining concert. Our purpose is to make great music available. Online ticket sales are one more way to make it more convenient for people to attend a GNU event. After that, the fun is pretty much guaranteed.

Loring Harrop
 Marketing Team
 The Great Northern Union Chorus
 Leaders In Men's A Cappella Performance
Marketing@gnunion.com
<http://www.gnunion.com/>

8

Upcoming Performances

September 18th Fairmont, MN Show

October 21 -22 District Competition
Lacrosse Wisconsin

November 19th Bethel University Show





Above, The **Great Northern Union** sings the “song of the contest”, **My Foolish Heart**. Then follows it up with a very energetic “**When the Midnight Choo Choo Leaves for Alabam**”. (pictures by Lorin May)





**Members:
Get to know "em**

**The Chorus Manager
Why that blonde guy?**

You may ask, who is this **Kent Erlandson** that keeps volunteering to handle the Chorus Manager duties? And why does he keep getting the job and nobody else does?? The guy has been doing it since just before the Atlanta

International contest time, way back in 1998. Ninety-when???

Lately though, seems he's been missing from standing over there at the end of the second rowt...what gives? And what's he done anyway for the chapter besides make occasional announcements about subjects that nobody can remember?

Those certainly are valid observations and concerns. First off, let me assure you, I definitely didn't ask for the job. In fact, I successfully avoided it for about 6 months. But the GNU has some very persuasive gentlemen who taught me the error of my ways! Past-President John Kleiber and Past-Chorus Manager Bruce Watson come to mind...and I shouldn't forget Bob Cannella, Doug Chapman and Roger Meyer!.

I've been singing barbershop since the mid 90's when I joined the Hilltop Chapter, having had my interest piqued by my brother Daniel over the preceding 6 or 7 years! I've sung in the church choir since about 4th grade (some say I was a shoe-in since Dad was the local Lutheran Pastor!) and had my first real barbershop harmony experiences back in Dallas where I grew up in the late 60's.

Also musically, I was in various bands through high school (Pep Band, Stage Band, Concert Band) in which I played trumpet, valve trombone and baritone and was assigned to the Drum & Bugle Corps while in the Air Force (played the euphonium) so I am at least *somewhat* interested in music.

My temporary absence is simply due to the recovery process from the eye surgeries which tends to throw off anything visually-related. I should be back aboard and in good form in time for District 2005.

I am a retired Air Force Chief Master Sergeant and in all probability won't be recalled unless things get very weird. Currently, I'm working as a courier/messenger (not a letter carrier) for the US Postal Service where I deliver overnight mail in the Minneapolis area.

I've enjoyed singing in a couple of Valentine's Day quartets over the years but my voice (Lead) is a "1" and

not a "3" like Dan Schroeder's so singing in a District Quartet Contest is a dream yet to be fulfilled. So far, I've had to be satisfied with singing on the District and International stages with the GNU each year and believe me, that's exciting enough!! Can't wait for the District competition at LaCrosse!

Oh, speaking of LaCrosse, please see me if you find yourself with a little extra time on your hands....have I got a deal for you!!! (Special thanks goes to Roger Meyer for his help with this article!)

Sincerely,

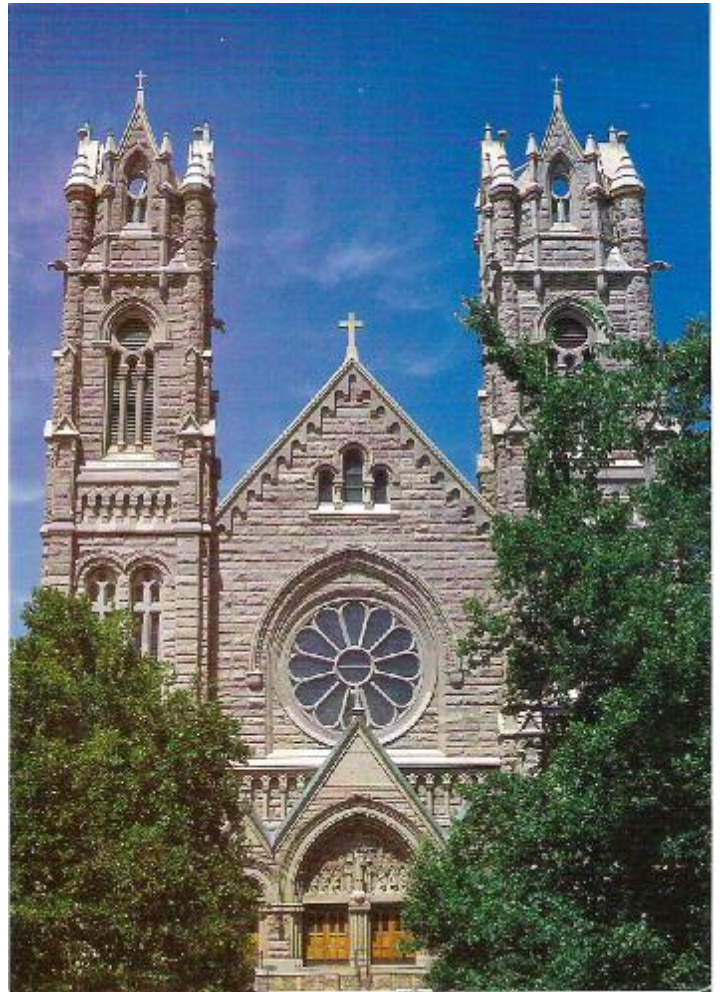
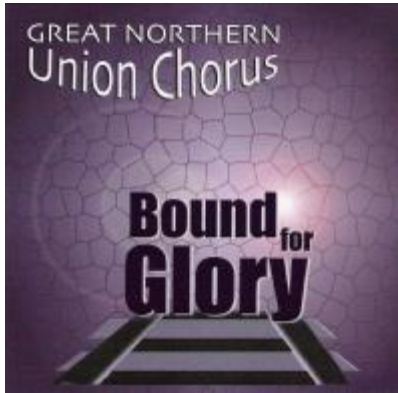
Your friendly neighborhood Chorus Manager, Kent!



*There is a special contest for collegiate quartets each year at International. Representing the Land O' Lakes District from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee and Lawrence University was **Expose'** who placed 8th in the contest.*

Sam Sather (GNU), James R Estes, Josh Umhoefer, Jake Umhoefer (picture by David Wagner)

The **Gospel Sing** sponsored each year at International by the **Good News** (Happiness Emporium) quartet pictured below, was held at the Cathedral of the Madeleine. The **GNU**, the quartet **Power Play** were invited to perform as part of the "service"





After a full week of friends, scenery, site-seeing, and singing, singing, singing, there was one last event at the Mormon Conference Center. This fine auditorium, the venue for our International contest, seats over 20,000 people in comfort and style.

The house held thousands that day; and for nearly three hours, a great many barbershoppers stayed in Salt Lake City, long enough to spend time in this very special place, with very special music. We observed, first, the rehearsal for the weekly 30 minute broadcast of sacred music from this hall; followed by the actual airing of this event. Then after a short break, we were privileged to behold the Barbershop Harmony Society's Gold Medal chorus, along with the one and only Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Suffice it to say, it was a magnificent morning; a memorable time!

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

After Midnight
a barbershop quartet

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

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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
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prism_gnu@hotmail.com
612.281.5609

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

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BRENT
TIM

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Bravo!
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