



# GNU's NEWS

THE GREAT NORTHERN UNION CHORUS NEWS

for the

HILLTOP CHAPTER

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O'LAKES DISTRICT

of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc.



GNU's NEWS

Vol. 7 - Issue # 3

August September 2002

## Heading to Fargo, District Contest October 25-27

**The Great Northern Union** is looking forward to the District Contest, the end of October in Fargo, North Dakota. This is a contest that the GNU has won 16 years in a row. However, now we have stiff competition from the Midwest Vocal Express from the Milwaukee area.

We have seen the MVE steadily improving over the last 5 years and they actually tied the GNU at the 2001 district contest. In July, on the International stage, the MVE took 5<sup>th</sup> place - edging out the GNU by 15 points.

The Great Northern Union has been working very hard with extra and longer rehearsals along with several more performances. Scott Kvigne, our interim director, is working hard with us, and we have had some of the best coaches in the society, like Tony Derosa (singing) and Dwaine Brobst (presentation) work with us on a consistent basis. We have raised our expectations of the membership and they are accepting the challenge.

### The District Trophy Transfer Tradition

Most of us know that the Great Northern Union has captured the Land O' Lakes District trophy for the past 16 years. This fall we resurrected the plan to pass it around to various members, each for one week. When a member brings it back to rehearsal, that person names the new lucky man. These are the men so far for this fall that have taken the trophy home for a week: Scott Kvigne, John Babbs, Larry Gere, Kent Erlandson, Corey Hanson and Jim Lutz.

For the first week this coveted, huge, golden trophy went to our talented Scott Kvigne. He has stepped up as director until Pete Benson can be here full time. Well



deserved, Scott! We are proud and thankful to have you in front of us.

Now, it is up to each of us to make District Championship happen again so we can circulate this prized trophy to every man's home.

*Acting Music Director, Scott Kvigne with the LOL District Trophy*



*Roger, Scott and Dwain working with the chorus*

**GNU CHAPTER LEADERS**

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Marketing VP	David Speidel	952-941-7153(H) 952-903-4180(W)
Membership VP	Tony Blackwood	952-922-4564(H)
Mem. At Large	Harvey Berwin	651-698-3515(H)
Mem. At Large	Jeff Aldrich	651-221-4400(H) 651-246-2499(W)
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Presentation	Roger Stanfield	952-440-3678(H) 651-628-4710(W)
Librarian	Ken Gilmore	651-770-1536(H) 952-936-8251(W)
Sunshine	John Chouinard	651-462-2780(H) 651-462-6681(W)
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**DIRECTOR**

Pete Benson		701-642-2484(H) 701-671-2872(W)
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**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

Scott Kvigne		952-431-0596(H)
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**COMING EVENTS**

- October 25-26 - District Contest in Fargo
- January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2003 Annual Show with guest quartet Michigan Jake

**Are you in the Shadows or in the Spotlight?**

Imagine this: *"For the 17th time, Great Northern Union wins the District Trophy."*

How does this sound to you? What are you doing, personally, to make sure this happens? Are you hiding in the shadows, as in this photo? Or are you out in the spotlight putting out your personal best? Do you coast between rehearsals? Practice and repetition are huge keys to success. How badly do you want this trophy?

Scott has told us that he knows "#17" is within our reach, but that there is still work to be done. Generally, the commitment level is high but it is up to each of us to reach that next level. We need men who are eager to be in the spotlight. Do your best each and every time you stand up on the risers.

**Happy Feet Award 2002**

At the August 29 meeting, Secretary Corey Hanson presented the "Happy Feet" Award to **Bob Griffith** for the most improved footwork. It consists of a "royally" mounted golden sneaker. Congratulations, Bob!





*Rehearsing really is very hard work, it just "looks" like fun*

## From the Judges Pit

*The Great northern Union is very fortunate to count 9 judges and 2 candidate judges among our members. Through this column, we will get advice from these experts on how to improve our individual performance.*

## Going to contest;

### An Attitude Adjustment:

*Don Challman,  
Society Presentation  
Judge*

The primary purpose of competing should be to have fun!! Entertaining an audience and making yourself a better performer will help you toward these goals.



Many Barbershoppers view a contest as a win/lose experience - but it can be a Win/Win experience for all of the contestants. If we are honest with ourselves, the connection with Greendale (Midwest Vocal Express) has been a true test of this concept and shows we are on the right track. The feelings of goodwill after Greendale's medal-winning performance in Portland support my meaning. I hope this never changes.

Some people believe that winning is everything (does this thinking pay your rent, give you a salary increase, pay a child's tuition, earn you a better job, probably not), ..if this is your mind set, you will end up as a

frustrated Barbershopper with no pleasurable memories to cherish.

Not winning doesn't mean that the performers were not doing the best they could. They obviously performed to the best of their ability on that particular night. Consider the fact that it's all performers are responsible for the final result.

"Winning" takes place by the knowledge that you entertained the audience, recognize your contribution to the performance and accept the results. To give up, blame others etc., is unacceptable and labels you a quitter, or even worse, someone with talent who is not willing to put in the effort.

True "winning" comes when you perform to the best of your ability, accept your current stage of development and recognize what you need to do to improve.

The personal benefits of competing as a quartet or chorus member far exceed the momentary glory of finishing first in a contest. To the individual who performs to the best of his ability, goes the inner satisfaction of what he personally accomplished. An empty victory awaits the "leaner" who finished first, but knows he failed to perform to his true potential.

Another factor to be considered is the joy and exaltation you receive by winning the audience. An experience that far surpasses anything you might get from a trophy. Good comedy quartets can identify with

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### Attitude Adjustment, Cont.

this: Take the Roadrunners, Night Howls, Ham-N-Rry, Music Makers, and Gay Ninety's quartets..

With the exception of the Roadrunners, none of these quartets ever won a contest but they often left with the admiration of the audience.!!

The VALUE of competition is that it serves to measure your personal (chorus) growth and directs you to the skills needed to advance to the next level. This results in greater personal satisfaction for you, your chorus, and a higher degree of personal connection with the audience.

If you want to make use of your potential, consider that competing with a chorus or quartet can fulfill most of the needs expressed in Maslow's Hierachy of Human Needs: Joy, self-elteem, belonging, achievement and self-expression.

Finally, take responsibility for your own performance. This more than anything else, leads to improvement!! A willingness to work on the tough spots to the best of one's ability leads to a feeling of accomplishment.

One final thought from The Inner Game of Music: A major key to remember is... "do not allow the inner critic to run your life".

### Board Meeting Highlights



Many of you already know that your new Hilltop Chapter board wasted no time after August 1<sup>st</sup> elections in having a marathon 5 hour planning meeting. Basically each board member is working on a set of goals and "milestones" which are markers with which we can monitor our progress.

Monthly meetings will continue, as will additional quarterly planning and review meetings. Between these sessions, each member of the board has agreed to a boatload of tasks that will drive us toward our goals.

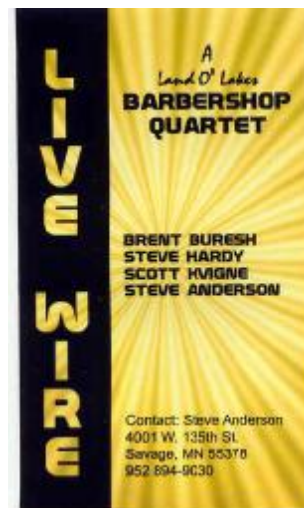
To meet these goals, each board member will invite you as a GNU member to help reach new heights by

participating in ways of your choice. However, don't wait for the invitation! If you imagine that your talents might fit with certain "department", then feel free to approach the corresponding board member via e-mail or in person. There are plenty of tasks to go around – remember many hands make light work.

There is a great deal of effort being placed on finding creative funding to help finance our future.

This means that all avenues for this venture need to be considered. What might you do in this regard? Certainly we want to encourage you to bring in new members, sell more tickets, find more show opportunities, sell more ads, find employer matching funds, and so on. The time is now to get on that thinking cap. Your board is listening. Nearly everyone can do something, either in the form of a single effort or in an ongoing commitment of time and energy for the cause.

There is too much to mention in this article, but suffice it to say that we will keep you informed; in this newsletter, during chapter meetings and via e-mails.



### Board Members for 2002 - 2003

President:	Roger Meyer
Music Vice President:	Scott Kvigne
Membership Vice President:	Jim Higgins
Marketing Vice President:	Steve Aldrich
	(Dave Speidel – Temporary)
Fund Development Vice President:	Harvey Berwin
Chorus Manager Vice President:	Kent Erlandson
Secretary:	Corey Hanson
Treasurer & Immediate past President:	John Babbs
Members-at-large:	Dave Miller, Daryl Morteck, Dan Schroeder

## And, the GNU BOTY Award goes to...

Well-deserved Congratulations go out to Kent Erlandson who is GNU Barbershopper of the Year for 2002. He is our faithful and hard working Chorus Manager Vice President.

Before every rehearsal, every performance, and every contest, it is Kent who has given his all to arrange each logistical detail. This means that we always have the required risers, lighting, dressing rooms, rehearsal rooms, seats at International, hotel rooms, and on and on, till every minute detail has been arranged. His job possibly takes more time than any other member. Thus he has been elevated to the title of Vice President.



When you see him please give him a pat on the shoulder for an untiring and unassuming job extremely well done. And he always does it with a smile! Kent, you are competence extraordinare! (Not to mention one of the consistently best faces on the risers!)

CONGRATULATIONS.

## Innovation Represents “Barbershop” at The World Choral Symposium

David Bailey-Aldrich

My quartet, Innovation, was honored to be asked to participate in The Sixth World Choral Symposium on Friday and Saturday, August 2-3. The World Choral Symposium is a week-long Triennial (every 3 years) event that includes choral organizations from around the



world. This year, it was held in Minneapolis, MN. This is the first year that this event has been hosted in the US.

To open the Symposium, the organizers had planned a concert of American choral music of all different styles. The performers included Chanticleer, The Boys Choir of Harlem, The Minnesota Chorale, a Native American

singer singing the Lakota Flag Song, a vocal Jazz group and the Excelsior Gospel choir, along with the Minnesota Orchestra. The venue was Orchestra Hall in downtown Minneapolis, which is one of the premier halls in the country (and perhaps the world) for musical acoustics.

Paul Wigley, Director of the Minneapolis Commodores, was asked by the organizer of the event to come up with a barbershop quartet to sing as part of the concert. We were very honored when Paul asked us to participate.

The organizers wanted traditional Barbershop, and they needed three minutes, so we put together a medley of "Wait 'Til the Sun Shines Nellie" and "Sweet and Lovely" from the Polecat book.

What a great experience to be a part of such a wonderful concert. We were honored to represent the Barbershop Society



*Singing Coach, Tony Derosa, at a recent GNU rehearsal*

## Roger Meyer President? - Why That Guy?

You may ask, who's this Roger Meyer that we just elected President of the chapter. He's always just stood over there at the end of the second row singing his part and all of sudden he's president. What's he ever done



for the chapter besides make occasional announcements about subjects that I can't even remember?

Those certainly are valid observations and concerns.

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*Roger Meyer, Chapter President*



**Roger Meyer, Cont.**

Let me tell you a little bit about my barbershop background. I've been singing Barbershop since the mid 60's when I joined the Peninsula Chapter in California in order to overcome my shyness of public speaking. Since then I've sung with the San Diego Sun Harbor chorus where I was President in 1978 and with the Minneapolis Commodores where I was President in 1980. I served as the Hilltop Chapter's first President when we started way back in the mid 80's.

I'm quite proud to have sung in all 16 consecutive International Contests AND Land O' Lakes District Contests with the Great Northern Union.

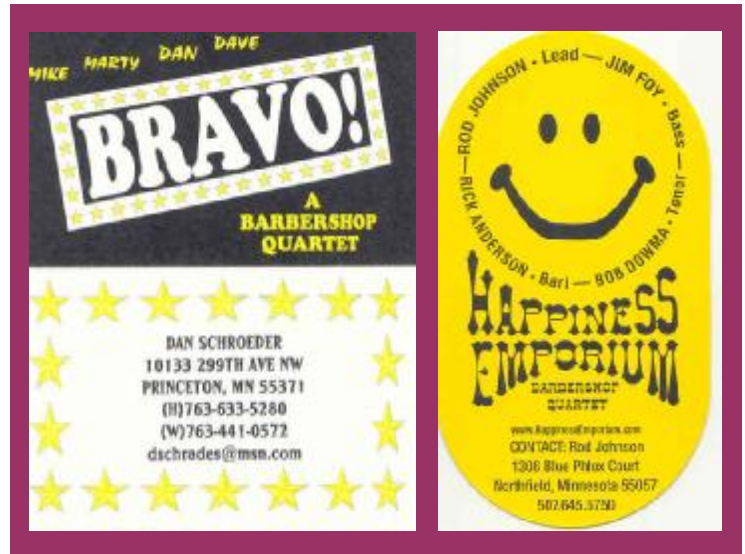
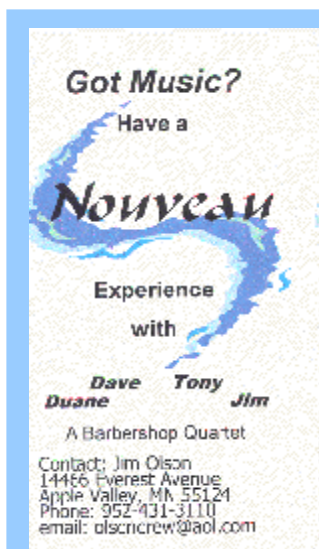
I've sung in numerous quartets over the years. Although we never scored very high in any contest, my quartets always were thrilled just to make it as mike testers for the Saturday night show. We had fun; and it was exciting. I highly recommend the experience to everyone!

I'm retired now, but my career spanned over 40 years in the computer industry where I was a programmer and manager. I started programming at Control Data in 1961 and spent nearly 30 years with them moving to locations like Seattle, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Minneapolis.

My work background led me to help the Society start to use computers back in the 80's. I wrote the Society's first computerized contest-scoring system. As a result of that project, I served on about 10 consecutive International Contest panels. During those years, I traveled to the 4 corners of the US to teach Secretary Judges how to use computers and the scoring system.

I'm presently a Contest Administrator judge and travel around the country judging division, district and international contests. Theresa and I just got back from Anchorage where I judged the Evergreen District's Fall Contest.

Next time, I'll talk about some of my ideas for my tenure as President. For now, suffice it to say that your board is being diligent. They have written individual work plans, and have given myself and their peers updates as to how they have already progressed. Many of these tasks require long term dedication, all in the name of helping the chapter achieve loftier goals.



**Performances!**

The chorus performed recently at 3 church services; St. Andrews in Mahtomedi, Mount Olivet in Minneapolis and United Church of Christ in St. Paul.



GNU at St. Andrews

On August 11, 2002 on a large and lovely campus in Mahtomedi, GNU was invited to sing for all three services of Sunday worship at the St. Andrews Lutheran Church.

The newly restored antique pipe organ was magnificent, and Bill Chouinard, the immensely talented organist, is the son of one of our members, John Chouinard.

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**Performances, Cont.**

Everyone in attendance was uplifted by all of the music of the morning, which included enthusiastic congregational singing, that wonderful organ, and of course Great Northern Union, who sang five numbers.

As with all of our Sunday invitations, we are grateful for the opportunity to perform for new audiences and to enjoy their fine music and hospitality.

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On Sunday September 8th, the chorus sang for GNU member, Pastor Dan VanderPloeg's United Church of Christ on St. Paul's Summit Avenue. It is also the occasional home of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra who loves the acoustics in that sanctuary.

There was a lot of music throughout the service, including another wonderful pipe organ and enthusiastic congregational singing. Pastor Dan effectively weaved the sermon around the music and the GNU.

Prayers were offered in memory of September 11 after which the chorus sang "God Bless America", and then ended the service with "Irish Blessing".



*GNU (and the pipe organ) at United Church of Christ*

Coincidentally it was also the day of observance of 42 years of wedded bliss for Anita and Dan. Can it be possible for two who are still so young? Congratulations!

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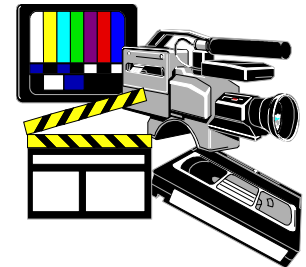
Mount Olivet is a large and beautiful gothic-style church; where their members admit to being traditional and conservative. This means that they are not used to applauding very much. But applaud they did for the Great Northern Union, so that was a bonus to a very pleasant morning on Sunday, August 25.

This church is reported to be the largest Lutheran congregation in North America, and our chorus has been privileged to sing for them on several occasions.

Thanks also to Dave Spiedel, Marketing VP, for setting up these paid opportunities. Watch the calendar for more opportunities to sing, earn a little money for the chorus and most of all, have fun!

**Lights, Camera, Sing!**

A big thank you to Darryl MorteK for video taping all coaching sessions and making a stage presence learning video for our contest numbers



Albin Brad Daryl Tom

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## Members; Get to know 'em!

### Meet Art VanDeWater, one of our newest members

My name is Art VanDeWater and I sing baritone. I have lived in Winona, Minnesota since 1967. My wife of 16 years, Roxie and I have a 13-year-old daughter, Lindsay. We are a fairly musical family; my wife plays and teaches piano. She also plays bari sax and flute. My daughter plays piano, alto sax and dabbles with the flute. I play piano, guitar and banjo.



Besides music, my other interests include model railroading and downhill skiing.

In 1998, I retired from 31 years of teaching mathematics at Winona State University.

'tho I am a life member of SPEBSQSA, first joining in 1956, I am brand new to the GNU. Previously, I belonged to the Hiawatha Valley Chorus in Winona, the Music Men in Rochester, the New Dixie Harmony Brigade in Columbia, SC, and the Whalers in South Hampton, NY. From 1968 to 73 I sang baritone in the Misterssippis with Bruce Odell, Mike Hengel and the late Gordie Selke. I also directed the Steamer City (Winona) Chapter of Sweet Adelines for 11 years.

I was attracted to the GNU because I wanted to be part of a chorus that sang well. I believe excellence in singing challenges and attracts others. Like others that commute, I feel the round trip mileage to rehearsals is minimized by what I take away from each rehearsal. It is a privilege to be part of such a great organization

### Get Acquainted With Cleon Wahlin

After growing up in Afton, Cleon now lives in Golden Valley. He has 2 brothers and one sister. He is married to Cheryl. and has two young adult daughters from a first marriage. One daughter plays viola; the other one is a composer.



He works as a computer analyst for Northwest Airlines.

Music has always been a part of Cleon's life: As a child, he took piano; in high school, he was in the chorus and was President of that organization.

Cleon began barbershopping in the St. Croix chapter in 1995 and then transferred to GNU in 1998. For a few years he sang lead with a quartet called "Spirits of Harmony". Cleon is hoping to find another 3 guys for a quartet experience. So if you might be interested contact him!

He says that he expected and likes the higher level of commitment and the associated challenges of the GNU experience. Cleon recruited Steve Nolte into GNU, as they both work for the same company

As for stepping up to additional roles with chapter, Cleon will be helping the Chorus Manager with International duties.

### Who is John Chouinard?

John Chouinard, lead, was born and raised in SW Minneapolis and now lives in Wyoming Township north of Forest Lake.



He played coronet in high school and sang in various choral groups and choirs. Bob Spong (original baritone for Happiness Emporium) recruited John in 1968 to sing with the Commodores. Three months later he was in a quartet singing tenor. Throughout the past 34 years John has sung in 5 registered quartets, and two

groups specifically organized to perform in Music Man productions.

He currently sings with his oldest son, Joe, plus Jim and Matt Hall (Croix Chordsmen) in the father/son quartet Relative Pitch. John and his wife, Joan (who studied piano) have 6 adult children: 5 with music degrees, all 6 involved in music performance, They have 8 grandchildren, 3 in music so far!

John was attracted to the GNU after attending a show and a couple rehearsals. He enjoys the quality of singing and professionalism in the organization plus the fact that he has lots of barbershopping friends in the GNU





**The Great Northern Union Chorus Bulletin  
Hilltop Chapter, S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc.**

**Steve Anderson, B.E.  
4001 W 135<sup>th</sup> St.  
Savage, MN 55378**

The Great Northern Union Chorus meets every Thursday from 7:00pm to 10:00pm, at the Greater Minneapolis Jewish Community Center, 4330 Cedar Lake Road in St. Louis Park. Driving North on Hwy. 100 take Cedar Lake Rd. exit and follow to end; driving south, take 394 W, exit on Park Place, which runs in to Cedar Lake Rd. The telephone number at rehearsals is 952-377-8330. "Early-Bird" rehearsals are held at 6:00pm for practicing S.P. moves. Members are urged to call the GNU Hotline at 651-643-4468 weekly for the latest word on rehearsals, performances, and other pertinent information. Also find us on the web at [www.gnunion.com](http://www.gnunion.com)



*Teach the Children to Sing*