



International Medalist
GREAT NORTHERN UNION
CHORUS



HILLTOP CHAPTER • SPEBSQSA

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O' LAKES DISTRICT

Vol. 7 - Issue # 5

GNU's NEWS

December 2002

Great Northern Union Chorus presents

“Great Days!”

Saturday, January 25, 2003 - 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm
 Bethel College - Benson Hall - 3900 Bethel Drive - St. Paul, MN

With Special Guests



Bravo!
 2001 Land o' Lakes
 District Champions



Michigan Jake
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Excaltibur
 International Quartet Finalists

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Great Northern Union Chorus
singing a story of college days

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P.R.I.D.E. How are we doing so far?

Is it just me, or does this chorus really seem to be moving forward at lightning speed? The enthusiasm toward disciplined rehearsals, learning new music, and embracing change has been fantastic and I thank you for that. In the past couple of months, we have learned five new songs, and have already had our first coaching session on the Montreal uptune!



OK, enough patting ourselves on the back. This massive action tells me that we are capable of doing more than we ever thought possible. This is good news, but we really have only scratched the surface of excellence. How do we ensure that we will keep moving forward? Expect more - more from yourselves - more from your peers.

In a recent email to the music team, I mentioned three major areas of improvement I would like to target for the GNU in the ensuing months. They are as follows:

1. Uncompromising, "on the breath," Paul Bunyan-like singing.
2. Attention to word sounds (diphthongs, singable consonants, de-emphasized neutral vowels)
3. Building a bigger bass section.

The first two areas are fundamentals and really should be second nature to a chorus of this caliber. We will get there through awareness, repetition and by training ourselves to accept nothing but the best sound. The third item is something that each of us can also work on.

Think of all the great bass singers who are missing out on the GNU experience and give them a call!

As we approach the Christmas season I have been thinking about all of the blessings in my life, and the Great Northern Union is certainly high on my list of those. I am thankful for the opportunity to work with such fine singers every week and also for the chance to grow as a musician and director. In our short time together, I have enjoyed getting to know many of you and I hope to develop more friendships in the coming years. I wish you and yours a most blessed Christmas!!

Pete Benson
Director GNU



What's This New President All About ?

Roger Meyer, GNU President

In the last issue, I promised you some words about my ideas for making the chapter achieve new heights.

Two key concepts for our success as a chapter are organization and strategic, long-range planning.

Organization is the separation of objects, ideas, people, etc. into smaller groups and then setting directions and goals for each group. And it is iterative; if the first level groups are still too large or too diverse then organize them into a second level of smaller groups. This process provides a way to focus; to accomplish what is deemed important; perhaps to accomplish even that which seems impossible.

Strategic long-range thinking is the backbone of guiding the organization to achieve its long term goals and objectives. It involves the ability to think long term; to see goals and objectives that may not be achievable for 3 to 5 years; and to see the major steps needed to achieve those long-term directions.

Organizing the Hilltop Chapter Board of Directors is a daunting task. However, I've asked each Board member to put together a list of committees to help him with his responsibilities. Then within each of those committees, the Board members are selecting chapter members to help on that committee. Finally, each committee will elect/appoint a committee chair. And soon we're going to see the first meeting of these committees.

Examples of what we have accomplished so far include the 12-Month Planner, the GNU Picture Roster, the electronically distributed GNU's NEWS, the weekly e-mails of rehearsal schedules and GNU's Notes.

Long range, strategic planning requires something to be written down. Because it is long range, it's easy to forget especially when we get wrapped up solving day-to-day operational problems. So each Board member has developed his own personal plan. Those plans have been compiled into a book titled, "Hilltop Chapter (Great Northern Union) FY 2003 Annual Plan". Each person's plan includes the following sections: Office, Responsibilities, Strengths, Weaknesses, Goals, Committees/Possible Members, Milestones, & Budget. The book is now at revision 7. Our next task is to develop a tracking chart for monitoring progress. If anyone would like to review these plans, let me know.

A lot of other work will go into making the next 9 months a success.



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.

Emotions: Let them take over

Barry Clapper, Society Presentation Judge

Ist, Let me say that it is a musical thrill to be singing with the GNU and I am honored to be part of it.

As most of you already know, I am a presentation judge and have been certified for 18 years. You are all fairly educated as to what goes into this category, however, I would like to add some thoughts that might help you understand a bit better.

Ist, the presentation judge really gets the best of everything. He gets to enjoy the total performance both vocally and visually. He listens and watches to observe the performers understanding of the song or songs being sung. If the performer is "singing" well, it certainly adds to the enjoyment of the audience. If the performer has chosen the kind of songs that bring out the best of the group, the audience will certainly recognize and appreciate it. Of course, in this style called "barbershop", it's the obligation of the group to follow the rules of "arrangement".

I have been blessed to be part of great barbershop singing and also perform in several different "instrumental" combinations; big band jazz, small group jazz, old time bands, and many different "Dixieland" groups. I play the reeds; saxes and clarinet. It's amazing how all these different combinations are working toward the same end. I don't care what the group, we are performing with the goal of **ENTERTAINMENT**.

When we sing a ballad like "There goes my heart", how can you not get totally into it? A song like that demands that you **wear your heart on your sleeve** and let your emotions carry you home. In "Taking a chance on love" there are several demands on your emotions, but the most important is the feeling of the beat, "rhythm". The musical technicians will block it out for those of you with "left brain" thoughts. In the choruse, they talk about emphasizing beats "one and three" or "two and four" but I say let your "right brain" take over. Get into the song, let your **whole body** feel the drive and enjoy the moment. Above all, make your commitment to the song and make it artistic. Your audience will reward you for your effort.



Farewell to Innovation

To our LOL extended family

For those of you who do not already know this, Innovation, 2000 LOL District Quartet Champions, has decided to retire. We performed for the last time at the ADC show in Fargo and what a wonderful reception we received.

Unfortunately, the demands of school, career and family



just became too much for me to balance along with the demands of a successful quartet. I had too many good things going on, and something had to give. I want to state publicly that I have never met a more generous, hard working, fun group of guys than Tom Matchinsky, Jim Barloon, Tom Puent and Jim Emery, and I have cherished every minute singing with each of them.

On behalf of Innovation, I would like to say thank you to each and every one of you for all of the support you have given us over the last four years. We have had nothing but wonderful experiences singing at conventions, on numerous chapter shows, and also as faculty at the two most recent mini-HEP schools in Clear Lake, Canada.

We would also like to personally thank all of our coaches, especially Paul Wigley, Tony DeRosa, Brent Graham, Roger Stanfield and Dwain Brobst. It was an honor to work with each of these wonderfully talented teachers, and we are better for it both musically and personally.

Please accept our sincere thanks, and know that we were deeply honored to represent you.

Respectfully yours,

David Bailey-Aldrich
Lead - Innovation
2000 LOL District Quartet Champions
Hilltop MN Chapter

Guest Coach

On December 5, we had the pleasure of working with Greg Volk, prestigious arranger of "That's a Plenty" currently being worked on for Montreal International Contest.

His coaching has propelled us into the next phase of performance, by helping us to interpret this lively piece into horn playing, toe tapping, hand clapping, New Orleans style jazz excitement. He left us with work to do. Remembering some of the basics of what we already know about diphthongs and vowel matching was a main focus.



Greg Volk leads GNU rehearsal of "That's a Plenty"



To each of you, we wish a special Holiday Season. May it be all that you wish for yourself and your loved ones. And for the New Year, 2003, let us each make it a great one, so that we have a healthy and prosperous life along with the best "GNU years"

Roger and Theresa Meyer

Marilyn Setzler Honored

On rehearsal night, November 14, Marilyn Setzler was the guest of honor for her uncommon loyalty and support of GNU. She is now an author of books that spotlight her home area of Carroll, Iowa and has made the decision to move back to that area. Our group wanted to send her off with gratitude for all of her years of good deeds.

She is the widow of long-time member Ron Setzler. Since his death 5 years ago, she has donated many thousands of dollars to the GNU. The most recent donation went to pay for the colored casual shirt uniform.

Roger Meyer introduced Marilyn and told of some her history with barbershopping. She was then presented with a plaque that was made by Bruce Watson. This was followed by a set of three songs from the chorus. At the end of this part of the evening, Marilyn was invited into the fellowship circle of Great Northern Union to experience the overtones and undertones of "Irish Blessing", which, incidentally, was one of the songs which was sung by the same men at Ron's memorial service.



Marilyn will keep in touch and will occasionally make trips back to the Twin Cities. We hope to see her at the Annual Show in January. We all wish her best of everything as she goes on with her full life.

Thanks to the members who all worked together to make the night a big success. Special thanks to John Babbs for bringing soft drinks, Marguerite Bergren for serving cake and Bruce for the plaque.



Marilyn Setzler with the Great Northern Union chorus. May the 'Road Rise to Meet You' Marilyn.

Members; Get to know 'em!

Meet Jim Barloon

Jim lives in Rochester, MN, with Grace, his wife. They have one adult child and two grandchildren. He grew up in a musical family in Iowa. In high school singing competitions, he won first and second place, (three times) singing a different part each time! He is in sales for NW Mutual Life.



For 27 years, Jim has been a part of our barbershop hobby. The past four have been with GNU. He is also a member of the Rochester chapter; and was the District Ethics chairman for 12 years. He was a member of the 1984 LOL District Champion quartet **Special Edition**; and 2000 District Champs **Innovation**.

His aim in joining GNU was to find a great quartet. While he searched, he got hooked on the perfection for which this chorus is striving. So, like several others, he makes the long drive each week for rehearsal.

Jim relates that his best GNU experience so far was when we were all "in the zone" before, during, and after the International contest singing of "There Goes My Heart".

Ask him sometime to tell you about the terrible farm tractor accident, which he and Grace survived 3 years ago. Time at the Mayo clinic and a difficult rehabilitation has taught them to really appreciate each other and all of life!



Getting Acquainted With Steve Hardy

Who am I? Well, I've been a Barbershopper officially for 24 years and have sung tenor and lead in several quartets and choruses. It's been a way of life, more than a hobby, for what seems like a very short time in some ways and forever in others.



I joined the society with the **Minnetonka Clippers** and went to the **Commodores**. I attended some of the early meetings of the GNU before they chartered, and joined shortly afterwards.

Quartets? It seems like I've almost always been in one. I've enjoyed them all, and some of the members may be familiar to you. My first quartet was called **Tin Pan Alley**. The next was **For Goodness Sakes**: Gary Rogness from Downstate Express, Ron Nelson from Grandstand and Harmony Galore Four, Greg Dolphin (singing tenor) from Excalibur. I also sang with the **Ring of Gold** for 3 years with Barry Clapper, Dick Treptow (Harmony Galore Four), and Rip Kirby where I appeared on the International quartet stage twice finishing 25th both times ... I think.


I sang for 10 years with a non-society gospel quartet called the **Goodtime Gospel Quartet**, which included Judd Orff of Talk of the Town and Jerry Helgren of Corporate Image and Grin and Tonics fame. Later Jerry, Dave Speidel, Keith Fransen and I would sing together as **Reprise**. In between, I sang with Rod Johnson (everybody knows him!), Ron Nelson (again), and Dick Treptow (again ... he was also in Tin Pan Alley briefly) in **Imagination**.

I'm currently the lead in **Live Wire**, 2002 District Novice Champions. It's been a privilege to sing with them all. Thanks guys.

On the personal side, I'm married with two adult "children," Scott and Ben. My wife of 29 years, Mary Lou, is a schoolteacher for Minneapolis. We met in college where we were both music majors, she in vocal education and me in instrumental education (trumpet.) My other hobby is computers, mostly Macintoshes, which I've had since 1985.

GNU Chapter Quartets

MIKE MARTY DAN DAVE



A BARBERSHOP QUARTET

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ROD JOHNSON • Lead — JIM FOY • Bass
RICK ANDERSON • Bari — BOB DOWNA • Tenor

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952 894-9030

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

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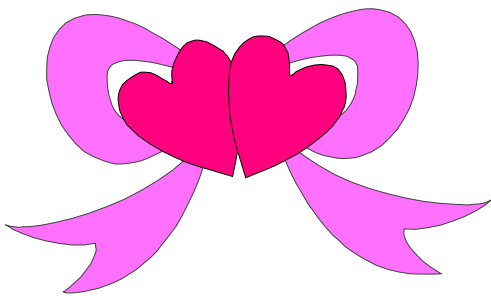
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P.O. BOX 25257, ST. PAUL MN 55125



Valentine's Day is just around the corner! Singing Valentines are great fun, appreciated and raise money for the chorus.



The Roadrunners
(20 Years Ago)

Contact: Rich Slind, P.O. Box 25257, St. Paul, MN 55125
E-mail: roadrunners72@juno.com
Web Site: http://theroadrunners.home.mindspring.com

Help Wanted...

GNU show - Attention members not singing in the show and any spouses or friends –

Your help is needed for one of the following at the show on January 25:

- (1) Selling tapes, CDs, and polo shirts
- (2) Selling Singing Valentines
- (3) Helping with the Afterglow.

For the afterglow, we need help at 6:00 PM for placing tablecloths, arranging chairs, making coffee, setting out cookies; and later for replenishing during the festivities.

Please RSVP to Meyers, or sign up at rehearsal.

Many thanks!

Needed, Afterglow Refreshments - Sandwiches will be provided; and we are asking if members or their spouses could bring **cookies or bars** for the afterglow.

Sign-up sheets are at rehearsal or notify Meyer's.



Coming Events

- ◆ **GNU Annual Show** – January 25, 2003
Benson Hall, Bethel College
- ◆ **Guest Night** – February 6, 2003
- ◆ **Singing Valentines** – February 14, 2003
- ◆ **Mason's Performance** – February 15, 2003
- ◆ **Southwest Div. Contest** – March 15, 2003
- ◆ **10,000 Lakes Div. Contest** – May 3, 2003
- ◆ **Garage Sale** – May 3, 2003

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 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

