



# International Medalist GREAT NORTHERN UNION CHORUS



HILLTOP CHAPTER • SPEBSQSA

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O' LAKES DISTRICT

Vol. 8 - Issue #4

## GNU's NEWS

June 2003

### 2003 Show of Champions

Please bring all of your friends to the annual pre-International show. As in recent past, it will be at the **Eden Prairie Performing Arts Center (at the High School), 7:30 PM, Saturday, June 14.** Since the show will be held the night before Father's Day, and many of you are fathers, why don't you take advantage of your fatherly privilege and spend the weekend as you wish - with us!

Joining us in Montreal and on the show will be qualifying district quartets, **Excalibur, Breakpoint, & Bravo!** and International Quartet Champion, **Happiness Emporium.**

And speaking of Happiness Emporium, they have invited The GNU to participate in the annual Gospel show in Montreal. Come to the Show of Champions and hear some of those great Gospel songs we will be singing.

With this stellar line up, you can see that your friends and neighbors will not be disappointed!

What a bargain at \$12.00. Contact **Bob Cannella** for tickets (651.454.4459) or come early as we were sold out for last years show.



**Bravo!**



**Happiness Emporium**



**Excalibur**



**Breakpoint**

**CHAPTER LEADERS**

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**The Director's Cut**



Just three rehearsals away until Montreal, YIKES! That's the reality, folks, and it's time to make hay. I appreciate your hard work and willingness to do some unfortunate last minute cramming. It is no secret that we are behind choreographically for a variety of reasons. We must now focus on what we need to do over the next few weeks in order to make it all work. We must all rise to the occasion.

What can you do?

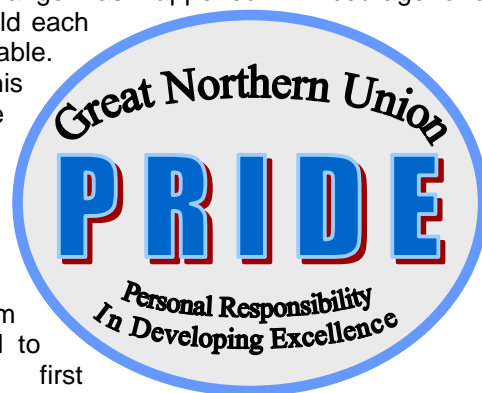
1. Do a run-through of the set daily with choreography.

This is the only sure way to get it into your "muscle memory". It's not a matter of knowing the moves and being able to do them, but rather to be able to fully contribute to the sound of the chorus while be involved in the music and doing the moves. Not an easy task, and not one that will be accomplished in the remaining three rehearsals alone. You MUST work on your own. I can wave my arms, coach, and remind you of the plan until I'm blue in the face, but unless the choreography is second nature, it is to no avail.

2. Be Personally Responsible for Developing Excellence! (PRIDE)

Study and own the dynamic and interpretive plan. Don't wait until the third note of the phrase before you realize that a color change has happened. Encourage one another and hold each other accountable.

We're all in this group because we expect to be held to a higher standard, right?



I for one am looking forward to my very first appearance on the International chorus contest stage. Whether this is your first or seventeenth, let's make it the best.

Sincerely,  
PETE

## Presidents Corner

At the end of July we will be at the close of another Hilltop chapter fiscal year. Each of your board members began the year by writing up a plan; for months now they have been working toward their stated goals. There will be a great many tasks to be accomplished as the chapter continues on the multi-year plan.



May I hereby invite you to think at what capacity you can help out in the next fiscal year? The next president and the next board will certainly welcome additional help. Let me expound on that for a moment. There are multi-year plans emanating from the music team; as well as the "business" team. It has been my job to organize the board members ("business" team) into writing their short and long term plans, and then having them provide progress as we have gone through the year.

We have some very capable guys with some very lofty goals. Revenue enhancement (in all its various forms) has been our focus. Grant procurement, show procurement, ad sales, ticket sales, garage sale, CD & logo sales, are some of the ways we have added to the coffers. There is a lot to do over the next few years. That's why I ask for your help for possible board positions for the new fiscal year; or as key members of various committees. Many hands make lighter work.

Like groups of any size, we need to organize many items on the business side. The ball is rolling and gathering momentum. Please help the team during the next year.

Lastly, we have re-established the annual tradition of an Awards Banquet, and official installation of new officers. We will take that opportunity to make it an occasion to also honor our spouses and other significant others. This year the banquet will take place on Saturday September 13, at Mystic Lake Banquet Area. All members, active and inactive, and special friends and guests are invited. Be sure to let us know by September 1st if you are coming.

Thank you for your support!  
Roger Meyer, President, GNU

## Division and Prelims Contests

For those of you who didn't make it, this weekend's 10,000 Lakes Division and LOL District International Preliminaries quartet contests were a great success. I was very proud of Hilltop's contribution of competitors to both quartet contests. As quartet after quartet was announced, it seemed like every one of them was from Hilltop!

In the 10,000 Lakes Division contest, the GNU had eight quartets competing and the first eight places all went to the Hilltop quartets! The Division contest hardware also went to Hilltop foursomes as Nouveau won the Division championship and PRISM won the Division Novice championship.

Continued on Page 4



*10,000 Lakes Division Champs Nouveau*



*10,000 Lakes Division Novice Champs - Prism*



*Apex at Division Contest*

## Contest, Cont. from page 3

Hilltop is sending 8 quartets to the LOL District contest this fall. According to the advanced rankings by division score, 5 of the top 6 seeded quartets have Hilltop members.

Also, both of the International qualifying quartets, **Bravo!** and **Breakpoint** are Hilltop quartets, as is **Excalibur**, who qualified out of District. Another Hilltop quartet, **Harmonyworks**, just missed qualifying for Montreal by 7 points out of over 1800.

Despite all the hard work the GNU invests in our chorus activities, it is clear that quarteting is alive and very well in Hilltop!

Congratulations to all the competitors this weekend. We thank each one of you for representing our chapter so well.--Jim

Jim Emery  
Singing Judge  
Hilltop, MN  
MSP quartet  
Great Northern Union Chorus



## Division Placement

The Division Contest was full of Hilltop quartets. Many are competing for the first time. Here is a list of the quartets in order of place at the division contest.

(\*) denotes first contest appearance

### Nouveau

Jim Olson, Tenor  
Tony Blackwood, Lead  
Duane Rigg, Bari  
Dave Boyd, Bass

### Live Wire

Brent Buresh, Tenor  
Steve Hardy, Lead  
Scott Kvigne, Bari  
Steve Anderson, Bass

### \*Apex

Keith Olson, Tenor  
Jim Larson, Lead  
Tom Puent, Bari  
Steve McDonald, Bass

### \*MSP

Tom Matchinsky – Tenor  
Mike Laurel – Lead  
Jim Emery – Bari  
Steve Case – Bass

### Special Alliance

Dave Wall, Tenor  
Glenn Aronson, Lead  
Doug Miller, Bari  
Lance Johnson, Bass

### Mood Swing

Tom Semple, Tenor  
Brad Berget, Lead  
Albin Peterson, Bari  
Daryl Morteck, Bass

### \*PRISM

Steve Nolte, Tenor  
Cleon Wahlin, Lead  
Alan Matchinski, Bari  
Darren Hoehne, Bass

### \*Highway 52

David Bailey-Aldrich, Tenor (substitute)  
Loring Harrop, Lead  
Jeff Aldrich, Bari  
Jim Barloon, Bass

## Duluth Weekend

After a relaxing drive to Duluth in sunny and warm spring weather, some of us met for an early supper. We began the weekend rehearsals at 7:00pm when our judge candidate **Tom Matchinsky** proceeded with his warm-ups.

Tony Derosa and Dwain Brobst led us through a phenomenal weekend towards a stellar performance in Montreal. The following are some of the "gems" imparted to us: "I like the fullness of sound,... but it needs clarity... in fact we really need a mixture of both." (We are looking for) "clarion sound". "Feed off each other on the top side of the notes" "If we don't push ourselves we won't get full extensions". They gave us plenty to work on. We have our work cut out for us. And it is apparent that each member is committed to do his personal best.



*Warm-ups at the United Church of Christ*



*Dwain Brobst working on emotional involvement*



*Tony Derosa working on sound*

## Weber Hall Show

Weber Hall on the University of Minnesota/Duluth (UMD) campus was our venue for the evening show on Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup>. Known for its unique architecture, and acoustics, Weber Hall was the perfect setting for an evening of Barbershop singing. The Duluth Barbershop chapter sponsored this show as a chorus fund-raiser. They hope to make this an annual event.

## Thank you from the Harbormasters.

All of us enjoyed having the GNU perform at Weber Hall. Thank you for the offer and the commitment to sing for our community. Lots and lots of great comments from folks I've talked with this week – but that doesn't surprise me a bit ... GNU is tops in our territory for sure.

I am convinced it was a good investment in BBS shopping awareness in the community. The chapter has been weak in that department for a few years now. One of my goals as the new director is to sell the BBS shop style to the community through a greater level of enthusiasm, good fun with the singers and good quality music to the public. I think it can be done ... and GNU's show helped us on this "new track"

Please convey my thanks to the rest of the GNU. Looking forward to seeing you next year.

### Bob Linaberry-Charis

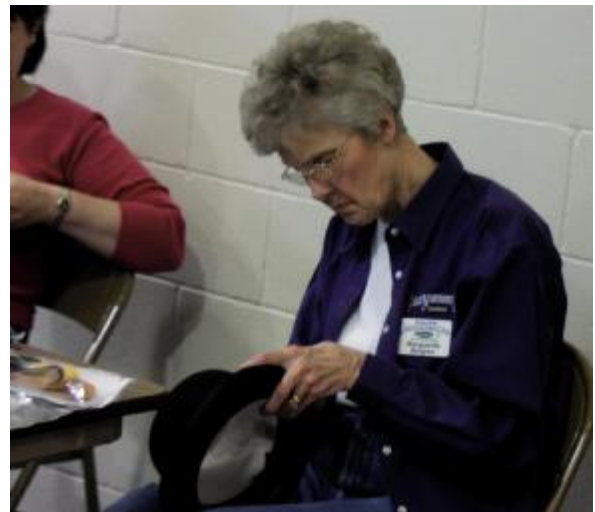
Music Director  
Duluth/Superior Harbormasters

## United Church of Christ, Duluth

Once again we were able to hold our retreat in Duluth at United Church of Christ. Thanks goes to **Dan Vander Ploeg** who used his relationship with the church to obtain the rehearsal space in the lower level of the church. Dan used to be the pastor at United Church of Christ. Our only payment for the space was to sing for the Sunday morning service!



*Judy Olson gave GNU a huge gift when she re-appeared last Thursday to help us hone our presentation skills. Not to spill the beans quite yet but there are some surprises in the presentation category for International. Old friends reading this please stay tuned and please come watch the performance on June 14th.*



*Hard at work! A big thanks to Marguerite Bergren for detailing our derbies with colored ribbon to match our ties.*



## 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.***

Hi guys,

The GNU chorus has been making some good strides in our Montreal preparation. Thanks to all of you for the effort you've invested so far and for the extra effort you'll be investing between now and the end of the month. One particular thing that we haven't seen improvement on yet, however, is maintaining key, especially in "That's A Plenty". I have some thoughts and a personal challenge I'd like to give each of us on that subject. First, there are more ways to go flat than there are singers in the GNU, so identifying the causes can often be very difficult. But awareness of flatting at an individual level is the first step to improvement. (Sounds like a 12-step program, huh?!) It is often the case that an individual singer is simply not aware of his own bad habits and assumes that there must be some other cause for the chorus not holding key. So, how do you tell if you're part of the solution or part of the problem? Try the following exercise at home. It may be enlightening.



the following exercise at home. It may be enlightening.

That's A Plenty ----

Play the initial key of the song: Blow a D on your pitch pipe or play a D on your piano or keyboard. (D is the white key between the two black keys.) Sing your part from the beginning to the end. (You can surely sing your own part to the entire song without help by now.) Play the final key of the song: Blow an F on your pitch pipe or play an F on the piano. (F is the white key just to the left of the three black keys.) Were you in this key when you ended? If so, congratulations!

If not, then you know you're at least part of the problem. If you didn't end up in the right key, the next step is to find out where you are losing pitch. The easiest way to do that is to do the above exercise with each section of the song. As a guide, you can take the following keys as reference points for the indicated measures. These aren't necessarily your notes. They are the keys your notes should fit into. Start at one point and sing to the next point and see if you're still on key when you get

there. If not, then the section you just sang needs personal attention to maintaining key.

Intro ("Once you really start...") - D Chorus, Measure 1 ("That's a plenty...") - D Chorus, Measure 17 ("It takes you down...") - C Chorus, Measure 33 ("You're gonna get mellow...") - Bb Chorus, Measure 49 ("Once you start you're...") - D Chorus, Measure 65 ("You're gonna blow that horn...") - D Chorus, Measure 77 ("Listen to the tenor...") - C Chorus, Measure 89 ("joint gets a jumpin'...") - Bb Stomp, Measure 105 ("Once you really start...") - F Tag, Measure 111 (bass solo) - F End, Measure 118 - F 7.

For example, blow a D and sing the intro up through the first measure of the chorus. Blow another D (see above). Are you still in key? If not, go back and sing the intro again until you can end up still in D when you get to the chorus. Do this for each section. When you can sing every section and maintain key properly, go back and try a couple sections at a time. Or, if you're really confident, sing the whole song top to bottom again and see how you do. 8. If you had problems making it through the whole song without losing the key, practice this at home every day until you can do it consistently.

If you'd like to try this same exercise on "All Alone", it's considerably easier. The entire song is in F. Blow F on your pitch pipe or play it on your piano or keyboard. Start anywhere and stop anywhere. Are you still in the key of F? If so, good job. If not, go back and find where you're losing pitch. If you can sing the whole song top to bottom and stay in F, you're part of the solution! Thanks for the effort, guys! If each one of us can sing both songs without flatting, it's a slam dunk that the chorus as a whole can do it, too. If you have trouble with the above process, feel free to corner me at any rehearsal. I'll be glad to help you any way I can.

Jim Emery, Singing Judge, Hilltop, MN

### The New Hotline #



**763-476-7383**

## Members; Get to know 'em

My name is **Don Russell**. My part in this WONDERFUL SOCIETY is BARITONE! Recently, my wife Chaque and I moved to Eden Prairie, MN. from Long Beach, CA. Prior to that, we lived in Fredrick, MD and Houston, TX.

I have two daughters are both grown. One is married, living in Texas with her husband and son. She is due to have her second son shortly after Montreal. My second daughter is finishing her Masters degree in Physical Therapy at the Univ. of Florida.

I work for a company called Bechtel. We are expanding the cellular system for AT&T Wireless throughout the region.

I started singing Barbershop in 1996 in Texas. I first heard barbershop in 1977 at a show. (Unfortunately, nobody ever came up to me to talk. I would have jumped at getting involved then.) I have sung with the Spring, Texas **Statesmen Chorus**. While I was assigned in the New Orleans area, I had took opportunity to sing with the New Orleans and Baton Rouge Choruses as a visitor.

We moved to Fredrick, MD after coming back from overseas, and I joined the **Catoctone Chorus**. We were the MAD Small Chorus Champs, and sang at the Buckeye Invitational. My company has had me on the road for the past year and a half. I just left Southern California, where I am an inactive member of the **Masters of Harmony** in Santa Fe Springs, CA. Unfortunately, I did not have the chance to get a medal with them due to my timing.

Now, as an active member of GNU, I will have the chance to sing on the International stage for the first time ever. (There are many barbershoppers who NEVER have the chance to do that.) I also plan to win a medal this year. I am so proud to be a member of this chorus.

I am in a registered quartet in Fredrick, MD (**Deja Blues**) Obviously, I don't get to sing with them very often.

I was advised by a lot of really great guys in California that I should come and get with the Greatest Chorus in the area, and I think that I have made a good move. (Getting used to all this "Leena and Ole" stuff, though, is going to take some getting used to!)

*Recently, the Bloomington Chapter held a pickup comedy quartet contest. Here is Bob Griffith (in the yellow hair) having some fun.*



## Meet Bob Griffith

My name is **Bob Griffith**, and I sing bari with GNU, and lead with the Commodores. I have lived in Bloomington since I married my wife, Pat, in 1961.

We have three daughters, and two grandchildren.

I worked for 3M Co. for 37 years until my retirement in 1993. My latest position at 3M was senior research and production service specialist.

My musical background has mostly been singing barbershop and in church choirs, although I did play piano in a small dance combo while I was in college.

I have been a barbershopper since early 1964, and have been in GNU almost 4 years.

I started barbershopping in the **Bloomington** chapter and switched to the Minneapolis **Commodores** where I have been a member since 1979. I am currently lead section leader in the Commodores and the **BOTY** recipient in 1992. I have attended Harmony College several times, and have taken advanced courses in musical arranging.

I have been in several quartets most notably "**The Hillcresters**" (1966-1968), "**The Knights of Harmony**" (1968-1988), and "**Grandma's Beaus**" (1988-2001). During that time I sang with Mike Stump and Merrill Miller from 1966-1999. The Knights of Harmony headlined two European barbershop tours in 1972 and 1978, and sang singing TV commercials for Coast to Coast Hardware in 1984 and 1985, appearing in 19 market areas. Grandma's Beaus had the good fortune of winning the **International Seniors Quartet Championship** in 1990. I would love to find three other guys to form a new seniors quartet for competition.

I was particularly attracted to GNU in the summer of 1999 when I attended a coaching session with Joe Connelly and discovered the high degree of commitment GNU had towards musical excellence.








Once again "Mirror Sessions" have begun in earnest. Lots of exciting Choreography to be polished



Random Acts of Choreography!

## Hilltop Chapter Quartets

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

**Before we go...**

*GNU performing at prelims in Plymouth*

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. Diving 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](http://www.gnunion.com)