



International Medalist GREAT NORTHERN UNION CHORUS



HILLTOP CHAPTER • SPEBSQSA

10,000 LAKES DIVISION – LAND O' LAKES DISTRICT

Vol. 9 - Issue #1

GNU's NEWS

January 2004

Something's Comin'

Have you marked your calendar for January 24?

Saturday, January 24th is the Great Northern Union Chorus' annual show. The theme "Something's Comin'" promises a show packed with the awesome sounds of the GNU – this year singing many gospel and inspiring songs.

Show times are at 1:00pm and 7:30pm.

Once again, the show will be held at the beautiful and acoustically marvelous Benson Great Hall at Bethel College in Arden Hills, MN.



Nouveau – 2003 District Champions



Four Voices – 2002 International Champions



Bravo! 2000 District Champions

Joining The Great North Union as featured guests: Bravo!, the 2000 District Champions, Nouveau, the current LOL District Champions, and everyone's favorite, The Happiness Emporium, the 1975 International Champions.

As an added treat, "Four Voices" the youthful 2002 International Champion quartet from Tennessee will be performing.

Please invite all of your family, friends and neighbors, to an musical experience for all ages. Good seats are still available. Call **Bob Cannella** at **651-454-4459** and please ask about attractive **group** rates.

If you are from out of town, discounted hotel rooms are available. Call the Holiday Inn at 651-636-4123 or the Day's Inn at 651-636-6370. To get the lower rate, just mention the Great Northern Union.

Something's Comin'..... Don't miss it!

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The Director's Cut

Keeping the Momentum

After coming off a musical high like the District contest in Rochester, it is a real challenge to try and maintain that level of intensity all the way through the annual show. Three major holidays falling on rehearsal nights, family commitments, and a seasonal decline in attendance are certainly factors that can seem to work against us. Not to mention that through all of this we are also learning a ton of new music, while trying to sell ads and tickets to the show.



Through experience, I know that by show time we will once again be at a peak level of performance. The GNU is "notorious" for pulling things together when the heat is on. The key is going to be to consciously keep the momentum going from the time we walk off the stage at Bethel to the time we walk on stage in Louisville! Is it possible? Yes, but it won't happen by accident. It's up to you, "the core" of the GNU.

What can you do?

Spread the word! Make some calls. Recruit, recruit, recruit. Our window of opportunity to bring in singers for International is very small. Now is the time. Do you still have your list of names? The guest night would be an excellent time to re-invite them.

Continue to encourage one another by maintaining an atmosphere of excellence in rehearsals. Remember, peer pressure is your friend! Lead by example.

Be prepared. Work on your performance outside of rehearsal. When it's time to be off the music, don't be the guy still using the music.



Remember what it feels like to give a "Rochester Performance" and rehearse that way all the time. Why would you want to give any less?

PETE

Presidents Corner

As we approach our January show, we all realize that we have experienced some excellent musical growth during this past year. There is more to come! **"Fun through musical excellence"**, what a great motto for our chorus!

We have learned to start singing through the "model". When we do that we have a wonderful sound. When it becomes second nature, it will be hard to beat!

One of the changes that have happened has



been no minimum rehearsal attendance. I think this is a step in the right direction. Instead of *mandatory* rehearsals, we are evaluated on the quality of our individual performance. We consider ourselves to be "almost" professional. The "privilege" of not having to attend every rehearsal has an accompanying responsibility – know your music, know your presentation plan and be prepared all the way around. Be able to perform like a professional. Some of us have family and other duties that might keep us from some rehearsals. This is of course, understandable. When I miss a rehearsal, I must put in extra time in at-home practice. Most of us must do this as well. There are some guys among our ranks that just seem get it "naturally". But do you think they don't work hard at being the best they can? Guess what! They are the very ones who do work even harder. Ideally, it's best to get to the rehearsal every week. The music we are making is sweet, and it's going to get sweeter if we all work to be the best we can be...in and out of rehearsals! Thanks men!

Another exciting thing on the immediate horizon is our upcoming CD. This one can really put us on the Barbershop map in a big way. We'll be recording with Four Voices and Happiness Emporium at Bethel. This is an opportunity we will never have again. The sacred songs and other music that will be on the CD will be an inspiration to all hearing them.

And finally, we must constantly be thinking of adding new good singers to our fold. The key to our success is to get our numbers up by adding excellent singers. Guest night is approaching and as in the past, we need your help in bringing guests who sing well to rehearsal on February 5th.

Jim

Show Time!

Loring Harrop
GNU Marketing VP

I've been a member of SPEBSQSA for over 10 years and I've seen one story after another about how to sell what we do: tickets, ads, membership, singing valentines and so on. My problem is that sales guys write most of these, and I'm not a salesman. I won't pretend to know much about sales but I know what I've observed.

Good salesmen are able to get you involved in a relationship where you feel like you want to work with them. They have you walk away feeling like you got the better deal - and they focus on closing the deal once they've got you.



Not me, I'm too self-conscious for that. Always worried I'm trying to talk someone into something they don't want. Always concerned about being too pushy. Sound familiar to anyone? I would cringe every time 'the annual show' rolled around in because sales pressure always came up. I was under 30, worked as a bartender around other 20-somethings and most of my family lived hours away. How was I going to sell tickets to a 'barbershop' show?! Ugh. On the other hand, I received 10 man-of-note awards in 5 years with the Seaway Commanders. More than half of them for guys under the age of 25. I also managed to sell show tickets. Not lots of 'em, but enough to feel like I did my part without browbeating friends. I'd like to share how I managed.

1. The most important thing for me was to be pleased with what I was doing - and not hide it. I didn't have to 'sell' tickets or membership. I simply talked to co-workers from time-to-time about what I was up to and how much fun it was. Over time, people naturally inquired about tickets on their own.

2. Have props. A photo of the chorus is a good one. (note: action photos say a lot more than portraits .. I'll try to have some nice ones available in the next couple of months for general distribution). In my office, where there are plenty of recent college grads, the younger workers typically bring in and share CDs. I often leave a copy of Evolution sitting out on my desk. Not only is it a great conversation piece, but having a recording (3, really) lends more credibility to a musical group.

Continued on page 4

Show Time (cont. from page 3)

3. Always have information on our show available. You don't have to push it in peoples' faces, but it's appropriate to have around when they ask. That's not sales - it's courtesy. Believe it or not, people are interested in you and in what you do . . . especially if it's entertainment. When you tell someone you sing and they ask for a performance on the spot ("Wow, you're a singer? Sing something!"), hand them a show flyer. Tell them if they really want to hear you at your best, they should come to a performance you've prepared for.

4. Be involved. Being a part of things contributes to your satisfaction with the group (see 1, above) and keeps you up to speed with the latest news. It's no coincidence that these things also led to more offers to sing in quartets. It'd be great to see Tom Semple inundated this year with members who want to help with Singing Valentines . or have Don Knecht overwhelmed with volunteers to help with membership.

5. Remember that what you do is a good thing. Seems like a no-brainer, right? Yet many of us still keep it to ourselves. You may feel like you're being pushy by sharing . . . or maybe you're not the outgoing type . . . but how many deserving people miss out on a great concert or fun activity because they haven't heard of us?

You've probably heard 100+ stories of how someone stumbled onto SPEBSQSA . I found a poster when I went to a local community center to take French classes in Toledo. I didn't think I was much of a singer, but called the number anyway. We bring music to people's lives. Some don't particularly care, but for others it's magical. To neglect our community by not discussing what we do individually is nothing short of tragic. PR is most effective coming from each of us. If Keith Leidel (MVSC) hadn't put up a poster with his name & phone number one day in 1988, I would've never heard the Bluegrass Student Union perform, sung with dear friends or even known of Harmony College. And I never would have met any of you. I'm not a salesman. I'm a singer in one of the 10 Best Choruses in the United States. Every Thursday rehearsal is a thrill of music and friends, every performance an adventure.

Every one of my friends, coworkers and acquaintances knows my passion has taken me to Portland & Montreal, to sing the National Anthem for the Twins & Vikings and to entertain people all over Minnesota, North Dakota & Wisconsin. My boss just asked to buy tickets for 'Something's Comin', 'cause I told her I was looking forward to the show. See you all Thursday night.

Loring

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.

You Be the Judge!

Judd Orff - Presentation Category

For those of you who have witnessed many contests and sometimes wonder how we (the judges) come up with the results we do as we put down our scores, here is a real life example of a quartet testing the rules. First I



will give you the rule prior to July of 2003 when it was changed. Then I will review the incident as I described it to my category specialist in my discrepancy report. Lastly, I will describe the new rule as voted in by the Society Board in Montreal. How would your score change? Would you have assessed a penalty with the new rule?

Continued on page 5

Attention all photographers:

We are inviting all members, spouses and family to submit photos for possible publication in the **GNU's News**.

Just send them electronically to Meyer's or Anderson's. These will always be welcome and should broaden our perspective on many GNU events.

You be the Judge (cont. from page 4)

THE OLD RULE...Non-singing comment or dialogue is generally not permitted as part of contest presentations.

A. Non-singing comment or dialogue *during a song* is permitted only to the limited extent where used to contribute to the theme of the song performance. Use of non-singing comment or dialogue deemed to be excessive to the Presentation judge(s) shall be penalized up to and including forfeiture.

B. Comment or dialogue, whether sung or spoken, *before, between or after the songs*, is not permitted, except for quiet spoken comments to correct legitimate problems or thank the audience during applause. Any other comments or dialog outside the song performance, whether or not intended to be part of the presentation, shall be penalized by the Presentation judge(s) up to and including forfeiture.

THE INCIDENT...Joe Connelly and I were the assigned Presentation judges for the Sunshine International Preliminary contest in Jacksonville, Florida in May of 2002. In the finals Saturday night, the 5th quartet of the evening opened with Roses of Picardy. All six judges scored the song between 67 and 74. During the acceptance after the first song, a cell phone rang and quartet member #4 answered the phone, which was in his pocket. A short dialog transpired about did he know Joe Connelly won with the song? Was he crazy to sing it with Joe judging? He hung up, they blew the pitch, and a 2nd phone rang. Quartet member #1 answered this phone from his pocket and was also questioned about the sanity of the quartet singing "Picardy" with Joe as a judge. This conversation was longer than the first. They then blew the pitch and sang "Ain't Misbehavin'" and scored about the same in Singing and Music, but Presentation penalized the 2nd song for excessive talking between songs. Some of our panel member's felt they actually were telling a joke between songs and should be given a 0 on the 2nd song. Our penalty resulted in a difference in our score of more than 10 points. How would you have scored the performance? Music and singing averaged 70 points for the 2nd song. A nice mid B, without the dialog.

NEW RULE...Non-singing dialogue is generally not a part of a contest performance. However, brief comments made with supporting visual communications may be permitted to more clearly establish mood/theme, assist the transition of packaged songs, or to add to the effect of closure of mood/theme. Spoken words deemed to be excessive or detrimental to the performance shall be penalized by the Presentation judge(s) up to and including forfeiture.

Q: Does the new rule change your score?

A: Our scores were lowered by 10 points and 20 points respectively. The new rule wouldn't have changed our score as the dialog the quartet carried on between songs was more an inside joke and a near hazing of a judge rather than a set-up for the 2nd song.

You be the judge!



Former director **Roger Williams** stopped by to listen and was asked to direct our final song of the evening, Irish Blessing.

Singing Valentines, February 13- 14th



Singing Valentines – where love is truly in the "air". Get your quartet together and join the citywide Singing Valentine program.

This year with Valentines Day on a Saturday, singing valentines will also be delivered on Friday Feb. 13th.

To register your quartet or order a Singing Valentine for the special person in your life, go to gnunion.com

Downstate Express heads for the International Seniors Competition

The 2004 midwinter convention will be held in Biloxi, Mississippi from January 25 to February 1, 2004. The headquarters hotel is the Grand Casino Bayview Hotel and it is the only hotel that will be used. All shows and contests will be held in the theater at the Grand Casino.

Things get under way with the Association of International Seniors Quartet Champions show Friday afternoon at 2pm. The show will feature the 2003 International Quartet Champions **Power Play** and **HEAT**, the 2003 MBNA American Collegiate Quartet Contest champion as well as past international seniors quartet champions **The Barons**, **Chicago Shuffle**, **Harmony**, **Jurassic Larks** and **One More** along with the **AISQC Chorus** directed by **Joe Liles**. Tickets are \$12.

The international seniors quartet contest finals take place Saturday afternoon starting at 1 p.m..



Working on some new notes for our Louisville Ballad, My Foolish Heart



Downstate Express will be singing 9th out of 27 competing quartets.



Thanks!
 Thanks!
 Thanks!
 Thanks!
Thanks!

Two other great shows are scheduled for Friday and Saturday nights and will feature the top five quartets from the 2003 Montreal convention: **Power Play**, **GOTCHA!**, **Metropolis**, **Uptown Sound** and **Riptide**, plus **The Barons** and the newly crowned seniors quartet champion. There will also be a special appearance by the Medalist Chorus -- a chorus made up of the five medalist quartets and the AISQC Chorus. The shows start at 8 p.m. each night.

To register, go to:

<http://www.spebsqsa.org/midwinterwww.spebsqsa.org/midwinter> or call 800.876.7464 x8462.

Two of our long time supporters, **Sandy Smith** and **Marilyn Setzler** have made much-appreciated donations to our coffers.

For these and all gifts of time and money, we at the Great Northern Union are extremely grateful. Without help from our friends, we would not be able to continue our many endeavors.

Marilyn and Sandy, GNU sincerely thanks you.

Help for "Shaky voices"

I receive a periodic newsletter from Art Sobczak (Business By Phone, Inc.) which contains helpful hints for successful business telephone techniques. In his recent mailing was the following article on Help For A Shaky Voice. I found a number of talking points therein for my use in coaching quartets with nervous voices [changing references from 'speaking' to 'singing' and 'prospect/customer' to 'audience'], and wanted to share it with all of you. I hope it is helpful to you.

Ron Rank
ILL District: SNG Judge

Help For a Shaky Voice

By Susan Berkely

I'm not sure if the winners and presenters at the Emmy's were nervous, but when many people are put in a stressful situation, such as a speech or a cold call, or even just a routine call, their voice reflects that. When we are nervous and under stress, our body secretes the hormones adrenaline and noradrenalin. These hormones cause our muscles to contract, causing the famous "fight or flight" response. The voice becomes shaky because during stress, the diaphragm muscles contract, breathing becomes shallow, the heart beats faster and we can't get enough breath to support the voice. This problem requires a two step approach: First, do relaxation exercises before a series of calls, and second, try to figure out why you are so nervous in the first place. Here are some of my favorite stress-busting techniques:



QUIET BREATHING - Before you begin calling, find a place where you can sit quietly with your eyes closed. Place both feet comfortably on the floor, hands resting gently on your knees, tongue lightly touching the roof of your mouth behind your front teeth. Close your mouth and breathe slowly and effortlessly in and out through your nose. Don't force it. Allow your body to breathe naturally. Relax your body and let the stress flow out with each exhalation.

BURN SOME ADRENALINE - Take a brisk walk around the parking lot or up and down the hallways before you begin calling. This will help burn off some of the excess adrenaline and make you feel more comfortable. You can also do some isometric exercises, tensing and relaxing your muscles by pressing your feet against the

floor and your elbows against the arms of your chair while you wait for your turn to speak.

BREATHE BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO SPEAK - Before you dial the phone, pause for a few seconds, visualize your listeners at the other end of the phone, smile, gather your thoughts and breathe as you look at your account or prospect information. Taking a breath before you begin to speak assures that shaky.

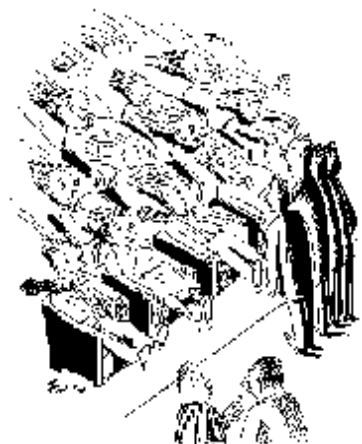
Some of the most common reasons for excessive speaking stress:

PERFECTIONISM - a call can never be perfect, only optimal. Having unrealistic expectations about your performance and then beating yourself up when you don't meet them is extremely stressful.

NOT KNOWING WHAT TO EXPECT - it's perfectly natural to experience some nervousness before some calls, particularly the ones you might not like, such as cold calls. In this sense a call is more like a performance than a conversation. If you expect some uncomfortable sensations caused by the temporary adrenaline rush when you make a call, you won't panic and the symptoms will soon go away. Keep in mind that peaking stress feels worse than it looks.

FOCUSING ON YOURSELF INSTEAD OF THE PROSPECT/CUSTOMER - the novice salesperson will often forget that the purpose of a call to give something to the listener... to help them get or avoid something. Whatever it is, you must always put the needs of the listener above your own personal desire to make a presentation. The more you can forget about yourself and focus on giving to others, the more relaxed and energized you will feel.

LACK OF PREPARATION - Not being ready for what you'll say on a call is really stress inducing. If you do this habitually, you should take a look at why you want to sabotage yourself. The more comfortable you are with what you will say, the smoother you sound. Of course these exercises are very useful and can give some very pleasing results, and virtually all aspects of the way you sound can be enhanced; accents can be minimized and articulation improved so that your speech is clear and easy to understand.



This is what I call a powerful performance

The Harmony Sweepstakes A Cappella Festival,

Now celebrating its 20th anniversary is seeking vocal harmony groups of all styles who would like to perform in this year's events. There are regional concerts in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, Boston, Washington DC and Olympia, WA. The winners of each regional are flown to San Francisco to compete in the National Finals, held before an enthusiastic sold out house of a cappella fans and music industry professionals.

The Harmony Sweepstakes have grown to become a very prestigious event with hundreds of vocal groups across the country participating every year with great honors awarded to the National Champions along with valuable prizes. This is a fun event to participate in and, regardless of whether you win, helps give your group exposure to a wider audience along with the opportunity to gain further recognition within the industry. Entry deadlines are approaching and interested groups are advised to contact soon the regional director of the concert they wish to apply. For further information about our event please visit: <http://www.harmony-sweepstakes.com>

2004 Schedule

Chicago - March 13
Northshore Center for Performing Arts
Andrew Blenderman 847-228-1150
sweeps@blenderful.com

National Finals - May 8
Marin Veteran's Auditorium, San Rafael CA
John Neal 415-455-8602 harmony@singers.com

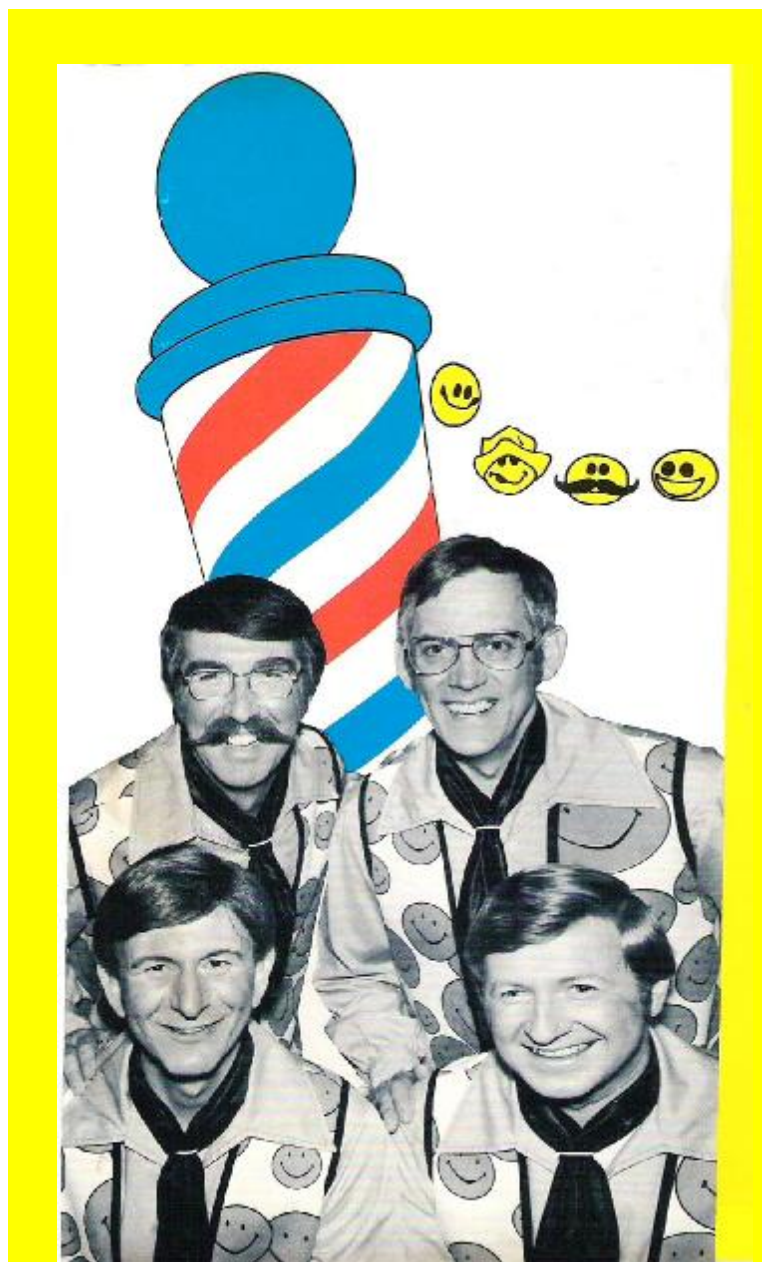
Sponsored by PRIMARILY A CAPPELLA
<http://www.singers.com>

Guest Night – February, 5th



Although we welcome guests at any rehearsal, the Great Northern Union Chorus is planning a special guest night on February 5th. If you are an inactive member, or if you know of someone, say from

your school or church that is looking for an expanded musical experience, please make arrangements to take part in this special evening. We promise a level of satisfaction and excitement that just might have you and your guest coming back for more. So let's renew friendships and see who else can come to enjoy singing with the GNU. And if you are in the bunch of guys waiting for an invitation, please consider yourself invited! We would love to have you join us.



Recognize these guys?

This is the Happiness Emporium circa 1975
Clockwise from top: Jim Foy, Bass; Bob Spong,
Baritone; Rod Johnson, Lead; and Bob Dowma, Tenor
See them at the annual show – January 24th.



We have had a lot of help from several people with our opening number (Something's Comin') for the annual show: Brent Graham stopped by to teach us a new tag that he wrote. Judy Olson worked up some stage presence for the tune and Judd Orff along with Pete Benson helped put it all together.

It's going to be a great start to a wonderful show.

Members; Get to know 'em

Our own illustrious and already sought after newer Presentation Judge Roger Stanfield has graciously agreed to sit still long enough to give us an interview. Following are his thoughts about the great GNU and how he came to be involved.

Roger Stanfield, a.k.a. Raj or Wendell, lives in Savage, by way of Prior Lake/ Richfield/Burnsville/ and Orange County, California. (Ed. note: where he spent early years as a Disneyland tour guide on a Jungle Cruise boat!) Roger has been married to his high school sweetheart Lauralee for 34 years. "We have 2 glorious sons: First, David, his wife Angie, and our first grandchild, Elyse Nichole Stanfield (4 months); and second, Rob, and his wife Melissa."



Roger has been in medical sales /management for 32 years, and for the past 10, he has been with Alina Hospitals and Clinics Home Oxygen and Medical Equipment.

In addition to his early Disneyland career, he was a debate team member in high school (useful, in holding his own with the Performance team), as well as in drama and high school choir. Music is in the family: his lovely Mom is part of Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral Choir in Garden Grove, pretty much the "Mormon Tabernacle choir" of Southern California.

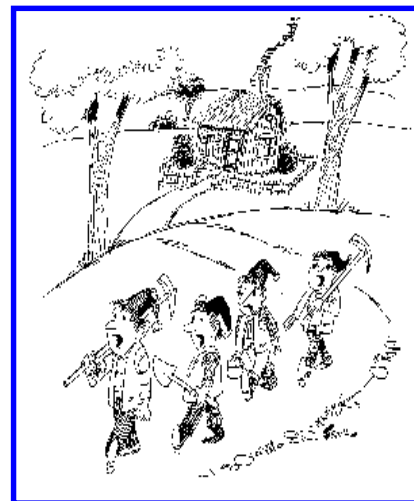
Since 1980, Roger has been a barbershopper. He began singing with the Minneapolis Commodores then became one of the founding members of Great Northern Union, along with Jim Emery, Alan Hoppe, Roger Williams, and a "plethora of others"..

In earlier years, he was in two quartets: "Baritones" and "Under Construction": "we sucked" he said, of both pick-up quartets. As for future quartet possibilities, he says "sure" ... if my marriage can take it"... When asked about his personal feelings for GNU, he exclaimed, "I helped to found this sucker! I have my heart and soul in this enterprise!"

As for his contribution to the greater barbershop community, he relates, "I am now a Presentation Category Judge, thanks to the bidding, prodding, harassing of my pal Roger Meyer... thanks Rog...".

"Following Montreal, says Raj, " I was one of the beleaguered souls. I was near the breaking point. But our new infusion of leadership & spirit impels me to want to stay the course. I love what we have accomplished under this new leadership."

He concluded the interview by saying, "Thanks (for the invitation to share), . . . Roger.. Raj... Wendell." (And if you are new, ask him sometime, who Wendell is, something to do with the creativity, which oozes out of his pores.)




Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho... it's off to sing we go.....

- Ø Jan. 17th & 18th LOL 2004 COTS, Menomenie, WI
- Ø Jan. 24th GNU Annual Show
- Ø Feb. 13th & 14th Singing Valentines
- Ø Feb. 19th Recording Session, Bethel College
- Ø Feb 28th Rehearsal with Mark Hale
- Ø Mar. 13th Southwest Div. Contest
- Ø Mar. 30th 10,000 Lakes Div. Contest
- Ø Mar. 25th Recording Session, Bethel College
- Ø Apr. 18th Rehearsal with Mark Hale
- Ø Apr. 30th - May 1st Int'l Quartet Prelims
- Ø May 14-16th Duluth Retreat
- Ø Jun 12th "On to Fame" show
- Ø Jun 27th - Jul 4th International Contest, Louisville



Hilltop Chapter Quartets

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

MIKE MARTY DAN DAVE



BRAVO!

A BARBERSHOP QUARTET



DAN SCHROEDER
10133 299TH AVE NW
PRINCETON, MN 55371
(H)763-633-5280
(W)763-441-0572
dschrades@msn.com



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

**HAPPINESS
EMPORIUM**

BARBERSHOP QUARTET

www.HappinessEmporium.com
CONTACT: Rod Johnson
1308 Blue Phlox Court
Northfield, Minnesota 55057
507.645.5750

E-mail: dougmiln@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

Ellis Jones, Tenor Bruce Gray, Lead



MAGIC


Barbershop Harmony & Sleight of Hand

507-934-2372
bgray@gustavus.edu



Don Miller, Baritone Denny Jackson, Bass

**DOUBLE
DOWN**



A Barbershop Quartet

Contact Tim Milbrandt 1-507-536-9513
1411 Durand Ct. SE, Rochester, MN 55904 tkjm@earthlink.net

Before we go...



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