



International Medalist
GREAT NORTHERN UNION
CHORUS



HILLTOP CHAPTER • SPEBSQSA

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O' LAKES DISTRICT

Vol. 9 - Issue #4

GNU's NEWS

July 2004

International Convention in Louisville, KY



The Great Northern Union gave a wonderful performance in Louisville bettering their 9th place finish from last year to 7th. Of course, they were hoping for a medal but were very pleased with their performance and for the 1st time in 2 years they edged past Greendale's Midwest Vocal Express who placed 8th.

As you can see by the picture, the stage was decorated with stars which made a great backdrop for our two ballads. We sang My Foolish Heart and There Goes My Heart.

Bravo! represented the LOL District well with a 24th place finish. They also placed better this year coming up from 39th place last year.



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The Director's Cut

Hi guys,

I am writing to you while still on the road somewhere in Michigan (I must have taken a wrong turn somewhere).

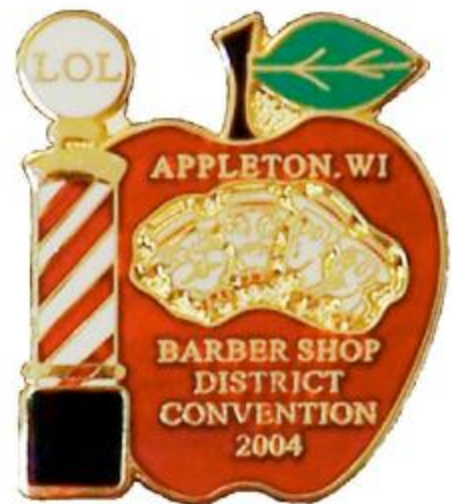
In case there are some of you I didn't get a chance to talk to after the contest, I wanted to let you know how proud I was of your performance on Saturday (in Louisville).



We absolutely performed the plan "better than we could". I was fortunate to be able to talk to all kinds of "influential big wheel barbershoppers" who couldn't say enough about our improvement and stunning musical artistry. Several of them also expected our placement to be in the medals. Those comments mean a lot. Of course it would be nice to have come home with a medal as well, but I know we're on the track and I am determined to get to the next level ASAP!!

Finally, I want to say a heartfelt thanks to all of the guys in the GNU for your hard work, dedication, time, and trust on a weekly basis and especially leading up to International. I look forward to seeing you next week and MAN, I CAN'T WAIT FOR DISTRICT!!

PETE



At International competition there are no evaluations from the judges, just the scores. But we did receive some feedback from several sources.

From Lloyd Erickson -- Insiders, Houston Tidelanders:

Great Northern Union's presentation was very special to me. I understand they have a new director (at least that is what they said on the webcast) who has a choral background. Their songs had the best horizontal flow of any songs sung this last week in Louisville. Little subtle nuances from syllable to syllable. Nothing flashy to detract from the message of the songs, but subtle artistry (are those words redundant?) in every phrase.

I was hoping they would medal so that both of their songs would be on the DVD and we could all study them.

Thank you Hilltoppers for that special moment.

From David Bowen, Contest Administration judge -- GNU:

One of the new features associated with the webcast this year was an arrangement that let the viewers log in and enter their own scores as the contest progressed. They did a pretty good job of picking the 20, 17 of their top 20 made the cut and the three they picked that didn't were in the just missed category. Just for grins, I decided to see how they'd picked the chorus contest and thought you might be interested as well:

- | | |
|------------------|------|
| 1. St. Charles | 90.3 |
| 2. Northbrook | 89.4 |
| 3. Toronto | 89.2 |
| 4. Westmenster | 89.0 |
| 5. Hilltop | 86.6 |
| 6. Marietta | 86.2 |
| 7. Alexandria | 85.5 |
| 8. Cincinnati | 85.5 |
| 9. Greendale ... | 85.0 |
| 10. Denver | 85.0 |



So you made a better impression on the listeners at home than you did on the judges, though the results don't say how many listeners participated.

From Bonnie and Steve Shannon -- Houston, TX

Bonnie and I have been watching GNU continually improve over the years and expected a strong presentation, but, this set was far and away the most

exciting and musically satisfying we've ever heard you do. Almost makes me want to move back to the Twin Cities... almost. ;-)

Please pass our heartiest congratulations to your gang!

From Brent Buresh -- GNU:

I just finished watching the webcast of the International performance and all I can say is, "Wow!" As most of you know, I've been away for a few weeks, and that's not the same chorus I heard the last time I was at a rehearsal. I don't remember the last time I heard the chorus use New such a wide range of dynamics. And there was great intensity at each and every different level.



Then there was the visual presentation. Although the webcast isn't the same as seeing it in person, the emotions shown on EVERYONE's face were incredible. I especially want to give kudos to all of the newer guys. As the camera panned the chorus I and I saw one of the "rookies" there was absolutely no let down. Great work, guys! I look forward to joining you again next Thursday!

From Steve Hardy -- GNU:

What a great job! I can't tell you how hard it was to just sit there and watch. I had to sing along. I need to share what the webcast guys said.

"Best horizontal singing of the contest."

"Emotional plan took us places." (paraphrased)

"Sang to our strengths by singing two ballads." (paraphrased)

Guys, you took me where you wanted emotionally, but also you sang with such clarity of diction that I had no trouble understanding every single word, something I haven't been able to say about anyone else. Emotion and clarity of sound. What could possibly better?!



I wish I could have been there to share the experience in person. "Win, place or show" it was a medalist performance if ever I heard one. Congrats.

The Falu Miner Chords, the Swedish chorus that was in the states for Louisville, came to visit GNU during our post international pizza party. They had 12 men and one woman on the risers. This is Theresa Meyer's account of the event.

Our Swedish table-mate was a handsome guy with a grey beard named "Sten". He has a wife and three teenage sons at home. He is a surveyor in a nuclear power plant. I believe that he said that the population of the town and outskirts is about 60,000 people (making it roughly the size of St.Cloud.) His English was very good. He said this was from watching television, since over 25% of the shows are in English. (He assured us that he knows that we don't all live like the movie stars!)



Sten drives a very long 45 kilometers to chorus rehearsal. They work on the risers from 6:00 until 10:00 PM once weekly. He told us that the director was ready to retire after 20 years, but since they won the right to go to International, he has now agreed to stay a little longer. Their membership also fluctuates according to work and family obligations, as well as other hobby requirements. Like Minnesotans, the Swedes also enjoy many forms of A Capella music.

Their USA 2 week agenda included Louisville; a bus trip to Chicago; a flight to Minneapolis, trips to Cambridge and to Cokato, and then their flight home on July 10. They especially enjoyed the fireworks for July 4th on the Ohio River at Louisville.

Pizza and Ice cream (which we served at the event) is well known all over Europe. Sten wondered if we started every rehearsal with such food! Not a bad idea!



Presidents Corner
My Fellow GNUs!

A successful trip to Louisville gives us all reason to want to sit back and enjoy the wonderful feeling. *Having done that*, are you ready to begin again? You bet. Now that the Calderons are working with us, a new excitement is permeating the chorus. We have Pete, the performance team, Mark, the model, the music and the Calderons. We have the complete package. *Well almost*. The other ingredient is a committed and focused you. (Is that redundant?) You have done a great job leading up to International and topped it off with a wonderful performance. Now it's time to begin again. By starting earlier on the choreo, we can take the pressure off in October. We'll only have to polish it not redo it.



Did you all have a chance to read the article about Jim Clancy in the most recent Harmonizer? If you haven't read it! It tells of Jim and how the Vocal Majority came about. In a side article Gary Hennerberg, VP for Marketing for the VM, talks about the warm-up: "The first 20 minutes or so (of the meeting) is spent warming up with a guy from our music team (sound familiar?). This may be the most important activity of the evening. At 7:20 we can usually tell what kind of an evening it's going to be. A great warm-up will usually mean a great rehearsal." I urge you all to emulate the VM. Sing as if you were on the risers with them. You are that good, so be that good.

Jim Higgins



**Louisville story from Don Russell—
GNU baritone**

One of my friends from the Mid-Atlantic District was in singing with the Capitol City Chorus and he happened to go with us to the Mass Sing. We all had decided to go to the Mass sing early enough to network with old friends. As you may know, there were seven door prizes given out, with the big one being the Harley-Davidson motorcycle. We were standing with GNU, Houston Tidelanders, Capitol City, and several Masters friends when they started calling out the names. They started calling out the first name, for the motor cycle. They called and called, but the young man was nowhere to be found. After about fifteen minutes of waiting, they decided to fully enforce the rule that you MUST be present to WIN and went on to the next name. They called my friend and his jaw about hit the ground. He immediately yelled to the stage that he was most definitely there and would be right up. What a way to have his FIRST International end up. He road back to Maryland with me and I had to listen to him all the way home! IT WAS GREAT! Just to let you know, for having very little choreography, our sing got us to 7th place. Wait until they see MCC in full dress. Gosh, wish I could be with you then.



Ken Slinde with one of the decorated horses in Louisville dressed in traditional barbershop style!

The Louisville Gospel Sing and The Good News! Memorial Scholarship

by Rod Johnson

The following was announced to approximately 1,000 attendees at the 18th Annual Good News! Gospel Sing in Louisville, Kentucky, at the Cathedral of the Assumption on July 1, 2004:

The **Good News! Quartet** is providing an annual scholarship known as The Good News! Memorial Scholarship, this year in memory of one of the founders of the Good News!, Mo Rector. The funding of the scholarship is derived from the sales of barbershop gospel arrangement folios and related learning tapes and CDs, which are produced by the Good News! Quartet.

The quartet, also known as the **Happiness Emporium**, received the following input from Music Specialists of the Barbershop Harmony Society, also known as SPEBSQSA, Inc., during the nomination and selection process. **Tina Glander** is the 2004 scholarship recipient.

Tina Glander, a music teacher at Wisconsin Hills Middle School in Milwaukee, WI., has a 6th through 8th grade boys' barbershop chorus that meets weekly at her school. The ensemble is dedicated specifically to barbershop, as she believes highly in its value. She and her past barbershop groups have been invited to speak and perform at the state MENC and ACDA conferences and she is a HUGE advocate for barbershop harmony. She has recently contributed to Next Generations, an e-newsletter the Society distributes to music educators. Tina will be attending Harmony College this summer, funded by the Good News! Memorial Scholarship. She has never been to Harmony College before and will gain significant value from the experience.



Ms. Glander addressed the attendees at the Good News! Gospel Sing, enthusiastically accepting the scholarship, while committing to continued use of barbershop harmony in her musical training of the young men in her school.



Above: **Four Voices** joined the gospel sing for a couple of songs
Below: As an ongoing tradition, **Happiness Emporium** invited anyone who knew the last song to join them in singing it.



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.

Many of you may have seen the message below from Reed Sampson in this week's Live Wire publication.

If you have ever thought about becoming a Society contest judge, I would encourage you to give it some real thought right now.



The 2 ½ year judge training cycle begins anew this fall, and we are looking for good new candidates in all categories. Three years ago Tom Matchinsky started down the path, and he will become a certified Singing judge in just a couple weeks. Six years ago, Roger Stanfield, Bruce Watson, and I became judge candidates, and we were certified three years ago.

I can say unequivocally that the experience of being a judge is nearly unrivaled in our hobby. The opportunity to rub shoulders with the very best as well as to help other quartets and choruses is unmatched. It is truly a great way to give back to the program many of the benefits we ourselves have received. It is also one of the best ways to meet barbershoppers at all levels in other districts and to learn the finer aspects of what we do.

If you'd like to talk with someone about what it means to be a judge, what is required to become certified, and how the judge candidacy process works, corner one of the many GNU judges and ask. We'd love to fill you in and get you started down the path. The GNU judges you could talk to about the program are listed below:

David Bowen,.....Contest Administrator
 Don Challman,Presentation
 Barry Clapper,Presentation
 Jim Emery,Singing
 Tom Matchinsky,....Singing
 Roger Meyer,Contest Administrator
 Doug Miller,Presentation
 Judd Orff, Presentation
 Roger Stanfield, Presentation
 Bruce Watson, Contest Administrator

Although not GNU members, there are other judges in the Twin Cities area, too, that could give you some insights, particularly into the Music category. They include:

Brent Graham, Music
 Jim Richards, Singing
 Paul Wigley, Music

So give it some thought. You won't regret it. ***Here comes the judge!***

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

The following is the post by Reed Sampson.

Contest & Judging open enrollment announced.

The Society Contest & Judging Committee invites all Barbershoppers who wish to apply to become a certified judge to make their wishes known during the open enrollment period from August 1 to December 31, 2004. This enrollment period is offered every three years with the next opportunity being in 2007. The enrollment process starts by contacting the category specialist of the category in which you wish to apply.

Contest Administrator Category Specialist Dwain Chambers: dwainca@midsouth.rr.com

Singing Category Specialist Russ Young: srobari@aol.com

Presentation Category Specialist Richard Treptow RTreptow@aol.com

Music Category Specialist Steve Jamison: srjamison@mindspring.com

For general questions and help: contact the Society Contest & Judging Chairman Larry Clemons at clemons@earthlink.net.

The Great Northern Union has a new rehearsal site.

**The United Methodist Church of Peace
 6345 Xerxes Ave S
 Richfield, MN 55423**

**Every Thursday evening from 7pm – 10pm.
 Visitors are always welcome**

SCJC Award of Excellence ROGER MEYER

This presentation was made to Roger Meyer during an all judges meeting at International in front of all of Roger's peers:

I would like to make a very special presentation on behalf of the Society Contest and Judging Committee to an individual in the Contest and Judging program that:

- Has 20 years of exemplary service to the C&J program, some even before he was certified
- Was Certified as Secretary 1987
- Was Certified as Contest Administrator 1993
- Served as a District VP C&J
- Served as a SEC Category Specialist

While these achievements are indeed significant on their own merit, this Award of Excellence is being given for outstanding C&J achievement above and beyond that normally associated with the tremendous 'volunteerism' we see every day in this great Society of ours. Some comments about our recipient:

- He was the Lead programmer on the original BBScores Dbase II program team when it was implemented in 1984 and continued his efforts with BBScores until the program was retired in 1993 with the advent of the new judging system.
- He was the First person selected to serve on the BBContest Design Review team in 1999 and wrote the system design specifications which became the basis for the functionality that is supported in the C&J scoring program today.
- From 2000 through the present, he has been the ONLY programmer for the completely redesigned BBContest.Scores scoring program.
- During this time, he also coordinated the system design with similar data base designs being used in Kenosha for

Society related C&J data.

- His knowledge of computer support for the C&J program is unequaled anywhere in our Society.
- The number of hours he contributed to this effort which likely are in the 3+ man years of work, or said another way – over 6,000 hours of work, are well in excess of what we could have afforded to pay outside contract programmers to accomplish the redesign. And all of his contributions have been accomplished as a volunteer with no expense to the SCJC or Society budget.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in presenting this
2004 SCJC Award of Excellence to

ROGER MEYER



The award reads as follows:

Society Contest and Judging Committee
Award of Excellence
Roger Meyer
For superior service and personal
dedication to contest and judging
July 2, 2004

Proven Winners work with the GNU

On Saturday July 24th the Great Northern Union was proud to have Rosemary and Bob Calderon from El Paso, Tx come up and spend the day with us. Bob and Rosemary are a couple of the best barbershop choreographers in the country having had 11 gold medalist choruses win with their packages. They were very personable and professional and you could tell that they had done their homework in preparing for their visit to the GNU. The Calderons were contacted in Louisville by Kevin Lynch after the chorus contest in which their choreography package, performed by St Charles' Ambassadors of Harmony, won 1st place.

Special thanks to Kathy Litchfield for taking some of the pictures while we worked during our 7 hour marathon rehearsal.



Members; Get to know 'em

Meet John Babbs.

I grew up in Cincinnati. I have lived in or near Excelsior since 1975 when I first moved to Minnesota from Indiana, except for a 4 year period in the mid 80's. Then I spent 1 year in Dallas/Ft. Worth and 3 years in Phillips, Wisconsin. Holly and I met here and were married in 1976. My daughter, Lisa (35) from a previous marriage lives in Miami (FL). She teaches piano as a sideline. Ryan (21) lives in downtown Excelsior and works as a photo technician at Walgreens. He did some great work in Child's Play Theater (now Stages) and in musicals at Minnetonka High School. Nate (18) is a senior at the Arts High School in Golden Valley. He has done 2 Guthrie shows and 4 Chanhassen Dinner Theater Shows as a singer/dancer. Mostly, he is a drummer and has accepted both admission and scholarship offers from Berklee College of Music in Boston, beginning in September, 2005. He will study for one more year at home with his current drum teacher before he goes to college.



Piano playing and music were a constant part of my upbringing. .. I took piano in elementary school, and sang in choirs and ensembles all through High School (Cincinnati) and College (Hanover College, southern Indiana).

I just joined, in April, the re-start of a 20+ year old business, The Arthur Group. We are "candidate representatives" and help upper level professionals, executives, and managers conduct confidential job searches. We help employers by providing a free service for their confidential searches.

My only barbershopping experience is with the GNU I got to the GNU via an invite by Rod Johnson to attend a concert. When I heard the first few notes of the first song I heard the GNU sing (Battle Hymn of the Republic), my life changed on the spot. I had no idea there were groups out there singing like that, and I wanted to be part of it some day. I was traveling extensively for work at that time and could not commit. Meanwhile, Roger Williams (a former 13 year director of the GNU) joined my church and I got to know him. I joined seven years later, in 1997, right after

Internationals at Indianapolis. (Side story...in my GNU audition, Jim Emery had me bend over and sing between my legs. More than a bit odd, I thought at the time. Now that I know Jim, I am not surprised!)

I sing lead on current music, tenor on some older music, tenor when I try to sing in a quartet! I am not yet in a quartet, formally. Bob Cannella and I have been trying to get something to work for several years. Jim Higgins is now part of that. Harvey Berwin was, but he had to drop. Then Don Russell was, but he had to move. Maybe we are not nice to bari's?

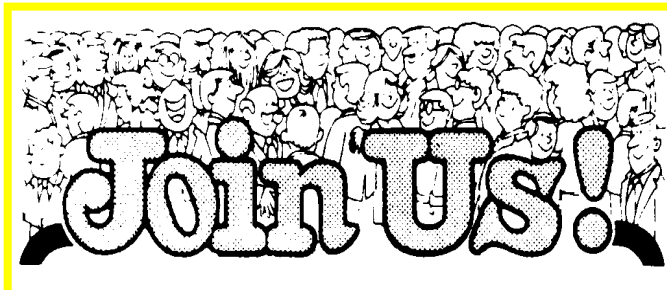
I've been on the board since the spring of 1988...the most seniority in that group. I have been in several roles, including a 2 year term as President and am now in my second year as Treasurer.

As an organization, we need to step up to the plate and figure out a way to raise enough money to *hire* Pete Benson and move him and his family to the Twin Cities area. He is so gifted and can take us to the places we want to go. It would be great to have him here locally.



These are the newest members of the GNU who competed for the 1st time with us on the International stage.

from left to right: Brent Gerber, Dave Mitchell, Jim Johannsen, Chris Ficken, Ken Slinde, Mark Sathe, Wally Brink



Guest Night August 19th



Mark your Calendar

August 8 Commodores Metro Picnic

August 15 Bob Barnes Church (

August 17 Como Park

August 19 Guest Night!

September 2 Joe Connelly coaching session

September 11 Awards Night

September 19 Fairmont Show

Oct 22,23 District Contest

Saturday in Nov Bethel College Cabaret

Jan 22, 2005 January Show Bethel College

Please contact dual member Mark Sathe if you and your family can attend the **Commodores-sponsored** picnic. They are generously providing hot dogs, soft drinks, and sweet corn, so they do need a head count. Camaraderie, woodshedding and magic will highlight the day.

Following are the necessary details:

DATE: Sunday August 8

TIME: 1:30-6:00 pm

PLACE: Veteran Memorial Park –
63rd and Portland, Richfield

FREE! Compliments of our Commodore friends

RSVP: Please get to Mark by July 30th:

Phone: 952-456 - 2100-or-**Email:** msathe@sathe.com



“people” horse noticed outside the gospel sing


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

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