



International Medalist
GREAT NORTHERN UNION
CHORUS



HILLTOP CHAPTER•SPEBSQSA

10,000 LAKES DIVISION – LAND O’ LAKES DISTRICT

Volume 13 #2

GNUsNews

August 2008

GNU well represented in Nashville



The Great Northern Union was well represented in the International Quartet Contest in Nashville in July with Vocality (upper left) finishing 19th and After Midnight (upper right) finishing at 34th. Also, Syd Libsack of Storm Front (above) is a dual member with the GNU. His quartet finished 6th this year. Happiness Emporium did their usual fine job on the AIC show and heading up the Good News Gospel sing as they do every year. Congratulations to all the quartets. All Contest photos courtesy of Lorin May.

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Recap from the State of the GN-Union Address

Even though I was unable to attend the International Convention (for the first time in 18 years), the 1st weekend in July still gave me that old feeling! I mean the feeling of excitement, drive, and competition! It is a good time to see where we are as a chorus, and where we want to be by this time next year.



There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that, in Appleton and Anaheim, we need to make an IMPACT! What's it going to take? Working hard? Getting coaching? Being in the zone at contest? Mirror room sessions? Well, we already do all of that. So, it's going to take that and more. It's going to take changing our culture and what we do in rehearsal even on August 7th. We are going to need to start doing winning performances well before we ever take the stage. We must WIN rehearsals and shows before we can win contests. What we want our audiences and judges to experience must be rehearsed continually.

How do we make an impact? We are committed to 3 specific initiatives that will help us to stand out this contest season.

1. **An Atmosphere of personal Individual attention.**
More sectionals/small groups/individual/taping/feedback.
2. **Moving more air.**
Full breaths, changing our "default" sound.
3. **Body Involvement/Movement**
Letting yourself feel the music and react physically

That's it! Monitor yourself to ensure that you are giving more than your "normal" effort in each of the 3 areas. We are fortunate to be one of the top 10 choruses in the world. Are you satisfied with that? If not, what are YOU going to do about it? When?

Pete Benson
 Director Great Northern Union

Ever wonder what it is that the judges consider as they score a contestant? Straight from the International Convention program, here is what the judges look for in each of the three categories.

Determining relative rank

Music

Judges in this category adjudicate the musical elements in the performance: melody, harmony, range and tessitura, tempo and rhythm and meter, construction and form, and embellishments. They judge the extent to which the musical performance displays the hallmarks of the barbershop style, and the degree to which the musical performance demonstrates an artistic sensitivity to the music's primary theme.

Presentation

These judges evaluate how effectively a performer brings the song to life. They respond to both the visual and vocal aspects of the presentation, to evaluate the interaction of these aspects in creating the image of the song, as well as everything about the performance that contributes to emotional impact upon the audience.

Singing

Judges in this category evaluate the degree to which the performer achieves artistic singing in the barbershop style: the production of vibrant, rich, resonant, technically accurate, and highly skilled sound, created both by the individual singer's use of good vocal techniques, and by the ensemble processes of tuning, balancing, unity of sound and precision. They listen for a sense of precise intonation, a feeling of fullness or expansion of sound, a perception of a high degree of vocal skill, a high level of unity and consistency throughout the performance, and a freedom from apparent effort that allows the full communication of the lyric and song.

Each judge may award up to 100 points per song.



Congratulations to **Gary Little**, who last week successfully passed the Barbershop Harmony Society's judge candidate school in the Contest Administrator category. This moves Gary from Applicant status to Candidate status. As an official CA candidate, Gary will now begin practice judging live contests as he progresses towards ultimate certification at the 2010 judge category school. Great job, Gary, and welcome to the judging ranks as a candidate!



Jim Emery

BHS Singing Category Specialist



The Midwest Vocal Express from Greendale Wisconsin came out with cute penguin costumes. They finished 12th in the chorus competition. Winning the contest for the 7th consecutive time was The Masters of Harmony from Santa Fe Springs, Ca. (pictured below). The Masters' director, Mark Hale, has been one of the GNU's main coaches and is responsible for helping us develop our crisp, clean sound by singing in "the model".



The following was distributed in the *On The QT* publication from our Society. This describes one really fun thing that happens at our District and International conventions. I sure hope you're planning on attending this fall's convention and next summer's convention in Anaheim. The contests will be a lot of fun. But there's a on more of fun to be had! Submitted by Jim Emery.

Singing Tags Until the Wee Hours

Ringling Chords After a Convention

By a late night Quarteter



There was nothing more exciting than to be at mid-winter this year and see Barbershoppers in their 70s singing with young singers in their teens until the wee small hours of the morning. What a thrill it was to hear those chords ring and to see the delight on everyone's faces. One of the most exciting things to see was gold medalists and singers who had never crossed the competition stage before singing together to make harmony. This year's Mid-Winter Convention was the largest in the history of our Barbershop Harmony Society and next year's looks to be even bigger with the possibility of an even larger youth festival.

Nashville was no different when it came to late night tag singing until the early hours and once again, age had little to do with whom you rang those chords. As the champions went from lobby to lobby you could hear the harmonies all over the place. O.C. Cash and Rupert Hall must have been smiling down as they heard many of the old tunes and yes . . .there were some not-so-old tunes being sung as well. A plethora of sounds of songs and tags filled each lobby.

This is what a convention is all about, after the contest is over! If you have never participated in this sort of activity, then you have not really been a part of what makes a weekend or a week like this complete; namely, ringing those barbershop chords with singers you've never met or . . . singing with a medalist or . . . your newest gold medalist.

Do yourself a big favor: The next time you go to a barbershop convention, challenge yourself to take the first step and form a foursome and sing a tag. Stay up as long as you can and continue to sing with guys and yes, some gals in your lobby, and you'll never forget the tingle and goose bumps you experience.



The International contest was held in Nashville in part because the Barbershop Harmony Society is now headquartered there. Pictured above is the new headquarters building. Next year the contest will be in Anaheim, California.



Download thousands of your favorite contest performances from www.iTunes.com

Search the online library with the keywords "barbershop contest"

Day at the Dome 2008

Speaking of getting some guys together to sing, Ken Slinde once again organized the annual "Day at the Dome" event bringing together 110 barbershoppers from 23 different choruses to sing the national anthem at the Minnesota Twins baseball game.

There were about 30 GNUers and the rest came from 23 other choruses in the area. Des Moines, Lake Geneva and Winnipeg were the furthest away and there probably would have been more participants but there were some scheduling conflicts in ND and Southeastern MN/LaCrosse that held the attendance down.

Our thanks to Paul Wigley, director of the Minneapolis Commodores, for stepping up to direct in Pete Benson's absence. Photos by Dawn Holmberg



In their new summer uniforms, the GNU (pictured above) joined several other barbershop choruses from around the Twin Cities and Minnesota at the annual Como Park singout organized by the St Paul North Star Chorus. Below is pictured the mass chorus who sang three songs at the end of the program including one arranged and directed by Ron Middlesteadt. Photos by Dawn Holmberg



2008 Choir Loft Fundraising Program

As part of our season concert promotion we are offering local church organizations an opportunity to raise money for their organization through our Choir Loft Fundraising Program.

Here's how it works:

On September 20, 2008 at 7:30pm the Great Northern Union Chorus and the Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir with Robert Robinson will present a joint concert at St. Michaels Lutheran Church in Bloomington, MN. This will be a gospel themed concert with performances by both ensembles which will also include combined collaborations including the two choruses together. The concert event will feature the rich musical history of both gospel and barbershop music and bring them together in a unique musical pairing and event.

Event ticket price is \$22.00. Participating organizations sell as many tickets as they can at face value (\$22). As part of the Choir Loft Program the Great Northern Union will donate \$10.00 per ticket sold back to participating organizations (minimum 10 tickets sold).

For example, if your choir sells 35 tickets to the Sept 20 concert event, you will raise \$350 for your choir. \$770 is turned into the GNU before the concert (\$22 x 35). After the concert the GNU cuts a check back to the participating choir for \$350 (\$10x35). The fundraising possibilities are endless!

Interested in the Choir Loft Fundraising Program?

Call Marketing Director Wally Brink at (612) 532-7684 or email marketing@gnunion.com

For complete concert information go to www.gnunion.com.

Gospel Concert with the Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir with Robert Robinson

Saturday, September 20, 7:30 PM

St Michael's Lutheran Church
Bloomington, MN.



The Great Northern Union hosts one of the region's most soulful ensembles as Robert Robinson and the Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir collaborate for an inspiring gospel concert in the beautiful setting of St. Michael's Lutheran Church.

The Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir

gathers singers of various musical experience, ethnic backgrounds, and ages to celebrate music and spirituality through the rich tradition of African American religious music. For some, the choir is a first foray into gospel singing. For others, this music is a way of life.

Led by Robert Robinson and backed by a talented ensemble of musicians, the choir's heart and harmonies invariably bring audiences to their feet in auditoriums, churches, schools, prisons, conferences, and festivals. Singular in its diversity and the power of its expression, in praise ranging from inspirational spirituals to rocking contemporary gospel tunes, the choir fills its members and listeners alike with gladness and gratitude.





Quartet News

On Friday, February 23rd, *After Midnight* and three other local performers took the stage for the first annual fund raiser for the Pilgrim Point scholarship fund.

Pilgrim Point is a camp owned and operated by the United Church of Christ denomination, and located on a point in Lake Ida, near Alexandria, MN. David was fortunate enough to attend Pilgrim Point with his family for a week in the summer 13 different times, and he and his family still have very strong ties with other families they met over those years. In 2006, David and Angela took Emma and Max to Pilgrim Point for the first time for a week in August.

The idea for the concert came during a discussion near the end of the week between David and Kris Potter, Mayflower Director of Ministries to Children & Families. After brainstorming about what the concert might look like, they decided to have *After Midnight* join with other Mayflower performers, and to direct all of the proceeds from the door donations to the new Pilgrim Point "Campership" fund.

Although the threatening weather (remember the warnings about the 8-12" we were hearing?) kept the crowd relatively small, over 50 people braved the elements, and made for a very energetic audience. Based on their reactions during each of our three sets, and the comments we heard afterwards, we felt like the concert was a real success. A few days after the concert we received the following note of thanks from Kris Potter:

Dear *After Midnight*,

I'm writing to thank you for your wonderful gift of song that you shared with us at Mayflower Friday night. Everyone I have talked with agrees that it was an unforgettable evening of music -- one of those concerts you never forget!

We were able to raise \$500+ for our "Campership" fund, with more coming in each day from those unable to attend.

Thank you again for your generous & joy-filled gift of music!

Kris Potter
 Director of Ministries to Children & Families
 Mayflower UCC

What an honor it was for *After Midnight* to be part of such a successful fundraising effort for such a good cause.

David Bailey-Aldrich
 Lead - *After Midnight*



Gold Rush (above) was asked to sing for the 100th birthday celebration of the Minneapolis Street Car Number 1300 held at the street car station near the Lake Harriet Bandshell. We sang on the platform and on # 1300 itself while it made its way to Lake Calhoun and back.



The GNU has been visited by 2 outstanding coaches over the last couple months. David McEchern (above with GNU visual team, Scott Kvigne and Roger Stanfield) who developed our stage presence package for our contest uptune and Joe Connelly (left) who came to help us in the singing category.

GNU Family Picnic

When:

Sunday, August 17th 4 pm until we go home

Where:

Beard's Plaisance located on the west side of Lake Harriet with some limited parking by the tennis courts right there.

The shelter is at the top of a modest hill. A more friendly approach is by parking near 45th and Upton and walking to the shelter.



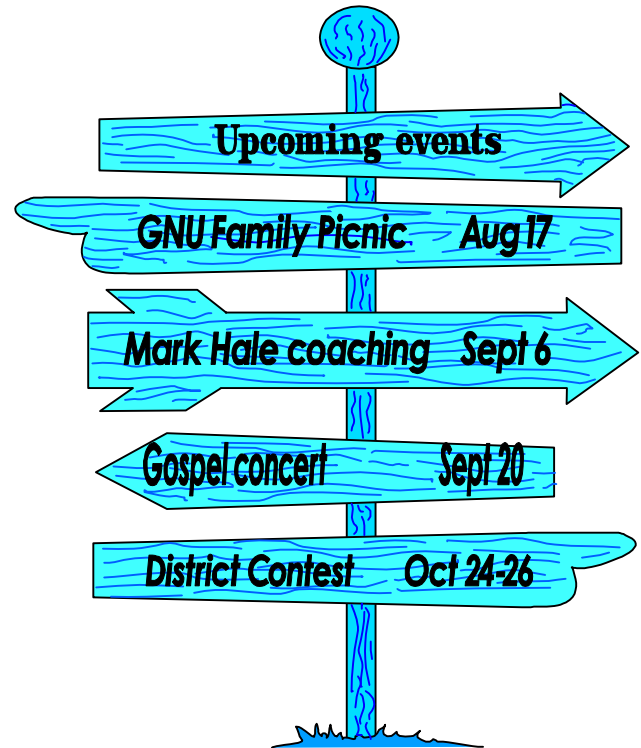
I believe that there will be a concert of some sort going on at the Lake Harriet Bandstand at 2 pm if you want to arrive early and still be within walking distance.

There are charcoal grills available and there will be gas grills brought by members to cook upon. Bring your own food with a little something to share as we did last year in Bloomington.

Steve LaBissonaire and Bruce Watson will have done the attendance calculation and awards will be presented. There might be some singing as well...who can forget the Benson family tag singing...just a warm-up for their youtube adventure!

It would be nice to know from everyone whether or not they will be in attendance...so email me privately an RSVP or be sure to sign the sheet at rehearsal. Try to guess at how many will be coming.

Ken Slinde
Membership VP



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 6:30pm 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

JAY TONY DAVID ROBERT



VOCALITY@VOCALITYQUARTET.COM 651.307.7248

Please Support These GNU Quartets



After Midnight
a barbershop quartet

Tom Marchinsky
952-931-9715
tom_bbshep@hotmail.com

Ellis Jones, Tenor Bruce Gray, Lead



MAGIC
Barbershop Harmony & Sleight of Hand

507-934-2372
bgray@gustavus.edu

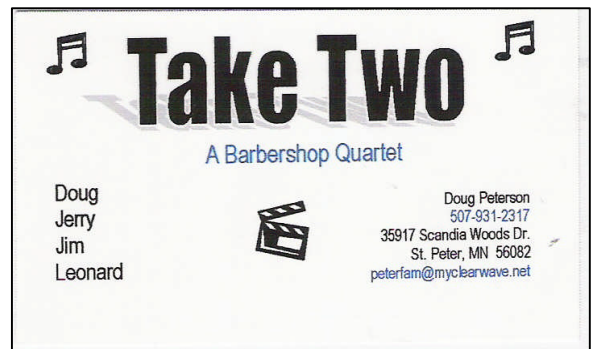
Don Miller, Baritone Bill Lydecker, Bass



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

HAPPINESS EMPORIUM
BARBERSHOP QUARTET

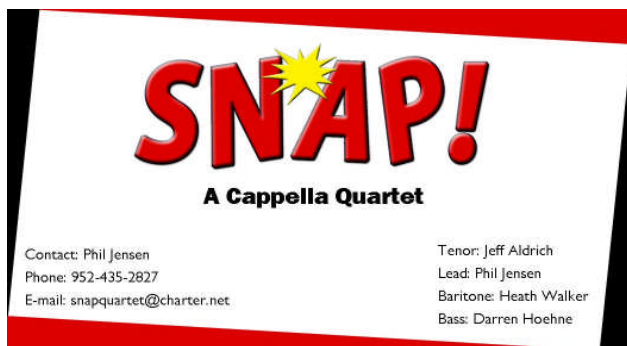
www.HappinessEmporium.com
CONTACT: Rod Johnson
1308 Blue Phlox Court
Northfield, Minnesota 55057
507.645.5750



Take Two
A Barbershop Quartet

Doug
Jerry
Jim
Leonard

Doug Peterson
507-931-2317
35917 Scandia Woods Dr.
St. Peter, MN 56082
peterfam@myclearwave.net



SNAP!
A Cappella Quartet

Contact: Phil Jensen
Phone: 952-435-2827
E-mail: snapquartet@charter.net

Tenor: Jeff Aldrich
Lead: Phil Jensen
Baritone: Heath Walker
Bass: Darren Hoehne



Jim Jay

Engage
Barbershop Quartet

Rick Steve

Contact: Jim Olson Minneapolis, MN
(H) 952-431-3110 olsoncrew@frontiernet.net



GOLD RUSH
A Land O' Lakes Quartet

STEVE NOLTE
STEVE ANDERSON

CLEON WAHLIN
STEVE HARDY*

763 757-0581
bari@prettygoodquartet.com

1750 - 131st Ln NW
MPLS, MN 55448



Talk of the Town
A Barbershop Quartet

Judd Orff - Lead
Keith Fransen - Tenor
Matt Hall - Bass
Jim Hall - Baritone

Contact
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