



GNU's News

International Medalist GREAT NORTHERN UNION CHORUS

June 30, 2010

Hilltop Chapter

Volume 15

Issue #3



Harmony Delivered!!!



The Great Northern Union performed at a gospel benefit concert on Saturday June 19 at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Apple Valley. The event raised money for Traci and Olivia Maccoux, two chronically ill sisters. For more information please visit www.tofuturehope.com.

Expedition 5th Place International Collegiate Medalists!!!

June 29, 2010-
Philadelphia, PA

2010 Bank of America Collegiate Quartet Contest Results:

- 1st Place Gold: Swedish Match 82.3
 - 2nd Place Silver: Prestige 82.2
 - 3rd Place Bronze: Spanglish 79.8
 - 4th Place Bronze: Go Fish! 79.4
 - 5th Place Bronze: Expedition 79.1
- (A total of 29 quartets qualified and competed.)



Expedition



Vocality



2010
International Convention
Philadelphia, PA, June 28 -
July 4

Vocality will be the seventh quartet to be judged and Expedition will also compete in the 19th slot among the 51 qualifying groups in the Quartet Quarter-finals today.



GNU Summer Collegiate Chorus

Members of the first ever GNU Summer Collegiate Chorus have joined the Great Northern Union for a great experience. Students are taking advantage of the opportunity to sing with guys from other colleges and rehearse with the award winning Great Northern Union Chorus. The fun began on Thursday May 27. The GNU Summer Collegiate Chorus will be one of the featured performers at the annual Como Park Pavilion Concert on Tuesday July 13. Thanks to Peter Benson, Dan Schroeder and everyone else that has helped promote this exciting opportunity for young singers to come together and make great music.

**2010 Great Northern Union
Officers & Directors**

***President: Tom Semple
Secretary: Roger Wambheim
Treasurer: Bob Dowma
Immediate Past President:
Bill Lydecker
VP – Membership: Ken Slinde
VP – Development: Marty Monson
Co-VP – Music & Performance:
Brent Buresh
Co-VP – Music & Performance:
Jay Fahl
Co-VP – Marketing: Luke Norell
Co-VP – Marketing: Dan True
VP – Logistics / Chorus Manager:
Gary Little
Member at Large: Jeff Goenner
Member at Large: Ken Gilmore***

***Show Chairman and Project
Manager: Wally Brink
Associate Director: Scott Kvigne
Director: Peter Benson***

GNU's News is an official publication of the Hilltop Chapter, 10,000 Lakes Division, LOL District, of the Barbershop Harmony Society. Bulletin material may be contributed by chapter members, copied from Society Publications, or may be borrowed from other chapter bulletins. All articles will be credited to the author. Articles not carrying a by-line have been written by the editor, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the officers of this chapter.

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Rehearsals are held on Thursdays at 7pm at the United Methodist Church of Peace in Richfield, Minnesota. The church is located at 64th and Xerxes. For more information contact Membership Vice President Ken Slinde gubass@comcast.net or 952-884-4975.

GNU's News June 30, 2010



**Director's
Corner
by Peter
Benson**

In my last article I included this quote: "The best time to change is when it seems least necessary." In other words, if you want to get ahead of the competition, you have to prepare even when you're not yet in the battle.

I'm writing this article from the International convention in Philadelphia, and even though the GNU is not competing this year, I am certainly remembering the feeling of butterflies and the excitement of competition. Being here to witness some of the top chorus rehearsals is very inspiring to me. I'll be excited to share some of my experiences with all of you.

Finally, on the subject of preparing for the future, I wanted to mention how thrilled I am about our 1st Annual Summer Collegiate Chorus. This is definitely the start of something big for the future of GNU. We are anticipating a chorus of over 30 young men from GNU, 7 colleges, and 3 high schools who will be singing with us at the Como performance later this month. Some of these kids will no doubt want to sing with GNU in the future, but I know that others are ready to start right now! A special thanks to Dan Schroeder for all of his work on this exciting project.

Keep your great ideas coming as we grow to be the best chorus on the globe!



Judy Pozgay coaching session 5/15/10



3 Questions

Jim Higgins

1) What drives you to put in the time and effort you think is necessary for GNU?

The quality of our product and the thrill of performing with these great guys.

2) How and where and when do you get it done?

I play the learning tapes whenever I am in the car or at the computer.

3) What is one thing you'd like to improve?

I could use improvement in all areas.

Bob Griffith

1. Whenever I have found something in life that I thoroughly enjoy, and feel I can excel at, I try to do whatever is necessary to hone my skills so I can be proud of my accomplishments. I have been in many quartets, but have never before had an opportunity to sing in a class act chorus like GNU.

2. I try to spend at least 1/2 hour a day studying music. Right after dinner (6:00 to 6:30) seems to work best for me.

3. Although I am always trying to improve singing techniques, choreography is my Achilles heel, thus I have to spend more time with this.

Jeff Hickman

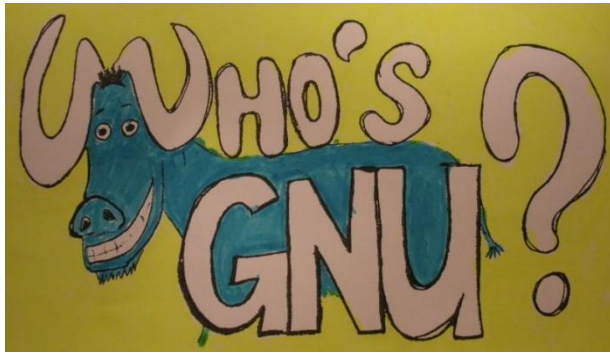
1) I want to belong as a soul mate of my brothers in the chorus. To do that, I need to pull my own weight; to be as good or better than the guy next to me. I love knowing I'm in one

of the best singing groups in the world. Not too many times you can say that. And how can I keep doing this.

2) I work in my car every day by repeating the spots over and over, until I can feel I'm doing it without concentrating anymore; like singing Happy Birthday. I need to look at the music to make sure the learning CD is on with the paper.

3) We need to upgrade the learning site whenever we update the song, so we can go off that, instead of the learning original.

(3 questions: continued on page 7)



Brent Benrud

Current hometown: St. Paul

Other places I have lived: Denver and Evergreen, CO; Milwaukee, WI; Decorah, IA; Osseo and Spooner, WI

Family: Pamela (wife), Tess (daughter, age 8)

According to my mother, I started singing along with the hymns at church when I was 18 months old. I sang my first solo, again in

church, when I was 3. I have been singing ever since.

I took private voice lessons for 7 years, first at the UW Eau Claire while I was in high school, then at Luther College. I studied vocal music education at Luther College (graduated with a minor).

I have been a member of the Barbershop Harmony Society for about 3 months.

I sang with the Luther College Nordic Choir, where I served as "Captain Riser" (i.e., stage manager). After college, I spent a season with the Dale Warland Singers; seven seasons with Kantorei in Denver, CO; and three seasons with The Singers.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my GNU experience so date. The spirit, energy, and level of commitment in the group is great. It is wonderful to hang out with a bunch of guys who get so excited about singing.

Other hobbies: skiing (cross country and downhill), scuba diving, home-brewing, tie dyeing, triathlon, golf.



Mark Kalla

I was born and raised in the St Cloud, MN area. I currently live in Sauk Rapids, MN. I support my singing habit by having a dual membership with the St Cloud, MN chapter of the BHS and rehearsing at least twice a week helps to keep my voice conditioned. I have been singing almost all of my life. All through elementary, high school, and college and most of my adult life as a

barbershopper.

I have been a member of the Society for 10 years.

I have been the St Cloud chapter secretary for 4 years and have been the chapter president for the last three and a half years. Singing with the GNU has been overwhelming. Singing with such talented men is a wonderful honor and pleasure. The GNU has been so welcoming. I am excited to perform with the chorus in the future. During my downtime I enjoy reading novels, playing golf and tennis, and amateur astronomy.

My favorite quote is from Dan Brown's "The Lost Symbol"

"Science tells me God must exist. My mind tells me I will never understand God. And my heart tells me I am not meant to."



Jim Slater

I feel fortunate to have been raised in the singing community of Northfield, MN (the land of cows, colleges, and contentment). Originally I hadn't signed up to be in 7th grade choir, but a week before school started a little voice said "you really need to sign up"...and I've been singing in groups of various types and sizes ever since (yea, I'm an a capella tramp).

I attended St. Olaf my freshman year of college and sang in the Viking Chorus. I earned my BA in Choral Music from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD. I sang in the Augustana Choir (bass section leader for three years) and a jazz quartet I co-founded. While living in Sioux Falls, I also played in the Augustana College-Community band, and performed in musicals at the Sioux Falls Community Playhouse.

I've sung with The Sioux Falls Master Singers, The Macalester Community Chorale, One Voice Mixed Chorus / OVation, Kantorei, Temple Baptist/Community church, and at the MN Renaissance Festival with The Court Revelers. Although I was the choir director at Temple Baptist for two years, I prefer and have often filled supportive roles in musical groups such as section leader, music librarian, assistant accompanist, assistant director, and walking pitch pipe :)

Other activities I enjoy include tennis, roller blading, skating, bowling, automobiles, long walks, card games, board games, tv/movie comedies, and tossing out a well-timed one-liner causing people to spew their drink across the room...

I worked as a Senior Business Systems Analyst for a large insurance company for many years, but recently retired from that role.

For those who know Myers-Briggs types, I am an ISTJ. For those who know StrengthsFinder, my five themes are Connectedness, Empathy, Developer, Responsibility, and Harmony. Harmony, harmony, we hail the name of harmony...

I'm enjoying singing with GNU and learning everything about the world of Barbershop! GNU gives me the buzz I crave that only in-tune, well-blended singing can do!

Coming Events:

**See more online: gnunion.com*

Como Park Barbershop Sing-out

Date: Tuesday, July 13

Time: 6:00PM

Location: Como Park Pavilion - St. Paul

The GNU will be one of many local Barbershop Harmony Society chapters performing in this annual summer event. *It will also be the debut performance of the first ever GNU Summer*

Collegiate Chorus. The Como Park Pavilion provides a great lakeside location for an evening of wonderful entertainment.

Saturday July 24 – Mark Hale Coaching

ACDA of Minnesota
Summer Dialogue Performance

Date: Thursday, August 5

Time: 8:30pm

Location: St. Olaf College, Northfield

The Great Northern Union Chorus has been invited to perform at the 2010 American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Summer Dialogue.

This concert of High Impact Harmony will be held in Boe Memorial Chapel. Concert time is 8:30 pm.

The GNU is no stranger to the ACDA. In 2008, the GNU performed at the North Central ACDA convention in Fargo, ND and drew acclaim for our precise harmonies and energizing performance.

www.acda-mn.org

2010 MN Twins Barbershop Day @ Target

Field

Date: Sunday, August 22

Time: 1:00 PM

Location: Target Field - Minneapolis

Play Ball! The GNU will join with up with our brother barbershop chapters and guests to sing our National Anthem before the Minnesota Twins game against the Anaheim Angels in the inaugural season of brand new Target Field.



We will sing the National Anthem on the field. Then from section 139 (top tan section in right field) we'll lead the crowd in singing God Bless America and Take Me Out to the Ballgame during the 7th inning stretch.

Youth In Harmony Autumn Choral Classic

Date: Saturday, September 25

Time: 7:30pm

Location: St Michael's Lutheran Church
- Bloomington

The Great Northern Union and the Minnesota Boy Choir team up to present a return of the popular Youth In Harmony concert collaboration. The Minnesota Boy Choir, directed by Mark Johnson, challenges boys and young men from many backgrounds to the highest standards of choral music.

Monday October 4 - EXTRA rehearsal

Monday October 11 - EXTRA rehearsal

Friday October 22 through Sunday October 24 – District, Fargo, ND

2010 Season Finale featuring Storm Front

Quartet

Date: Saturday, November 13 &
Sunday, November 14
Time: 7:00pm & 2pm
Location: Benson Great Hall, Bethel
Univ. - Arden Hills

The GNU returns to Benson Great Hall for our final concerts of 2010. Traditionally our biggest concerts of the season, the 2010 Season Finales will feature championship performances and spectacular a cappella singing in an intimate concert setting. Sharing the stage with the GNU will be the 2009 3rd place BHS medalist Storm Front Quartet. Be a part of this exceptional concert experience as we celebrate our 2010 season and look ahead to our exciting 25th anniversary.

Rehearsals from Finale through the end of the year

Save the dates: 2011
Spring Tour May 13-15, 2011



3 Questions
continued...

Jared Hoke

What drives me to put in the time/effort it takes to be a full partner in GNU?

Not in order of importance:

1) I sing because I love to sing. I practice because I want to sing more effectively.

2) The more effectively I sing, the more fun it is TO sing. This is essentially selfish.

3) I work hard at it because

a) that's what it takes to do it well, to progress, to move audiences and win contests. I love to do both.

b) that's what is expected

c) I do NOT want to let my brothers down

Just as in War, that last thing: not wanting to let my brothers down, is probably the strongest driver. A chorus or a quartet is a team. A team is about working together to achieve synergy. For that to happen, everyone has to pull at his oar. It's just that simple.

How/when do I do it?

The number one place and time is driving around in my car. It's a perfect place to rehearse; private, contained, well-equipped with supportive electronics and everything in easy reach.

The number two place is in my home office in front of a large floor/ceiling mirror. I use this less often because it's hard, and brutally revealing.

#1 thing to improve?

Breathing and breath support, which is part technique (how/where I breathe) and part general physical conditioning. Singing is an athletic as well as artistic enterprise.

#2 thing is ensemble, particularly as I have a big voice

#3 thing is relaxation. I tend to get too excited, and lose tone and ensemble. It all fits together.

It's like downhill skiing; at first so much harder when you are scared and tending to freeze up. But when you get loose and experience what a good turn *feels* like, it's WAY better than a thousand instructions rattling off in your head. It's the Inner Game that controls the Outer one.

Ken Gilmore

I do the work because I like to sing well enough to attract fans and reward them with exciting and beautiful music.

Now retired, I use the tools on the GNU learning site and study sheet music with my electronic

piano at home and write out the lyrics for memorizing.

Only thing better would be if music team knew at the beginning the exact arrangement we will use so we don't have to figure out the on the fly changes.

Don Challman (48 year Society member; charter member of GNU)

1. The love of the sound we produce and the joy expressed by those we sing for.

2. At home and in my car.

3. Ability to more quickly memorize the new songs we sing.

Judd Orff

1. The reward is each time we perform in public. Where else can you get the response we do from an audience and still remain a hobby singer?

2. I sing in my car, I work on my music at home and I record myself from time to time to see if I really know where I'm at.

3. Talking on the risers.

David Bailey-Aldrich

1) I feel that I owe it to myself, and my brothers on the risers, to be well prepared - especially when I'm going to be leading a sectional.

2) I typically listen to learning tracks on a loop at my desk while at work when we're learning a new song -- not too loud to annoy my neighbors, but I can get in A LOT of reps listening during a work day. I also try to practice singing my part, or thinking the part if my family is around, while at home -- in the shower, or when I'm doing laundry in basement, or while mowing the lawn -- I try to fit in practicing while doing something else, so I don't have to try and fit in one more thing to an already busy schedule.

3) There isn't just one thing, so I'll list a few

things I would like to improve:

- My riser discipline, so that I can be a better example to others - especially new members.

- How quickly I learn and memorize choreography -- I need to be sure that I'm not leaning on other guys so much.

- My ability to effectively communicate what I'm looking for when in front of the Lead section and/or the whole chorus.

Caleb Berge

1) What drives you to put in the time and effort you think is necessary for GNU?

Answer: The love of the sound.

2) How and where and when do you get it done?

Answer: Mostly in rehearsal and audio recordings in the car.

3) What is one thing you'd like to improve?

Answer: Learning the music away from rehearsal so I can better absorb technique and choreo during rehearsal.

Doug Peterson

1. My desire to: entertain
sing well
sing for Pete

2. Lots of time spent in my car going over and over and over my learning tracks. Oh, and going over my learning tracks some more.

3. Singing in my head voice without running out of air so quickly.

Rick Hurd

1. a. The thrill of a great performance.
b. Wanting to be one of the leaders in GNU not a follower.
c. The quest for a "gold", which requires 100% ALL the time.
d. NEVER wanting to disappoint the icons of this organization.

e. I love the never ending challenge of new music/moves.

2. a. Listening to cds, in the car and at home, to learn the flow of the song.

b. At the piano, "plunking out the songs" to learn the correct notes and intervals and learning the song in sections. No I can't play piano but I can find the notes on the piano.

c. Singing the songs, where ever I am, in the shower, at work, mowing the lawn.

3. To learn the music quicker.

GRAND DESIGN
Barbershop Quartet

Contact: Matt Hall
Phone: 715-410-8818
matthewjhall08@yahoo.com

Tenor - Leonard Huls
Lead - Don Hettinga
Bass - Matt Hall
Baritone - Derek Glenna

EXPEDITION
Barbershop Quartet

Jeremy Ganswindt *Tenor*
Jay Fahl *Lead*
Bryan Ziegler *Baritone*
Jake Umhoefer *Bass*
Contact Jake at bbrshopper@yahoo.com

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Minneapolis MN 612-866-1856
WWW.ENGAGEQUARTET.WEBS.COM

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

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(If you'd like your Quartet's business card included in the next GNU's News please e-mail to ttwheeler_56150@hotmail.com)