



GNU's NEWS

THE GREAT NORTHERN UNION CHORUS NEWS
for the
HILLTOP CHAPTER



10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O'LAKES DISTRICT
of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc.

GNU's NEWS

Vol. 7 – Issue # 2

May - July 2002



The Great Northern Union Chorus on stage in Portland

International Contest in Portland

The Great Northern Union performed admirably for their beloved director, Roger William's final International performance. The resurrected "lawyers" package, originally performed in Miami, was re-interpreted and presented with renewed enthusiasm to a 6th place finish.

After singing in the 4th position on the 2002 International stage, the members were free to watch and listen to most of the International Chorus contest. (For those who are new, this is a first) A glance at the score sheet attests to the extremely high level of competition. Any future competitors certainly have a high standard to meet!

Our LOL quartets did us proud by performing at the consistently high standards to which we are now accustomed. **Excalibur**, with their new base, Jay Giallombardo, finished 7th. **Breakpoint** from the Fargo area finished in 34th place and **Innovation** from Hilltop finished 39th.

Congratulations to all participants.

Midwest Vocal Express Wins Medal



Midwest Vocal Express at the LOL Pep Rally

A well deserved congratulations goes out to **Midwest Vocal Express** from Greendale, WI. MVE took home 5th place honors with a wonderful performance in their 4th international appearance.

While edging out GNU by only 14 points, it is mutually agreed that the success of one group breeds success in the other.

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NEW GNU DIRECTOR ANNOUNCED

During the energetic LOL Pep Rally in Portland, Pete Benson of Fargo, ND was named as the new GNU chorus director.

Great Northern Union had enjoyed the directing efforts of Pete Benson at a regular rehearsal on May 23. The session included excellent warm-up and suggestions on how to produce top quality sound, (like the Vocal Majority, for example). Much to our pleasure, that sound, from the very same voice boxes, was now more full-bodied than that of our regular "GNU sound"!

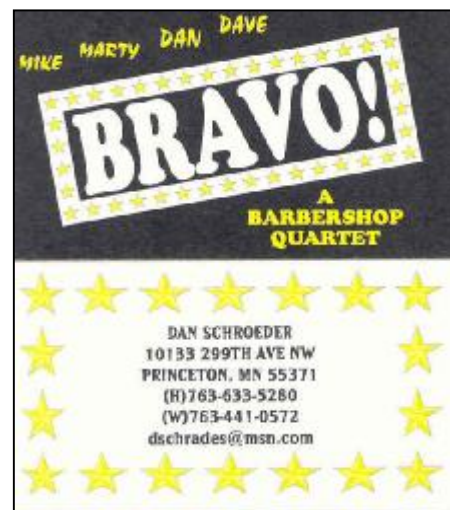


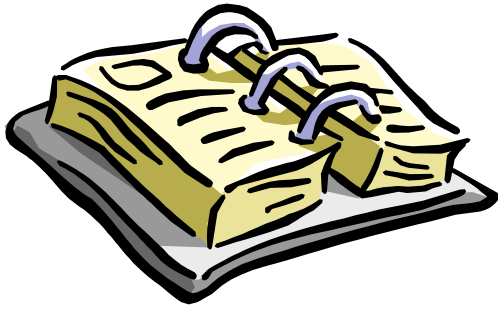
Highly talented and motivated, Pete was seen by all to be a great coach and director and we are looking forward to having him as part of the GNU.

Although he officially starts on August 1st, for the next several months, Pete will be commuting to rehearsals on a scheduled basis. Scott Kvigne will be directing in Pete's absence during this transition.

Pete currently resides in the Fargo area teaching music and directing a Sweet Adeline Chorus. He also had directed the Albert Lea chorus to a 2nd place district win.

He has a wife and young son; and by the time you read this they will have another new baby. Pete would like to find a college-level position teaching music in the Metro area, and will move here as soon as can be arranged.





COMING EVENTS

- August 11 – Church Performance
- August 25 – Church Performance
- September 8 – Church Performance
- October 25-26 - District Contest in Fargo
- January 25th, 2003 Annual Show with guest quartet Michigan Jake



A "SWAN SONG" NOTE

From your former bulletin editor - Emery Nelson

I took over as B.E. for the GNU's in 1966. I had done it for SCV since 1979 and continued as B.E. for both chapters through 1999.

My first bulletin featured Larry Ajer, Cindy Hanson and Roger Williams at Quadna. The GNU's had captured FIFTH place medals at Miami Beach the previous July doing "the lawyer's set". (My greatest thrill as a Barbershopper!) In the 1996 bulletin Roger stated, "No chorus of 60 men who comes in fifth is seen in that light." Our goal for 1996 was to establish ourselves as a contender.

At International, fifth, fourth and third places are awarded bronze medals; second is silver; first is gold. Our goal for International in 1997 was to earn a medal of a different color.

A bigger, stronger chorus means more fun, bigger impact, and a medal of a different color. Hang on. We're moving up!"

The following short article was as meaningful then as it is now:

BELIEVE THAT G.N.U. IS A CONTENDER
By Larry Ajer

You showed me what tremendous potential you have at Quadna. Now let me recap the accomplishments for you in a few brief words.

1. Remember to BE PRESENT in the HERE and NOW!
2. Recognize and use all propellants in the song to increase the emotional content of the music.
3. Recognize your individual analytical or artistic style and apply that to the performance.
4. Understand how Roger's movements change the song's direction. Apply energy whenever he calls for change.
5. Perform without fear! YOUR GOAL IS WITHIN REACH!

Now to the new B.E's---enjoy the fun of representing the whole GNU chorus. It IS FUN to spread the news for such a talented group. I sincerely hope that everyone will submit timely articles when asked. Having a chorus photographer at all major events will make the bulletin even better. My thanks to everyone who contributed over the last seven years.



TRIBUTE TO ROGER WILLIAMS

Our retiring and highly esteemed, director, Mr. Roger Williams, was totally surprised at dinner on the occasion of the GNU retreat and rehearsal-marathon in Duluth on May 18, 2002.

Judd Orff, Bruce Watson, and Roger Meyer co-MC'd the event. Roger was presented with an engraved plaque and a large memory book with photos and letters from many Barbershoppers. To top it all off, a number of attendees gave oral tributes with humor, even hilarity, and most of all, great sincerity.

Roger replied in kind: "If I have been successful it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants",



Roger Williams was graduated from Hamline University in 1978 with a degree in Music Education. During his last 2 summers at Hamline, he worked at Valley Fair singing in a quartet. After graduation, he taught music at Lake Benton and later at St. Louis Park.

He joined the Society in March 1979 with the Minneapolis Commodores and that year he sang with them in the front row at International.

In 1985 he was one of the original founders of the Great Northern Union and participated in the first organizational meeting. Roger was the Director when the chapter was chartered and licensed later that year. His name appears proudly on the original charter.

His GNU highlights include International contest performances in Louisville to a 3rd place medal and in Miami Beach where the chorus received a spontaneous standing ovation after singing the original Lawyer's Parody set to a 5th place finish.

To say that he will be sorely missed is an understatement. We echo so many who have said that his "great pair of hands" is surpassed by few. This, along with his ever-present gentlemanly and respectful demeanor in working with the chorus will always be remembered.

We wish him Godspeed in his life adventures that include spending precious time with his growing family, church activities, and the ever-present demands of an auspicious career at Coda Music.

Best of everything, brother! May the wind be ever at your back.

MORE PERFORMANCES!

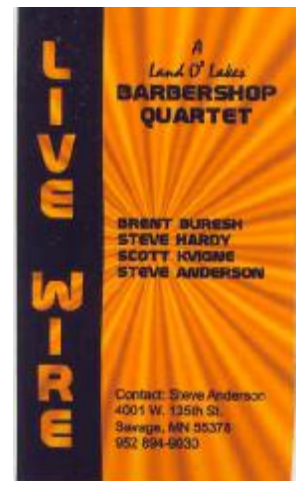
On April 30, an A-frame Methodist church in Excelsior was the scene for an evening of Great Northern Union entertainment. The chorus was the after-dinner show for a group of local folks.

Also performing with energy and spontaneous humor, was the new 10,000 Lakes Division Quartet Champion, Live Wire.

Although the chorus for the evening was small, they virtually filled the choir space. GNU performed so well that they got a coveted standing ovation.

Folks were asking for CD's and have e-mailed back their appreciation. As always, the guys created good will, and drove away knowing that the performance was another example of striving for fun through musical excellence.

Watch the calendar for more opportunities to sing, earn a little money for the chorus and most of all, have fun doing it.



GNU Performs at Roger's Church

PLEASE JOIN US

It came roaring to my attention as I was putting labels and stamps on the last newsletter that there are a heck of a lot of 'active' GNU members who are not currently singing with us. Presently, we have over 100 "active" members and another 100 "inactive" members on our mailing list.

Now I know some of these men have moved out of town and have still kept their GNU membership current. That's great, we love to keep in touch.

However, there are many familiar names on the list that still live in the area – and you know who you are. You would be very **welcome to join us on the risers once again.**



True, it is a time commitment, but I believe it's worth the effort to be able to sing in this organization. We are working hard and continuing to improve which is evidenced by our continual rise in District Contest scores each fall.

Be a part of the excitement, consider joining us on the risers. It is a great time to be a GNU! BE

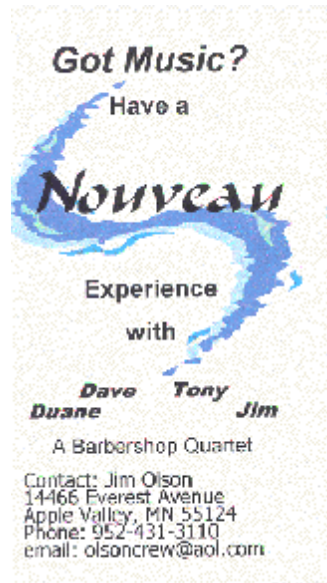
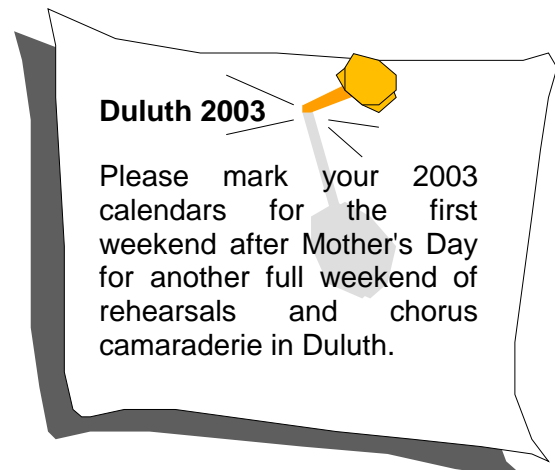
DULUTH RETREAT

For an entire weekend from Friday evening, May 17 until Sunday noon, the Great Northern Union stood on the risers and worked toward excellence in order to perform at our top potential at International.

Those who were able to attend will attest to the fun with "Wendell" and responding to the suggestions from coach Dwain Brobst.

Perhaps most importantly, sentimentally at least, to prepare to give Roger Williams one last high on the International stage in July.

The rehearsal facility, Pilgrim Congregational church, was lent to us at no cost through the efforts of GNU member Reverend Dan VanDer Ploeg, formerly of that church. Our only "payment" was to sing at the service on Sunday as well as to provide a short concert in the church parlors afterwards.



ANNUAL COMO PARK SING-OUT

Once again fellow Barbershoppers got together for the Annual Como Park Invitational Sing-out. In the Pavilion by the lake, six choruses performed followed by a mass sing by all chorus members.



Leading the Combined Chorus, Duane Rygg

LOL SPRING CONVENTION

At the LOL Spring Convention in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on May 3 - 4, the following GNU quartets competed: Innovation, BRAVO!, Nouveau, and Moldy Oldies. Additionally Jim Estes, a former member of the chorus, sang in two quartets: Die Wunderkinder and Four Weeks. Four Weeks won the Novice Champion. Die Wunderkinder may represent the District at the International College Quartet Contest in Portland in July, depending on scoring of another college quartet in Red Carpet Division.

Judges on the panel from GNU included Barry Clapper and Bruce Watson. LOL District Officers attending both the District Board meeting and the House of Delegates meeting included Dave Bowen and Bob Brutsman. Many other GNU members are also judges and are past District officers! Way to go GNU!

DID YOU KNOW?

Great Northern Union members have really become a presence at the Land O' Lakes District level. Take for instance, the District Barbershopper Of The Year (BOTY) celebration: GNU has SIX members who have been District BOTY members:

- Bob Brutsman
- Roger Meyer
- Doug Miller
- Duane Hutton
- Judd Orff
- Don Challman.



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Special Alliance

GLENN, DAVE, LANCE & DOUG (Barbershop Quartet)

Contactman: DOUG MILLER 4822 Rutledge St.
612-447-8265 Prior Lake, MN 55372

STOP THE PRESSES

I just got off the phone with Tom Matchinsky and Scott Kvigne, who as we write this, are on their way driving back from St. Joseph, Missouri from the Society's Judge Applicant School.




Both Tom and Scott passed the school with flying colors and are now full-fledged Candidate Judges, Tom in singing and Scott in presentation.

Now comes the really hard work, two years of practice judging and then Judge Category School.

Congratulations!


Jim Emery

GNU's News
Readers want to know...



Get the word out about your GNU chapter quartet. Send us your business card and we will publish it in an upcoming edition of GNU's News

JIM DAVID JIM TOM



INNOVATION
a barbershop quartet

2000 Land O' Lakes District Champions

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Teach the Children to Sing



**The Great Northern Union Chorus Bulletin
Hilltop Chapter, S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc.**

**Steve Anderson, B.E.
4001 W 135th St.
Savage, MN 55378**

Rehearsals: Thursday evenings at 7:30pm
At The Greater Minneapolis Jewish Community
Center, 4330 Cedar Lake Road, St. Louis Park, MN

The Great Northern Union Chorus meets weekly from 7:30 to 10:00p, 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 612-377-8330. "Early-Bird" rehearsals are held at 6:30pm for practicing S.P. moves. Members are urged to call the GNU Hotline at 651-643-4468 weekly for the latest word on rehearsals, performances, and other pertinent information.

