



International Medalist
GREAT NORTHERN UNION
CHORUS



HILLTOP CHAPTER • SPEBSQSA

10,000 LAKES DIVISION – LAND O' LAKES DISTRICT

Vol. 9 - Issue #3

GNU's NEWS

June 2004

“On to Fame” Show promises the best in Barbershop Entertainment

The Great Northern Union's annual “On to Fame” show will be presented on Saturday June 12th at Chaska High School.

This show features the groups that will be representing the Land o' Lakes district at the International Convention in Louisville in July.

For an unprecedented 18th time in a row, the GNU chorus will be competing along with **Bravo!**, who will make their 2nd appearance on the international stage.



The 1973 LOL District Champion and 1975 International Quartet Champion **Happiness Emporium**, (pictured at right) also sings at the convention each year. They participate in the Association of International Champions show, Sing with the Champs and as the organize the Gospel Sing.

Added to the show this year will be the 2004 LOL District Quartet Champions, **Deluge**.

For more information, or to order tickets, contact Bob Cannella at tickets@GNUnion.com or 651-454-4459, or call the GNU Hotline at 877-318-6859 (toll free).



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The Director's Cut

By the time you read this article we will probably be only a rehearsal or two away from our best performance ever. I am thrilled about the "Monster Ballads" set for Louisville and I am already imagining the experience of standing on stage guiding you through six minutes of impeccable musical artistry. Have you imagined it yet? If not, it's time to start.



Those of us who have been in competition before know just how fast the actual set will blow by. It is amazing to think about the countless hours of rehearsal leading up to the six minutes that seem to be over in the blink of an eye. So, what can you do to get the most out of those six minutes?

Prepare yourself ahead of time. You may as well expect not being able to hear on stage, bright, hot lights in your eyes, slight nervousness, and the biggest crowd you've ever sung for (excluding the Metrodome). If you know all of that ahead of time then you have no reason to be thrown off your game. You must do what you know how to do regardless of the circumstances.



Another way to prepare is to always, always, always be in performance mode. Every time you sing from now until contest, perform. Imagine that you're singing for an audience at every rehearsal. Don't plan to somehow "turn it on" when you get on stage. Do it all the time so the contest stage will seem very familiar. Your facial expression, body movement, and singing must all be one entity. Repetition is the mother of skill.

Lastly, decide what you want. What do you personally want to gain from the whole experience? Or better yet, what do you want the audience to gain? It seems like a strange question, but if you know what you want, you'll have a much better chance of getting it. Maybe singing all the right notes and words without fainting on stage is your goal. Okay, then what can you do now to ensure that it happens? If we just do what we've always done, we'll usually get what we've always gotten. Decide what it is you want and your brain will figure out a way to make it happen. I don't know about you but I am planning for a magnificent experience!

Pete

Presidents Corner

My Fellow GNUs!

Did we ever have fun in Duluth? The answer is a resounding YES! Under the direction of Pete and with the help of Bev Lynde and our presentation team we did a great job. Wasn't the show fun too? After a rigorous rehearsal day, we got a prolonged surge of energy and gave the appreciative audience a wonderful performance!

Now we get ready for another show, the On to Fame Show. This will be our last presentation to a "live" audience before Louisville. A couple of years ago we had a full house at this event. Wouldn't it be fun to sing to a full house again? How do we do that? You know how, we must sell tickets. Remember the energy that a large and enthusiastic audience gives you on stage? We give ... they give ... the energy that builds is fabulous! Everyone goes away happy.



We all have an obligation to *support* our chapter. A few do it by volunteering for just about everything. (Hello Kent, Bob and several others.) Some support the chorus by working on the music team or the presentation team. Others do it by getting people to come to our shows (***selling tickets.***) Yes, there are some that do all of the above. The new guys are settling in and volunteering and we really appreciate their support. Another group just enjoys singing and paying dues. We would appreciate it if this group helps to "Fill the House" and sell some tickets. This is an expensive hobby, but selling tickets doesn't cost anything! It takes little more than telling your friends and family that we are having a show.

Our Contest Package is starting to get where it should be. Your hard work here is paying off. Louisville is not that far away. It is just 37 days from this Thursday's rehearsal. But, if we work five to ten minutes a day plus formal rehearsals, we will be ready for that international stage.

Thanks to *Don Knecht (our membership VP)* and you, we have a number of new men that will be experiencing the International Stage for the first time. Let's make this the highlight of their career with us.

Men it is a real privilege for me to be associated with you. You are professional caliber singers and come through in the end to do a wonderful job. Let's savor our time together in preparing for Louisville and together we will "Break a collective Leg".

Jim Higgins

Letter from Bev Lynde after our weekend with her in Duluth

Good morning,

What a marvelous retreat weekend! Hopefully the Choo Choo choreo is now set and will just need some minor tweaking by your presentation staff. I felt the learning sessions were very productive and that is due to the terrific work ethic of the chorus and the splendid leadership of the director and musical and visual team. I would suggest you continue to use the video and let the guys watch themselves. They will be more critical of themselves than you will be. I realize that planned choreography is not a part of your regular repertoire so this seems like a lot to them. Once they get used to it and realize they can execute the plan, adding more planned moves to the regular repertoire songs will be a snap. They are a very intelligent chorus. You are so blessed to have such talent to work with.

The Saturday night show was in a word---AWESOME!

The energy level was so high I had to keep reminding myself that you had been on your feet for 13 hours. You gave new meaning to the phrase---"the show must go on".

Please relay my gratitude to the chorus for one of the best birthdays I've ever had. I haven't had a birthday cake since I was 11 years old. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to talk with so many of the members and get to know them on a more personal level.

I had a blast!

If you hit any snags or have any questions that I can help with I am here for you 24-7. Just pick up the phone. I may live in Ambassadors country but my heart is at GNU. You guys are the greatest!

Until Louisville--

Love to all,
Bev





The Duluth weekend retreat was held May 14th and 15th. Saturday, we were fortunate enough to be able to rehearse at the College of St. Scholastica (pictured at right) in Mitchell Auditorium.

Saturday evening we gave a 90 minute performance as a fund raiser for the Duluth Chapter with the help of After Midnight and Signature quartets.

Bev Lynde was our only coach for the weekend as we concentrated on choreography for "When the Midnight Choo Choo leaves for Alabam".



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.

Pete says:
"I try to be as positive as possible, but frankly, I am out of ideas on how to get you to sing all of the word sounds all of the time. I know what it sounds like when it's right because we have done it on individual phrases. The problem is that it is inconsistent and



unfortunately that portrays a "trend" to the judges. I have run out of ways to ask for it? It's up to you."

Well, guys, how do we get this done? If you know how to change your own behavior, spend the time to do it. If you don't think you're the problem, guess again. I know that I am.

I have a little assignment that I'd like to give each of us (myself included). Remember the "Just one more phrase, that's all I ask?" program. Well, it's time to resurrect it and keep it alive from now until July. I've got a little twist for it now, to make it easier for you and for me. But it will take some perseverance on our part. How bad do you want a medal?

By now, I'm confident that every one of us, with the possible exception of a few new members, know exactly how to figure out all of the word sounds in a phrase. I am positive that any of us can turn "The scene is set for dreaming" into "th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". The challenge is for us to make each of the phrases done correctly into a habit. And habits happen only through repetition. Not once a week repetition. Every day repetition. That's where you (and I) come in. The little program I went through before did a phrase or two per week. This time let's assign ourselves just one short phrase per day. For example, tomorrow (Monday) is the day for "The scene is set for dreaming". Six words! Spend every idle moment you have during the day (you have lots more than you think) saying to yourself (just in your mind is fine) "th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Say it or think it correctly over and over. "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Do it in the shower. "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Do it while you get

dressed for work. "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Do it on the drive to work. "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Do it at your coffee break. "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Do it at lunch. "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Do it driving home. "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Do it while you make dinner. "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Do it during commercials while you're watching TV. "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Do it while you get ready for bed. "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Over and over. "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Overdo the diphthongs and singable consonants. "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Really overdo them! "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Do it so many times that, by the end of the day, this phrase done perfectly is burned into your neurons permanently. And then do it during your dream! "Th' s-ee-nn ee s-eh-t f-oh-er d-er-ee-mm-ee-nngg". Then on Tuesday, move to the next phrase. "ll-uh-vv-zz nn-ah-k-ee-nngg aa-t th' d-oh-er". Burn a new phrase in your brain every day. "ll-uh-vv-zz nn-ah-k-ee-nngg aa-t th' d-oh-er". Every day! "ll-uh-vv-zz nn-ah-k-ee-nngg aa-t th' d-oh-er". I'm not going to send you an e-mail every day. This is your (and my) personal responsibility. If you want a medal, you're going to have to do this. If you want to beat Greendale, you're going to have to do this. Nobody can do it for you. Do a gut check on your own motivation and then just do it.

Tom Matchinsky guaranteed that, if we all do this, we will win a medal in Louisville. I give you the same guarantee. I also make the reverse guarantee. If we don't do this, we won't win a medal. It's just that simple. You make the choice. Now print this message, cut out the schedule, and tape it up on the refrigerator, or on the bathroom mirror, or on your dresser. Wherever you'll see it first thing in the morning. Find your phrase for the day, and commit to yourself and your fellow GNU friends for that phrase for the whole day. And do it EVERY day. Is there a medal this year for the GNU? You decide, and decide now to make a personal difference in the answer. I promise you that I will do the same.

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



Greater St. Paul Area North Star Chorus



Look who's
turning
1000...

On Tuesday, April 20, 2004, the The Greater St. Paul (MN) Chapter of SPEBSQSA held its first-ever all-chapter reunion (a.k.a. their collective 1000th birthday). Invitations were sent out to all known addresses for

former members, many of which are now GNU members.

The following was posted on the LOL District webpage by Tom Arneberg.

The turnout was great! There were at least 100 people there. We started out with a half hour of chit-chatting with old friends. At 7:30, we all did vocal warmups together, followed by performances by the current chorus members.

That was followed by some tag-teaching and story-telling time. We heard lots of great stories from the 1960s and even the late 1950s, when the chapter was first formed. (For a while, it seemed that the evening was turning into a Bob Dowma roast! ;-) We also heard from Nouveau, the current LOL District Champion quartet from the St. Paul Chapter.



John Barrett and Tom Arneberg

The highlight of the evening was when emcee and mastermind John Barrett invited everyone who was a member of the chorus in the 1980s up to the risers, then asked Bob Dowma to direct us in our big contest song, "My Lady Loves to Dance." That was the song we used when the chorus hit its peak in numbers and quality, in the early 1980s.

Amazingly, we pulled it off! Not only the words and notes, but dynamics, bell chords, and even choreography!! Sure there were a few glitches here and there, but I couldn't believe how well we executed, TWENTY YEARS later!! (And with no rehearsal or even advanced warning.)

Congrats to John Barrett and the rest of the gang at the St. Paul Chapter for a great evening. At one point, John mentioned that we shouldn't wait 47 years for our next reunion. So stay tuned!



The original **Night Howls** quartet
Don Challman(lead), Dale Teorey(bass)
Bob Dowma(tenor) and Doug Chapman(bari)



Nouveau

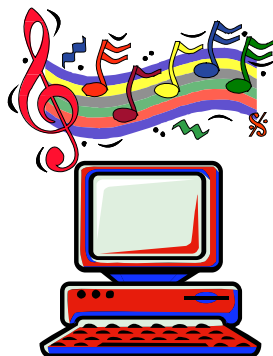


The Anderson twins, Rick and Steve

Photos by Ron Middlestaedt and Tom Arneberg

Live Barbershop and A Cappella music shows on the Internet

as found in a "Probe" bulletin editor's email



There are now THREE LIVE shows on the air each week at www.harmonize.com/THN

Tuesday - Tuesday Night Swipes with Marty Israel (various groups) 7-10pm ET

Wednesday - East Coast A Cappella Review (Doo Wop) with Garry and Linda Cascio 7-10pm

Thursday - The Applause Show with Rich Taylor and Vinnie Haynes (various groups) 6:30-10pm

And soon to come

Monday - Joaner & Bea In Harmony with Joaner Garrett and Bea Hoyley (various groups) 7-10pm

Sunday - a gospel show hosted by Rich Taylor (name and time tba)

Sunday - a show featuring our SPEB and SAI Gold Medal Champs hosted by Renee Craig (name and time tba)

Things are moving along quickly and we invite you to tune in for all of these shows.

You can hear these ANYWHERE in the world as they are broadcast via the Internet (if you can read this, you can hear these shows).



It's also great fun to join the chat room where we talk about the songs, the artists, the arrangers and the upcoming men's Int'l. I suspect Rich and Vinnie will be playing song from MaxQ, Gotcha!, Metropolis, Riptide, TNL, the VM, Swingle Singers and many others as we gear up for Louisville.

International Prelims in Fargo

The Land O' Lakes District International Preliminary Contest was held April 30th in Fargo, ND. **Bravo!** will be representing Hilttop and the LOL district as the only quartet to qualify for the International contest.



In addition to the international prelims, it was a division contest for those quartets who had not qualified as yet for the District contest to be held in Appleton, WI in the fall.

The Great Northern Union will be well represented in Appleton with 6 quartets qualifying to be there. After Midnight, Men at Work and PRISM qualified in March.

Special Alliance, who missed the cut at the 10,000 Lakes division contest, went up to Fargo to compete again in hopes to score better and qualify. They accomplished their goal and will be in Appleton in October.

Also qualifying in Fargo was a re-formed Apex quartet with
Keith Olson (tenor)
John Danilenko-Dixon (lead)
Tom Puent (bari)
Jim Larson (bass)

Quest is another new GNU quartet who qualified for "district" up in Fargo. Quest is made up of....
Jay Althof (tenor)
Mike Laurel (lead)
Brent Graham (bari)
Tim Milbrandt (bass)

Congratulations to all the quartets heading to the next level of competition.

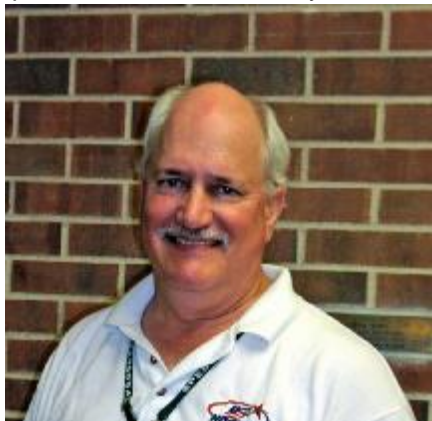


Members; Get to know 'em

John Kleiber, the "Duplicator"

One of our past presidents, John Kleiber, is part of a family with somewhat eclectic musical backgrounds. His wife Josephine, is a pianist. Their daughters, Carley, a freshman at UW, Eau Claire, and Josse (rhymes with possee) a 9th grader at Valley View in Edina, play trombone and trumpet. John was in a boys' choir in

church as a 5th grader; then continued singing in three choirs throughout high school and college. Back to high school, he was in a trio, (which was a cross between Peter, Paul and Mary; and Simon and Garfunkel), which was called "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern"---see Hamlet! This group was made up of John, his sister, and his best friend.



For his career, John is a Custom Design Engineer for Honeywell Solid State Electronics in Plymouth. "We make microchips for the military. If I tell you much more, I'll have to kill you!", says John.

John joined SPEBSQSA 18 years ago; and joined GNU 12 years ago, right after the International convention in New Orleans in 1992. He started with Minnetonka Clippers, both as Assistant Director and Co-director. He actually directed one song on a contest stage and several at Orchestra Hall. He says he has no talent nor ambition to direct GNU; but did appreciate the privilege to direct "Irish Blessing" at the end of his presidency.

He does have a somewhat colorful-if often unregistered-quartet experience. One of his quartets was actually registered: "Rhythm and Smooze". It consisted of himself, John Babbs; Bruce Watson and Bob Barnes. Here is his account of that group: "We started as a Valentine quartet. We sang in a Division contest with John B and I trading parts on the two songs. Bruce and John are "bi-sectionals-<wink>". We fell apart because we just didn't know enough songs. I've done several other Singing Valentines quartets with Minnetonka, singing in Methodist and Fairview Southdale hospitals. We were always well received, even if we weren't very good. And it was always fun".

When asked about his decision to join the chorus, he said "as much as anything, I was attracted to GNU for the high quality singing, the work ethic, and the overall

excellence. I especially like the high level of competition and the sophistication of the directors and music teams over all these years. John's special moments with GNU include the announcements at Calgary, Miami Beach, and Kansas City, hearing us announced as placing in the medals at International.

John has held many positions of responsibility within the chapter: President, Program Vice President, and Secretary "for more years than I can count. Currently I am the tape-CD duplicator for rehearsals. I have been the convention logistics coordinator for several contests including Miami Beach, Salt Lake City, and parts of Atlanta to name a few, plus some district contests."

John's next statements took us by surprise and filled us with sadness. He, together with the help of the good doctors at Park Nicollet and Methodist Hospital, and with the love of his family, is battling cancer. The course includes a constant at-home IV drip with one of those fancy chemotherapy drugs; and 6 concurrent weeks of radiation. After that, there is to be 6 weeks of recovery; then there will be surgery to remove the shrunken tumor. This might mean that he cannot sing at International, but I emphasize "might"...something tells me he will be persuading the doctors to at least try depending on his level of strength at the time. We are all with you, John!

Before we close this article, John wanted to give us all the following advice: that each of us, especially everybody 50 years old and over- should have all of the necessary precautionary screening tests, in order to avoid this for ourselves. **Please get those check-ups!**



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

SPEBSQSA & The Minnesota Twins

Many GNUs participated in our May 12 performance for the Minnesota Twins game with other LOL chapters. We've talked about the most visible results, but I haven't given a clear accounting of why we handled the performance differently this year.



Marketing is about giving a customer something they value and getting something in return. We are never paid for our Twins performances and the PR is having our chapter name across the display board while we sing. Our reward is

the satisfaction of singing for a major league baseball team. This is fine for chapters that just sing for the fun of it, but GNU has some serious goals regarding both performance and marketing that require a new perspective.

After our 2003 performance, I asked to meet with Twins management to discuss how we could better serve each other's interests. They met with me after the season was over, in November (during a snowstorm), when we sat down to lunch and discussed a mutual desire for greater community relations. I didn't hide the fact that I wanted their list of 1200 would-be national anthem singers, but Glo (Twins PR manager) had her own ideas. A former Sweet Adeline from Bemidji, she wanted a giant chorus of barbershoppers for the anthem. This was a chance for GNU to meet a challenge outside competition and impress a potentially high value customer, so I said 'yes'.

Then there was the matter of ticket sales and attendance. Where the Twins need the most help is on weeknights at each end of the season, when school is in session. We set an agreement that our giant chorus *would not* have to audition but *would* pay for their own tickets - that was justification to include everyone. After that came getting in touch with other chapters: Albert Lea, Black River Falls, Bloomington, Brainard, La

Crosse, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Rochester, St. Cloud, St. Paul, Windom & Winona. More than 175 men participated, bringing 400+ attendees, including families. Glo was happy with the results: "Thank you - words will never do your singing the praise you deserve!" is at the top of the letter we received from her on behalf of the Twins.

That's part 1 of the story. Glo invited us to choose a date for 2005 when the new schedule is printed at the end of this season. One of our leaders has asked me "What's in it for us?" Here then, is an accounting of what we got for our participation and what we missed:

The biggest wins were achieved in the area of performance (the testing of large-scale chorus logistics plus a pre-international stadium performance, especially for our newest members) and in public and customer relations. Our solo shots may be gratifying, but hardly yield the results of the spectacle we created on May 12. In addition, it was a chance to overcome some negative impressions about GNU with our primary support group: other chapters. You did introduce yourself to some of the other guys, right?

The biggest disappointment was in the area of recruitment - not only with GNU but LOL chapters in general. Many groups missed a great opportunity to reunite past members for the big occasion or to utilize a chance to sing for the Twins as a way to bring in new members. If more than 1200 people audition *specifically* to do this every year, there's a market we can fill. LOL chapters can use this to recruit in the same way that Singing Valentines raise money. The lack of sales is no surprise. It was unfortunate, however, that the display saw so little traffic. Prism did a great job, but we need more quartets in the concourse if traffic is to be driven towards our information booth.

In many ways this was a successful event to be repeated and improved upon.

Loring Harrop from the GNU Marketing Team



Photo by Dawn Holmberg

A note from Theresa Meyer:

As your photographer for the past couple of years or so; and one of the "co-editors" of this publication, I am having to hang it up for the foreseeable future. You know how Roger has stood by me for a great many (large and small) operations over the past seven years. We face three or four more in the next year or so. Some is orthopedic; some is indicated below.



John K. has told you to get checked for the "other end" of the alimentary tract. I am informing you that my doctors always ask me to tell folks to please curb the use of tobacco and alcohol. (Although it was not the case for me, over 90% of folks who get oral cancer are smokers and drinkers.) And please get thoroughly checked out! As always, the name of the game is early detection.

Please keep Roger in your hearts as we travel another long path. Barbershopping is a great life for both of us and we plan on keeping this hobby going in some form or other for a long while. **Thank you** from the bottom of our hearts for your friendship, love and support! As the unsinkable Molly Brown said in that famous song: "I ain't down yet!"

The best to my GNU pals as you **earn a medal** in Louisville. I hope to be there in person if not, then for sure in spirit.

Big Thanks to Theresa Meyer for all her hard work on the newsletter!

Dates to Remember

Saturday, June 12 7 PM
On to Fame Show

June 27- July 3 All Week
International Contest Louisville, KY

Saturday, Sep 11 7 PM
Awards Night

Sunday, Sep 19 TBD
Fairmont Show

Nov 13, 2004 TBD
Bethel College Cabaret

Jan 22, 2005 TBD
Annual Show Bethel College



Our director, Pete Benson, leading us to better singing though the "model"

Hilltop Chapter Quartets

Got Music?
Have a
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Contact: Jim Olson
14466 Everest Avenue
Apple Valley, MN 55124
Phone: 952-431-3110
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Bruce Stasch **Loring Harrop**
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GLENN, DAVE, LANCE & DOUG (Barbershop Quartet)

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

Please support these
Hilltop Chapter
Quartets



Scott Kvigne is, once again, leading “mirror room” choreography sessions twice a week. Members are required to attend at least one mirror session as a qualification for performing on the international stage in Louisville. These sessions prove very valuable as not only a learning tool but also as a “testing ground” for tweaks in the choreography. Last night was no exception and the guys that made it to this 1st session will be ahead of the game when they get back to regular rehearsal. **This just in.....**Midnight Choo Choo will be debuted in Appleton at District in the fall. Two “monster” ballads will be performed in Louisville.



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