



International Medalist
GREAT NORTHERN UNION
CHORUS



HILLTOP CHAPTER • SPEBSQSA

10,000 LAKES DIVISION - LAND O' LAKES DISTRICT

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GNU's NEWS

Sept 2004

The Great Northern Union has more than one reason why we would like to reclaim the District Championship this fall in Appleton, WI. As described below from the SPEBSQSA official website, the society has changed the qualification process for the international contest. Read on....

2005 chorus contest goes wild!

We're taking the chorus contest to a new level of excitement: a wild card playoff in Salt Lake City to pick six more choruses for the finals!

Updated: 7/26/04 5:02 PM

The 2005 international chorus contest will be feature competitors qualified in three ways:

- **The sixteen (16) District Chorus Representatives** selected through the standing procedure at Fall District Contests.
- **Choruses from affiliate organizations** invited under standing rules. Usually, no more than two or three participate.
- A **chorus wild card playoff** consisting of up to twelve (12) choruses from the Barbershop Harmony Society. The top six (6) scoring choruses progress to the international chorus contest finals.
- In total, as many as 30 and as few as 22 choruses could compete in the finals; a total of 22-25 choruses seems likely, based on previous affiliate participation.

Qualification procedure

- After the Fall District contests have been concluded, and the District Chorus Representatives have accepted invitations, an invitation will be issued to the next twenty (20) highest scoring choruses. Of these, the twelve highest-scoring choruses to accept this invitation will participate in the chorus wild card playoff.



- The chorus wild card playoff will be held on Thursday, July 7, in a venue separate from the Finals, and will be ticketed as a separate event. A completely separate panel of judges will adjudicate under normal contest rules.
- The six highest-scoring choruses in the wild card playoff will advance to the Finals. The seventh-highest scoring chorus will perform as mike testers for the Finals.
- In the same fashion as quartet quarter-finals and semi-finals, a score sheet from the chorus wild card playoff showing the choruses not advancing to the finals will be published. A separate score sheet for wild card choruses advancing will be published after the Finals.

Conduct of the 2005 international chorus contest finals

- The Chorus Finals will be judged by a separate panel, whose judges will not be permitted to view the chorus wild card playoff.
- Choruses may sing the same songs they sang in the chorus wild card playoff without penalty.

(Qualification continued on page 2)

(Qualification from page 1)

- Scores are not cumulative from the previous round. All choruses start on an even basis.
- Choruses qualified from chorus wild card playoff will be inserted into the regular pattern based on their previously requested riser configuration.

Future contests

- The chorus wild card playoff will be conducted in 2005 on a trial basis, and should not be considered a permanent change to Society contest procedures.
- The chorus wild card playoff has been approved by the Society Board after consultation with the Society Events Committee and the Society Contest & Judging Committee.



You won't want to miss next years International in Salt Lake City. The contest site (pictured below) is a brand new concert hall style venue.



Have you ever referred to certain barbershop groups as "contest choruses" or "two-song" choruses? You know, the groups that sing their two contest songs very well but the rest of their repertoire is marginal at best? Perhaps you have even thought of GNU as "one of those choruses." There certainly are times during our year where contest songs seem to take precedence, but I'm certain that after the Fairmont performance, one could not categorize us in the "two song" group.

The purpose of this article is to make it clear that while GNU has always set a high priority on competition, it is by no means what we're all about. We are about excellence! We strive to be the best at everything we do. Excellence does not just pertain to contest performances or even shows. Excellence should trickle down into every facet of our organization, including rehearsals, warm-ups, business meetings, early birds, sectionals, etc. Success is not just something that happens on stage, but something that happens all the time.



As we prepare for District contest, let's not focus so much on being excellent for that one big event. Let's focus on just **being excellent** and the rest will take care of itself.

Pete

District Convention Tailgate Party.

Saturday October 23 - 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM served in the Performing Arts Center Kimberly Clark Room.

Chicken Breast, Brats, Burgers, Hot Dogs, complete toppings bar, cold potato salad, potato chips, relishes, baked beans & brownies. ALL FOR \$12.00 PER PERSON. SEATING FOR ONLY 200 SO REGISTER EARLY

Send check Payable to the Fox Valleyaires and number attending to: Richard Staedt,
1118 E. Byrd St. Appleton, WI 54911

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As was mentioned in a previous article, The Society board has changed the qualifying process for choruses wanting to go to International competition. There are no more "wild card" spots, which is the way we have qualified the last 2 years. It would be best for us to win the district contest in Appleton and let Greendale earn their spot though the preliminary contest held in Salt Lake.



The
President's
Corner

There is an old adage that has many applications to individuals and organizations. In essence, it says that to attempt to maintain the status quo or tread water is an impossible goal. Rather one either advances or falls back. GNU is no exception.

There are several challenges we face to which this adage applies. It will be up to each of us (not just the board or music team) to cope with the challenges by doing what we can to move ahead. These challenges include at least the following: budget, music program, director retention, and membership. This article and subsequent ones will discuss these and other issues the GNU faces.

The Budget

As many of you know, our finances are limited and we need to be careful not to spend more than the income we make. At this point, we have little or no reserve. In what may be a first for this chapter, The board has adopted a budget for the current fiscal year(August 1, 2004 – July 31, 2005) that limits the amount that anyone responsible for a given budget line item can spend, with allowable expenses based on an estimated income. We depend on each of you to sell show tickets and program ads as they are our primary source of income.

The Music Program

Pete, Scott, Marty and Erik along with the rest of the music team have been working hard to raise the level of our performance. We have begun to see the results of their efforts thanks to the commitment of you, the members, to their program.

Now it is up to each of us to make sure that the GNU continues to advance and not fall back.

Bill Lydecker
President of the GNU





From the Judges Pit

The Great Northern Union is very fortunate to count 9 judges among our members. Through this column, we will get advice from these experts on how to improve our individual performance.

From an email Jim Emery sent out after returning from category school:

Today (Sunday) we completed the 2004 contest judging category school. This is where all Society judges must go every three years to be certified or re-certified for future contest judging.



The GNU was blessed to have 9 of its members in attendance at this year's school. Eight were looking for re-certification, including David Bowen (Contest Administrator), Barry Clapper (Presentation), Don Challman (Presentation), Jim Emery (Singing), Roger Meyer (Contest Administrator), Doug Miller (Presentation), Judd Orff (Presentation), and Roger Stanfield (Presentation). Seeking his first judge certification was Tom Matchinsky (Singing).

Each one of the guys were (re)certified, raising the GNU judge total to a society high of 9. Congratulations to all 9 GNU judges. We're proud of every one.

One particular note from this week was Tom Matchinsky's incredible performance. The Singing category had a total of 49 individuals practice scoring and giving mock evaluations. Each judge took four scoring tests of 20 songs each. After each test, the scores were entered into a statistical analysis program that determines scoring accuracy. At the end of the week, all of the test were totaled and all 49 individuals ranked for scoring accuracy. Our new guy Tom was the 4th most accurate scorer of the entire Singing category! This is an amazing accomplishment, especially for a

judge candidate scoring against nearly 40 experienced certified judges. (He kicked my butt at 13th!) Tom also got very high marks for his evaluation sessions. Special congratulations got to Tom, our newest GNU and society Singing judge! He will be a super judge. Give Tom your congratulations, well-earned admiration and thanks for all the work he has invested the next time you see him. We proud of you, Tom!

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

The following is an email response from Tom's Dad, Alan Matchinski to Jim,

Thanks so much for your wonderful post about Tom. I immediately forwarded it around our family. Your words are very generous, and because I know you very well, I also know you don't pass out the compliments unless they are greatly deserved. Thanks for your help in Tom's development.



He owes so much to barbershop and to the many people who have encouraged him and inspired him since his 10th birthday when we first filled out a membership form for him in the Greater St. Paul North Star Chorus. That and the April day in 1988 when he and I passed our GNU auditions will always stick out in my memory. Not to mention all of those winning performances together on the risers.

There have been so many highlights, and some times that made us go, "hmmm." Like him partying with the big boys at some district wins by the GNU. Or finding New Orleans very lax about minor's drinking. Just offer Tom some peel-and-eat shrimp and watch his facial coloring, even today. The night I lost him in Louisville (he was 14 at the time) will also stick in my mind. But I was sure he was with great, trustworthy people and doing something he loved very deeply. At 9 in the morning I found he had spent the night singing tags and songs with other barbershoppers and their families. Not just any barbershoppers, but a bunch of gold medalist quarteters, directors, judges, arrangers, and society biggies. They started at Purdy's Coral and finished with breakfast someplace. I guess he should have been grounded for life, but then he never would have been able to become a loving husband, an Opera singer, a District Champ, a great coach and teacher, and a now a singing judge. We are all so very proud of him.



Meet Tom Matchinski

Tom Matchinsky, GNU's most recent SPEBSQSA certified judge, is married to Kathryn and they live in St. Louis Park with their puppy. In his work-life, he is an Insurance Underwriting Manager for United Healthcare.

Members: Get to know "em

Part of our wonderful tenor section, Tom comes by his barbershopping naturally, since both parents have been in the hobby for decades. He says he was **born** a barbershopper, but his dad made him wait until he was 10 years old to officially join up! Prior to that he would stand on chairs and rip tags with St. Paul chapter members. (Isn't this a priceless mental image!) Then, in 1988, he and his father joined GNU shortly after the San Antonio convention.

Tom calls himself a "junkie" of the performing arts. He majored in Vocal Performance and Education at Gustavus, and minored in percussion. He also sings with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Minnesota Opera and Minnesota Chorale who performs with the Minnesota Orchestra. "It's so much fun to sing with professionals who come to rehearsals prepared, which allows the conductor to work on the artistry rather than doing mundane tasks like learning notes and words. My ultimate dream is for the GNU to be able to do this every week", says Mr. Matchinsky.

He currently is singing in a quartet, "After Midnight", with David Bailey-Aldrich, Steve McDonald, and Jim Emery. Previously he sang in "Innovation" with David, Jim Barloon, and Tom Puent.



Tom has many memories over the past years; and will never forget getting the GNU called as medalists in San Francisco in 1990.

Some of the work with Pete has been pretty awesome. We are just starting to scratch the surface of being a top notch chorus. We've been a good chorus all along, but Pete's musical leadership is something special.

To sum up his comments, Tom related "If every man will commit to being prepared well enough for Pete to do his magic, we'll be better than we've ever been, and we'll have more fun than we've ever had. The by product is

more men on the risers, the accolades in the competition arena, and greater respect within the global musical community

The following are excerpts of the Harmonet reporter's review of the quartet contest at the **Buckeye Invitational**. Great job, **Nouveau** (especially "dynamo" Tony)! :-)

Date: Sat, 21 Aug 2004 09:04:40 -0400
From: "Jade Walker"
Subject: BUCKEYE: Quartet Contest

Standard and Comedy quartets were mixed together for this contest.

Nouveau (Standard) SPEBSQSA, LOL

(Jim Olson, Tony Blackwood, Duane Rygg, Dave Boyd)

Their opener was "Jeepers Creepers/Them There Eyes". Tony, although the shortest, is definitely the dynamo of this quartet. They put a lot of attitude in this song with significant looks and various tempi and inflections. Jim posted first then handed it off to Dave.

"Are You Lonesome Tonight?" remembered their loved one with fondness. There's something about this quartet that makes me want to sing along, a little tickle at the base of my lungs. Wait, it's Dave singing melody.

The "All Over Now/So Long, Dearie" medley showed how much they enjoy saying goodbye. Nah, they're not bitter. They poured lots of inflection and attitude in the song and even did The Wave on "wave your little hand".

When Harold Lathom announced the results Nouveau took 3rd in the "Mens" and "entertainment" categories.





Scott Kvigne directed a small group of GNUs at the Brooklyn Center United Methodist Church. We sang for both services that Sunday in August. Bob Barnes set up this performance as he is one of the church members.



The annual Como Park performance was held on August 17th. 6 choruses participated in this invitational event put on by the St. Paul North Star chorus. They have organized this performance every year for about 20 years. Pictured here is the mass chorus that ended the show with the Battle Hymn of the Republic under the direction of Mpls Commodore director. Paul Wigley.

Awards Banquet 2004

On the late summer evening of September 11, even as our chairman **Marty Monson** paid tribute to the loss felt everywhere on this date 3 years ago, the chorus settled in for a nice evening of camaraderie, good food and good scenery at the site of the Lost Spur Golf Course in Eagan. A good time was had all around, as we enjoyed the company of our members and their ladies.



Co-chairmen **Amy and Marty Monson** did a wonderful job of creating an exciting system of providing surprises to the ladies via a raffle system. Lovely pink and red long stemmed roses were also provided to each female guest.



Roger Stanfield, in his inimitable style, announced this year's choice for the BIF award, (Best Improved Face) was newbie **Dave Mitchell** who was not in attendance. He has since been surprised with this award.



This year's winner of the coveted "Happy Feet" award was **Mike Brama**. The traveling trophy is actually a "golden" sneaker.

Festivities continued, and in time, **John Babbs**, the recipient of last year's Barbershopper of the Year award, came to the podium. He graciously and appropriately took a long time to recognize a great many men and women who have, in their own ways, given of themselves to the good of the chorus. Certainly any number of men cited during that phase of the evening deserved the BOTY title.



Toward the end of his presentation, John called Theresa Meyer to stand and take recognition for her efforts on the behalf of the group. Then, he told her "stay standing, and will you kiss your husband and tell him that he is the 2004 Barbershopper of the Year!" Both totally surprised and grateful, with tears and smiles of gratitude, they made their way to the podium where the traveling and permanent trophies were presented to **Roger Meyer**.



Rachelle and Pete Benson being recognized at the banquet. Rachelle also won the gift certificate to the Juut SalonSpa

As was mentioned before, the awards banquet is also a time when we can show our appreciation to our spouses. There were several items raffled off for the ladies including gift certificates to Caribou Coffee, Bath and Body Works, Juut SalonSpa, and Barnes and Noble. There was also a "scavenger hunt" conducted by Marty Monson during dinner which included everything from a frequent buyers card to a library card to crayons, to Revlon lipstick to Juicy Fruit gum to a Virginia quarter along with many more items. Here are some more photos taken by Theresa Meyer at the Awards Banquet.



Faces in the crowd.....



Pictured from left to right are our "scavenger hunt" winners; Grace Barloon, Kelly Stewart, Angie Orff, Holly Babbs and Marie Morteck.



Kelly Stewart, Steve Nolte's fiancée, with her Barnes and Noble gift card



Josephine Kleiber won a gift card for Caribou Coffee

The GNU is blessed with a lot of talented quarteters. We have 5 quartets going to District next month. Many of these quartets are newly formed and have members not only from the GNU but also from other chapters. Good Luck to all the GNU quartets as they head for Appleton. The quartets and their members are listed as follows.

After Midnight

Tom Matchinsky (tenor)
David Bailey-Aldrich (lead)
Jim Emery (bari)
Steve McDonald (bass)

Special Alliance

Dave Wall (tenor)
Glenn Aronson (lead)
Doug Miller (bari)
Lance Johnson (bass)

PRISM

Steve Nolte (tenor)
Cleon Wahlin (lead)
Alan Matchinski (bari)
Darren Hoehne (bass)

Men at Work

Bruce Stasch ,(tenor)
Steve Hardy, (lead)
Loring Harrop, (bari)
Jim Barloon, (bass)

Quest

Jay Althof (tenor)
Mike Laurel (lead)
Brent Graham (bari)
Tim Milbrandt (bass)



COMING EVENTS

October 22-23..District Contest in Appleton WI

November 21.....Mn Vikings National Anthem

Saturday in November (TBA)...Bethel Cabaret

January 22, 2005.....Annual show at Bethel

March 12.....Luther Norseman College Show

April 3,.....Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church

The **Minnetonka Clipper Chorus Chapter** will present it's Fall 2004 show on Saturday September 25th at 3 and 7 PM at The Hopkins Center for The Arts, 1111 Mainstreet Hopkins, Mn. The featured Quartet is **Nightlife**, 1996 International Champion. In addition, we present **The Minnesota Boychoir Allegro Choir**, the senior division. We invite all barbershoppers in our area to attend.

Ticket prices are: Adults - \$14, Senior and Student \$12. Tickets may be purchased at the door, at the Arts Center or by calling 512-935-6258. See our webb site at www.mensing.com for more information.



Congratulations to David Mitchell for winning the BIF (Best Improved Face) Award.

The **Bloomington Good Times Chorus** announces a series of cabaret shows and invites everyone to come join the fun! The flier of our October 30th show can be viewed at: <http://www.sing4u.com/cabaret.pdf>

The first show, an adult costume party with a Halloween theme, will feature performances by our chorus and four local quartets, including **PRISM, The Salty Dogs, Random Sample, and The Wizard of Ahs**, as well as other special entertainers.

Tickets are \$12 each and a cash bar and food will be available (at additional cost). Mark your calendar and plan to join the fun:

7:30pm October 30th, 2004 at the Bloomington Eagles Aeries, corner of Old Shakopee Rd and Old Cedar Ave in Bloomington. Seating is limited, so get tickets now by calling Harlan Mellem at (952) 888-4546.



What a great show we put on in **Fairmont MN**, at a wonderful restored **Opera House**. As you can see, we had a blast putting on this performance. Top left is Director Pete Benson out front. Top right is Kent Erlandson and Mike Brama. To the right is Kevin Lynch with his over the top enthusiasm. Way to go Kevin! And below the chorus is just wrapping up "When the Midnight Choo Choo leaves for Alabam" which earned us a standing ovation!



Thanks to Anne Brudzinski for the photos



Congratulations on a fine performance Sunday in Fairmont. From where I stood, every set was solid, if not perfect, and there were no songs that made me think "I wish we hadn't done that!" We made some \$\$\$, received two standing ovations from an obviously appreciative crowd, helped a worthy cause make upwards of \$3000, and got another performance under our belt. Well worth the 2 hour drive in my opinion. Special thanks to **Anita and Dan Vander Ploeg** along with **Loring Harrop** for their efforts in setting up the performance and selling it to the community and to "**Men At Work**" and "**After Midnight**" for giving of their time and talents to help us fill a 2 hour show.



So what could the down side possibly be? We had 56 guys on the risers, and put on a solid show. Think what it might have been like with 70, 80, or 100. For those who were unable to attend, I hope you don't have to miss the next experience. When our marketing team sells the GNU as one of the nation's premier men's singing groups, let's make sure we're out in full force. Secondly, most of you know how much we made today. How many times this year have we had a gig that paid that much? What if we had this opportunity 10 times a year, to pad our coffers and hone our performance skills? Imagine the strides we could make financially and musically if we performed like this every 4-6 weeks. I know some of you have a long drive to rehearsal and shows, and others prefer the excitement of contest. I for one belong to a chorus so I can perform! And you've heard ad nauseum that performances hone our contest skills, and fund contest related expenses--medals don't come cheap, you know.

We may be looking at a new market for our product. Draw a circle around the metro with a 2 hour radius and see how many communities the size of Fairmont fall within that market. Many of these towns are hungry for great performing groups like us. I grew up in a small town, and sometimes the most exciting thing to watch was cows crossing the road. Not tough to beat that. But I digress. What I really want to say is that I was pleased to share a great performance experience with an appreciative audience, and with my brothers in harmony. I look forward to many more just like it, and even better.

Thanks for a "Great Day."

Thanks for a "Great Day."

Scott Kvigne



After Midnight (above) and **Men at Work** (below) helped to entertain the audience at the Fairmont Opera House.





When will he yell.....

Getting ready for district in October has been a challenge with all the new choreography in "When the Midnight Choo Choo leaves for Alabam". We debuted the contest package at the Fairmont show September 19.

Appleton here we come!



Got Music?
 Have a
Nouveau
 Experience
 with
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Duane Jim
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Contact: Jim Olson
 14466 Everest Avenue
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 Phone: 952-431-3110
 email: olsoncrew@aol.com



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 —RICK ANDERSON • Bari— BOB DOWNMA • Tenor—

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 bgray@gustavus.edu

Don Miller, Baritone Denny Jackson, Bass

Bruce Stasch Steve Hardy Loring Harrop Jim Barloon



Contact: Jim Barloon
 3823 Oak Park Circle S.E.
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 1507-288-3021

MENATWORKQUARTET.COM



After Midnight
 A Barbershop Quartet

Contact:
 Tom Matchinsky
 952-931-9715
 tom_bbshop@hotmail.com

E-mail: dougmilr@aol.com Tax I.D. #41-1903683

Special Alliance
 GLENN, DAVE, LANCE & DOUG (Barbershop Quartet)

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

Before we go.....

We didn't get the "on to Fame" show in the last issue so here are some pictures from that performance held in June.



A college quartet from Nebraska (above) accepted an invitation to join us on the show. They were a definite crowd pleaser!

The Happiness Emporium (left) showed us why they are invited to perform each year at the Association of International Champions show.



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