

# The Pitch Piper

77 YEARS OF BARBERSHOP HARMONY

OVER 714,089 SQUARE MILES

Volume 78, Number 2

A Bulletin for Barbershoppers in the LO'L District

March-April 2025

## DEL RYBERG





## Pitch Piper

The *Pitch Piper* is published bi-monthly by the Land O' Lakes District Association of Chapters of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America, Inc.

Land O' Lakes Chapters are situated in the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and the Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario.

## Office of Publication

**Editor:** Nate Peplinski  
127 Rose St. N, West Salem, WI 54669  
(715) 498-1198

**Email:** [pitchpiper@loldistrict.org](mailto:pitchpiper@loldistrict.org)

Send address changes to: Pitch Piper, c/o SPEBSQSA Inc., 110 7th Avenue N., Nashville, TN 37203-3704. **All correspondence or copy should be sent to the editor.**

## Land O' Lakes District Officers



**President**  
**Mike Lietke**  
3953 S. Camrose Ave.  
New Berlin, WI 53151  
(262) 893-0001  
[mikelietke@hotmail.com](mailto:mikelietke@hotmail.com)



**Treasurer**  
**Matt Nagel**  
4999 Sterling Dr.  
Greendale, WI 53129  
(414) 507-5187  
[nagelbshop2009@gmail.com](mailto:nagelbshop2009@gmail.com)



**Director of Events**  
**Jay Althof**  
4671 Lake Ave.  
White Bear Lake, MN 55110  
(651) 206-2686  
[jayalthof@gmail.com](mailto:jayalthof@gmail.com)



**Executive Vice President**  
**Nate Peplinski**  
127 Rose St. N,  
West Salem, WI 54669  
(715) 498-1198  
[starquarterback14@yahoo.com](mailto:starquarterback14@yahoo.com)



**Director of Chapter Support & Development**  
**Jim Rasmus**  
1446 Gunnell Ln  
Manitowoc, WI 54220  
(920) 973-0010  
[pjras20@gmail.com](mailto:pjras20@gmail.com)



**Director of Contest & Judging**  
**James Estes**  
(650) 686-1080  
[dir-cj@loldistrict.org](mailto:dir-cj@loldistrict.org)



**Immediate Past President**  
**Jay Althof**  
4671 Lake Ave.  
White Bear Lake, MN 55110  
(651) 206-2686  
[jayalthof@gmail.com](mailto:jayalthof@gmail.com)



**District VP - East Region**  
**Mike Ziegler**  
438 Sunset Dr.  
Plymouth, WI 53073  
(920) 918-7917  
[mikeanddenise@live.com](mailto:mikeanddenise@live.com)



**Secretary**  
**Tyler Hall**  
603 6th St NE  
Mandan, ND 58554  
Cell 701-213-7636  
[secretary@loldistrict.org](mailto:secretary@loldistrict.org)



**District VP - West Region**  
**Justin McCullough**  
1939 50th St. S.  
Fargo, ND 58103  
(701) 640-3224  
[jumccull@gmail.com](mailto:jumccull@gmail.com)

### Land O' Lakes District – State of The District



Feb 22, 2025

Dear singing family,

By this time of the year, many of our choruses have shared their immense talent in spring shows, the snow is gone (I know, I jinxed it), and we are on about our normal spring patterns.

Just a couple of notes from the pulpit here.

We continue as a district to work on putting

things together for opportunities to gather in the spring. Of note, in the western part of the district Justin McCullough, Brent Gerber, and a host of other folks are looking to build upon the resounding success of their community event to make it annual. They are inviting the neighbors in and blowing the pitchpipe.

Here in the east, we are working on putting something similar together for next year. Cannot wait to add detail to that.

Upshot though, is that we need not wait for something to be planned to make something



happen in our own back yard. I urge you to call your friends and get a multi-chapter visit night together or whatever you think would be fun.

On another note, the district board voted unanimously to offer registrations to district this year at a 1:1 exchange rate. It may seem trifling in terms of money saved by the individual singer, but the thought is what is important here. We are a singing community and we want to drop any perceived barriers that keep us apart from each other.

Recent political posturing has been harmful to that effort, meaning the district, in our own little way feels the need to extend this courtesy to our northern brothers and sisters as a reminder to us and them that we are here to sing. There is value in fellowship, and we cherish your friendships. If you are north of the border and had not already booked the weekend on something unchangeable, please consider being in Minneapolis October 10-12.

All this talk about singing makes me want to... Sing. Somebody blow a pitch pipe. -Mike

## Bob Dykstra collection of articles available for sale!

*Proceeds go to the Bob Dykstra Legacy Fund.*

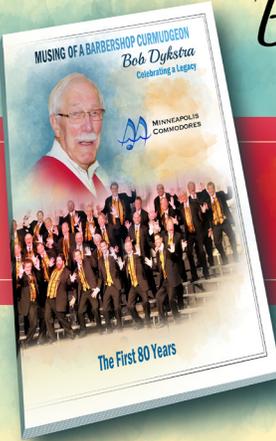
Contact Harvey Weiss

763-439-4447

harveyw137@gmail.com

*Harvey Weiss and the Dykstra family have collaborated to give us this opportunity to relish some of the late legend Bob Dykstra's wit and wisdom, the yarniest musings of a barbershop curmudgeon, as he so eloquently describes.*

*Check page 10-11 for a sample and details on how to order!*



**Bob Dykstra**  
Celebrating a Legacy

A collection of Bob's articles originally published in the CHORDINATOR 2014-2024

75 pages of Barbershop history  
Available in the lobby today  
\$20 (no credit cards)

# LEADERSHIP WITH LARRY

Good leaders organize and align people around what the team needs to do.



## **CHAPTER SUPPORT REPORT**

Jim Rasmus, VP of Chapter Support (pjras@gmail.com)



We had a good District Liaison Meeting on April 12th – with 13 District Liaisons present reporting on 25 of our 35 Chapters. It was a lively and informative conversation.

### **Here's a summary of successful programs highlighted:**

- The **Faribault** Chapter held a grant-sponsored outreach effort on Barbershop Quartet Day featuring 9 quartets from southern MN singing in a community venue.
- **Bismarck-Mandan** works as a team involving EVERYONE on Singing Valentines.
- **Winnipeg** credits their Learn to Sing Better program and a move to more contemporary music to their continued growth to nearly 50 members.
- **St. Croix Valley** is finding success in proactively targeting empty nestors, retirees, and independent senior living residents. They communicate not only with prospects but also with family and friends to encourage prospects to give Barbershop a try.
- Some significant inter-Chapter events are: **Windom-Mankato** plan to do 4 shows together this spring; the upcoming **West Region Spring Sing** in Valey City; **Como Park** event in St. Paul. I can add the annual **Chicken Chew** in Oshkosh and the possibility of an **East Region** event in 2026.
- Several mentioned the financial benefits and adaptability of Choral Tracks to help their chorus learn new music faster and better.
- Another theme is the importance of how Chapters function as a kind of large, extended family culture. But consider **Winnipeg's** experience of having about 30 of the members who have been with the Chapter for less than 5 years and haven't experienced the LOL or BHS Family.

### **Chapter leadership concerns raised this time were:**

- If a Chapter is concerned about growth and wonder about shifting from all-male to all-voice, a model to consider might be adding a second chorus, e.g., Greendale, Minneapolis and Regina.
- The LTA materials we offer are good! The tricky part is finding people to fit the roles and prioritizing what matters the most. Developing long-term music planning beyond the next performance can be a real challenge for some Chapters. How might we develop administrative consultants or coaching models for Chapters?

Don't forget the LOL website: <https://loldistrict.org/chapter-development>, Visioning Retreats and LOL Grants:

- Chapter Show Grants subsidize registered District Quartets to perform at your show for up to \$750 per Chapter per year.
- Chapter Development Grants provide up to \$1,000 per Chapter per year to promote your Chapter or pay for resources to help your Chorus in your musical development.

*And PLEASE reach out to me if you have ideas or questions we can explore together! Be well!!*

**If you or anyone you know would like to receive the *Pitch Piper* in good old-fashioned print form, contact any board member or email [pitchpiper@loldistrict.org](mailto:pitchpiper@loldistrict.org)**



# Kathryn's Korny



KATHRYN ZIEGLER, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

## Areas of Executive Functioning...And BARBERSHOP

Hello again! I am back to chat with you all a bit more about connections between my professional career as a pediatric occupational therapist, and the hobby that I love so much, barbershop!

This edition's topic is *executive functioning*.

I work with kids on executive functioning skills almost every day, and have been able to apply a lot of what I have learned to my time as a barbershopper as well! Some of the specific skills I may work on include working **memory, shift, emotional control, organization, planning, and goal-setting**. Here's an introduction to those areas!

**Working memory:** Namely, our ability to take in information and hold it for a short amount of time. This is an important aspect of taking in notes from our directors, and being able to apply them shortly after. Working memory can eventually be transferred to long term memory, through practice and using other various strategies, especially learning our music!

**Shift:** This is the ability to change your focus, adapt, and alter your behavior based on the situation at hand. Think about a time something has gone wrong during a performance. How were you able to shift your focus back to the task at hand, making beautiful harmony?

**Emotional control:** Okay, okay, this one is pretty self-explanatory, as it's the ability to control your emotions. I'm not sure if any of you have seen Forward Harmony's

sets, but let me tell you, this is an important skill for us all to learn (Bryan loves some good emotional damage). Being able to understand your emotions (nerves before a big show, feeling silly with friends during rehearsal, anger when you just can't quite sing the song right), and engage regulatory strategies to help you manage these emotions, is huge for us all!

**Organization:** Organizing your physical space, and well as your mental space is incredibly important. Creating methods to organize your music, having a space to practice that is not cluttered, and setting plans for learning your music are all ways to help with the learning process!

**Self-monitoring:** How are you at recognizing what parts of your music you really need to work on? Voice recording can be a powerful tool in monitoring your success with learning music!

**Planning/Goal-setting:** Does your chorus want to qualify for International this year? Are you hoping to start a new quartet? The executive functioning skills of planning and goal-setting are important factors in how you figure out the steps you'll need to take to reach that goal, and take action to check each of those steps off the list as you go.

While the above skills do not encompass all of the executive functioning skills I may work on with my clients, I think this gives a good snapshot into the ones that relate the best to barbershop!

With the powers of all of these skills combined, you will learn your music, power through unexpected challenges, understand your emotions (and be able to connect them even more to your music), and work towards the goal of being the best barbershopper you can be!

Throughout this series we'll continue digging deeper into these core concepts!

- Kathryn

## Save The Date - 2025 Land O' Lakes Fall Convention – Up, Up and Away!

We are well into the planning process for our Fall Convention. The convention will once again be held at the Minneapolis Airport Hilton Hotel on October 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. Put the date and location on your calendar.

You won't want to miss this event as we continue to build on the success of our past conventions. More details will come over the next couple of months!

Jay Althof, VP Events, LO'L District





# LAND O'LAKES DISTRICT WEST REGION

## SPRING SING

**May 31, 2025**

10 am through 6 pm

Valley City State University; Valley City, ND



### **ADC SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE**

**Did you know that the Association of District Champions has scholarships available for quartets or individuals?**

**Scholarships for what, you ask?**

**Contact Leonard Huls at [lensingstenor@gmail.com](mailto:lensingstenor@gmail.com)**



With Spring just around the corner, we continue to put our plans together for our LO'L Fall Convention – UP, UP and AWAY! Our theme recognizes that we have many positive things happening all across our District and our Fall Convention is a special time for all of us to get together and enjoy the camaraderie, music and fun activities we have planned!

Here are some details to help you get ready to join in the fun. We'll open our convention registration this summer, but we wanted to share this information for your own planning purposes.

**Dates:** October 10-11, 2025

**Location:** Minneapolis Airport Hilton Hotel (where we have been the past few years) 3800 American Blvd E., Bloomington, MN 55425

**Room Rates:** \$115/night plus taxes

**Convention Registration Fees:** (Note all participants in the contests or festivals must purchase, at minimum, the "All Contest Events registration")

- Complete Package (All Contest Events, Lunch, Banquet and Showcase): \$135
- All Contest Events: \$70
- Single Contest Event: \$25
- Junior (12 years and under) All Contest Events: \$30
- Showcase Performance Only: \$15
- Saturday Lunch: \$20
- Saturday Banquet and Showcase: \$45

In addition to the contests, we'll once again offer free quartet coaching, for those quartets not participating in the contests, on Friday morning. And we'll have Fun Squad activities, the All-Chapter Chorus and our Saturday Night afterglow. It truly will be a super fun convention! Up, Up and Away!



## DEL

By Tim Milbrandt

For “Honoring Our Heroes” this issue we are focusing on someone who isn’t a quartet singer (with one humorous exception) or director, but has been and continues to be one of the behind-the-scenes folks who keep things organized and moving forward so that everyone else can enjoy our wonderful hobby. In sports terms they would call him a “glue guy”, because what he brings to the table helps everything stick together.

Del Ryberg was born just after the end of the Great Depression in Fairmont, Minnesota. Growing up during World War II and the Korean War was a tough time. After his father lost his job the family relocated to Kenyon, Minnesota, which is where Del Graduated High School. The Draft was in full swing and the week he graduated from High School he received the letter from the draft board and joined the US Army shortly thereafter.

Del was released from the Army in March 1956, was hired by IBM in June, and was married to his High School sweetheart Mary in September. Mary was singing with a Sweet Adeline Quartet and this is what pulled him into the world of Barbershop music.

In 1960 Del and Chuck Guthrie started the Rochester Barbershop Chapter and in a period of 6 years had grown to 66 members. During the following years the Chorus captured the Southwest Division Chorus Championship for 7 consecutive years.



In the summer of 1974, Del received a call from Jim Richards asking him to fill a vacancy on the District Board for the Southwest Division Vice President position. This began a 40+ year span of officer positions and committee jobs.



While working as a Procurement Engineer for IBM for 37 years Del simultaneously served in many positions for his chapter, the district, and The Society. Some notable activities include:

- Holding basically every board position within the Rochester chapter
- Chapter BOTY in 1963, 1965 and 1997 – 34 years from first to last BOTY!
- Many district offices including president
- International board member for four years
- District Convention Manager/ VP Events from 1991-2003
- District BOTY, Hall of Fame and Lifetime Achievement Award recipient
- Chapter Officer School committee - 1981 to 1995
- COTS/Leadership Academy Chair - 1996 - 2024
- Served on many committees and authored several manuals

*Here are some of Del’s highlights as a 66 year member of The Society:*

- Serving as faculty for the Chapter Officer Training Schools (COTS) throughout The Society
- The 50th Anniversary District convention in 1993 in Rochester culminating in a chorus combined of the Minneapolis Commodores and Mason City Chorus with over 150 singers leading the audience in singing “From The First Hello to The Last Goodbye” and directed by Joe Liles. There wasn’t a dry eye in the arena and a non-barbershop friend remarked afterward, “that was the most awesome thing I have ever heard in my entire life”.



were locked and the air conditioning was off and it took until noon to rectify things as everyone waited.



- The 1976 Spring Convention hosted by the Regina, Saskatchewan Chapter who hosted a “Provincial State Dinner” on Saturday night for all attendees. There was bagpipe music, a head table on a dais for the District Board members, and board members’ wives were escorted in on the arm of Canadian Mounties.

- International Mid-Winter Convention in Hawaii when a Barbershop friend and pilot gave Mary and Del a ride in a single engine plane over an erupting Mount Kilauea volcano at 700 feet.

- Del’s one and only public performance in a quartet was singing a tag with Grandma’s Beaus as a fill-in for Jim Richards when Jim was the Society President. They sang “TAG NE1”.for the International Board. Sound it out and it is “tag anyone?”. Friend and coach Judy Ode-Olson listened to them warming up and commented “It can only get better”.

- A convention in Racine, Wisconsin at a school when computers controlled everything and the doors

- A Spring convention in Bismark where there was no backstage so Quartets and Choruses were staged in the lobby of the Hotel across the street. The signal to bring the next group over was turning on the light in the bathroom so the groups across the street could see it and knew it was time to walk on stage.

As long as I can remember, Del Ryberg has been an important part of the Land ‘O Lakes Barbershop landscape. He has been, and remains, passionate about doing his part to keep barbershop healthy and thriving. As we visited recently he mentioned several efforts he is involved in currently (at age 91) as he continues doing what he has always done – making his contribution and doing the behind the scenes work that helps everyone else to continue enjoying this hobby.

If you haven’t found your way to give back to this wonderful hobby, take a page from Del’s book and consider looking for one small way to serve- you never know where it could lead!



# The Future Is Bright in LOL!

By Donny Rose, Harmony Foundation International

Hello, friends!

I'm lucky enough to spend my days supporting barbershop programs across North America — and I can honestly say, this is one of the most exciting times in our history. Our music is growing, our reach is expanding, and lives are being changed — right here in Land O' Lakes and beyond. But none of this happens without you. The singers in your local chapters.

Here are three big reasons to feel proud — and one important reason to get involved:

## 1. Barbershop is reaching more people than ever.

If you remember the 1990s, when BHS had 30,000+ members, that was an amazing time — and I loved it. But today, the reach of barbershop is even greater... much greater.

Thanks to YouTube, TikTok, tag apps, music publishing, and streaming, millions of people are discovering our sound. I meet students, teachers, and choirs around the world who already know and love barbershop — even if they haven't joined (yet!). They're learning tags, watching TimTracks online, and falling in love with our special brand of harmony.

## 2. Chapters are rebuilding — and new energy is taking hold.

COVID hit all singing communities hard. Some chapters closed, and we felt the loss. But now, the comeback is real.

At my chapter visits, I see it firsthand: more laughter, more music, more purpose. Membership is growing again. People are reconnecting through song. And Harmony Foundation is proud to help fund the BHS and HFI programs that are fueling this revival and helping chapters come back stronger than ever.

## 3. A \$200,000 challenge is here — and we need your help.

We've been given an extraordinary opportunity: the Johnson Legacy Challenge, a **\$200,000 matching gift** from a generous anonymous donor. Every new or increased donation will be matched dollar for dollar.

That means double the impact for life-changing programs like:

- Next Generation Barbershop
- Support for junior and varsity quartets and choruses to attend Midwinter and International

- Harmony University Scholarships

For youth, directors, arrangers, quartets, chapter leaders, and music educators

- AIC Outreach
- Gold medal quartets visiting schools and chapters across North America — at no cost
- Power of Harmony
- Bringing music and healing to youth in correctional facilities

These aren't just "nice-to-have" programs — they're game-changers. They grow chapters. They transform lives. They are the future of our singing community.

If you were on the road with me across the district, you'd see what I see: generous donors making a real difference at the chapter and district level.



## So here's my ask:

To our many donors reading this — thank you. Whether your gift is large or small, it matters. You're part of a community that believes in giving back, and I'm grateful for you.

And to those who haven't joined our donor family yet — just take a moment to reflect.

Has barbershop brought you joy? Friendship? Purpose?

Has it lifted your spirit or helped you feel connected?

If so, now's the time to give a little back.

Together, we can keep harmony alive and strong in Land O' Lakes — and beyond.

Visit [harmonyfoundation.org](http://harmonyfoundation.org) to learn more, or reach out to me directly. I'd love to connect.

With harmony and hope,

Donny Rose

Harmony Foundation International

☎ (253) 241-5616

✉ [Drose@HarmonyFoundation.org](mailto:Drose@HarmonyFoundation.org)



## Dear LOL District friends:

It is with a truly heavy heart that we share that our long-time friend, Lynn “Ole” Anderson, is home on hospice suffering from ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s Disease.

You may remember “Ole” from his many years singing baritone in the Sawdust City Slickers, and later with Perfect Timing. His smooth baritone notes, friendly smile, and on-stage antics were rivaled only by his classic telling of Swedish jokes about Ole, Lena, Sven, and Torville. Many audiences at chapter shows all over the district have likely forgotten those jokes over the decades, but NO one will forget how good Torville looked in that suit!!

When not singing in his quartets, Ole was a fixture with the Oshkosh Winnebago Chorus. He enjoyed many years of chapter shows and EAA “Chicken Chews” before moving to Beaver Dam and singing with the Madison Capitol Chordsmen.

As you may know, ALS is fatal, and although Ole has been dealing with it for a while now, he only recently was diagnosed. It is typical with this disease that by the time of diagnosis, you are in the later stages of it. Ole is fortunate to be staying at home under the care of his loving wife, Patti.

Please don’t delay in showing your appreciation to Ole for not only his decades of dedication to the craft of barbershop harmony singing, his double-digit tally of Man of Note pins, and all the good times and gut laughs he bestowed upon you from stage, by sending him a funny greeting card to his home. His mailing address is:

Lynn Anderson  
222 Madison St.  
Apt 308  
Beaver Dam, WI 53916

Don’t delay - please send one today!

In harmony,  
Friends of Ole and Patti

## Save The Date - 2025 Land O’ Lakes Fall Convention – Up, Up and Away!

We are well into the planning process for our Fall Convention. The convention will once again be held at the Minneapolis Airport Hilton Hotel on October 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. Put the date and location on your calendar.

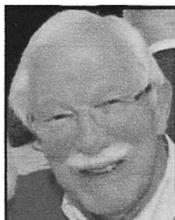
You won’t want to miss this event as we continue to build on the success of our past conventions. More details will come over the next couple of months!

Jay Althof, VP Events, LO’L District





### Musings from a Barbershop Curmudgeon



Bob Dykstra

#### The Rise of Choruses in a Quartet Society

It is clear that **O.C. Cash** and **Rupert Hall** envisioned their newly-created organization in 1938 as a quartet society. The name says it all: **The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America**. It wasn't long, however, before chorus-singing became a staple of chapter meetings everywhere. As early as the first mid-winter meeting of the fledgling society held in St. Louis in 1940, the host chapter members directed by **Norman Rathert**, who was to become the Society's second president, serenaded visiting Barbershoppers with a choral performance. Rathert's counsel to Cash regarding the virtues of chapter chorus development was equally prophetic and persuasive: "If you get a group of men together and teach them to sing their parts, look at how many quartets you are bringing into being real fast."

A brief look back at chapter activity in our Land O'Lakes District illustrates the evolution of chorus activity in the Society. I grew up in Southeastern Wisconsin and first became familiar with the Barbershop organization when the Sheboygan, Wisconsin chapter

was founded in 1945. They presented their first Parade of Quartets the following year and I attended their annual show a few years later. **O.H. (King) Cole**, later to become President of SPEBSQSA, was the organizer and first chapter president. The new chapter had 75 charter members and put on its first show in 1946. (I actually sang Barbershop harmony with a group of men in nearby Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, although we never officially joined the Barbershop Society. That experience was pivotal in my joining the Junction City Barbershop Chapter in the Central States District while stationed at Fort Riley in 1953).

But I digress! King Cole, who was to become International Society president in 1948 and 1949, simultaneously organized a Barbershop chapter in nearby Manitowoc, Wisconsin. This chapter also chartered in 1945 and boasted 80 members. They put on their first show that same year featuring 15 quartets including international gold medalists, the Harmony Halls (1944) from Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the Misfits (1945) from Chicago. The show also featured the Manitowoc Chapter chorus, so clearly the chapter was formed with chorus-singing as one of its planned activities, a mere seven years after the Society was formed to preserve and propagate "barber shop quartet singing."

I should also mention that King Cole's daughter, **Ginny Cole Osborn**, demonstrated her own organizing skills by putting together the soon-to-be-famous female quartet, the **Chordettes**, who began their rise to fame by singing and recording Barbershop harmo-

ny. Moreover, even though they never became members, their rise to fame coincided with the establishment of the **Sweet Adelines** Organization which attracted thousands of women to the art and the thrill of ringing Barbershop chords. It's interesting to note that the Chordettes appeared on the Minneapolis Chapter's initial show in 1948. The Minneapolis Chapter had chartered four years previously, the first Minnesota chapter to do so.

At any rate, the Manitowoc show program makes clear that by 1945 at least, Barbershop chapters were involving choruses in their public performances. The old standard Parade of Quartets was more and more setting aside a time slot for the chapter chorus, and chapter members started campaigning for chorus competition similar to that set up for quartets. According to **Harry Purinton**, longtime Land O'Lakes District Historian, the Society's first chorus contest was held in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on July 21, 1946, which interestingly ended in a first-place tie between Milwaukee and Manitowoc.

The international office also lent support to the growing interest in chapter choruses. In 1948 it made available to chapters materials to help with chorus development. This was followed a few years later by the publication of barbershop harmony song folios designed to ease the problem of what to sing.

**MUSINGS OF A BARBERSHOP CURMUDGEON**  
 Bob Dykstra  
 Celebrating a Legacy

A collection of Bob's articles originally published in the CHORDINATOR 2014-2024

75 pages of Barbershop history Available in the lobby today \$20 (no credit cards)



### Dystrka (Cont'd)

The next step involved setting up the framework for chorus competition at the international level. Each district was invited to send to the 1953 international convention in Detroit up to two choruses each of which had to include at least 20 singers. Since not all districts at the time had set up the mechanism for selecting their top competitive choruses, the winner of the Detroit contest, the Grand Rapids Michigan chorus, was named the 1953 International *Convention* Championship Chorus. Naming an International Chorus Champion would have to wait until next year.

By 1954 all districts had set up qualifying procedures and 22 choruses showed up in Washington, D.C. to compete for the first international chorus gold medal. The Land O'Lakes District was represented by the Madison Chapter Chorus directed by **Joe Ripp**, baritone of the popular Cardinals quartet. The Washington, D.C. chorus became the first international chorus champion.

Prior to the 1955 Miami Convention rules had changed a bit. Each district was allotted only one chorus slot. Unfortunately, only ten of the Society's districts sent a representative to Miami. (Central States, Evergreen, Far Western, and Michigan districts failed to compete). The primary reason for their absence appeared to be the high cost of participation, especially for choruses which had to travel significant distances to district

contest sites, not to mention the host city of the international contest.

There were serious questions about whether or not chorus competition would survive given the cost issue. Our Land O'Lakes District took immediate measures to reduce travel costs associated with chorus competition by adopting what they called a "divided chorus contest." In 1956 two chorus contests were held to select the district champion. The Sheboygan Chapter hosted the eastern contest on July 29<sup>th</sup>; St. Paul hosted the western contest on August 19<sup>th</sup>. The same judging panel was used for both contests and scores from the two contests were combined to select the champion. The Sheboygan chorus won the eastern division and the overall contest. Eau Claire outscored its rivals in the western division but finished third overall. (To the best of my knowledge the "divided chorus contest" was put to rest after its one-year trial).

Because of the financial issues associated with chorus competition, serious consideration was given at the 1955 meeting of the Society Board of Directors to discontinue the international chorus contest. Moreover, a motion to do just that was defeated at the 1956 Midwinter Convention held (believe it or not) in Minneapolis. However, a motion was approved to present the same motion to the House of Delegates at their meeting at the 1956 Convention held in Minneapolis. Needless to say the motion to abolish chorus competition failed; it's still going strong today. As far

as I know there has never been another serious challenge to that aspect of Society competition.

In 2004 moreover, the Society changed its name from the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America to the Barber-shop Harmony Society. Barber-shop *quartetting* was no longer singled out as a point of emphasis; Barbershop Harmony, whether sung by foursomes or larger groups, clearly became the focus and remains so today.

**Bob Dykstra**  
Celebrating a Legacy

A collection of Bob's articles originally published in the CHORDINATOR 2014-2024

75 pages of Barbershop history Available in the lobby today \$20 (no credit cards)

#### AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE!

This commemorative collection of 37 articles penned by Bob Dykstra is available in hard copy for \$20 (plus \$5 shipping).

Bob Dykstra was a 73-yr member of the Barbershop Harmony/Minneapolis Commodores.

The "booklet" is 75 pages, covering his history of barbershop from 1944 and on, including the 80 years of the Commodores.

Contact Harvey Weiss:  
763-439-4447

harveyw137@gmail.com

Proceeds go to the Bob Dykstra Legacy Fund.



---

## Land o' Lakes District West Region Spring Sing to Take Place May 31 in Valley City, ND

*Brent Gerber and Justin McCullough*

The BRAND NEW **Land o' Lakes District Barbershop Spring Sing** will be held on **Saturday, May 31, 2025**, at **Valley City State University in Valley City, North Dakota**. This full-day event will bring together singers from across the region for an exciting day of *vocal coaching, group singing, and music development*, culminating in an evening concert.

This event is open to members throughout the district and will feature **Kordal Kombat**, a popular a cappella quartet from Minnesota, and **Jay Althof**, tenor of the renowned quartet *Vocality* and former District President. Participants will receive expert coaching from these accomplished faculty members and have the opportunity to perform in the evening concert, which will showcase the talents of the day's attendees.

“We’re thrilled to bring together barbershop singers for a day of learning and camaraderie,” said Justin McCullough, District West Region VP. “With financial assistance from the ADC and District, the Spring Sing offers participants a chance to enhance their skills, and most importantly, connect with fellow singers to enjoy a fun and rewarding experience.”

This event can be a great developmental opportunity for your chorus or quartet, but we’ll also have a track for individuals who aren’t attending with their chapter chorus. The event runs from **10:00 AM to 6:00 PM** and the cost is only **\$25** per person, which *includes lunch*.

### Event Details:

- Date: May 31, 2025
- Time: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
- Location: Valley City State University, Valley City, ND
- Cost: \$25 (includes lunch)

For more information or to register, visit <https://loldistrict.org/west-region-spring-sing> or contact *Justin McCullough* at [jumccull@gmail.com](mailto:jumccull@gmail.com).



## unlabeled editor's notes

- I can't remember how to write 1, 1000, 51, 6, and 500 in Roman Numerals. I M LIVID
- If you think someone would be deserving of a feature in this publication, contact [pitchpiper@loldistrict.org](mailto:pitchpiper@loldistrict.org)
- What's a lawyer's favorite cocktail?  
Subpoena Colada.
- Many thanks to the Pitch Piper staff: Tim Milbrandt, Brian Plehn, Brent Frankenhoff, Angie Williams, Tom Arneberg, as well as Todd Smith, and Bob and Bill Fricke.
- I was playing chess with my friend and he said, "Let's make this interesting." So we stopped playing chess.
- If you need learning tracks, check out [www.choraltracks.com](http://www.choraltracks.com). The annual subscription is an enormous value! [nate@choraltracks.com](mailto:nate@choraltracks.com)
- When you attach a light to the ceiling, be sure to screw it up.
- Get involved. Even if it's only thirty minutes every six months, that's still helping. Ben, I'm talking to you.
- Why was 2019 afraid of 2020? Because they had a fight and 2021.
- An apple a day keeps the doctor away. If you throw hard and have good aim.
- Not to brag but I made six figures last year. I was also named worst employee at the toy factory.



Schrodinger is putting you in a box

But it is a pretty nice box



- Email for submissions is [pitchpiper@loldistrict.org](mailto:pitchpiper@loldistrict.org)
- Reminder Choruses get show posters in for free!
- Reminder to quartets that ad space is available!

- Check out the website! [www.loldistrict.org](http://www.loldistrict.org)
- Special note of sponsorship to Matt Curtis and [www.choraltracks.com](http://www.choraltracks.com)



# Choral Tracks

Practice Made Simple



# What is Happening at Headquarters?

Nate Peplinski, Executive Vice President



One of the main responsibilities of the District President, Executive VP, and Immediate Past President is to stay in touch with Headquarters (Harmony Hall, Kenosha, Society, choose your colloquial and preferably colorful and antiquated favorite term) through the medium of the District Presidents' Council. From time to time, then we need to be conduits to communicate goings-on and happenings from the society level to the folks interacting directly with their communities (you.)

So here's a quick update with a few points.

1. BHS is (finally) solidly back in the black, financially speaking. The regrettable mess with HFI is in the past and recovery is above expectations. Convention registrations for International in Denver are also outpacing budget. Things are looking good, from that standpoint.
2. One of the biggest complaints from membership is that staff is hard to get ahold of for customer service. The leadership team at HQ is astutely aware of this completely legitimate concern and is looking at possible solutions that will continue to keep the budget safe:

-BHS has a wealth of folks willing to volunteer.

-Somewhere in the range of 80% of calls and messages can be answered from a list of the FAQ's on the website.

The initiative that HQ is looking to implement is how to train and mobilize its great volunteer base to help with some 80% of the volume of customer service issues on the plate so the CS staff can be more prompt and responsive and, you know,

**ACTUALLY PROVIDE CUSTOMER SERVICE.**

3. The other biggest disconnect between headquarters and the "boots on the ground" Joe Barbershop folks, has been that the highest amount of money from dues goes to the level of the organization with which they interact the least. Most folks get the most fulfillment from their weekly rehearsals and community involvement, which makes HQ seem superfluous and perhaps unnecessary. Discussions here are thorough and ongoing, because everyone can see that that's poor business practice!

Value can be either direct or indirect, and the discussions get complicated. Pilot programs have been discussed, heatedly, and ended up back to the drawing board to work out more of the kinks that have been brought up. The main takeaway is that communication is improving and the feeling of "top-down" mandates is lessening. We will continue to keep you informed throughout the process. Lots to unpack.

So there's been legit frustrations. We feel now that they've actually been heard. And not just lip service, we're really working to make changes. (Even if some of it is still frustratingly slow.) -Chat more soon, Nate



## What services does the BHS provide?

Services	Description	Member Benefit	Chapter Benefit	District Benefit
Administrative Leadership Services	Healthy Chapter Initiatives, Role-Based Training	Indirect	Direct	Direct
Contest and Judging Services	Category School, Judge Contest Travel, Contest Adjudication	Indirect	Direct	Direct
Corporate Services	Financial, HR, Technology, Legal, Insurance, Philanthropy, Project Management	Indirect	Direct	Direct
Communication and Marketing Services	Harmonizer, LiveWire, Social Media, Targeted, BHS Brand	Direct	Indirect	Indirect
Customer Support Services	Membership	Direct	Direct	Direct
Event Services	International Convention, Midwinter Convention, Harmony University	Direct	Indirect	Indirect
Music Publishing and Copyright Services	Hal Leonard, Library Expansion	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
Musical Leadership Services	Music Director, Music Team	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
Outreach Services	Music Medics, Senior Singers, Youth	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
Preservation Services	Audio and Video, Artifacts	Indirect	Indirect	Indirect



**CRAZY**  
little

**THING**

— called —

**LOVE**



**Minneapolis  
Commodores**

Chorus, MCX, Quartets  
*With Special Guests*  
Kordal Kombat

Sunday September 13, 2025  
3:00 PM

Adults \$20, Student/Child \$5

**Minnehaha Academy**  
3100 West River Parkway  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406





# COLLABORATION!

The *Mankato Riverblenders* Chorus is pleased to join forces with the *Windom Chord Hustlers* to present four summer Patriotic concerts. Each chorus will be recruiting new members to join them starting in the May rehearsals for this 6-8 week program. No cost, no obligation, just come sing.

The choruses will join together on *June 14th* performances in *Mountain Lake* and *Windom*. Then on *June 28th* they will again come together for performances in *Mankato* and *Madison Lake*.

Each chorus will perform songs on their own, then form a mass chorus to sing the final segment. There will also

be chapter quartets that will add their talents.

Both chapters are using these shows to encourage others to join us and we've agreed that to encourage guests to participate they will be able to use their music.

There is a three-fold purpose to this endeavor: **1.** Recruit potential new members. **2.** Create greater camaraderie between the two choruses. **3.** And, certainly, to honor the people to have served and continue to serve our great country.

There is also another opportunity for the joint chorus to singing the National Anthem at the *Mankato Moondogs* (baseball) opening night with our guest singers.

## CONTEST CORNER

with James Estes, DVP for Contest and Judging

The snow has melted, the trees and plants are blooming, and the winter coats have gone into the closet for a well-deserved break. You know what that means? The BHS International Convention is less than two months away! If you have never been to an International Convention before and have the means to be in Denver, Colorado anytime between July 1-5, you are in for an unreal treat this year. To date 82 (eighty-two) quartets and 39 choruses have qualified for the International Quartet Contest. Land O' Lakes will be well-represented by Forward Harmony (singing 16th on Friday, July 4), as well as our two quartet qualifiers, Coulee Class and First Ave (draw to be determined in the coming weeks)! If you're in Denver, cheer loudly! I know I will be. If you see me there, say HI!



This time of year also means we're halfway to our next Land O' Lakes District Convention and Contests! This is a fantastic time to start getting coaching for your chapter or quartet, and the LOL Association of District Champions is finalizing a list of willing/available coaches to help you. We have so much musical talent around the district willing to help your group improve, even if it's not for a contest! Good coaching leads to improvement, and improvement just adds to the amazing fun this hobby provides. -James




**Lakefront Quartet**  
Max, Dylan, Derek & Brian

Call/Text: 414-708-3573

Follow us!  
lakefront\_qt





Jeff Paul  
Ken Ryan

(701) 799-8665  
ransomnotes@myyahoo.com Facebook: Ransom Notes Quartet



JAY TONY BEN TOM

classic a cappella sound

www.vocalityquartet.com 651-206-2686

**CHORD SMASH!**

Sam Sather, Erik Eliason, James Estes, Scott Perau

info@chordsmash.com  
715-461-0318



**CHECKMATE**

A Winning Combination of Music in the Barbershop Style!

Contact: Harry Hanson 2020 Grange Ave. Racine WI  
Phone: 262-498-0314 Email: checkmatequartet96@gmail.com  
Facebook.com/CheckmateQuartet96



Allen  
Colin  
Matt  
Nate



Facebook: Coulee Classic Quartet

LO'L home page: <http://loldistrict.org>

Follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/LOLDistrictBHS](https://facebook.com/LOLDistrictBHS)



## Calendar

Please send show registrations to:  
District Secretary Tyler T. Hall  
603 6th St NE  
Mandan, ND 58554  
Cell 701-213-7636  
secretary@loldistrict.org

**2025**

- May**
- 17 Wisconsin Youth Quartet Festival - Stevens Point, WI
  - 17 Oshkosh, WI - Checkmate, Thrift Store Four, FH
  - 31 West Region Spring Sing - Valley City, ND

- June/July**
- 28-July6 International Convention - Denver, CO

- September**
- 13 Minneapolis, MN - Kordal Kombat
  - 20 Stevens Point, WI

### October

- 4 Amery, WI (Polk County) - Coulee Classic, Just One More!!
- 4 St. Paul, MN - Northstar Chorus
- 10-11 District Convention = Bloomington, MN

### December

- 6 Oshkosh, WI

