

# The Pitch Piper

75 YEARS OF BARBERSHOP HARMONY

OVER 714,089 SQUARE MILES

Volume 76, Number 6

A Bulletin for Barbershoppers in the LO'L District

November - December 2023



LO'L District Quartet Champions - Chill Factor!



LO'L District Chorus Champions - Midwest Vocal Express!



International Qualifiers

First Ave and Coulee Classic our LO'L international qualifiers!



LOL Lifetime Achievement

Judd Orff the 2023 LO'L District Joe Liles Lifetime Achievement Award Winner.



LOL Barbershopper of the year

Jay Althof the 2023 LO'L district Barbershopper of the year!





# 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 Quartets 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 Provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario.

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## President's Message

Submitted by Jay Althof - LO'L District President



For the 700-plus people who were able to attend the Fall Convention, we had a great time! While there are always things to improve, overall it was a very successful event. A huge thank you to Arv Zenk, and so many, many more team members, who worked very hard to make our Barbershop

Family Reunion run smoothly and bring so much joy, camaraderie and great music together. And we have already started planning for next year's event!

I know many of our chapters are busy with their holiday concerts. And, we are all preparing to make 2024 even more successful than 2023. And a great way to prepare for great results in 2024 is to attend our Leadership Academy that will once again be held in-person at the University of Wisconsin River Falls on January 5th and 6th. In addition to the administrative courses, we have some great elective classes related to musical leadership and performances. EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO ATTEND. All the details of available classes, registration and housing information and much more is on our District Website. The registration fee of

\$75 includes five meals! It will be both educational and great fun. So, take a look at the link I put in the e-mail and sign up soon!

As we wrap-up 2023, and I complete my term as your District President, it is appropriate to take a look back and review some of the progress we've made together. The first word that comes to mind as I reflect on the past few years is **teamwork**. We are so very fortunate to have many people in our District that are willing to share their time and talents to help our chapters and, by extension, our District be successful. If you are in a position to add your talents to the crew, we are always looking for more people to join our various committees and initiatives. I promise that you will find it fulfilling to be part of our dynamic team and help our barbershop family be even more successful!

Here are some highlights of what we have accomplished together over the past few years.

### We navigated through the pandemic

- We provided on-going guidance to chapters regarding aspects to manage with Covid
- We created a District-wide Virtual Christmas program in 2020 shown on the BHS YouTube channel ...Continued on page 5



# 2024 LO'L Leadership Academy & Lakes Chord College - January 5 & 6, 2024 University of Wisconsin - River Falls, WI

- Reasonable hotel rates
- Classes for every person in your chapter
- Guests are Welcome
- Tuition is just \$75.00 and includes 5 meals



## Learn your Chapter Officer's job -

### Saturday AM - Office Core Classes

- President Class
- Secretary Class
- Treasurer Class
- Membership/Development VP Class
- Music & Performance VP Class
- Chorus Directors & Ass't Directors
  
- Joe Barbershop Smorgasbord for those not in a Chapter Office class

## Develop your Leadership skills

- Planning for Successful Chapter Shows
- Membership Guest Night Idea's
- How to Welcome & Keep Your Guests
- Recruiting new Members & Retention
- The Barbershop Paradox
- Forming & Directing a Mixed Chorus
- Bring Barbershop To Your Community

## Learn how to perform better

- Moving With Freedom In Performance
- Be The Best Performer You Can Be

## Just plain fun stuff

- Joe Barbershop Smorgasbord
- General Session with New Songs

## Learn some new skills - Sharpen some old ones

- Leadership in Volunteer Organizations
- Youth Barbershop In Schools
- Harnessing Social Media for Youth
- What Churches/Chapters have in Common
- Generating Grassroots Financial Support

## Learn How to Sing Better

- Warmups & Vocal Techniques
- Bringing a Song to Life
- The Basics of Vocal Pedagogy

## How to Register:

- Go to the District website at [www.loldistrict.org](http://www.loldistrict.org) and download the registration booklet OR
- Check with your chapter President or Secretary for the registration booklet mailings they received.
- Or Email to [delryberg@gmail.com](mailto:delryberg@gmail.com) and will be sent to you.



## Interview with Doug Miller

November 30, 2023 by Tim Milbrandt

*This series of interview articles focuses on barbershoppers around the Land O' Lakes district who have made an impact on other barbershoppers and the hobby overall. If you know of someone who made an impact on barbershop and barbershoppers either as a quartet singer, director, administrator or in some other way that you feel has a valuable story to share, please suggest them to the editor by writing to Nate Peplinski at [pitchpiper@oldistrict.com](mailto:pitchpiper@oldistrict.com).*

### Honoring our barbershop heroes – Doug Miller edition

Doug was raised in Coldwater, MI. He took piano lessons and played tuba in the school band. Doug learned to sing in church and could sight-read naturally. He was in a trio with his mother and father with his dad playing guitar and singing melody, his mother singing alto and Doug playing the bass and singing baritone. Doug joined the local barbershop chapter.

Doug tried out for the high school choir as a sophomore and was accepted, but also made the football team and the two groups practiced at the same time. The choir director knew Doug from other interactions and knew he could read music. She pulled out a barbershop harmony book and he sight-read Hello My Baby baritone line. Doug decided to play football instead of join the choir, but was invited to sing baritone in the school's barbershop quartet whose baritone had graduated the year prior. Doug moved to Illinois after graduating from college with a degree in Civil Engineering, joined the South Cook Chapter and quickly became chorus director.

While in Chicago, Doug's quartetting got serious.

He is in rarified air as a five-time quartet medalist with three different quartets on two different voice parts, all while in the Illinois District. Doug was directing the South Cook chapter and was acquainted with brothers Greg and Larry Wright. They and another friend from high school, Dave Brady, formed the *Sundowners* with Doug singing baritone. Their first international competition was in 1966 where they finished 5th. This was followed up in 1967 and 1968 where they finished 4th both years. After that, one of quartet members was drafted to Vietnam and the quartet disbanded. In serendipitous timing, another local quartet, *Avant Garde*, had lost their bass singer and even though Doug had been singing baritone, he tried out on a whim and was selected to join the group. *Avant Garde* competed and earned a 5th place medal in 1969. The group continued to sing together for a couple more years.

In a testament to being the right person in the right place at the right time, another local group, *Soundtracks*, had lost their baritone due to a work obligation. Doug joined the group and promptly won a 5th place medal with them in 1973. For those of you not keeping track, that is 5 international quartet medals in 8 years, on 2 voice parts no less! What an incredible stretch of quartet competition!!! In case it seems like Doug was just loafing around, he also directed the Arlington Heights, IL chorus to international medals in 1973, 1974 and 1975. You may notice that he medaled as both a quartet singer and a director in 1973. In recounting his experience at International that year he shared - "at that time, after the quartet semifinals (top 20) the top 10 quartets were taken off-site to record for the international record. The same happened for the top choruses. After competing with the quartet and chorus and having recording sessions with each, when I got back to the convention center prior to the quartet finals I was so tired I had to lie down on the dressing room floor and take a nap."

Doug moved from the ILL district to the LO'L and in 1977 directed the Racine Dairy Statesmen. He moved back to Chicago for a short time and then finally to the Minneapolis area circa 1980 and directed Commodores for many years including numerous international contests. Doug currently sings bass with the *Gay 90's*

*Quartet*. The group started in 1943 and plugs in new members when someone steps down. Doug is the 20th member of the quartet and their tenor is the 21st. He has no formal music training other than schools and seminars put on by SPEBSQSA and BHS.

### **Highlights of Doug's barbershop career**

- Earning 5 medals as a quartet singer
  - Meeting his wife Connie through barbershop. She was directing a chorus in Eau Claire Wisconsin and singing in a quartet; Doug was asked to coach the groups "and the rest, as they say, is history." (Connie is no slouch in the barbershop world, being a Sweet Adeline International quartet champion with *Four Star Collection*.) Doug and Connie have two sons and five grandchildren.
  - ILL district - Music Man award Fall 2023
  - 66 Year Society Member
  - President Land O'Lakes District Barbershop Harmony Society 2009-2010
  - Selected to Land O'Lakes Barbershopper of the Year in 1999
  - Selected to Land O'Lakes Hall of Fame in 2006
  - Minneapolis Commodores Barbershopper of the Year in 1992.
  - Interpretation/Presentation Judge for 32 years
  - Former Interpretation Category Specialist
  - Certified Chorus Director Workshop Intensive Trainer
  - Founder of *Friends*, a mixed harmony ensemble for 21 years
  - Producer of Mixed Harmony Showcase 1991-2001
- In 2002 Doug retired from the computer consulting business and was a school bus driver for 21 years.





## President's Message (cont.)

Submitted by Jay Althof - LO'L District President

### We navigated through the pandemic

- We provided on-going guidance to chapters regarding aspects to manage with Covid
- We created a District-wide Virtual Christmas program in 2020 shown on the BHS YouTube channel

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1lvqEcT6Sg>) – Pretty awesome!

And we hosted a couple virtual tag parties



### We Improved the use of technology

- We enhanced our District Website to truly be the go-to-place for all important information about our events, history, communications, and more
- We enhanced our Facebook page to promote barbershop happenings all across the District
- And we used Zoom for Monthly Board/Leadership team meetings, our House of Delegates meetings and our virtual Leadership Academy

### We maintained solid financial management

- Our district balance sheet is strong
- We reduced our District dues by 30% to \$24/year
- We increased the level of financial support to those participating in international competitions
- We provided Roar Back funds to support chapters to help restart after the pandemic
- And we provided Quartet and Chapter Development grants this past year, and plan to continue next year. This was in large part due to a generous donor. Thanks for making this possible!

### We increased our Recognition and Communications

- We implemented a digital version of the PitchPiper, which was a significant cost savings
- We delivered Monthly Audio update messages
- We initiated our District-Chapter liaison program
- We initiated the Joe Liles Lifetime Achievement Award
- And we initiated the Golden Chord Award – for the Music Educator of the Year

### The District Leadership Remained Focused on Key Issues

- We Paused Division/Regional qualification contests
- We put significant effort into having successful Fall Conventions that include all our contests – Under one roof – Fun Squad – Hospitality rooms and so much more
- We Maintained our Leadership Academy virtually and now back in-person this January
- We Helped guide chapters and individuals through the HFI-BHS conflict

- We Provided guidance to chapters navigating through EIH
- We Provided significant leadership and motivation to the Value Exchange program with BHS, the Society Board of Directors and all Districts through the District Presidents Council
- And we continued to remind ourselves that *the mission and purpose of the District Leadership is to help our local chapters be even more successful.*

Going forward, I'm confident even better things are on our horizon as we continue to explore new membership and participation models that will encourage more people to join our barbershop community. Thanks to all of you for your support these past years and I look forward to continuing to contribute to the success of our District for many years to come.

I wish everyone a happy holiday season and I'll see many of you at our Leadership Academy in January. --Jay

## unlabeled editor's updates

deadline for submissions for the January - February issue is Jan. 22.

Have you thought about getting involved in district leadership, but are worried about getting in over your head? Email me. Or Mike. Or Jay. Or anyone really. There are many hats to wear and district leadership can look a lot of different ways.

My wife told me to stop impersonating a flamingo, so I had to put my foot down.

Special thanks to Brian Plehn and Tim Milbrandt for joining the Pitch Piper team! (More on that upcoming)

If I got 50 cents for every failed math exam, I'd have \$6.30 now.

Go to Leadership Training Academy Jan. 5&6. I'll be there. All the cool kids are going. Five meals are included in the price. Let's sing a polecat or a tag. Registration is on the district website. It's legit.

How can you tell if you're out of invisible ink?



## Land O'Lakes District Grants Continue in 2024!

The LO'L Board has authorized the following financial programs to support Chapters in their efforts to increase membership in 2024!

**Chapter Development Grants offer up to \$1,000** to Chapters for membership promotion such as: advertising and promotional materials; Director development; Chapter Officer Training.... In 2023, 17 Chapters received a total of \$13,815 for these projects.

**Chapter Show Assistance Grants provide up to \$750** to Chapters to subsidize the cost for LO'L District Quartets to appear on their Chapter Show. In 2023, 15 Chapters received a total of \$11,050 through this grant program.

### Changes for the 2024 Grants Program

1. In 2024, grant applications need to be submitted on redesigned grant forms. The Chapter Support Team determined additional information was important to have for all requests, specifically: amount/percentage of Chapter investment, current Balance of Funds on hand, BHS Membership and average rehearsal attendance.
2. A Chapter must have a minimum of 10 members of the Barbershop Harmony Society to apply. Our experience is when a Chapter's membership dips below 10 members, the chances of survival are slim. To be fiscally responsible, future investments to Chapters need to be made with realistic expectations of survival and growth.
3. An evaluation form will accompany all grant checks. Evaluations will be expected within the following schedule: 30 days after the supported Chapter show or 60 days following the completion of the Chapter development grant initiative.

### Take Coaching to the Chapter

Take Coaching to the Chapters (TCTC) will also continue which provides coaching to choruses who want to improve their performance package or basic repertoire. Expenses paid by the District for the coach are: mileage at the standard District rate of 40 cents per mile, coach's expenses incurred for the evening (e.g., meal en-route or with the Director prior to the coaching session). There is a limit of two coaching sessions per calendar year.

See the Land O'Lakes website [Grant Forms \(loldistrict.org\)](http://loldistrict.org) for grant applications and TCTC instructions.

## **Leadership with Larry** *Larry Lewis*

### Leadership vs Management

Leadership is the ability to develop a vision that motivates other to move with a passion toward common goals.

Management is the ability to organize resources and coordinate the execution of tasks necessary to reach a goal in a timely and cost effective manner.



## LOL NextGen Barbershop Update

Written by Justin La, Chairman, NextGen Barbershop Committee

The Youth in Harmony Festival, held on November 11th in Red Wing, MN, was a vivid illustration of our commitment to nurturing young talent in barbershop harmony. Organized with a deep passion for music by Kim Grossmann, this event created a unique platform where sixty students from various schools converged. It wasn't merely an occasion for these young singers to perform; it was a transformative experience where they immersed themselves in the intricacies of barbershop harmony. With expert guidance from seasoned directors and performances by quartets like Upbeat and CHORD SMASH!, the students were not just learning songs; they were becoming part of a community, building connections that extend beyond the notes.

The upcoming Midwinter 2024 convention, taking place January 11-13th in New York, is set to be a significant milestone in the journey of young barbershop groups. It represents a culmination of hard work and dedication for groups like Sirena and Triple AAAs. These talented young singers, having earned their place through a competitive video audition process, are among the top 15 quartets that will compete at this event. There will also be performances by the Treblemakers and Vocal Motion, both led by the accomplished Penny Yanke, will be a testament to the diversity and dynamism present in youth barbershop music today. Going to these events for the youth are not cheap, if you want to help them financially please email me at ([justinla92@hotmail.com](mailto:justinla92@hotmail.com)).

The Leadership and Training Academy, scheduled for January 5th and 6th, is another crucial event in our calendar. My sessions there will explore the integration of barbershop music into school programs and the potential of social media in engaging young singers. These sessions are more than just educational; they are about envisioning a future where barbershop harmony evolves with changing times and technology.

We'll delve into how barbershop can enrich school music programs, offering students a unique musical outlet that enhances their overall educational experience and I encourage you to attend if you value the importance of technology and engaging youth. The focus on social media aims to bridge the gap between traditional barbershop singing and the digital world that today's youth inhabit.

In addition, the Golden Chord Award Music Educator of the Year is a vital component of our efforts to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of music educators in our district. By recognizing their dedication and influence, we not only honor their commitment but also reinforce the importance of their role in the development of young barbershop singers. This award, nominations for which are available on our district website in January, is a way for us to express our gratitude and support to those who are instrumental in keeping the barbershop tradition alive and thriving.

As we prepare for these events and initiatives, it's clear that our commitment to fostering young talent in barbershop harmony is about more than preserving a musical tradition; it's about creating a vibrant, evolving art form that resonates with each new generation. Our efforts today are laying the groundwork for a future where barbershop singing continues to be a source of joy, learning, and community for young singers.

**If you or anyone you know would like to receive the Pitch Piper in good old-fashioned print form, contact anyone in district leadership or email**

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



# ADC and Showcase Show!



ADC Chorus (feat. Happiness Emporium)



All-Chapter Chorus



Vocality



Happiness Emporium



St. Croix Crossing



Kordal Kombat



Coulee Classic



Checkmate



CHORD SMASH!



First Ave

## November 2023 Youth in Harmony Event: Red Wing Recap

Youth in Harmony returned with a bang on November 11 in Red Wing. Sixty talented students from five different schools arrived at the Red Wing High School, with tremendous enthusiasm, ready to sing and learn.

The energy steadily increased throughout the day, starting with physical warm-ups by Susan Krisnik, followed by terrific instruction from the clinicians Paul Wigley and Brandon Galbraith, then wonderful tips and skillful performances by quartets Upbeat from Northern Lights, Region 6 and CHORD SMASH! from Land O'Lakes district. . Even during breaks, the energy and enthusiasm was palpable as a steady stream of tags were being sung by participants.

The culminating concert sparkled with performances by the singers. The Young Women's Chorus sang "Edelweiss" and "We Go Together," directed by Brandon Galbraith. Not to be outdone, the Young Men's chorus, directed by Paul Wigley, followed with "In the Still of the Night" and "Hello Mary Lou." Of course, Upbeat and CHORD SMASH! made encore appearances. The evening finished with a spectacular joint mixed-group performance with all students singing "I'm Sitting on Top of the World," directed by James Estes.

It was extremely gratifying to see the concert well-attended, and the high level of competency achieved by the students in just one day. But the biggest surprise was hearing the amazing level of accomplishment in some of the student small groups.

We're confident that the students got far more than

they expected by participating. Not only did the energy level increase steadily through the busy schedule of instruction, sectionals, tags and performances, their closing comments reflected their gratitude. "Thank you so much for this experience. It really opened my eyes to barbershop singing," wrote one student. Other remarks stated, "I grew a lot as a singer - thank you all" or "I have more confidence in my singing." But statements of "This was such an incredible opportunity," and "It was a super fun day" show how much the event meant to them overall.

The students were also gifted on arrival with specialty items that will keep this special day alive in their memories - t-shirts, name tags, nifty pencils and of course, a steady stream of food and snacks to keep them energized throughout the day.

A huge thank you to the many volunteers that came to support the event from North Star Chorus, Twin Cities Show Chorus and Vallee de Croix. From registration to picture-taking, music assistance to keeping a steady food supply for the kids, you all helped things run smoothly. Another big thank you goes to our sponsors, **North Star Chorus, Twin Cities Show chorus, Vallee de Croix, Northern Lights Region 6, Land O'Lakes, SAI, and BHS.**

All in all, this year's event was a huge success. Yet...while the students maintained their lively enthusiasm through the busy day, organizers will be sure to include stretchers to haul away exhausted director's next time! Looking forward to the next YIH event on January 27<sup>th</sup> in Amery Wisconsin!





## 2023 LAND O' LAKES DISTRICT AWARDS

### Chorus Awards

Intl Prelim Chorus District Representative *Midwest Vocal Express*  
 District Chorus Championship *Midwest Vocal Express*  
 District Men's Chorus Championship *Midwest Vocal Express*  
 District Mixed Harmony Chorus Championship *Forward Harmony*  
 District Plateau A Chorus Championship *Lakelanders Chorus*  
 District Plateau AA Chorus Championship *Great Plains Harmony*  
 District Plateau AAA Chorus Championship *Midwest Vocal Express*  
 District Most-Improved Chorus Award *Capitol Chordsmen*  
 District Central Region Chorus Championship *Minneapolis Commodores*

District East Region Chorus Championship *Midwest Vocal Express*  
 District West Region Chorus Championship *Great Plains Harmony*

### Quartet Awards

Intl Prelim Quartet Qualifier *Coulee Classic, First Ave Championship* *Chill Factor*  
 Men's Quartet Championship *Chill Factor*  
 Mixed Harmony Quartet Championship *Mixed Meter*  
 Women's Quartet Championship *By Request Quartet*  
 Seniors Quartet Qualifier *Checkmate*  
 Seniors Quartet Championship *Whistle Junction*  
 Next Gen Varsity Quartet Contest *Fifth Quarter*  
 Novice Quartet Championship *House of Chords*  
 Central Region Quartet Championship *Sound Image*  
 East Region Quartet Championship *Chill Factor*  
 West Region Quartet Championship *Double Dutch*



Capitol Chordsmen



Clipper City Chordsmen



Commodores



Croix Chordsmen



Forward Harmony



Fox Valleyaires



Great Northern Union



Great Plains Harmony



Indianhead Chorus



Lakelanders



Midwest Vocal Express\*\* (Champions)



North Star Chorus



Northern Gateway Chorus



Riverblenders



West Central Connection



Assorted Baris



By Request Quartet



Checkmate



Chill Factor\*\* (Champions)



Cinematix



Coulee Classic\* (int'l qualifier)



Double Dutch



Fifth Quarter



First Ave\* (int'l qualifier)



Gay Nineties Quartet



House of Chords



Joyful Blend



Just One More



Keys & Chords



Lake Effect



Lakefront



Late Expectations



Loose Change



Magic



Mike Check



Mixed Meter



Pour Four More



Ransom Notes



Saskatune



Sound Image



Spare Parts



The 7/8ths



Thrift Store Four



Whistle Junction



YTBN



Land O' Lakes **2023 Joe Liles Lifetime Achievement Award** winner:  
 Judd Orff  
 and **2023 Barbershopper of the Year:**  
 Jay Althof  
 (more about them in the next issue!)



**YOUTH IN HARMONY**  
 January 27th 2024  
 Amery High School

**NEXT GENERATION BARBERSHOP**

**FEATURED TEACHING QUARTETS**

*For the Girls: Upbeat*  
*For the Guys: First Ave*

**REGISTER TODAY!**

Register online:  
[www.youthinharmonyfestival.org](http://www.youthinharmonyfestival.org)  
 or our new website [www.nextgenwi.org](http://www.nextgenwi.org)  
 or visit us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/YIH.WI](https://www.facebook.com/YIH.WI)

**WHO: STUDENTS GRADE 6 - COLLEGE**  
**WHEN: SATURDAY JANUARY 27<sup>TH</sup> 2024**  
**WHERE: AMERY HIGH SCHOOL**  
**REGISTRATION: 8:30 - 9:00 AM**  
**COST: \$10 (INCLUDES: SHIRT, LUNCH, SNACK, MUSIC, LEARNING TRACKS)**  
**FREE PUBLIC CONCERT @ 4:30**

Youth In Harmony Festival Event Sponsors: Indianhead Barbershop Chorus, Croix-La-Joie, and Vallée de Croix  
 Contact Kim Grossmann with questions about the event: [leadw@yihwi.com](mailto:leadw@yihwi.com) or call (715) 553-8130

**Watch for new things in 2024!**  
 We'll have more digital content! More historical interviews! More features about the HOF! More from the ADC! More from the Happiness Emporium 50th Anniversary Celebration! Also more on the new Pitch Piper staff!



## Harmony College Midwest

February 17, 2024

DoubleTree Hotel, Bloomington, IL

Learn from our head clinician,

**Debbie Cleveland**

and our guest quartet,

**Midtown**

***(2023 BHS International Quartet Champion)***

Enjoy a full day of coaching (for individuals and for quartets) and classes,  
taught by an esteemed faculty that includes

**Debbie Cleveland, Midtown, David Wright, Erin Cook,**

**Bryan Ziegler, and Terry Ludwig**

Individual registration: \$85

Quartet registration: \$325

(in addition to hotel cost)

More information available on Facebook

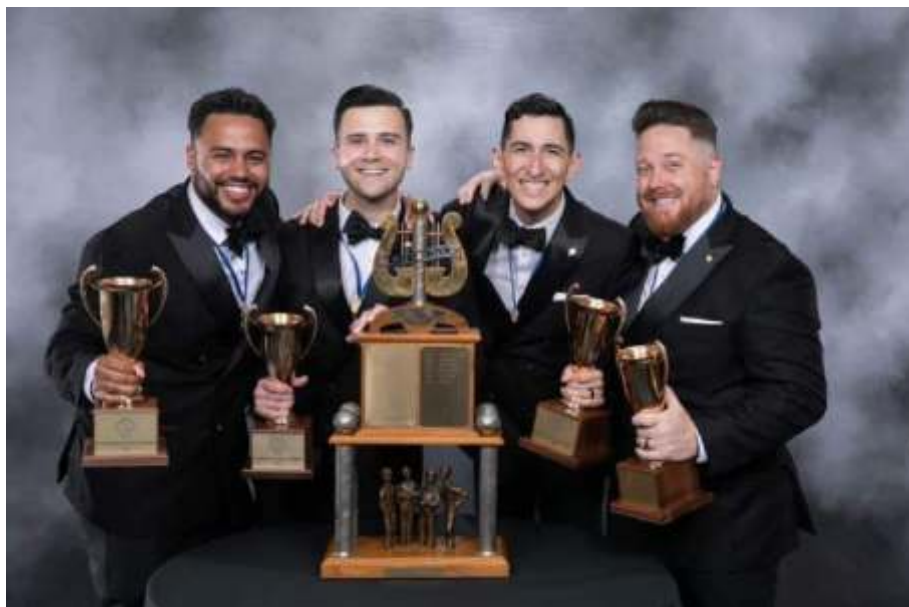
(search )

Tickets available beginning September 22 on Eventbrite.com

(search for )

**EarlyBird pricing available from 9/22-9/29**

**(\$80 for individuals, \$300 for quartets)**





## New Schmitt Brothers Audiobook

### Available Now

Features 12 songs by the champion Schmitt Brothers quartet plus 2 live recordings.  
Narrated by Damian Schmitt, son of quartet tenor and spokesman Joe Schmitt.  
Available on amazon.com and audible.com

December 11, 2023 – The Schmitt Brothers rose to fame after winning the 1951 international championship of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America (SPEBSQSA), putting their hometown of Two Rivers, Wisconsin, on the map. Their incredible story inspired P.T. Rivers, great niece of the quartet, to write The Schmitt Brothers book. Shortly after its publication, the author enlisted the help of other family members to produce an audiobook.

“It’s very difficult to describe the magic of their singing on the written page,” notes Rivers. “My goal was to combine the music with the story in a way that would really bring the Schmitt Brothers to life so that their memory and harmonies could live on.” Damian Schmitt, son of quartet tenor and spokesman Joe Schmitt, readily agreed to narrate the book, while John Gorski, nephew of the quartet, offered to integrate the music and produce the audiobook. The endeavor took more than three years to complete.

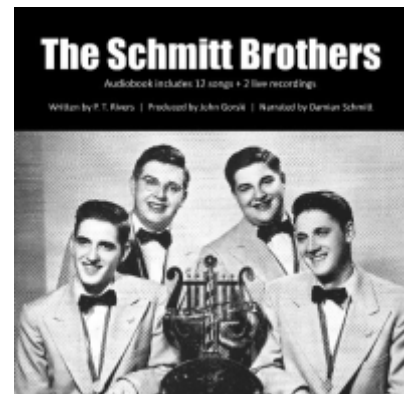
The new audiobook includes 12 songs such as The Whiffenpoof Song, Shine, It’s Great to Meet a Friend from Your Hometown, That Wonderful Mother of Mine, America the Beautiful, Nearer My God to Thee and more. In addition, the audiobook features two live recordings. In the first, Joe Schmitt recounts their victory before a live audience. In the second, lead singer Jim Schmitt celebrates the quartet’s 50th anniversary during the 2001 Barbershop Harmony Society convention, where a surprised audience was entertained by 99 Schmitts there to honor their dads and grandpas. “Everyone involved in this project is related to the quartet and grew up hearing them sing,” said Rivers. “This project is truly a labor of love from our family to the Schmitt Brothers’ many fans.” The audiobook is now available at amazon.com and audible.com. Listen to a preview of the audiobook by clicking “sample” under the photo of the audiobook cover.

### About the Schmitt Brothers

The Schmitt Brothers—Jim, Joe, Paul and Fran—grew up in family of 17 in Two Rivers, Wisconsin. The first contest they won was not in front of a crowd of 8,000 at the international barbershop convention in Toledo, but on WOMT radio in Manitowoc when the youngest was just four years old. They learned to sing in the St. Luke’s church choir and won the SPEBSQSA title after singing barbershop for only 18 months. With performances routinely booked years in advance, the quartet sang together for 35 years, spreading harmony from all the major stages in the United States and Canada as well as the Ed Sullivan, Arthur Godfrey and Lawrence Welk shows. In the meantime, they raised 35 children, ran successful local businesses, and participated in and led civic organizations from the Elks and Lions Clubs to the local chamber of commerce, school and church boards. In July 2023, the Schmitt Brothers Stage was dedicated in Two Rivers Central Park.

### More Information

Visit [schmittbrothersquartet.com](http://schmittbrothersquartet.com)  
Follow The Schmitt Brothers Quartet on Facebook  
Listen to The Schmitt Brothers Greatest Hits on Apple Music and Spotify  
Read The Schmitt Brothers book. Paperbacks are available at the Washington House Museum and Paper Crane Books in Two Rivers, and Heart & Homestead and LaDeDa Books & Beans in Manitowoc. Paperbacks, hardcovers and eBooks are also available on amazon.com  
Read The Schmitt Brothers Stage, a commemorative book honoring the quartet and their hometown, available on amazon.com  
Visit the Washington House Museum to see the display dedicated to the quartet  
The new Schmitt Brothers audiobook features 12 songs and 2 live recordings. Available at amazon.com and audible.com. ###





## Hello Land O' Lake friends-

Donny Rose with a quick thank you for a wonderful convention weekend! I loved hanging out with you, watching each of you encourage one another all weekend, celebrating H.E.s 50th, and so much more. Bravo!

I am reminded that if all you know is the LOL district, you may think this is "normal" for districts. Great organization at all levels, high level groups, hundreds of folks milling about at a convention (not just a contest), a vibrant champs organization, a crazy amazing afterglow show, a youth coaching event, an All Chapter Chorus that blew my mind, and lot's of laughter and hugs. To top it all off, *you LOWERED your already low district dues because... you are doing so well!* Friends, this is NOT the norm for our districts. You are healthy because of many factors, and one of these factors is that you stand on the shoulders of giants from the past, and we owe them a debt of gratitude and action to keep this going!

As I shared with you from stage, at the All Chapter Chorus rehearsal, in private conversations, and even between a tag or two, our mission at HFI is to connect people to the singing causes YOU (the donor) care about. You could help us in a variety of ways, including...

### Donor's Choice

Last year, HFI gave back approximately **\$800,000** to over 350 districts, chapters, and harmony brigades. Yep... those funds *kept these groups alive* as they rebounded from no live events and significant membership loss; perhaps when they needed financial help the most! You can designate up to 30% of your giving to your chapter or brigade, and we will automatically pay out a few times a year.

### Power of Harmony

The POH program (music for incarcerated young men) in Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and now growing into Texas with the help of the Vocal Majority! We also have been funded by Josh Groban's organization Find Your Light Foundation (yes... THAT Josh Groban) and a donor that is covering our administrative costs for the next 3 years! With the help of our donors, these young men are given the ONE thing they need more than anything else in their lives The Power of Harmony!

### AIC outreach

The Association of International Champions (gold medal winning quartets from BHS) are giving back to our barbershop community and schools at no cost to the participants! This HFI partnership for the AIC outreach program has impacted over 6,000 students, 140 music teachers, and is only getting more popular with requests pouring in! I had the privilege of directing an event with 200 middle school kids in California with BHS champions "Signature" last spring, and I got to tell you *this program got me so inspired that I made a leap of faith to retire from 30 years of teaching music and work for HFI!*

### Barbershop Harmony Society

You may want to give directly to our BHS partners in Nashville and their four program areas to

- 1) energize young singers
- 2) preserve barbershop
- 3) build singing communities and
- 4) support music education.

100% of your giving will go to our partners in Nashville, with nothing "off the top" for HFI administrative fees.

It's 2023, and individual philanthropy for churches and service organizations are no longer the norm. I get it... times have changed. However, can you imagine if the world found the joy WE know in LO'L singing barbershop? The conflicts we could solve? The people who don't know the family they are missing?

These programs are not magic. They take money to happen. Think about it \$10 a month is all it takes to get started. Heck, I pay Netflix quite a bit more than that, and my heart is not happy when I see my bill. However, my giving to HFI feels really good. I know my gift is helping barbershop for the future, and I like being part of something bigger than me.

I would love to have you join our HFI team and be a barbershop hero in the Land O' Lakes district. Barbershop has enriched your life, and I hope you will help pay it forward to others who really need this wonderful community.

*Think about it?*

Thanks, friends. *-Donny Rose*

**If you or anyone you know would like to receive the Pitch Piper in good old-fashioned print form, contact anyone in district leadership or email**

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





# CONTEST CORNER

with JAMES ESTES - DVP for Contest & Judging

**Congratulations** to all who crossed the contest stage in Bloomington this past October! It's hard to believe it has been almost two months since we heard the products of everyone's preparation. With 25 quartets and 15 choruses performing as either competitors or festival participants, we demonstrated that barbershop isn't just alive in Land O' Lakes, but is growing! Thank you to all of you who responded to the convention survey, specifically those who commented on the changes to the stage setup. Arv and his team worked countless hours to make sure we improved the setup from the 2022 convention, and we are so happy that it made a difference for you - both competitor and audience member! We will continue to tweak and make the best of the space provided at the Hilton for any and all future conventions.

In addition to the 40 groups who crossed the stage, we are incredibly fortunate as a district to have qualified Checkmate (1996 District Champion) for the International Seniors Quartet Contest, being held in January in New York City! We wish them our best as they sing 12th in a contest with 24 other quartets from around the world! Along with **Checkmate**, three of our district's own qualified for the International convention in July in Cleveland, OH! For the International quartet contest, we are thrilled to be represented by **Coulee Classic** (2021 District Champion) and **First Ave** (2019 District Champion). For the chorus contest, **Midwest Vocal Express** (Greendale, WI) will be singing 23rd in Cleveland on Saturday morning, July 6. We are also incredibly excited that **Forward Harmony** (Greendale, WI) was invited and accepted to perform as mic-testers for the Friday chorus contest in Cleveland! LOL will be well-represented at the International Convention.

Finally - congratulations go to our District Chorus Champion, **Midwest Vocal Express**, as well as **Chill Factor** (2023 District Quartet Champion and Men's Quartet Champion), **House of Chords** (2023 District Novice Quartet Champion), **Mixed Meter** (2023 Mixed Quartet Champion), **By Request Quartet** (2023 Women's Quartet Champion), **Whistle Junction** (2023 Seniors Quartet Champion), and **Fifth Quarter** (2023 Next Gen Varsity Quartet Champion). We also crowned three regional champions: Double Dutch (West Region Champion), Sound Image (Central Region Champion) and Chill Factor (East Region Champion). Congratulations to all and enjoy your championship year! We will see you all next year in Bloomington!

-James

Other notes from the editor

- The email for Jan. submissions to the Pitch Piper is [pitchpiper@loldistrict.org](mailto:pitchpiper@loldistrict.org)
- Reminder to choruses to send in your show posters!
- Reminder to quartets that ad space is available and affordable!
- Reminder to check out all the work that's gone into the website! [www.loldistrict.org](http://www.loldistrict.org)
- Also a special note of sponsorship to Matt Curtis and [www.choraltracks.com](http://www.choraltracks.com)



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LO'L Home Page on the  
Internet: <http://loldistrict.org>



LO'L has a Facebook Page at  
[www.facebook.com/LOLDistrictBHS/](http://www.facebook.com/LOLDistrictBHS/)



**Calendar**

Please send show registrations to district secretary:

BOB BREY, Secretary  
Land O' Lakes District  
1411 S 31st Street  
Manitowoc, WI 54220  
rwbrey1950@gmail.com

2024



**January**

5-6 Leadership Training Academy, UW-  
River Falls  
9-14 Midwinter Convention - New York,  
NY  
27 NextGen/YIH - Amery, WI



**February**

17 Harmony College Midwest,  
Bloomington, IL - Midtown

**April**

6 Appleton, WI - Spitfire  
13 Manitowoc, WI - Coulee Classic

**April (cont.)**

20 Colfax, WI - (Dunn County) - Coulee Classic  
21 Lacrosse, WI - Coulee Classic

**May**

3-5 Northern Pines Harmony  
Brigade/ADC Spring Sing  
5 Oshkosh, WI -  
5 St. Cloud Area

11 Black River Falls - Vocality, St. Croix Crossing,  
18 Wisconsin Youth Quartet Festival,  
Stevens Point, WI

**July**

1-7 International Convention - Cleveland, OH

**October**

5 West Allis, WI - Coulee Classic  
11-12 DISTRICT CONVENTION - Minneapolis, MN

