

The Pitch Piper

72 YEARS OF BARBERSHOP HARMONY

OVER 714,089 SQUARE MILES

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A Bulletin for Barbershoppers in the LO'L District

May – June 2020

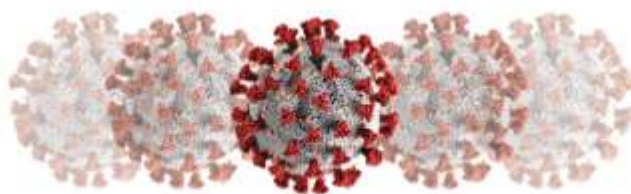
Special COVID-19 Edition

LO'L Board Meeting Notice

At our District Board meeting on May 17th the decision was made to cancel our Fall Convention for 2020. While this is unfortunate, it was based on several key data points and our overall desire to make sure our members and families remain safe. Those key data points include:

1. We were able to negotiate with the Mayo Civic Center a no cost cancellation for this year, but only if we decided quickly.
2. A recent seminar held by the American Choral Directors Association shared the scientific issues associated with spreading the virus by singing. That coupled with the demographics of our singers and audience members makes it unlikely that groups will get together in person until a vaccine is available, or some other manner of having the majority of the population build a natural immunity to the virus.
3. A representative sample of our chapters indicated that about 40% of our members who regularly attend our Fall convention indicated they would not attend this year due to a combination of concern about the virus and economic challenges with their chapters and personal finances.
4. Given the uncertainty of when larger groups can gather (which is different between the states and the Canadian provinces) many choruses/quartets may have felt pressure to rehearse earlier than they should, putting some members at further risk.

Now our focus will be to determine how we can qualify choruses and quartets for the 2021 International Convention to be held in Cleveland. Our early thinking is that we will plan a qualifying competition in the Spring of 2021. More information about this qualification event will be available this fall after we have time to plan the event over the summer.





Pitch Piper

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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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LO'L has a Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/LOLDistrictBHS/

I Have a Song to Sing!

Submitted by Gordon Billows - LO'L District President



Not quite what we were expecting for 2020, eh!

I sincerely hope that you are all coping successfully with this Pandemic and rising to the challenges (and opportunities) it brings to your home, business chapter and community. With the cancellations of our conventions, shows, rehearsals, etc. it is now even more important to maintain/increase/improve communications and involvement of all members of the Chapters and District - your BARBERSHOP FAMILY. We can all do our part to ensure that we continue to enjoy and support Barbershopping, even if we are not meeting physically.

Many Chapters email weekly newsletters to their members. Some include articles about the Chapter's history, pictures from past events, information about the other Districts in our Society, links to some of the Harmony University general session warm ups, member autobiographies, links to some very entertaining choruses or quartets featured on YouTube, etc. Some Chapter newsletters can be accessed on the LOL website. Here are a few to browse through: <https://sites.uwm.edu/marcus/mve-monthly/> and <https://minneapoliscommodores.org/chordinator>

Zoom video conferencing has become a very popular means of communication in our District, Society, IN OUR WORLD. When our actual rehearsals were cancelled, many Chapters scrambled to find ways to continue communications and involvement with their members. It usually took only one rehearsal session, with Zoom's **USER FRIENDLY** platform, to get all members comfortable with the basic virtual rehearsal protocols/nuances. The Chapter Zoom hosts have quickly discovered some very creative and effective ways to use the Zoom features. Their rehearsals are becoming increasingly more valuable to the members and the "attendance" is about equivalent with their previous actual ones. We are all hoping that life WILL soon return to a better "normal"! In the meantime, Zoom conferencing is giving Chapters opportunities that were never imagined.

I have attended and participated in a number of LOL Chapter Zoom rehearsals over the last few weeks. All have been very excellent interesting experiences. Here are a few examples of what some Chapters scheduled in their rehearsals:

- The half hour before scheduled rehearsal is used for learning/reviewing a tag or Pole Cat song or for a short committee meeting.
- A Society staff member, HU instructor, contest judge etc is invited to attend the virtual rehearsal and give a 20 – 30 minute presentation on their area of expertise.

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COVID Happenings: Polk County Chapter Indianhead Barbershop Chorus

Submitted Ken Mettler



Our Polk County Chorus in Wisconsin has a unique opportunity. Our local area newspaper (The Inter-County Leader) has made space for us to send in a weekly article of 500 words and a photo. There is no charge for this 1/4 page spot. I think they are glad to have contributions at this time because there isn't much else going on in the area. No sports, no public meetings, hardly any accidents to report... basically not much news.

This might be an idea for other choruses to use. We are holding Zoom meetings at our regular practice times. It is fun to just keep in touch with our chorus friends. We are learning "How" we are doing as much as "What" we are doing. It is nice to be a singing group, but it is also nice to be more than just a singing group!



www.vocalityquartet.com 65' 206 25:66

Non Member Fund Raising Solicitation Project

Submitted by Rudy Zarling
AOS Chair

At the last District convention I shared my concern that the number of new donors for the Youth in Harmony program had leveled. Since Society members represent a finite number, I felt we needed to approach Non Members, an infinite group of sorts. However, this meant entering a competitive situation. We would be competing with 1,800,000 IRS recognized charities!! I would need to develop a marketing strategy to instill a sense of urgency for charitable minded non members to support YIH. I started to do some research to find some common problems Young Folks were having that singing could eliminate.

I recalled returning from a District convention in Janesville, WI that a Cemetery at our Church had a number of Tombstones toppled. I recall speaking to my wife, Carol, "if those kids knew about singing they would not have done that". Little did I know that 20(?) years later that would form the basis for further study. I did more research and found that this

Nation has a problem with vandalism not only Tombstones but Graffiti and a host of others. Graffiti costs this country 80 Billion dollars ANNUALLY for cleaning. Auto windows broken, not for burglary but something to do.

That led me to develop a presentation for FUNDRAISING to Non Barbershoppers. With the help off Bill Kilbourn who also sings with a Quartet, EASY DAYS helping me, I developed a prototype presentation on Flash Drive. I used it on 4 Non Barbershoppers with success. Contributions ranged from \$25.00-\$200.00. One individual, was so enthused he wanted to send it to other influential people all over Wisconsin. I asked him not to do so till I had approval from Harmony Foundation. Next step was to run more tests so I sent a number of Flash Drives to more members to get more data. I wrote a script for them, sent the Flash Drive and asked them to present it to a few Non Barbershoppers. I'm asking for your help also to develop more data.

If you would like to help, call me and I'll get the script for your approach and the Flash Drive. rhzcmz@aol.com 262 893 9480.

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Contact Dan Heike
dan@prettygoodquartet.com
715-495-4523



Central Region Report

Submitted by Steve Zorn, Central Region VP



The 19 Chapters in the Central Region have had a challenging 2020! This is no surprise because all Chapters have experienced the same thing. All performances for the Spring, like annual shows, senior citizens performances, even singing in the park have been canceled. And it is very challenging to plan for the future because we don't know

what will be allowed in the coming months. We have two States and one Province that rule our behavior and a myriad of experts sharing conflicting ideas of potential consequences.

The Chapters are reaping the benefit of audiovisual technology that allows us to meet virtually. Some members dislike the virtual option because it is a new computer challenge which they would prefer to ignore. However the benefit is that we can continue to connect with one another. I know that over half of the Central Region chapters are meeting via tools like Zoom, Microsoft Meeting, or Google Meet. Even better, Chapters are including others in their meetings. For example, Marty Monson, CEO of BHS, joined the Croix Chordsmen and the Great Northern Union choruses' meetings. Gordon Billows, President of LOL District, joined the North Star chorus' meeting. GNU hosted a presentation by their director, Mo Field, on the "Performance" category. They had room to invite others from metro area choruses. Although not in the Central Region, Stevens Point used this technology to hire a new director. The point is that we can use this technology to stay together and learn more about others.

The challenge remains to keep all of us interested while we are not able to sing together in person. As you probably know, the technology does not allow us to sing together. But it does give opportunity for learning songs differently, learning more of the theory of music, how to sing better in your chorus, critiquing our own performances (dig out that DVD from the last District contest!) and performances of other choruses and quartets. This is information that we tend to ignore during an in-person meeting because we prefer to simply sing.

Any chapter that wants some help in using a Zoom-like product or what to do when you do gather, be in touch with your advocate, your friend from another Chapter, or me. You will be welcome to "visit" with another Chapter if you want to know what is going on.

Finally, I polled the 19 Chapters asking how many of the active members would NOT attend a live meeting if we were allowed to gather now. About 30% said they would not attend for fear of the virus' impact on their personal health or that of a close family member. Many Chapters would be at risk of losing key performers until there is a vaccination or better safeguards. This means all of us are at risk of losing members. I have no answers to this except keep yourself safe. In the meantime, let's work together to find ways to work through this crisis.

IN MEMORIAM



Jim Lee, a 33-year BHS member, past away on March 17, 2020. Jim served as LOL District President for 2-terms (2005/2006) sang in numerous quartets, was a LOL chapter advocate, LOL District auditor along with serving in several other District positions. He was named the 2012 LOL District

Barbershopper-Of-The-Year and was inducted into the LOL District Hall of Fame in 2017. Jim was also a past Treasurer of the International Barbershop Harmony Society.

Noted in his obituary, Jim's whole family were singers, they often sang grace before meals, and Jim was crooning his favorite tunes right till the end. Jim and wife Linda also sang with the semi-professional couples group Friends, who remind us "Friends are Friends forever".



LOOKING FOR QUARTET OPPORTUNITY

An Appleton Fox Valleyaires lead is looking to sing in a quartet. A Society member since 1978, has 25-years singing experience. Lives in Berlin WI and is willing to travel.

Contact Joe Lenz, 145 W Moore St., Berlin, WI 54923 /920.290.6152



Midwest Vocal Express Happenings

Submitted by Matthew Post

While the pandemic has no doubt disrupted our normal routine, the men of The Midwest Vocal Express are doing everything we can to continue the spirit of music and comradery that we all depend on to get through this time. We are continuing to meet at our normal time, Monday nights from 7-10, but now in the form of a weekly Zoom call. Since we were in the beginning stages of a repertoire turnover when the quarantine started, our director and baritone of 2018 International champs After Hours, Bryan Ziegler, developed a rehearsal strategy to aid in the music learning, consisting of playing our full mix learning tracks while the rest of the chorus sings along on mute. Even though there are obvious setbacks to this since we can't hear each other or get immediate feedback from Bryan, this has been a valuable way to get repetitions on each song. Combined with a self-evaluation form that each singer completes for each song, the music and performance team has been able to track the chorus' progress on aspects such as music accuracy and memorization.

The Zoom platform has also given us new opportunities we didn't have before to practice "performing". It is interesting to be able to watch every member on the Zoom call perform each song and learn from and encourage individual interpretations of each song. In addition, we are lucky to have Mike Lietke, a certified judge in the Performance category, to lead us in many exercises to become better performers. After giving us many helpful hints and mantras ("Thought comes before action, which comes before word"), he shared with us a few performances from Josh Groban, Don McLean, and The Music Man. As a group, we all watched these videos in real time and gave our thoughts as to what made them great or mediocre performances. We even got a chance to critique After Hours from international 2016 (we think Bryan still loves us after the critique) and compare it to how they

improved to gold medalists in 2018. We've also had more time to watch replays of our own performances over the past two years and self-critique and learn how we can be better performers.

And an MVE rehearsal wouldn't be complete without someone exclaiming, "To the bar!" Our afterglow is a much-loved part of our rehearsal experience and the comradery we have is very important for us to maintain during this time. So naturally, following each rehearsal the Zoom call extends late into the night for more fun, drinks, and some really bad jokes. Unfortunately, we have not figured out a way to sing some tags. But this is still such a meaningful way for us to stay connected. If you were to tune in any week, you'll find any number of virtual backgrounds. My favorite has been the background photo of After Hours, but every guy was photoshopped to be Bryan Ziegler. Our rehearsals have been such an important way for us to stay connected and have fun with each other. We've actually had many guests during this time.

From past members who are maybe thinking about rejoining to guys new to the hobby, virtual rehearsals have provided an easy way for guys to reconnect or observe for a few hours to see if they are interested. We even had our first Virtual Audition and welcomed a new member to our chorus during this time! Who would have thought we'd be adding numbers?

The virtual experience has provided many new opportunities to reach beyond our typical audience and try out some unique learning techniques. The Zoom rehearsals have worked out very well for us and we would recommend other chapters to give it a try. Use it as a way to reach out to former chapter members and invite guests to join in on the singing. It is a way to make the music easily available for anybody who wants to join the fun. The pandemic may have interrupted our normal routine, but the Midwest Vocal Express is still working hard and having fun like we always do. And we can't wait to sing with you all again this fall.

East Region Report

Submitted Scott Finley, East Region VP



Through email conversations and presidents reports, I have been able to glean the following information: Zoom is the new norm. Many choruses are using it weekly to "rehearse" and keep everyone's "toe in the water" so to speak. Madison reports that their rehearsals are "getting better every week".

Appleton has been doing a bang-up job with this for the last month or so. They are reviewing their repertoire and holding meetings every week to keep members up-to-date, which is almost as important as the singing itself! Appleton is also into their second week of "virtual quartets", which has been very cool to see from a technological, as well as a psychological point of view. That's it for now!

COVID Happenings: The Heart O' Lakes Harmony Chorus

The Heart O' Lakes Harmony Chorus (H-007) has encouraged members to stay in contact with each other by telephone calls, texting or emailing one another. As previously done, the President sends out emails on the Sunday before and the Tuesday after our normally scheduled Monday night rehearsals.

Our Director Brent Gerber, who continues to be very busy during this COVID-19 pandemic, emails to each member on Sunday or Monday, different vocal warm-up exercises, then followed by YouTube videos of chorus/quartets singing the songs we have planned to sing at our Spring Shows in Fergus Falls and Detroit Lakes, MN. in April 2020.

We have tentatively rescheduled our 2 Shows for September and October 2020. Communication is the key ingredient to keep us all together when we can't be together.



The Croix Chordsmen Go Digital!

Submitted Jay Althof

March, 2020.

And there we were, like so many chapters, well underway with preparations for our annual Spring show scheduled for April 4rd when we faced the decision to suspend our rehearsals and postpone our annual show due to Covid19. After a week of not having a chapter meeting we recognized that we should try to find a way to get together in a virtual manner using technology. Would it work? How many of our members would participate? What would the agenda be? Would we be able to sing? These were just some of the questions we had. Yet we felt we had to try, as the alternative of not getting together with our barbershop family was just unthinkable.

April, 2020

As we write this article we've now had 6 chapter meetings utilizing video conferencing. As expected, it took us a few weeks to work through an effective agenda and help most of our members learn how to connect using the technology. But now we have almost 40 members and guests participate for about 2 hours each Tuesday evening. We are learning new songs, singing tags and polecats, maintaining the songs we had learned for our show and, most importantly, staying connected with each other. The technology we are using to stay connected includes:

- Zoom video conferencing: one of our members has the Professional version so we don't "time out" during our meetings
- Earmaster: a free program that helps our members with pitch matching and interval training
- BarbershopTags.Com: A site with lots of tags (sheet music and audio files)
- Polecats from BHS (sheet music and audio files)
- Telephone Tree: the old standby approach to connect with those members who haven't been able to connect via Zoom

Over time, we have gotten more proficient with these tools and continue to look for

more that can enhance our meetings. We are going to try a shared YouTube video next! And we now have these tools available for future use in case of a snowstorm or other situations where being together in person is limited.

Our weekly agenda is to have a pre-meeting time for about 30 minutes to make sure members can get the technology working and just chat casually as members join in. We then sing "The Old Songs" and spend time singing along with learning tracks (while we are individually muted). This has worked pretty well, and we have learned a couple of new songs and maintain our current repertoire. We have a business meeting and take the time each week to have a member share more of their background in a "Get To Know You" portion of our meeting. We wrap-up with Keep The Whole World Singing and then head to our virtual afterglow where we chat more, sing tags and polecats. One unexpected positive is that since we now see ourselves on the screen while we sing, it seems that our "smiles" have

become more consistent! We have also had the good fortune to have had Marty Monson and Dustin Guyton join us on different Tuesday evenings as our outside guest. We even have a new prospective member that has started participating in our virtual meetings.

May, 2020 and beyond.

We have more and more fun each week, but every week that goes by the more we miss getting together in person. Yet, one silver lining in the dark virus cloud is that we all are reminded how important the special relationships we have with each other truly are. And in many ways, we are becoming an even stronger chapter as a result.

As we say at the end of every meeting: It's Great To Be A Barbershopper!





West Region Report Staying Connected in a Disconnected World

Submitted by Justin McCullough, West Region VP



Wow! What a couple months it's been! Our world is flipped upside down and we're all learning how to deal with this temporary "New Normal". Businesses are adapting to keep their employees working and learning new ways to provide services to their customers. The same thing is happening at the Barbershop Harmony Society and more

locally here in the LOL District. Choruses are learning new ways to keep their members connected and the District leadership is looking at ways to keep members informed and involved.

At the District level, we are working on new ways to connect and communicate with our membership. We are working on utilizing our website more, sending audio messages from our EVP Jay Althof on the state of affairs, and posting videos on our Facebook page showing some great performances from International from our great choruses and quartets.

At the chapter level, the biggest adjustment we are seeing is online practices! Choruses around the District are utilizing web conferencing tools like Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Webex to bring their members together and continue to work on music together. This is such a new concept! But we are seeing success and it's getting better as companies are releasing new features and as we learn and adjust to make these online practices work better. And this is working for choruses of all sizes. From Bismarck and Fargo to Hilltop and Greendale. If you need help with this, please reach out to your Chapter Advocate or Regional VP. There are also great videos on YouTube showing how to use these tools as well! On a personal note, I can't tell you how great it is to see everyone's faces again! It's uplifting!

We are definitely living through a unique time period right now. I have to say though, how lucky are we that we are living in a time where we have the technology available to allow us to stay connected! I hope you can utilize these tools to keep your chorus connected. Have an online happy hour or meetup! Also I want to encourage you to reach out directly to each other. Check in on your fellow chorus members. An email or phone call goes a long way and can make your friends day just a little bit better! Stay Healthy! Keep Singing! I look forward to the day when we are all busting chords in person again!



GNU Zooming Along Into the Future

Submitted by Kyle Weaver

In some respects, Great Northern Union never missed a beat. When the coronavirus pandemic began circulating throughout the world and social distancing measures were about to become a reality, GNU, like every other choral organization in the world, knew we'd have to take a long time out from in-person rehearsals—from standing on the risers next to our brothers in song.

The week after stay-at-home became a requirement, though, GNU was still in action, moving immediately into holding rehearsals via Zoom, an online video conferencing platform. GNU certainly didn't invent the concept of online choral rehearsals, and we probably weren't the first to try it, either. But credit goes to GNU's new director, Mo Field, and the GNU Music Team members for bravely leading the chorus into this new "remote" era. That first rehearsal was as efficient and organized as almost any in-person rehearsal. It was engaging, fun, useful and effective. The three hours (plus virtual afterglow) flew by and left everyone wanting more—two benchmarks of a truly great rehearsal.

What has made it so effective is the variety of activity. We sing. We socialize. We follow our director. We work on song interpretation. We have breakout sessions and sectionals and individual voice lessons. We let our talented in-chorus music teachers teach and our singing coaches coach singing. We even have cocktails together afterward.

Of course, the one hurdle we haven't yet cleared is the technological one that nobody seems yet to have solved: digital lag prevents us from actually singing together, in real time, with actual, immediate auditory feedback. If anyone has figured that one out, please let us know.

So why tell you all this? By now, I would hazard a guess that most, if not all, of the LOL choruses are holding some manner of online rehearsals. I know for certain that Midwest Vocal Express, the Commodores and the Croix Chordsmen all are doing so.

My hope is that by sharing our experience, sharing what has worked for us, we can offer some ideas up to others. GNU remains a proud member of the Land O'Lakes District and we'd be glad to offer up any assistance to other choruses who might like some help in getting their groups together during this challenging time. We'd gladly send people to visit you and we'd welcome you to visit us. Just drop us an email (greatnorthernunion@gmail.com) and let's talk.

It's tough being isolated. And I submit that those of us who live with music in our hearts are suffering just a bit more without our traditional weekly musical reprieve from the hassles of real life. Let's see what we can do to combat this virus with what we do best: music.

#SingBetterTogether



Clipper City Chordsmen Going Strong Despite Corvid-19 Limitations

Submitted by Donald Lewellen, Jr.



If it is a Tuesday evening, the Clipper City Chordsmen are rehearsing together. While still following social restrictions and staying at home to

avoid in-person interactions, the all male a cappella group has still found a way to “get together” as they have for the last three quarters of a century. “We missed a week or so early on in this time of isolation, and didn’t like it one bit” says Marketing VP Don Lewellen. “We first tried a Zoom meeting with our board and Music team and thought it could work well for the entire chorus. Since then, we have been meeting every week with 25 or more guys attending.

Member Johnathon Purvis was eager to experiment with some different methods to sing together. “We tried singing through our computer microphones on Zoom, but everyone has different internet speeds so it was a real mess. We also are trying to have individuals sing their part separately and then stitch them together to form a virtual quartet, but that is a work in progress.” continues Purvis. “Even though we can’t harmonize together as a group, it is great to see each other, do warmup exercises together, review videos of other quartets and choruses, and spend some time discussing ways to improve our individual singing technique.”

“Director Dave Buss has been instrumental in getting some outside music educators to join the weekly group sessions” says Anthony Schreiter. “Some weeks, it is through sharing and discussing YouTube videos that were recorded at past educational conventions, but other weeks, the group has had virtual personal visits from master coach Paul Ellinger, Katie MacDonald, Manager of Recruitment for the Barbershop Harmony Society, and Donny Rose, Director of Music Education for the Barbershop Harmony Society. It is amazing to have the chance to share an evening with these talented folks.”

Coming up for the chorus will be visits with arranger Patrick McAlexander and international visits with Performance Judge Mo Field from Canada and Music Judge Alex Morris from Australia. Johnathon Purvis adds “I really love the guests we’ve been having join us. Their knowledge and inspiration is great. Despite not being able to actually sing together, we are still learning more about our hobby and that knowledge is power for when we are finally able to get back together again.”

Past President Jim Rasmus adds “Singing creates bonds that are tough to break. Just getting together to see each other once a week is not as good as being there together in person, but it sure is better than nothing!

Vocality – Live! (Virtually)

Submitted by Jay Althof

“What, we won’t be able to get together to rehearse for a long time? We have to find a way to make virtual rehearsals work.”

We are sure many quartets feel the same way. Fortunately, a couple of years ago Vocality found a software program called JamKazam that showed promise of enabling 4 people to sing from their own homes and have the delay in sound be small enough so that the chords still ring and the songs can flow. It did take quite a bit of time to figure out how to configure all of our computers, get direct connections to fairly high-speed internet and also headphones, microphones and an analog-to-digital converter box, but we made it all happen! While it is far from perfect, it is good enough for us to learn new songs “live”, fix passages, improve Jay’s arrangements (like always!) and have a good time catching up as brothers would always do. And it is important that we continue to rehearse because we have lots of fun activities coming up this summer and fall (we hope!)

We had gotten a nice start recording songs for our FIFTH album before the virus crisis happened. We have four recorded and those are being mixed now. We still have 7 or 8 more songs we want to include on the album, so our virtual rehearsals are being used to learn a few new songs and maintaining several of our newer tunes that we will record when we can get back together in person. We are really excited to share those new arrangements with you.

We have scheduled our 5th Annual Concert from the Porch in White Bear Lake for July 18th. Given the virus situation, we aren’t sure at this time how that may work, but at this point we think it can be a combination of some people joining us in person with proper social distancing and a live-stream via Facebook. So keep the afternoon of July 18th on your calendar as a potential for the Porch Concert, whether in-person or virtual. We will provide updates as the date gets closer.

Like so many performing groups, we had several shows cancel this Spring. Fortunately, most are just postponed until Fall or next year. We really enjoy performing and can’t wait to bring our new arrangements and long-time favorites back to live audiences through these shows. Until we can all meet again in person, stay safe, stay strong and keep on singing!





Very Dark Cloud – Some Silver Linings

Submitted by Jay Althof, Executive Vice President



As we are all so painfully aware, the Covid19 virus has disrupted our individual lives as well as many of our barbershop activities. Many chapters cancelled or postponed their Spring shows. We cancelled our Spring convention. In person rehearsals and chapter meetings have stopped. The International Convention this summer is cancelled. Quartets struggle to find ways to rehearse. Our District President Gordon Billows and his wife, Paula, both contracted the virus, and thankfully recovered. And many more challenges. Yet, we are a resilient bunch of people and we are finding ways to make the best out of a bad situation.

Your District Leadership Team continues to put plans in place for our Fall Convention and January Leadership Academy. Of course, there is still the possibility that one, or both of these events will need to be cancelled or postponed, but our feeling is that it is much better to have plans in place, ready to go if possible, rather than scramble later if we are able to move forward. That said, we will make a final decision regarding the Fall convention in June and the Leadership Academy in September. Of course, our primary considerations are the health and safety of our members.

A couple of new communication elements are coming on line. Each month I will record a brief audio clip to share the highlights of happenings around our District and any important news. This will be posted on our District Website and I'll also e-mail the file to the Chapter Presidents for direct distribution to all members. We have also been putting together a "Sunshine Site" that will be connected to our District Website. Many of us had, or still have, what we called the "Sunshine Committee" in our chapters. Those committees would make sure that when a chapter member, or their family, was sick or had other difficulties that they would receive a card, or other support. Those groups really help extend the true feeling of being part of a Barbershop family. Now that we have moved to a more virtual way of staying connected, the Sunshine Site is a place where we can list those all across our District who are having difficulty so that we can offer our support and prayers. I'll share more details about how to access that site in the next few weeks once we have it up and running.

A final thought about another silver lining is how the personal separation caused by the virus has reminded us how much we truly love our Barbershop experience. Many chapters are holding weekly video conferences. Some are utilizing the phone tree approach to keep members in touch. And I'm sure there are other creative ways being used as well. I know in my chapter the general feeling is something like: "Wow, I really miss all of you, the fun we have singing together and the family feeling I get each week at our rehearsals. I didn't realize just how important that was to me, until it looked like we weren't going to be able to stay connected." I challenge all of us to take the realization of this passion and find ways to invite others to join us. What we have as Barbershoppers is truly special and in many ways we owe it to the broader society to get more and more people engaged with us. It will help so many of them feel better, have access to our support network and just be happier. And, when we grow we feel better too! Stay safe, keep singing and I hope to see you all soon!

I Have a Song to Sing

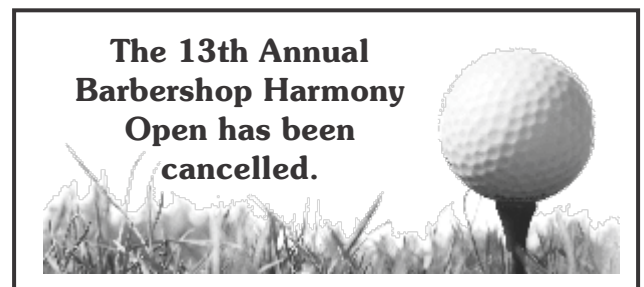
...Continued from page 2

- Introduction of a new song - the words on sheet music are read and the members discuss the song's story. The mixed track is played a few times, members follow with their music, and the song's story is discussed again. There is follow up the next week. Members are encouraged to revisit the song that week and identify some emotional components to share.
- Sing current repertoire songs with the mixed track, identify and fix difficult/problem areas, reinforce the desired emotions and presentation, sing the song again in performance mode. Members are encouraged to record themselves at home and submit for adjudication.
- Prospective, former members, members from another chapter or Chapter Advocates are invited to attend the virtual rehearsal. (It helps to email music to them in advance so they can sing along.)
- Section rehearsals ("break out" sessions) are scheduled within a Zoom rehearsal.
- A Harmony University general session warm up video is downloaded and played at the Chapter's virtual rehearsal. There are many to choose from on the BHS YouTube site.
- A chorus and/or quartet video from International contests is downloaded and played. The members analyze and comment on the positive, then on the negative, aspects of the performance. The videos are played again. Members identify desirable qualities that their chorus or quartets should strive for.
- Invitations to nearby Chapters to share in your virtual rehearsal experiences - a win-win situation. **Let's share our Best Practices!**

BTW – If you look at March/April Harmonizer, page 19 (HU ad), at the picture on the right side at the bottom, the Barbershopper with the "white hair and beard" is John Plazek, LOL 2003-04 President and 2010 LOL BOTY!

What's going on in your Chapter, in your virtual rehearsal? Share your successes and ideas with the District by communicating with your Chapter Advocates and Board Members. Let's prepare for the future of Barbershopping in Land O' Lakes together.

Keep safe and keep well so we can sing tomorrow!





LO'L Youth in Harmony Update!

Submitted by Jim Rasmus, Chairman, LO'L YIH Committee



COVID-19 has had its heinous effect on our 2020 Youth in Harmony plans! The **6th Annual Wisconsin Youth Harmony Festival**, as well as the **Provincial Youth Quartet Championship in Regina** were both cancelled in May. Music educators were disappointed when the BHS cancelled Harmony University and only time will tell if youth choruses and quartets will be able to participate at Midwinter in New York City....

There are three things relating to Youth in Harmony efforts I want to share with you.

The BHS is upgrading Youth Policies which will affect our Chapters and District. At this writing, the details are not totally clear but, in case you haven't heard, here's a quick summary of what's coming:

- Background checks for staff members, board members, and those having regular contact with youth.
- An annual check of all members against publicly available federal, state, or provincial sex offender registries.
- Additional youth protection training to those persons in a position of choosing volunteers to work around youth on a regular basis.
- Education about activities that fall under prohibited personal interaction.

For more information, go to <https://www.barbershop.org/youth-protection-update-spring-2020>.

The Wisconsin Youth Harmony Festival (WYHF) Board has been using this time to establish an independent 501(c)(3) status to enable them to explore further grant opportunities and easier fund-raising. The proposed Golf Outing later this summer is still in limbo, for obvious reasons.

WYHF is also working with the Wisconsin School Music Association (WSMA), state-wide music educators and BHS staff to update the approved barbershop arrangements available to quartets who wish to participate in Solo and Ensemble Festivals. This is important because that approved music list is only reviewed every three years. Others involved with efforts to encourage formation of youth barbershop quartets in other states/provinces may want to use this time to explore their approved music lists.

That's all for now. Stay well, safe and look forward to the day we can get back to singing and encouraging the next generation to get turned on to barbershop!

IN MEMORIAM



It is with great sadness that the Stevens Point Barbershoppers (Northern Gateway Chorus) announces the passing of our director of several years, **H. John Lay**, on Sunday, March 15, 2020, of complications following heart surgery. He was 78.

A Celebration of Life Service for John will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Stevens Point at a later date. Shuda Funeral Home (www.shudafuneral.com), which is assisting the family with arrangements, will update its website when a date is determined.

John was a talented and admired musician who had many musical avenues including the Trinity Lutheran Church Senior Choir, Monteverdi Master Chorale, and Northern Gateway Chorus.

In lieu of flowers, memorials in John's name may be made to Monteverdi Master Chorale, The Northern Gateway Chorus, and Trinity Lutheran Church. Online condolences may be sent by visiting www.shudafuneral.com.

As John's family wrote in his obituary, "His commitment to his family, friends, church, and community was immeasurable and will never be forgotten. The imprint he has made on the lives of those around him is inspiring."

With the passing of Stevens Point Chapter Director H. John Lay, the chorus formed a director search committee and, in early May, hired Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools Director of Choral Activities Julie Stoffel as interim director.



2019 Chapter B.O.T.Y. Winners

Minocqua/Woodruff, WI - Todd Oxley

St. Croix Valley, MN - Walt Ogburn



New Book Tells True Story of Champion Schmitt Brothers Quartet

Submitted by P.T. Rivers

Many of you know the story of the Schmitt Brothers—Jim, Joe, Paul and Fran—who grew up in a family of 17, learned to sing in the church choir and won the 1951 SPEBSQSA title. With performances routinely booked years in advance, the quartet sang together for 35 years, spreading harmony from Carnegie Hall, Madison Square Garden and all the major stages in the country as well as the Ed Sullivan, Arthur Godfrey and Lawrence Welk shows.



The Schmitt Brothers quartet posed with the SPEBSQSA trophy following their victory in 1951. (Back: Fran and Joe. Front: Jim and Paul.)

A newly published book, “The Schmitt Brothers,” tells the behind-the-scenes story of our very own legendary champion quartet. Based on over 15 years of research and more than 30 interviews, the 223-page book includes 67 photos, many never seen before. It details the quartet’s meteoric rise to fame, the faith and family that molded them, and the hometown they put on the map. Readers say it takes them back in time and reveals glimpses of the quartet they didn’t know before.

“This is a heartwarming story set in a small town and built on strong family values,” said author P.T. Rivers, a great niece of the quartet. “Even when standing in the spotlight to the thunderous applause of thousands of adoring fans, the Schmitt Brothers never lost sight of what was really important: faith, family and community. They firmly believed that singing brings joy.”

The novel begins with the first contest they won—not in front of a crowd of 8,000 at the international convention in Toledo, but on WOMT radio in Manitowoc when Jim, the youngest, was just four years old. It chronicles their lives as they grew up in Two Rivers, went to school, married their sweethearts and established their

businesses.

Discovered by chance when their melodies caught the ear of O.H. “King” Cole, SPEBSQSA President and father of Virginia Cole Osborn, a member of the Chordettes, the Schmitts were invited to join the Manitowoc barbershop chapter, where they met future coaches Johnny Means and Milt Detjen. Within 18 months, they mastered the challenging techniques of the uniquely American a cappella style, winning every contest on the road to the championship, where they bested 40 of the top quartets in the United States and Canada.

During the next 35 years, they “traveled along singing a song,” logging more than 2 million miles and performing in 3,000 programs. In the meantime, they raised 35 children, ran successful businesses, and participated in and led civic organizations from the Elks and Lions Clubs to the local chamber of commerce, school and church boards.

“The Schmitt Brothers were capable of perfectly blending delicate tones, thundering crescendos, cascading decrescendos and chords that – if you didn’t know better – made you think there was an entire orchestra backing them up,” said P.T. Rivers. “They truly enjoyed singing together and generously shared their talents. The magic of their singing brought harmony and joy to all who heard them.” The Schmitt Brothers recorded nine albums. Their Greatest Hits is available on Apple Music and Spotify.

“The Schmitt Brothers” is Available Now on amazon.com. Paperbacks and eBooks are available on amazon.com. Search for The Schmitt Brothers by P.T. Rivers.

More Information

- **Contact** P.T. Rivers at ptriversbooks@gmail.com
- **Follow** The Schmitt Brothers Quartet on Facebook
- **Listen** to The Schmitt Brothers Greatest Hits on Apple Music and Spotify



In 1974, the Clipper City Chordsmen presented the Schmitt Brothers with the Quarter Century of Harmony Award. The surprise event is described in detail in “The Schmitt Brothers” book. (Back: Joe and Fran Schmitt, Milt Detjen. Front: Jim and Paul Schmitt.)



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H2HQuartet@yahoo.com

*Land O' Lakes District Association
Member of Heart to Heart*

CHORD SMASH!
a Barbershop Quartet

James Scott Erik Sam

Contact:
info@chordsmash.com
650-404-1018

Visit us on the Web!
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Sound Image



Tom Schmet, Baritone • William Loring, Lead
Robert Starz, Bass • Todd Mathison, Tenor

Contact: Robert Starz
Phone: 820-894-0423
email: starz@frontiernet.net www.soundimagequartet.com

Calendar

NOTE: Dates shown on this page are for those activities that have proper clearance through the District Secretary. Please DO NOT send show registrations to the editor, DO notify:

BOB BREY, Secretary
Land O' Lakes District
1411 S 31st Street
Manitowoc, WI 54220
rbwrey1950@gmail.com

2020

June
20 Minocqua-Woodruff, WI
(CANCELLED)

June/July
28-5 Los Angeles, CA (CANCELLED)
International Convention

September
12 Minneapolis, MN
19 Lake Geneva, WI
19 Hilltop, MN

October
3 Stevens Point, WI
Main Street
10 Ripon, WI
Vocality
10 Polk County, WI
23-24 Rochester, MN (CANCELLED)
LO'L Fall Convention

November
7 Mankato, MN

December
12 West Allis, WI
12-13 Hilltop, MN

A special THANK YOU to all the contributors to this issue... you went the extra mile to provide communication to our District during this difficult time and it's truly appreciated ☺...

Pitch Piper co-editors Bob and Bill