

Minneapolis Commodores CHORD-INATOR



OFFICIAL CHAPTER BULLETIN

"YOU BELONG HERE"

July 2026

VOLUME 82, # 2

2026 - Barbershopper of the Year TONY MASON

"All for One Chord, One Voice for All"



"Keep The Whole World Singing!"



The Minneapolis Commodores are a community. One that nurtures its members with a sense of belonging, accomplishment, and fulfillment. Our BOTY's genuine leadership has been an integral part of fostering and sustaining that community by constantly reinforcing through words and deeds the power that's inherent in the gift of music.

He was raised in a household that was filled with music. Early on it was folk-singing that *Seized The Day*. Those storytellers who trod *Country Roads* provided a strong foundation as he began to learn about the joy of creating harmony and how lyrics and heartfelt singing can change lives.

Upon joining the Commodores, our 15-year chapter member quickly became a *lead*-ing presence in his section following that with quartets, a show chairman role, and a visionary chapter presidency to add to his chorus resume.

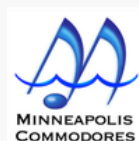
Our BOTY has widely proclaimed that he's a distant second when compared to all the other singers in his family however, even as the *beat goes on* with *Daddy's Little Girls*, where there's a *Will* there's a way. He is and always will be number one in our hearts, *the sunshine in our lives*.

In sincere appreciation for all his many contributions and dedication to our chapter, the Minneapolis Commodores are pleased to proclaim,

Tony Mason

2026 Barbershopper of the Year

Presented in Saint Paul, Minnesota on the seventh day of June, 2026

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Thanks for the Pictures In This Issue

Jamye Casperson
Mark Ortenburger
Bill Walkowski
Dick Riemenschneider

Thanks to our team of proofreaders

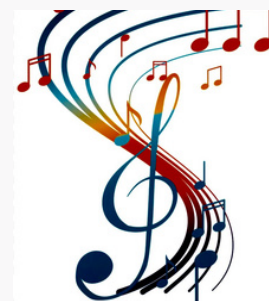
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It's Great to be a Commodore!



Striking A True Chord

FROM OUR PRESIDENT



DAN TRUE

Who We Are, and Why It Matters

As we move through this year together, I've been reflecting on what truly defines the Minneapolis Commodores. Not just our music, not just our history, but the deeper character of this chapter — the part that is felt more than it is seen. In recent months, I've had the privilege of watching our chorus demonstrate, again and again, the qualities that make us who we are: commitment, camaraderie, and a genuine desire to welcome others into something meaningful.

The Minneapolis Commodores are, at their heart, a multi-generational barbershop chorus rooted in the Twin Cities and strengthened by decades of shared experience. We are a group of men who come together each week not only to sing, but to uphold a legacy of harmony, fellowship, and service. Our culture is shaped by humor, kindness, and the steady belief that every voice — whether brand-new or seasoned by years on the risers — contributes to the fabric of our sound.

This identity is not accidental. It has been built over time by members who show up, support one another, and carry forward traditions that matter. It is reinforced by the way we greet guests, the way we encourage new singers, and the way we treat each other with respect and good humor. It is visible in our performances, our community work, and the way we represent barbershop harmony throughout the region.

But perhaps most importantly, our identity is sustained by the simple truth that every member plays a role in shaping the future of this chapter. The strength of the Commodores has never rested solely with a board, a committee, or a handful of leaders. It rests with all of us — every man who stands on the risers, every volunteer who lends a hand, every singer who takes a moment to welcome someone new.

As we continue our work this year, I encourage each of you to carry that identity forward. Share your story. Invite someone who might enjoy what we enjoy. Offer a warm welcome to the next guest who walks through the door. These small actions, repeated consistently, are what keep our chapter vibrant and growing.

We are a chorus defined not only by the music we make, but by the community we build. And that community is strongest when each of us takes ownership of it — with pride, with purpose, and with the same spirit that has sustained the Commodores for generations. Thank you for the way you show up. Thank you for the way you support one another. And thank you for helping ensure that the Minneapolis Commodores remain a place where harmony, fellowship, and service continue to thrive.



Director's Corner With Jamye Casperson



If You're Finished Learning, You're Finished Growing

Many singers think that once you've been singing for decades, you've learned everything there is to learn. But the truth is, your best singing isn't a finish line with a trophy. It is momentum—

- Momentum as growth — the steady unfolding of new skills, new confidence.
- Momentum as curiosity — the spark that asks “What else can my voice do?”
- Momentum as resilience — the ability to adapt as your voice evolves.
- Momentum as inspiration — the creative fuel that keeps singing joyful
- Momentum as commitment — the choice to keep showing up for your craft

Stay open to the idea that your voice can keep improving, no matter how long you've been singing. Great singers never stop exploring—they keep studying, keep refining, keep discovering new corners of their sound. It's the same reason professional athletes rely on coaches throughout their careers: growth doesn't stop when you're good; it accelerates when you stay curious.

Taking lessons doesn't mean you're lacking something. It means you're growing. Somewhere along the way, people started treating “learning” like a remedial activity, as if lessons are only for beginners or people who are struggling. But the truth is, the most confident, capable singers are the ones who stay open to guidance. They know that an outside ear can catch things they can't hear themselves. They know that growth is a choice, not a phase.

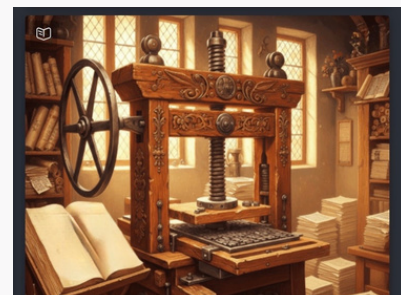
Chorus rehearsals are fantastic for ensemble skills—blending, tuning, timing, diction, listening across the group. But they're not designed to focus on your voice. That's where individual study comes in. Private lessons give you the space to explore your own technique, your own artistry, your own vocal health. One setting builds the collective; the other builds the individual. A well-rounded singer needs both.

In the end, the singers who keep learning are the ones who keep growing. They don't settle or shrink back; they stay curious, open, and alive to what their voices can still become. They know the joy of singing isn't about being “finished”—it's about discovering new strength, new resonance, new confidence at every age. And if you ask any great singer how they stay great, they'll tell you the same truth: they keep learning.



Mason's Musings

FROM OUR IMMEDIATE PAST-PRESIDENT



A few months ago, Debbie and I got the chance to see one of my lifelong musical heroes, Herbie Hancock, perform with a group of highly experimental and unbelievably talented musicians. This group was, as Jerry Garcia would have said, WAY out there! They would start classic tunes and then noodle their way into some of the wildest extended jams I've ever heard. It's as if they opened up a window to the universe and just harvested whatever notes floated into that theater from some other realm of consciousness.

Midway through that transcendent event, a thought hit me: The band had no written sheet music. They decided what to play next based on mood, audience and band vibe, and emotion. They used a combination of known and experimental instruments. They tapped into the flow, and they allowed the harmony and inharmonicity to lead us all to strange and new musical frontiers.

And this means we were the only people in the history of the world that would ever hear that music that way.

Live music is magic!

Our goal, obviously, is not to purposefully channel the Hancock brand of improvisational chaos. We Commodores listen to learning tracks, read and memorize music, and rehearse weekly to learn how to sing the same things the same way at the same time. We have world-class directors and coaches who help us sing together, breathe together, cut off together, shape vowels together, and come together.

When we work at it; when we really listen and learn; when we trust our leaders and each other, we get closer to the crisp precision that makes every chord ring and goose pimples appear. I know I'm not the only one who loves and craves more of those moments when music and energy collide and our evenings / performances / convention sets become transcendent.

But the Commodores are also a group that taps into live magic. Our age differences, attendance patterns, practice regimens, individual commitment to blend and rhythm and section sound, and even factors like voice health, relative temperature, and barometric pressure ensure that though we work towards perfection, we unleash new non-repeatable music into the world every time we sing together.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of this magic. Every convention, every show, every performance, every Tuesday is special. New. Thank you for helping me come alive every time I get to sing with this great group. It is, truly, Great to be a Commodore!

The Commodores name Tony Mason 2026 Barbershopper of the Year

On June 2nd, at Mancini's Char House, the Commodores named **Tony Mason** our 2026 BOTY. Entertainment was provided by, appropriately enough, Elevator Music, since three of the four members belong to Tony's family, and the fourth our venerable Director, **Jamye Casperson**. We also acknowledged our families and friends who provide the support and encouragement to keep this wonderful organization moving forward. Additionally, we honored a lengthy list of 50+ year Commodore members, a few of whom were present, and took the opportunity to engage in a little tag singing. A great time was had by all but I suspect not quite as great as the Mason family.



Mancini's



Elevator Music

Sarah Spedding, Grace Mason, Jamye Casperson, Debbie Mason



The Mason Family

Dad must have been otherwise occupied and missed the picture.



Tony Mason addresses his legions of fans.

A Little More BOTY



Hall Pass

Dave Bechard, Tony Mason, Dave Casperson, and Paul Wigley



Rick Anderson, Jim Foy, Chuck Guthrie, Dick Riemenschneider -
A little after-dinner tagging with **207** years of Barbershop Harmony Society membership between them. WOW!



"The Night is Still Young"
Three from the Ear Doctors quartet (**TJ Striblen, Harly Lentz, and Morgan Baumbach**) singing with long-time Commodore **Al Machinsky**

Jim Richards Chord Candy

While Jim's tag selections are always fun and interesting, the BHS history lesson that goes along with them make these "must reads" (and of course "must sing" as well). He mentions **Joe Connelly** who is now considered "the most decorated and influential lead in history" and **Tony DeRosa** who wasn't at the time this was written but now is a 5-time International Quartet Champion.

Chord Candy #114

by Dr. Jim Richards, Der Tagmeister



Keepsake became International Champions in 1992 with lead singer "Awsome" Joe Connelly earning his second gold medal. Bass, Don Barnick, earlier won his first gold singing tenor in Grandma's Boys. First time champions were tenor, Roger Ross, and 19 year old Tony DeRosa singing bari. Roger and Tony are currently singing tenor and lead, respectively in the current 4th place medalist quartet "Main Street." This month's Chord Candy offering is the tag to one of Keepsake's signature songs. This tag has something for everyone. It starts off on an augmented chord that quickly resolved to a barbershop 7th chord as it does in "Shine On, Shine On Harvest Moon." This is followed by a lovely tenor/ lead duet. In measure 3 the lead starts a long "hanger" while the baritone gets a tiddley to die for. In measure 4 the bass gets to start a delicious 9th chord sung as a bell chord that resolves to the tonic. Sing this with love and tenderness and you will experience goose bumps! Enjoy!

The musical score is written for tenor and bass voices. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The score consists of two systems of staves. The first system has two staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The tenor part (top staff) has lyrics: "And I on- ly have on- ly have eyes for". The bass part (bottom staff) has lyrics: "you. I on- ly have eyes for you.". The second system also has two staves. The tenor part (top staff) has lyrics: "you. I on- ly have eyes for you.". The bass part (bottom staff) has lyrics: "you. for". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and chord symbols (e.g., 8, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100).

Reprinted from earlier versions of the CHORD-INATOR in memory of our great friend, consummate Barbershopper, mentor, BHS Society President, and International Senior Quartet Champion with Grandma's Beaus - Jim Richards



Around Town

The Northern Pines Harmony Brigade show was held on May 2nd. As always the Commodores were very well represented with 11 members, including multiple members in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place quartets (**Ben Wanggaard, Dave Bechard, Harly Lentz, Andy Richards, and Tony Mason**). Tony Mason was also the winner of the Spirit Award which is voted on and presented by all the other attendees. **Dan True** did his usual fine job of MCing the Saturday evening show.



Commodore Participants



Some familiar faces in the crowd



The winner of the "I Can't Stop Smiling Because Music Makes Me Happy Award" - **Dave Bechard**, directing "Everybody Loves Somebody".



A few more familiar faces



Around Town

The Minneapolis Commodores found an open month on our calendar and rather than take a break from singing, a foreign concept indeed, decided to stage a somewhat old fashioned **Parade of Quartets**. Quartets from the Commodores, some with temporary replacements, some spur of the moment ("hey let's put on a show"), along with several from other Twin Cities chapters as well as the chorus and MCX, performed for a very enthusiastic audience. Everyone had a great deal of fun, so much so that there might be a repeat in our future.



Southern Rim
Dave Day, Kaden
Ofstad, Ken
Wentworth, Dave
Casperson



Bandit

Nick Serrecchia, Zach Rolfs,
Jay Carey, Jonathan Rolfs



Thanks to Dave Bechard's tutelage and support, **JAKT**, a quartet from Blaine High School, was scheduled to sing on the show. Unfortunately two of the members weren't able to make it so **J** and **Keegan** (Bass & Bari) took the opportunity to sing some tags afterwords. From all appearances it was *fire* (ask your grandkids what that means) as they sang very well with **Bill Walkowski**, **Lee Wyland**, and several others who were waiting to tag-in.



Frostbite

In a final performance tune-up before singing on the BHS International Stage in St. Louis - **Seth Olson**, **Oliver Nicholson**, **David Friedges**, and **TJ Striblen**



Around Town

A few more from the Parade of Quartets show



Dave Wall with our Commodore friend **Bob Ostergaard** who was back in town for our show.



Our Afterglow at the Yard House and yes you can order a yard of beer as one of our members can attest to.



Harvey Weiss getting a gentle reminder that the tenors are over on stage right.

Investiture of the 2026 Commodore Board Members



Swearing in the Minneapolis Commodore Board Members

Dick Riemenschneider, Harly Lentz, Tony Mason, Dave Casperson, Bill Walkowski, Oliver Nicholson, Bill Albrecht, Neal Mortenson.

Not pictured: President **Dan True** who was administering the oath, **Steve Grady**, and **Andy Richards**



Around Town and “Outta” Town

(From our President Daniel True)

Please join me in congratulating Frostbite Quartet for earning a 15th-place finish in the NextGen Varsity Quartet Competition finals. This is an outstanding achievement, and we are incredibly proud of the way they represented both the Minneapolis Commodores and the Land O’ Lakes District on an international stage.

Frostbite is **Oliver Nicholson, TJ Striblen, Seth Olson, and David Friedges**. While two members of Frostbite sing with the Commodores, the quartet also includes two outstanding singers from elsewhere in the Land O’ Lakes District. Their combined talent and teamwork reflect the best of our regional Barbershop community. Together, they showed what collaboration, friendship, and shared purpose can look like when young singers bring their best to the Barbershop world.

Their musicianship, character, and commitment reflect the values we strive to uphold as a chapter. They carried our name with integrity, and they demonstrated the strength of cross-chapter connection that keeps our Barbershop community vibrant.

Please take a moment to congratulate these young men. They made the Commodores proud. We can’t wait to see what they do next.



The Commodores take a short break during rehearsal to watch Frostbite perform on the International Stage.



Fútbol & Generations In Harmony

There's an athletic event being staged at the moment that is being followed with great anticipation by many people around the world. And it's **not**, as some of you have already assumed, the upcoming July 18 World Snail Racing Championship in Congham, UK. Of course it's the World Cup of Fútbol (Copa Mundial) that is providing great entertainment even if you're not a soccer fan. The every-four-years event is put on by FIFA which, given the amount of money flowing into the pockets of this organization, might stand for "**Fully Involved in Fleecing All**". Perhaps a bit unfair however the competition has been compelling (still going on at the time of this writing) and I found some interesting thoughts that seem to connect this event quite well to our own musical world.

The coach of the U.S. Team is Mauricio Pochettino, who seems to have that unique ability to pull together and create a very good team from a group of disparate individuals. We know quite well what this looks like since locally we have seen Cheryl Reeve do exactly the same thing *time after time* (you know I had to include a song reference) with the WNBA's Minnesota Lynx.

Mauricio shares a belief that a great team is more than a collection of individuals. In his words it is, "*a state of mind, distinguished by its special aura, a collective confidence and joy that all of its members share.*" To me that sounds a lot like our own Commodore experience. And while we may not share the same goal of becoming a world champion, our team (community) does have it's own special aura that celebrates the shared joy of singing and belonging. Maybe this is best understood through the Commodores charitable program, our mission as it were, "*Generations in Harmony*":

"The Generations in Harmony program empowers all people to discover, develop, and share the joy of singing by connecting voices across the ages. Through support, education, and opportunity, we sustain a living legacy of harmony that inspires communities today and for generations to come."

Even if Coach Pochettino had Lionel Messi on his team, the widely acknowledged "best player in the world", he would understand that a winning aura doesn't come from a single individual. It comes from a strong team of individuals with varying skills and abilities, each committed to empowering the people around them, everyone "singing" their part.

Bill Albrecht's Craft Corner



Words We Tend to Clip and How to Fix Them

What is clipping?

Clipping is when you stop singing a vowel prematurely and move to a singable consonant or to a non-singable consonant or to a rest prematurely.

- Singable consonants include L, M, N, V, Z, R, W, Y, and NG. These consonants help maintain legato (connected) phrasing. You can sing these consonants on a pitch.
- Non-singable consonants include P, T, K, S, F and SH.

Below are underlined examples of syllables that we tend to clip:

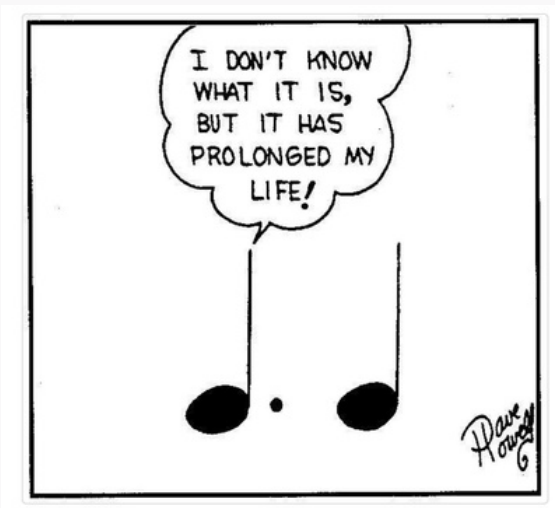
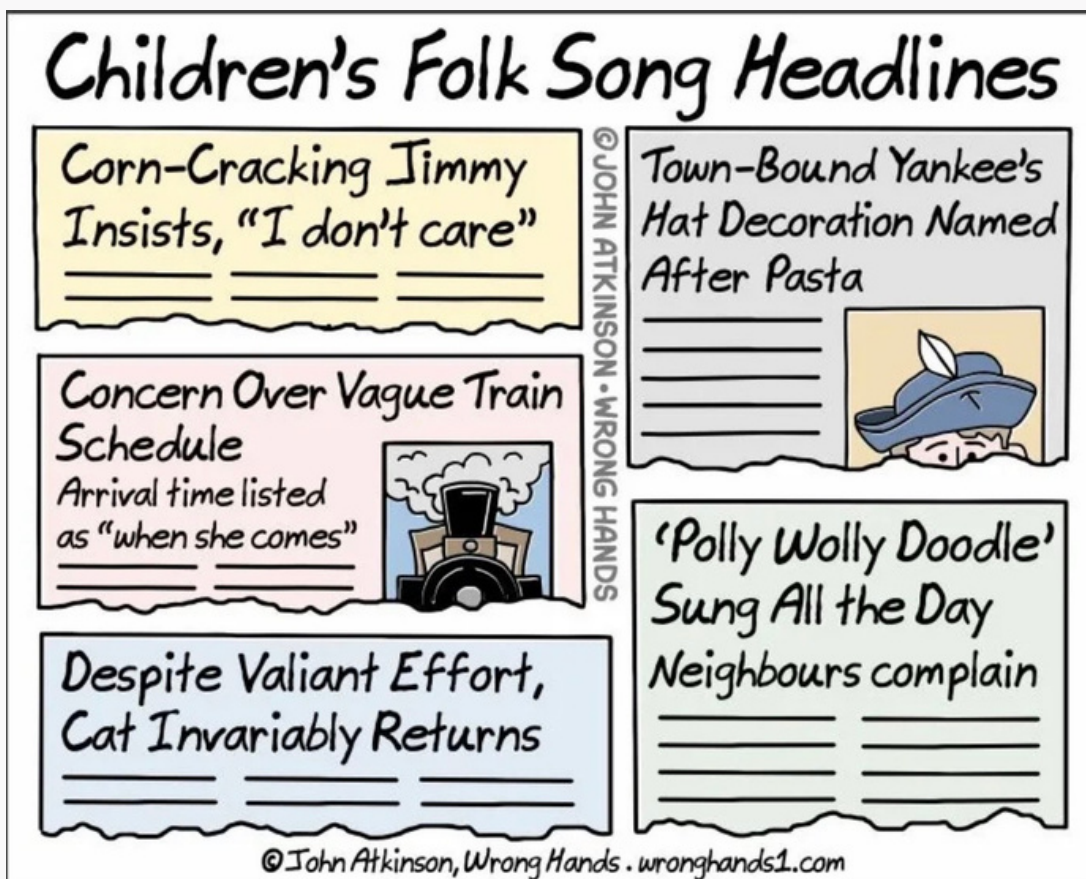
- When I bid farewell to my every care.
- Come fly with me. Let's fly, let's fly away up and away.
- Hello loneliness, I think I'm gonna cry.... I feel like I could die.

How to avoid clipping words like these:

- Extend the singable vowels
- Minimize the duration of non-singable consonants
- Delay non-singable consonants until the start of the next word
 - E.g. Turn "Think I'm" into "Thin kl'm"
- Maintain an audible pitch as much as possible
- Combine duplicate consonants
 - E.g. Turn "yes sir" into "yeh sir."
 - E.g. Turn "Good Day" into "Goo day"
- Eliminate "white space" where no notes are audible

Overall, we want the audience to hear "connected chords" as much as possible to create "a wall of sound" with minimal interruptions except where necessary to clearly understand the lyrics.

Just For Fun





Minneapolis Chapter Quartet Contacts

BOMP:

Mark Ortenburger..... 952.250.0968

CINEMATIX:

Steve Grady..... 952.334.7500

EAR DOCTORS & FROSTBITE

TJ Striblen 224.306.9950

HALL PASS:

Dave Casperson 651.247.6319

JUST ONE MORE:

Nate Weimer 316.204.8756

SWYPE:

Mark Bloomquist 612.325.9349
The Commodores meet
every Tuesday at 7 pm
Oak Knoll Lutheran Church
 600 Hopkins Crossroad, Minnetonka 55305

**Guests are welcome but please contact us
 in advance so we can meet you at the door**
 (Neal Mortenson nmortenson@usfamily.net)

Mark Ortenburger, Bulletin Editor
 10466 W Riverview Dr
 Eden Prairie, MN. 55347
 (952) 942-8382
 markortenburger@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Aug 11 | Como Park BBS Show
Como Park, St. Paul |
| Sep 12 | Commodores Annual Show
Minnehaha Academy |
| Oct 17 | LOL District Convention
Bloomington, MN |
| Dec 12 | Annual Holiday Show
Minnehaha Academy |

July, 2027

*Barbershop Harmony Society
 International Convention
 Minneapolis, MN*

The Chord-Inator is available on the
 Minneapolis Commodores website
commodores.groupanizer.com



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