

# Minneapolis Commodores CHORD-INATOR



OFFICIAL CHAPTER BULLETIN

September, 2025

"YOU BELONG HERE"

**VOLUME 81, #4**

The Minneapolis Commodores Present our 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Show

**CRAZY LITTLE THING CALLED LOVE**



*For the full write-up and pictures from the show please see pages 5-10.*

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**Thanks for the Pictures In This Issue***Jamye Casperson**Hardin Olson**Kaden Ofstad**Mark Ortenburger**Andy Richards**Dick Riemenschneider**Marge Riemenschneider**TJ Streblin**Bill Walkowski*

*And, an extra special thanks to Josh Lambert who provided many of the high quality pictures of our Annual Show that are included in this issue.*

***It's Great to be a Commodore!***



## Mason's Musings FROM OUR PRESIDENT



**TONY MASON**

*I'm a Fall Guy. And I mean that not in a "he's a patsy" way, but in a "Of all the seasons, I love Fall the most" way.*

*Despite the confusing continuing pumpkin spice onslaught (NO! I do not want to treat our cats to pumpkin spice scented kitty litter, thank you very much), Fall has always been my favorite time of year.*

*It's Jazz time. Apple Picking time. Football time (if you're into that sort of thing) - and almost Basketball time (I'm into that sort of thing). It's Crisp. Colorful. Calmer. And full of Commodores.*

*Annual show is just past. It was amazing. We put on a great show. It was a wonderful mix of silly and superb. There is something so beautiful about sharing the stage with a multi-generational choir full of good men bringing good joy to a good audience through good puns and great music.*

*And now Commodores Fall continues. Convention is up next. And then the Holiday show.*

*Convention will go well. We are singing smooth. We are trusting our world-class director team (Thank you, Bechard, Jamye, Paul!). We are trusting each other. Let's just do our thing!*

*And then let's see if we can get 125 or 150 men on stage for the Holiday show! If you haven't sung with us for a while, please come join us again at least for this short season. We miss you! And if you have men in your life who need what we enjoy, invite them to come be with us!*

*Peace on Earth feels like a bit of a stretch goal right now. But every week when I'm with you I find Peace on the Risers. Plenty of good will to men. I live grateful for this chance to enjoy this, my favorite time of year, with this group, my favorite group of men.*

*Thank you for letting me be a Commodore.*



## Markin' Time



Welcome to Fall. This is a special time of year for the Commodores since we get an opportunity to showcase our Annual Show. Commodores, and Quartets, and Interplanetary Visitors, oh my! Please enjoy the pictures and story from “Crazy Little Thing Called Love”. If you’re only interested in the Annual Show (hopefully not) you’ll have to do a little work since Page 1 has a teaser for the show and you then have to wait for page 5 to find the rest of the story and lots more pictures.

If you’re reading this you were successful in navigating to the Commodores website and opening the CHORD-INATOR file. We’re trying this new approach since it allows us to publish more pages along with high quality photos without running into a series of, “unable to load/file too large”, messages.

We also have something else that’s a bit of a departure from past issues or maybe it’s just a stroll down memory lane. Most of our readers will be familiar with our **Jim Richard’s** Chord Candy Tags that have been a CHORD-INATOR fixture for many years. Our Editorial Board decided that it might be nice to go back and revisit the “original” Jim Richard’s entries that enlivened these pages for so many years. As part of our historical meander we also thought it might be important to introduce, and for others reintroduce, the Barbershop fixture that was Jim.

There is no greater chronicler of the Commodores history, and Barbershop history for that matter, than **Bob Dykstra**. Since Bob was a personal friend of Jim’s we are republishing his column that he wrote to memorialize Jim’s passing in February of 2016. As with everything Bob wrote, it’s a gem and a very fitting tribute to the legacy Jim left to everyone who calls a Barbershop chapter home.

Happy reading and as always, keep those cards and letters coming in.

## The Minneapolis Commodores Celebrate their 81<sup>st</sup> Year

By Dick Riemenschneider, Blake Wanger, and Bill Albrecht

### *And What a Time It Was!*

The Minneapolis Commodores presented their 77th Annual Show (\*see note at the bottom) on September 13th, 2025 at Minnehaha Academy North Campus. 265 enthusiastic Commodores followers enjoyed the show titled “Crazy Little Thing Called Love” written by **Blake Wanger**.

The story features an extraterrestrial visitor from the Fermata Galaxy in the Chordis Minor system, Ronim, played by **Jack Dinkel**, who is visiting earth to learn about humans. Ronim chooses Percival Persnickety, played by Blake Wanger, as his Earth contact. He has all but concluded his studies of humans with the exception of one element that continues to elude his understanding; the human concept of love. Ronim is in luck however as the town he is visiting, Harmony Hills, is celebrating their annual Heartstrings Festival, a musical celebration of all types of love. The story continues as Percival, along with the chorus and quartets, explains the concept of love through their music. At shows end Ronim has an understanding of love and is ready to return home.

However, Ronim encounters a snag in his journey home when the device he uses to summon his people to retrieve him malfunctions and he is unable to establish communications with them. The device transmits four harmonic tones letting them know he’s ready to be picked up. A quartet (**BOMP**) is summoned to generate the tones. But even with perfect harmony they lack the amplitude to get the signal across the vastness of space. The chorus is pressed into service and their massed voices provide enough oomph to summon his craft. As Ronim leaves Earth he tells Percival *“May your lives always be replete with all the forms of your crazy little thing called love!”*

Chapter quartets appearing in the show, in order of appearance, included the following: **Hall Pass**, **Swype**, **Frostbite**, **Cinematix**, **Ear Doctors**, **Just One More**, and **BOMP**. Also appearing was the very large quartet **MCX**.

The featured guest quartet, **Kordal Kombat**, one of the premier quartets in the Land O’ Lakes District, contributed an outstanding performance to a highly appreciative audience.

\*The Commodores were formed in early 1944 but did not have an annual show until 1948. The early Commodores Annual Shows were a “Parade of Quartets”. Also, there was no show in 2020 because of the COVID Pandemic.

*The Minneapolis Commodores would like to thank the Show Committee*

Show Chairman	<b>Dave Casperson</b>
Logistics and Program	<b>Mark Ortenburger</b>
Marketing and Program	<b>Steve Grady</b>
Producer	<b>Morgan Baumbach</b>
Script	<b>Blake Wanger</b>
Music	<b>Jamye Casperson, Dave Bechard, Paul Wigley, Dave Casperson</b>
Special recognition	<b>Judy Olson – Emeritus Producer</b>

## Our Show Directors

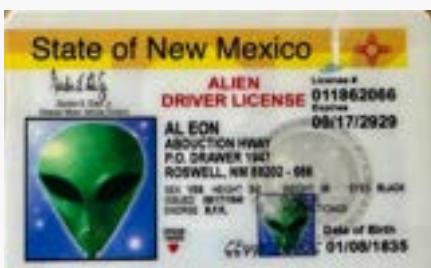


*Dave Bechard, Jamye Casperson, Paul Wigley*

Ronim and Percival Persnickety



*Jack Dinkel and Blake Wanger*



*Ronim's Intergalactic Spacecraft Operators License*

## Show Chairman



*Dave Casperson*

## Producer



*Steve Grady*

## Our MC & Scriptwriter

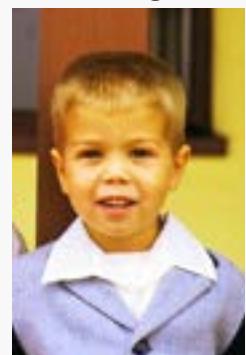


*Blake*



*Morgan Baumbach*

## Show Logistics



*Mark Ortenburger*

## Hall Pass



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

## Ear Doctors



*Oliver Nicholson, TJ Streblin,  
Morgan Baumbach, Harley Lentz*

## BOMP (The Town Fathers)



*Doctor Pepper (Mark Ortenburger),  
Principal Charming (Bill Walkowski),  
Pastor Bedtime (Dave Wall),  
Mayor Maynott (Harvey Weiss)*

## Just One More



*Matt Richards, Ben Wanggaard,  
Tony Lopakko, Nate Weimer*



## Cinematix



*Steve Grady, Tony Mason,  
Andy Richards, Scott Zoellner*

## Frostbite



*Seth Olson, Oliver Nicholson,  
Ian Witry, TJ Streblin*

## Ear Doctors and Just One More

*Oliver Nicholson, Nate Weimer,  
Tony Lapakko, TJ Streblin,  
Mason Baumbach,  
Ben Wanggaard,  
Harly Lentz, Matt Richards*



## Swype

*Ken Wentworth, Conrad Ward,  
Andy Richards, Mark Bloomquist*



## MCX



*Dave Bechard, Morgan Baumbach, Dave Casperson, Harley Lentz, Tony Mason, Oliver Nicholson, Kaden Ofstad, Andy Richards, TJ Streblin, Ben Wanggaard, Conrad Ward, Ken Wentworth*



*Director (Not so Emeritus) Paul Wigley*

*And just one more (or a few) pictures from the show.*



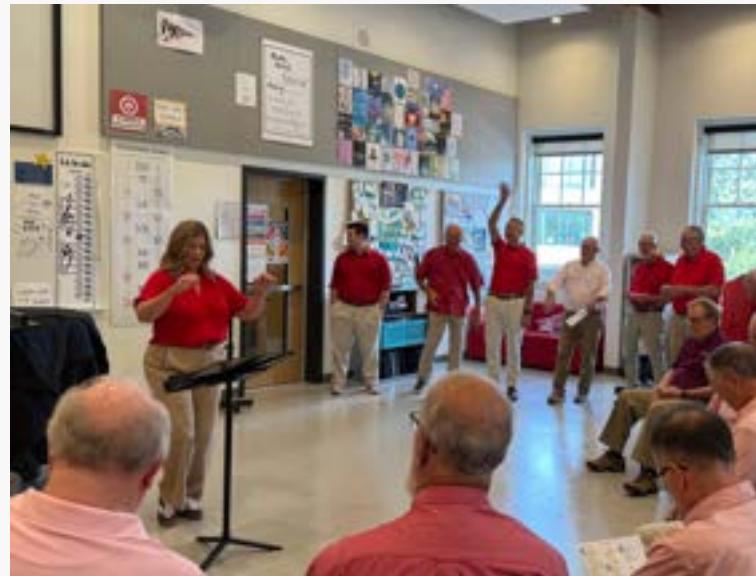
*Having conquered the  
Barbershop world Kordal  
Kombat is considering a move  
into the highly competitive world  
of Flamenco dancing - olé*



*Yes there will always be Steve  
Grady inspired "Jazz Hands" at a  
Commodore performance*



*Our finale -  
Keep the Whole World Singing*



*Dave Casperson raises his hand to  
ask for a Hall Pass during pre-show  
rehearsal*



## Director's Corner With Jamye Casperson



### ***Why Intergenerational Singing Matters***

*In a world often divided, our chorus is an example of the power behind intergenerational singing. Intergenerational singing brings together life experiences across ages, breaks down generational barriers and builds genuine (and unexpected) friendships.*

*When singers of different ages come together, something remarkable happens. The rehearsal room becomes a space where life stories are exchanged and young and old share smiles and laughter.*

*These moments often turn into mentorships, friendships, and mutual admiration. It's not just about singing—it's about growing together. A 25-year-old might learn the art of barbershop and find themselves singing a tag in the parking lot, while the seasoned singer might walk away with a shiny new rehearsal app on their phone.*

*Music has long been known to enhance cognitive function, reduce stress, and elevate mood.*

*But when generations sing together, these benefits multiply. For older adults, singing in a mixed-age chorus can combat loneliness and keep the mind sharp. For younger singers, it offers emotional grounding and a sense of belonging that's increasingly rare in today's fast-paced world.*

*Our chorus isn't just a place to sing—it's a place to belong. Singing together helps us understand and care about each other. It reminds us that while our life stages may differ, our human experiences—joy, loss, hope—are connected. A love song sung by a chorus spanning five decades of life experience carries emotional weight that no single age group could replicate alone.*

*So the next time you stand shoulder to shoulder with someone twice your age—or half it—remember: your voices are part of something bigger. By embracing intergenerational singing, we model a community that values inclusion, respect, and lifelong learning. We show that music isn't bound by age—it's what brings us all together.*

## Charting Jim Richards

By Bob Dykstra, Old Friend

I met and became good friends with Dr. Jim Richards as a result of our mutual love for Barbershop harmony. Jim and I both joined the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. in 1953. I was at Fort Riley, Kansas, at the time protecting the eastern part of the United States from Korean war planes. Jim was likely at Northwestern University earning his Ph.D in physics. Our paths crossed probably in the late 1950s when we both arrived in the Twin Cities. Jim came to begin what was to become a very productive career ... I came to finish my collegiate studies and to make the substantial fortune **John Hansen** promised me for moving up here to sing with the *Hut Four Quartet*. Jim joined the Roseville North Suburban Barbershop Chapter, I joined the Minneapolis Commodores.

We may have met at the first annual Parade of Quartets presented by the Roseville Chapter. I recently found a program from that concert held on Friday, Oct. 10, of some unknown year, at Ramsey High School. My educated guess is that it was 1958. The *Hut Four* sang on the show and the program lists Jim Richards as a member of the Roseville North Suburban Chapter. I assume he sang in the chorus but there was no mention of his being involved in any other way. He didn't perform in a quartet, didn't direct any numbers, apparently left his bass fiddle at home, and had no speaking parts in the show. I'll bet that never happened again.

So Jim and I have been fellow Barbershoppers for over sixty years and I've noted and experienced first-hand the wonderful attributes ascribed to him on social media during the past week by Barbershoppers from all



Bob Dykstra

around the world. I even learned something new. Jim was the drum major in the Pekin High School Marching Band.

Many respondents mentioned how much they appreciated Jim's mentoring qualities. Others said: Jim was a delight to be around. He exuded class and was a true gentleman. He was one of the true greats in our Society. We lost a Barbershop GIANT.

I particularly liked **Brent Gerber's** comment: "Jim was the ultimate mad scientist of Barbershop who loved to teach but was also the consummate student of his craft; always listening and taking things in."

Undergirding most of these remarks, it seems to me, is a trait that I think very accurately described Jim. He was plainly and simply ... a *giver*. He obviously received a great deal of satisfaction from ringing chords, the trademark of Barbershop harmony. He sang in a number of quartets including three that experienced the thrill of appearing on the International-competition stage.

You old-timers may remember the *Men of A-Chord*, who competed at International in 1963-64 and the *Red Barons*, who sang on the International stage in 1972 but also were crowned Land O'Lakes District Quartet Champs in 1971. His quartet experiences were highlighted, of course, by his singing bass with *Grandma's Beaus* when they were named Barbershop Harmony's 1990 International Senior Quartet Champions at the Midwinter in Tucson, Arizona.

He also has been a stalwart for decades in his beloved chapter chorus, the *Minneapolis Commodores*, during which time I doubt that he's ever missed a show or competition. In fact, according to Barbershop Harmony Society historian, **Grady Kerr**, Jim performed 12 times with the Commodores in International chorus competition.

Which reminds me of something that

was so like Jim. In 2013 the Commodores were edged out in their quest to represent the LOL District in BHS International Chorus competition to be held in Toronto. Jim very much wanted to appear on the Toronto international stage because fifty years previously he had competed on the same stage with his quartet, the *Men of A-Chord*. Jim's wish came true when good friend, **Steve Delehaney**, director of the *Westchester Chordsmen*, heard about the situation and invited Jim to sing with his chorus, which was scheduled to be the microphone tester chorus for the competition. Jim quickly accepted the kind invitation, learned his music and choreography from afar, rehearsed a few times with the Chordsmen at the international contest, and happily joined them on stage. And he did just fine!

Also, Jim obviously reveled in the camaraderie that spawns the wonderful lifelong friendships we develop in our precious hobby. But Jim more than most of us felt a real need to give back. Let me mention very quickly some of Jim's "give-backs." I'm sure I'm just scratching the surface.

He served on the faculty of Harmony College for 35 consecutive years where he taught his very popular course, "The Physics of Sound." He was heavily involved in the Society's judging program serving terms as Chairman of the Judges and as Sound Category Specialist. He served as Land O'Lakes District Secretary in 1972 and District President in 1973 and 1974. He was Minneapolis Chapter President in 1976, and International President of the Barbershop Harmony Society in 1989.

Let me also give you a few examples of the awards that were presented to Jim in recognition of his exemplary contributions. He was named District Barbershopper of the Year in 1975 and Minneapolis Chapter Barbershopper of the Year in 1978. He was inducted into the LOL District Hall of Fame in 1990 and the International Society's Hall of Fame in 2009. He

(Cont. on Page 13)

(Charting Jim Richards from Page 12)

also earned the John Foster Friendship Award from the district in 2003. (I can't imagine the size of his trophy room at home.)

If you thought Jim would rest on his laurels following such a record of achievement, you're dead wrong. He certainly could have said, "It's time for somebody else to step up", but that wasn't Jim. In recent years he maintained a very busy and productive Barbershopping schedule, only now with far less visibility and fanfare. For example, Jim served as bass-section eader, he contributed a tag to virtually every issue of the chapter's newsletter, the Chord-Inator, he served as a proofread, he was in charge of multiple mailing lists, he seldom missed a chorus rehearsal or a singout, he took charge at the chorus members' weekly afterglow at the Richfield American Legion Club, he organized the Dixieland group that appears on every Minneapolis Commodore show , and played a mean bass fiddle with the Dixiedores to boot. The Commodores will find that many things they took for granted will not get done in the immediate future because Jim and very quietly been taking care of them.

Another thankless job that Jim handled for many, many years was to teach a tag to the Friday Lunch Bunch that Meets on Thursdays (TFLBTMOT). Jim's love of singing and arranging tags has been illustrated for years by personalized license plates given to him at the 1989 Honolulu Midwinter by Hardin Olson in recognition of his ascendancy to the presidency of the Barbershop Harmony Society... TAG NE1. (Get it??). For the uninitiated, a tag in Barbershop music is analogous to a coda, the ending of a classical piece. At any rate, sometimes, perhaps often, we had difficulty with his particular Tag of the Day. You imagine the disconnect when Dr. Richards, the musicologist, was trying to explain a Chinese seventh chord to a number of musical morons like me. We soon learned not to ask Jim to explain anything unless we had a lot of time to listen. Let's just say he was quite thorough in his explanations.

We all loved and respected Jim more than words can express. To say that we'll miss him is the understatement of all understatements, although I'm sure none of us can predict at this time all of the ways that he will be missed. He was simply a giant in so many ways. Rest in peace, old friend.

## International Senior Quartet Champions

### Grandma's Beaus



# Jim Richards Chord Candy - Reprinted from May, 2014

## Chord Candy #121

by Dr. Jim Richards, *Der Tagmeister*

My music dictionary defines *Cadence* as "the conclusion of a musical thought." Cadence is a good definition of a tag!



The goal of a tag is to conclude the musical thought melodically and harmonically at the same time. Without getting technical there are some rules that apply to both melody and harmony that have provided a variety of cadences to please the ear of the listener and singer. That is why there are so many tags. Sometimes a tag arranger will deliberately provide an interesting harmonic cadence that upsets the melodic cadence. Alternatively, the melody can be concluded nicely at the expense of a legal, but unexpected harmonic cadence. In either case the result does not make musical sense, but does provide an unexpected surprise that delights many a devoted tag singer. This month's Chord Candy offering is

Jim Richards a good example of such a surprise. It starts out nicely in the key of Bb but somehow ends up on a final E-Major chord, a tri-tone (one half an octave) away from the tonic. The harmonic steps to get there are legal but the melodic cadence is destroyed. This tag is not for sissies, but it can be fun if you like surprising adventures. Moving from the last note in Measure 6 to the first note in Measure 7 the lead stays on the same note, the tenor moves up one half-step, the bari moves down one half-step, and the bass moves down one whole step. Enjoy!

### *Beautiful Day In May*

(JDR variation 5/6/14)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Oh, what a beau-ti-ful day in May. Oh, what a beau- ti-ful day!

Eb6 Gm Eb6 B7 B9-R B7 E E

## A Barbershop Trifecta?



Staff Photo

This picture accompanied Jim's Chord Candy from 2014 and is extra special since it introduces another gift that the legendary Barbershopper bestowed upon the Commodores. His son **Andy** and grandson **Matt**, were introduced to the chorus on a Tuesday night and soon became new members. It most certainly was a beautiful day in May.

Andy Richards (left) brings a quarter of a century of guitar playing and singing experience in a 60s - 80s band along with his son, Matthew (right), who brings his drum-corps skills as a Vikings' Skol Line drummer to the challenging experience of singing Barbershop as Lead and Bar, respectively, to a recent Minneapolis Chapter meeting, of course with the invitation of their Bass dad and grandfather, Jim (center). All three seem to be having a wonderful time.

# Yes You Can Get Frostbite in Denver

(TJ Streblin's narrative of his first International Convention with Frostbite)

## Frostbite

Seth Olson - Tenor

Oliver Nicholson - Lead

Ian Witry - Bass

TJ Streblin - Baritone



Hi Commodores!

I just wanted to say thank you to all of you that have sent supportive messages to me/**Oliver**/Frostbite over the past week or so and everyone that has helped us along our journey to the NextGen quartet competition. I flew back late Tuesday, sleep deprived and without much of a singing voice. I think that's indicative of a good international experience, though. I thought I'd share some stories with you if anyone is interested.

TL:DR: The International Convention in Denver was amazing. Thank you for all the support along the way. This will be far from my last time attending an international convention.

NextGen Competition. Although we didn't score quite as well as we'd hope, the NextGen Varsity Quartet Contest was a really fun time. It was cool to feel like one of the "big" quartets where we had a photoshoot ahead of time and a liaison leading us through the ready rooms before getting to the big stage. It was cool to hear **Kyle Kitzmiller** announce our quartet as representatives of the Land O' Lakes district too. The first person I saw as I walked on stage was the judge sitting right in front of me... **Tim Waurick**. That was a little intimidating.

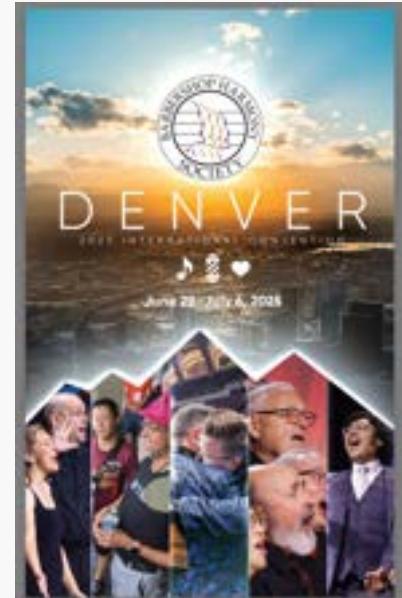
We also got to meet some of the other young, up-and-coming quartets in our contest as well. One of the other quartets we met have been singing together for 8 years! Crazy that Frostbite formed just last October. All of the NextGen Singers were super-talented and I'm sure we'll be seeing some of those quartets having a lot of success in the future.

The New Tradition Chorus. As **Paul Wigley** mentioned, I got to sing in the chorus contest as well with the **New Tradition** from Northbrook, IL. Some of you may already know this, but I grew up in Glenview, IL, the town right next to Northbrook. **Ben Brekke** (Northern Pines Brigadier) referred me to one of the leaders of the New Tradition chorus and it worked out that I could visit home during their retreat to earn my spot on the risers. And they put me in the front row! It pays to be young I guess.

I was excited to see what the prep work looked like for a chorus gearing up for the international stage. They spent quite a lot of time on how to convey the meaning of the songs through body and facial language. We also got to work with the LOL President, **Mike Lietke**. It was great to meet him. That got me excited to get going on our upcoming district convention.

The AIC Show. I have to talk about how amazing this show was. One after the other, the best sounding quartets I've ever witnessed kept coming out to best the last one. It blew my mind just how loud and resonant these quartets were. And my all-time favorite quartet, **Platinum**, got to celebrate their 25th anniversary! **Tony DeRosa's** still got it for sure. **After Hours** probably sounded the best. They are still insanely good.

Also, the biggest applause of the night was for... **Happiness Emporium**! I'm not exaggerating. As soon as they came out the crowd went wild. I already knew how much of an inspiration they were to the Twin Cities and LOL District, but the whole society was in awe of the HEQ. They even had the entire crowd rocking in their seats, laughing their head off. And the **Newfangled Four** referenced that very song in their finals set the next night! It was incredible seeing the impact that a hometown quartet can have on the entire Barbershop world.



Varsity Quartet Contest and Chorus Finalist (continued)

<b>9. Captain! Come! (AM)</b> Mike O'Connor, Taylor Broadbent, Ruth Coyle, Sue O'Rourke	<b>16. Promobile (U)</b> Seth Davis, Oliver McAllister, S. Stokes, Ian Wray
<b>10. Played the Fifth (M)</b> Shane Kestles, Laren Dryer, Ben de Doyen, Roderic Miller (Singer Nominee, Institute of Modern Culture Inc. Contest)	<b>17. Fender Bender (M)</b> Bradon Feland, Zach Hause, Holt Madsen, Carson Koch
<b>11. Redford! (M)</b> Adam Stevens, Steven Prudhal, Cresca Prudhal, Ruth Weston	<b>18. Cruise Control (M)</b> Stephens Sprecher, Eddie Carras, Kaya Reed, Sam Carras (Singer Nominee, Institute of Modern Culture Inc. Contest)
<b>12. Centrepiece (M)</b> Natalie McAllister, Karissa McAllister-King, Renee Davies, Harry Phillips	<b>19. Fresh! (M)</b> Jackson Stobbs, Jackie Stevens, Derek Miller, Zach McDowell (Contest)
<b>13. Incognito (M)</b> Dale Johnson, John Nakagawa, Steve Roberts, Ross Tressler	<b>20. Suite Life (M)</b> Ley Davis, Emily McAllister, Tara Carter, Zach Stevens (Singer Nominee, Institute of Modern Culture Inc. Contest)
<b>14. Promenade (M)</b> Jeff Hynes, Will Lynt, Harry Bell, Karen King	<b>21. Proof of Concept (M)</b> Wesley McCafferty, Wayne Rasmussen, Jefford Lutkens, Mike Lutkens (Contest)
<b>15. Trilogy (M)</b> Jason Pacholski, Bryan Barnes, Kenny Davies, Ben Anderson (Contest)	<b>22. Wox Caryl (M)</b> Directed by Steve Hobbs (Singer Nominee, Institute of Modern Culture Inc. Contest)

No results will be announced immediately following the 2024 International Contest. To download immediately, visit [Barbershop.org](http://Barbershop.org) or visit the BHS Facebook page.

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The Open Quartet Contest. So I saw some of the quarterfinals and semifinals, but I really want to talk about the finals. **Lemon Squeazy** blew my socks off. They absolutely deserved the win, and I highly recommend watching their finals set (“Popular” and “All-American Prophet Parody”) once they come out on YouTube. I told my quartet-mates I think **Victor Nillson**, the tenor or sometimes lead is probably the best singer in the whole society. Their 15 year long journey was inspiring. The hard work pays off.

All of the other quartets in the finals could have medaled too. None of them disappointed in any way. I feel spoiled to have heard so much good Barbershop and I don’t know how I’ll recover. I already can’t wait until next year.

Saturday Afterglow. After the Quartet Contest was of course the afterglow. Frostbite might have been the first ones to start singing tags as soon as we walked out of the finals. We were all hyped up off the energy of watching the new champions receive their medals. From the quartet, Oliver and I were up the latest, heading back to our Airbnb around 5:30 a.m. (when his scooter died and we had to share one for the rest of the ride – haha!).

Two really cool moments that night. Oliver and I went to Taco Bell and who walks up behind us? None other than the newly crowned third place champions, **First Take!** We asked them to sing a tag, so Oliver and I sang with their treble clef, **Tony Colosimo** and **Alex Corson**, on the tag “Like Leaves Will Fall”. They were the nicest guys and didn’t hesitate a second when we asked to sing. The other cool moment was when a tag turned into an almost one hour coaching session with the new sixth place quartet baritone, **Seth Fetzer**, from **Sunday Night Social**. Oliver and I sang, Heart of My Heart, with him and a SUN district champion, for so long just working to get some of those chords to ring as clearly as possible. They were super patient with us and showed us just how in tune seventh chords can be.

Non-Barbershop Denver. Finally, Denver was a cool city to have the competition in. The altitude was manageable for singing and it had some great hiking opportunities that we took advantage of. It’s also near where Oliver went to college, so we visited some of his old a cappella buddies and sang some tags with them too.

**Roger Ross** said this was around his 50th International Convention in a row. I know I’m riding the high right now, but I’m going to try to reach that same mark (probably won’t make it lol). I know I’m going to try and make as many as I possibly can, thought! This is definitely a life-long hobby. Thanks for listening and again thank you for all the support.

As always, it’s great to be a Commodore!



# The TE Tuner-The Swiss Army Knife of apps

by Doug Johnson



Your voice is the entire orchestra in a barbershop group. Unlike musicians with frets or keys, we rely solely on our ears and muscle memory for pitch. Achieving perfect intonation, tight harmonies, and a seamless blend is our goal.

The TonalEnergy Tuner & Metronome, also known as TE Tuner, app is a fantastic digital tool that has revolutionized the lives of vocal groups striving for that perfect sound.

TE Tuner is not just a simple pitch pipe. It's a game-changer for musicians, especially singers. Whether you're practicing solo or rehearsing with a group, TE Tuner provides visual and analytical feedback to take your performance from "okay" to "outstanding."

TE Tuner is an incredibly accurate tuner. However, its visual feedback sets it apart. You'll see a captivating "Target Tuner" display, resembling a vibrant bullseye. It often displays a "smiley face" that expands or shrinks and changes color. Green signifies perfect pitch, yellow or orange indicates slight deviations, and red indicates areas requiring improvement. For individual singers, this instant feedback eliminates the need for guessing.

But here's where it becomes exciting for barbershop groups. When your group sings a chord, the app analyzes the collective sound, allowing you and other singers to visually see how each voice contributes to the blend. It reduces guesswork by transforming abstract listening into tangible data that can be addressed and corrected. This helps your group "see" its intonation and strive for a unified, resonant sound.

Most importantly, YOU can track your pitch over time to gauge your progress and pinpoint challenging notes and phrases.

TE Tuner's exceptional chord and harmonic analysis is a valuable tool for barbershop groups. When everyone hits a chord, the app displays individual notes, their relationship to the root, and even detects subtle overtones. This is crucial for achieving that coveted "lock and ring" we strive for on every chord.

By examining the harmonic structure, you can ensure that every note within a chord is perfectly aligned. You can identify and adjust your pitch or vocal color to harmonize seamlessly. The app can even automatically determine and model justly intoned major and minor chords, allowing you to hear and replicate that pure, "beat-less" sound of a perfectly tuned harmony. This makes discussing "tuning the chord" more concrete.

The Advanced Metronome keeps everyone on the beat.

Rhythm is the foundation of any great barbershop performance. TE Tuner's advanced metronome ensures everyone is perfectly in time and internalizes tricky rhythms. Customize almost everything, including subdivisions, time signatures, and click tracks. For larger groups, it syncs with multiple devices using Ableton Link.

(Cont. on Pages 14 & 15)

The metronome anchors intricate vocal runs, complex rhythmic arrangements, and consistent grooves. Practice tough sections slowly, gradually speeding up until you internalize the music's feel. The visual display provides rhythmic backup, crucial when there's no conductor. The "Metronome Assistant" randomly silences beats, forcing you to feel the pulse.

Beyond problem-solving, TE Tuner is an excellent teacher and silent vocal coach. It offers ear training exercises and games to sharpen your ears. Interval training, pitch matching, and harmonic recognition help singers identify pitches, intervals, and chord qualities accurately. The tone generator with its instrument sounds provides precise reference pitches or drone notes for tuning.

For a barbershop group, this means your collective musicianship could improve significantly. As each individual's ears improve, singers can sight-sing new arrangements, anticipate notes in chords, and make precise real-time adjustments based on feedback. This continuous ear development is crucial for crafting organic, responsive, and truly musical performances.

### Checking Yourself Out: Recording and Playback

TE Tuner's audio and video recording capabilities are invaluable rehearsal tools. You can record entire songs, challenging sections, or single chords and instantly playback them back. This objective self-assessment can't be achieved solely by listening while singing.

Reviewing recordings helps identify issues with blend, intonation, rhythmic consistency, dynamics, and overall performance. The video feature allows you to analyze stage presence, visual cues, and body language impact. Looping sections, slowing playback, and exporting recordings for sharing make reviewing and practicing efficient. You can share problem sections or your director can annotate recordings with feedback.

### Getting Your Hands on It: Platforms and Cost

TE Tuner is easy to get on various devices:

- \* Phone or Tablet: iOS (iPhone, iPad) and Android phones and tablets.
- \* Computer: Windows PC or Mac computer.

This app can be used on phones, tablets, or computers, providing a consistent experience across platforms.



The price is a steal:

- iOS/Android: \$5.99 to \$7.99 USD for a one-time payment, giving full access to mobile devices.
- Windows/Mac: \$9.99 USD for a desktop license, activating on up to five computers.

There are a lot of apps that will do most of what TE Tuner does, but why clutter up your phone with 4 or 5 apps?

Considering the features—a world-class tuner, metronome, ear trainer, and audio and video recorder—it's an incredibly affordable and high-value tool compared to buying separate gadgets or software.

TE Tuner provides objective feedback that will help you overcome unique challenges. By improving intonation, harmony, rhythm, and ear training, this app will boost your confidence, control, and sound quality. It's a valuable investment for enhancing your musicality and overall awesomeness.

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After organizing your videos into playlists, now let's ...|

### **Become a YouTube Ninja with Keyboard Shortcuts!**

Want to navigate videos like a pro? These keyboard shortcuts will change your YouTube life:

- **Spacebar:** Pause/Play
- **Arrow Keys (Left/Right):** Move forward or backward 5 seconds.
- **J/L:** Move backward or forward 10 seconds.
- **K:** Pause/Play (same as spacebar)
- **F:** Enter/Exit ~~fullscreen~~ mode.
- **M:** Mute/Unmute
- **Up/Down Arrow Keys:** Adjust volume.
- **0 (zero):** Jump to the beginning of the video.
- **End:** Jump to the end of the video.
- **Number Keys (1-9):** Jump to a specific percentage of the video (e.g., 5 jumps to 50%).

**Pro Tip:** Check out the "Library" tab on your YouTube channel to see all your playlists in one place.

So, what are you waiting for? Start making your own unique YouTube playlists today! You'll be amazed at how much more fun and efficient your YouTube experience becomes. Happy listening (and watching)!





## Around Town

A number of Commodores made the trip to Faribault, Minnesota to sing at a National Quartet Day event. Great fun was had by all.



Elevator Music



Ad Hoc Quartet – Hall Doctors?

BOMP Quartet had a chance to participate in Sheila Cole's wonderful testimonial she gave about her husband and former member, Dan Cole. Dan was a donor to the Minnesota Lion's Vision Foundation. This wonderful organization operates through the University of Minnesota Ophthalmology & Visual Neurosciences Department.



The Commodores had a Crazy Hat Night at our regular Tuesday rehearsal. Proud winner, that's Bill Dahl on the left, narrowly beat out Jamye Casperson and Dave Bechard. Thanks to Bill Albrecht, wearing a vintage 1980's Harmony College beanie, for the fun event.



# Bill Albrecht's Craft Corner



## Diphthongs

Diphthongs occur when two vowel sounds are back-to-back.

In most cases, singers should sustain the target vowel and avoid migrating to the vanishing vowel until necessary.

Sing "home" which includes the vowel sound "o" followed by "oo."

Most people unintentionally approach the "oo" and the "m" before they should.

Unconsciously, their mouths and lips will begin to move until they pass the point of no return.

It is caused by thinking of the word "home" instead of thinking of the word "hoe."

	Target/ Sustaining <u>Vowel</u>	Diminishing/ Vanishing <u>Vowel</u>	Note the target vowel sounds are underlined.
<u>Examples</u>			
Hay, Pay, Say, Hey, Lay	A	EE	
I, I'm, Smile, Hi, Sky	ah	EE	
Oh, So, Go, Know, Home	o	oo	
Boy, Toy, Coin, Noise	o	EE	
We're, Beer, Pier, Hear	EE	ur	

In the examples below the target vowel comes after the vanishing vowel. Again the target vowel sounds are underlined.

	Diminishing/ Vanishing <u>Vowel</u>	Target/ Sustaining <u>Vowel</u>
You	EE	oo
When	oo	eh

Triphthongs occur when three vowel sounds are back-to-back-to-back. Again the target vowel sounds are underlined.

Your/You're	EE	oo	ur
Why	oo	ah	EE
Way	oo	A	EE
How	ah	O	oo



## Minneapolis Chapter Quartet Contacts

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct 10-11 LOL Fall Convention  
Minneapolis

Oct 21 Messiah Lutheran Concert  
Lakeville, MN

Dec 9 Friendship Village Concert  
Bloomington, MN

Dec 13 HOLIDAY SHOW  
Minnehaha Academy



**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](mailto:nmortenson@usfamily.net))**

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