

# River Ramblings

Editor - Jeffrey Grimmer

## The Mankato Riverblenders: Singing Valentines

From your Music VP: Although I was not at home in February I wanted to let you all know that I was still active in the Society and its activities. I have been attending the Lemon Bay Chord Company Rehearsals here in Englewood and was asked if I could sing bass for a Valentine Quartet. Of course I said yes and so we sang 8 times on Tuesday.

The one that stood out was the one we sang at the Englewood United Methodist Church before 900 people who were there to attend a Winter Concert



Series program. We sang to the woman who has organized this event for many years. She was totally surprised and loved it. It does not matter where we sing and display our craft, the reactions are very similar and we, as did you all I am sure, made many people happy, from lonely widows to young lovers and all those in between. What a great

hobby we have!! I am anxiously looking forward to rejoining you on Tuesday's as we prepare for our future sing outs and shows.

My singing day began with leaving the house around 7am after forwarding our home number to Joel Botten's cell phone. Ruth was all through with Valentines Day and resting well. Riverbend gathered at the Happy Chef, had a few quick bites of breakfast, picked up the Roses, our schedule, a few miscellaneous supplies, and with our Pilot/Driver Karl Youngblom we headed for New Ulm. Mary Pipping was surprised, courtesy of husband Dwayne, who was hiding in Georgia. The office folks working with Mary, had a happy start to their Valentines Day. Mary was smiling and happy as we left. Next was Nichole and her day care kids on Payne St, followed by Kay, at Motel 8. Coming into Motel 8, Charles got "hugged" by the young lady who was the manager. Jensen Motors staff got a surprise free bee in thanks for their past Ad sponsorship loyalty. The showroom was full of happy faces as we drove off. Next, we sang to Nancy Cramblit and her elementary class in Lake Crystal. The kids



Riverbend

were wide-eyed and Nancy was smiling. On our way into Mankato, we stopped at Hillcrest, asked Marv to stop his very "strenuous" exercise and listen to a couple Valentine songs. Next was Marlene on east Madison avenue and then another free bee for a large Hospice nursing staff at Madison East. Pathstone Nursing was next and our recipient was Vivian. We also returned to Pathstone later and sang for their Valentine program.....lots of smiling faces, as we left each time. Old Main Village was our next stop and good friend Gladys was very surprised and happy with our gift to her. Barb at Loyola received a free bee from us for always being available with her keys to the Riverblender storage room. (In the middle of the afternoon we got a call from Eric, who had overlooked Valentines Day and was trying hard to smooth things over, with fiancé Erin at Snell Motors. We saved the day for Eric. Erin was pretty happy as we left.) Cathy on Walnut Street was next and also smiling as we left.

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Next we had a couple free bees, which generated promises for the April show as well as a little YouTube video for Riverbend.

Following a coffee break at Tandem Bagels and being joined by Gents of Harmony, we were off to Olives after leaving the walls ringing. On the way to Olives, we met some ladies at City Hall and sang for "cookies". Next, Dan & Margaret were very receptive and smiling, as we left them at Olives, to enjoy their romantic Valentines dinner. Next, we were off to South Central College and a guy named Mex...Mex was a happy guy when we left. Next on the list was an appointment for Lynn, from Randy, in a "Private Room" at City Center



Riverbend

Hotel. Barb & Judy were the next two recipients at Papa George's on Riverfront Drive. Then we were off to an indoor archery range in Kasota, to sing for Kyle from a "Secret Admirer".....a little dicey for a minute or two, but he took it like a man and didn't "shoot the messengers"!!

Riverbend had an awesome day and Dwain, especially, enjoyed our first public performances.

Thanks again, to our very focused driver and front man, Karl Youngblom.....ever the gentleman and

great host.

Ron Meyer - Lead Riverbend



The "Gents of Harmony" had a super time singing Valentines this year. Since we had never sung together before we were a bit unsure what kind of sound we would have but from all indications we sounded great together. We all did our part to make the day go well. In addition to listening and doing our best to stay in tune, Harold our "front man" made sure we were singing to the right person at the right time, Joel was busy all day taking phone calls and coordinating additional



Valentines, I drove the van, Al Lee called out directions and found the quickest route to the next stop and Lenny napped in the back seat. I never realized singing tenor was so exhausting. ;-)

All of our Valentines went well but several can be highlighted. We sang for a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher in

Waseca right in the class room and her 30 plus students were really psyched up and filled with energy. Singing for my niece Amy at the Civic Center was really a treat for me. She was attending a leadership conference with several hundred other Mayo employees and executives and was called to the front of the room as we were escorted in. Amy appeared some

what shocked at the time but her mother sent a note saying she really enjoyed it and has received many positive comments from coworkers. I guess the Mayo execs all know who Amy is now! One of our last stops was really special because it was for a special friend of Joel's. I'll let him pass on the details but I can say the love light was definitely glowing.

We also passed out over a hundred Disney show cards and found them to be really well received. Great songs, great friends, and great weather all came together for another excellent Barbershop kind of day. I can't wait for next year!

Thom Schubbe - "The Gents of Harmony"



MAGIC - Singing Valentines



Rural Free Delivery (RFD) would like to thank driver Ron Larson and Front Man/Photographer Dean Kluge for their time and talents used during our tour of Singing Valentines. We as always, had a fabulous time performing for over 20 different groups during the day. The joy and happiness that we brought to so many people makes everything worthwhile. We look forward to a 2013 repeat!!

We would also like to thank Tim Schubbe for filling in for Chuck Brooks while he was enjoying warmer weather in Florida. He did an outstanding job singing the bass and was able to sing to his



R  
F  
D

sister and his daughter. Steve Pettis, our new tenor, also did a fantastic job and had a great time! He was also able to sing for his daughter and her classmates.

RFD also had a performance at the grand opening ceremonies of the Mapleton Community Centers new \$3,000,000.00 Assisted Living Center. There was a large crowd that showed up to view the apartments and lounge areas. We wish to thank the Mapleton community for their generous applause and warm welcome.

Jeff Grimmer  
Lead RFD



*The Riverblenders would like to thank Sandy Allen, Joel Botten, Ruth Meyer and all of the front men and drivers for helping with the Singing Valentines Project.*

*MAGIC - Don Miller & Bailey Blethen*

*Gents of Harmony - Harold Rodning*

*RFD - Dean Kluge & Ron Larson*

*Riverbend - Karl Youngblom*

*Soul Purpose - Ron Conrad*



Soul Purpose-with Willy Derner as Lead and Arv Zenk as Tenor



Breakfast Meeting and Warm up at Happy Chef North



## Mankato Riverblenders, Sweet Adelines say 'I love you' in song

By Grace Webb

The four men show up at the office around lunch hour. They're all wearing matching outfits: white and red striped vests over white dress shirts with bright red ties. They ignore the quizzical looks from the other office workers as they make their way to one woman's cubicle.

They're used to people's stares. When the quartet reaches its destination, they spread out into a semi-circle, surrounding a woman who is understandably confused. Her eyes dart from one man to the next as she tries to figure out what is going on. Her confusion melts into delight — mixed with a little bit of bashfulness — as the men begin to sing:

"Let me call you sweetheart — I'm in love with you. Let me hear you whisper that you love me too. Keep the love-light glowing in your eyes so true. Let me call you sweetheart — I'm in love with you."

Doug Peterson, interim director of the Mankato Riverblenders, steps forward and hands the woman a red rose. He explains her husband bought her a Valentine-gram as a special surprise.

### Something for everyone

The Mankato Riverblenders is one chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society, a singing association that has 373 chapters in 12 nations. The Mankato chapter was formed in 1973 and has placed well in both national and international contests over the years. But more importantly, the

Riverblenders value the opportunity to serve the community. Valentine-grams help achieve that goal.

"Every group that's done it has oodles of stories of how it's impacted them and others," Peterson said.

The Riverblenders have been offering Valentine-grams for years and the singing specials are very popular. Peterson said the Riverblenders perform about 80-130 Valentine-grams every year, making the songs their second-biggest fundraiser.

Typically, a quartet of singers from the barbershop group will serenade the lucky recipient with either "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" or "Heart of My Heart." The recipient will also receive a rose and a note card with a poem, in addition to a picture with the singers.

Peterson said the Riverblenders have serenaded people at work, at home, in factories, in nursing homes, in stores and even on a radio broadcast over a CV radio when a wife wanted to send a Valentine-gram to her trucker husband.

"We sing for people," Peterson said. "We want to entertain them and we want to make it fun. And we want it to be fun not only for the audience but for the singers."

"You get all sorts of reactions," added Jeff Grismet, marketing and public relations vice president and one of the founders of the Mankato chapter of singers.

The Mankato Riverblenders aren't the only southern Minnesota group that offers Valentine-grams. The Minnesota Valley Sweet Adelines, the Riverblenders' female coun-

The Riverblenders are pictured with Janice Lundquist, the recipient of a Valentine-gram submitted photo



## Singing Valentines Local Coverage

In case you didn't know - The Mankato Free Press puts out a monthly magazine which is free if you are a subscriber or it's only \$19.95 for a 12 month subscription.

This page contains part of the February issue which contains an article written by Grace Webb, a contributing writer for the magazine. The article focuses on the Singing Valentines programs that both the Mankato Riverblender and the Minnesota Valley Sweet Adelines perform every February 14th.

Doug Peterson and I met with Grace one morning at a local restaurant and went over the history, goals, and successes of the Riverblenders since its inception in 1973. She took a plethora of notes, and as you can see, she did an outstanding job. We sincerely thank her and the Mankato Free Press for such a fabulous article and for their support of non-profit organizations in Mankato and surrounding communities. Again our thanks to:

**Mankato Magazine/The Free Press**

(use of the article was granted by the Mankato Magazine/The Free Press)



Besides singing, the Sweet Adelines offer their Valentine-gram recipients a rose, a hand-crafted card (created by one of the group members), a picture and sometimes a bonus CD with tracks of the group's barbershop-style songs submitted photo

terparts, also deliver these romantic musical messages.

### A feminine touch

Mankato's chapter of Sweet Adelines International has been performing since 1973. Like the Riverblenders, this all-female singing group offers Valentine-grams. In fact, the Sweet Adelines and Riverblenders will sometimes collaborate if one group can't make an appointment or if the customer prefers a specific gender of singing group.

For the Sweet Adelines, Valentine-grams have been a staple of their group since the late 1970s or early '80s. Public relations coordinator Ellen Grubbs estimated the group performs between 35-60 Valentine-grams a year.

Grubbs said the Sweet Adelines have performed at many seasonal venues, from local food restaurants to the Weller State quarry (singers were required to wear safety goggles and hard hats), and even for a farmer as he milked cows in his dairy barn.

"It's a good memory for them," Grubbs said.

The women performing in the quartet wear matching outfits, usually red shirts and black dress pants, along with festive red lipstick. Besides singing, the Sweet Adelines offer their recipients a rose, a hand-crafted Valentine's Day card (created by one of the group members), a picture and

sometimes a bonus CD with tracks of the group's barbershop-style songs.

"Just about everybody in our chorus participates in some way," Grubbs said, explaining that some of the women will sing, others will prepare the flowers and still others will deliver.

In addition to Valentine-grams, Grubbs said the Sweet Adelines began offering Photo-grams last year to people who weren't in the Southern Minnesota area. While they have had requests, Grubbs said personal Valentine-grams are still much more popular.

"Most people like having the [singers] come in person," she said.

Readers can purchase singing Valentines from the Riverblenders by calling 507-934-2371 or from the Sweet Adelines by calling 507-368-6148.

The Riverblenders perform about 8-130 Valentine-grams every year, making the songs their second-biggest fundraiser submitted photo



# Comments from the President

A lot of what is on my mind right now is centered on the great time had by all of us on February 14th. What a day! Right now, Stan is kicking-up his activity, getting ready to host the Contest officials. Stan is a great man for the P/R job he does so well. Arv is also doing a great job prepping for the March 31st event in Nicollet. More of our weekly focus is now on the contest. Pete Benson will be coaching us on March 13th..**MARK YOUR CALENDAR.** Jeff is getting final details lined-up for our April 14th show. Be sure you have your show attire ready. Thom & Tim are keeping Willie busy, building show props. Ad sales are picking up pace..the deadline is approaching fast. Please review your Contest and Show music to give our best to our fans. Please give me your Award of Harmony nomination. Exciting times to be a Riverblender! Even more exciting times to be your President! Thank you, for the opportunity.

President

Ron Meyer

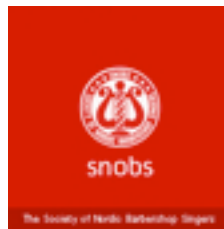


## Combining Norwegian History and Barbershopping

Joel Botten

In August of this year, the national Norwegian Gudbrandsdalslag (club) is conducting a tour to Norway. As a club member, I am going to enjoy a conducted tour of the country and to help celebrate the Battle of Kringen. As history has recorded, a company of Scottish mercenary soldiers were attacked and defeated by a group of peasants from the valley of my Botten ancestors.

They were on their way to help the Swedes fight the Norwegians. Their leader was Sinclair of Scotland who was killed in the battle. Sinclair family members of present day Scotland will come to Norway to help celebrate their ancestor's demise. (Yes, they are the family of Knights Templar fame.) The festival will last 4 days and includes a soccer game between Scotland and Norway, speeches, banquets, site tours and, I expect, a few samples of Aquavit (Norwegian vodka). I will be staying for an extra 10 days to travel to places missed on previous



trips and also to visit relatives. I am hoping to visit one of the SNOB chapters some evening. I am sure it would be a great experience. Do you know about our fellow Scandinavian Barbershoppers?

SNOBS - The Society of Nordic Barbershop Singers - is a Nordic organization whose purpose is to spread, develop and preserve the barbershop music style within choruses and quartets in the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Iceland and Sweden. It is a common organ to coordinate male barbershop singers to spread, develop and preserve the barbershop music style. SNOBS was

founded in 1980, and has ever since been developing barbershop music in the Nordic countries. They have annual contests similar to ours. You can find the complete background to the forming of SNOBS and read their history on their website. <http://www.snoobs.org/default.php?>



## Unfortunately - Back to the Drawing Board

Dear Bruce and the good men of the Mankato Riverblenders,

It is with greatest regret that I must inform you that I will be unable to take the helm of the chorus at this time. As you know, I have a 17-yr-old daughter, Hannah, who is a junior in high school. My decision to move to Minnesota was based on the agreement I worked out with my ex-husband that he would live with her and assume guardianship until she graduates next spring. However, last week, he was told by his employer that he was being promoted and must relocate to Birmingham, Alabama by June 1st. I love and respect my daughter enough to not force her to uproot her life by moving either to Minnesota or Alabama before her last year of high school. We have spent the past few days trying to work out some way for her to remain here, but there just isn't anyone we feel confident leaving her with for such an extended period of time.

I am so very, very sorry, for your sake as much as for mine. You are a great chapter and a fine chorus, and I was so looking forward to the opportunity to work with you towards even better singing AND having more fun. I'm sure you understand, however, that my daughter has to come first for the next year or so.

I will be in the Cities for my son's college graduation Mother's Day weekend, and if at all possible, I will remain a few extra days so I can visit your rehearsal on May 15th. (Maybe they'll even let me have a little face time to lead you in a polecat or one of your repertoire pieces! :) ) My thoughts and best wishes will be with you always as you keep Mankato singing.

With warmest regards,

Anita

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing!"

## 2012 "Disney" Show



**Only 6 weeks to go!!! Thank you for your time and effort!!**

Jeff Grimmer - 2012 Show & Ad Chairman

## Poem By "Marv"

### A Card Game

*Marvin Ostrom*

At birth our unique life talents were set,  
Thus kind of what you see is what you get.

We're dealt a hand from a major deck,  
There freely ours so what the heck.

Yet we might be held responsible,  
One never knows, but it's possible.

On occasion it occurs where judgment's involved.  
Better play the right card less an opportunity dissolved.

The card we play, a decision wrong or right,  
Could cure a sore problem or present a plight.  
So it's important when we play, we've selected the right card,  
Yours is very important, so be on your guard.

Land O'Lakes Southwest & 10,000 Lakes Divisions

Spring Contest Schedule

Nicollet High School - Nicollet, MN

Saturday, March 31, 2012

Sat - March 31,

7:30-1:00 - Ticket and Information desk Lobby

7:30-2:30 - Food and Beverages available - Lunchroom

8:00-9:30 - Stage open for Inspection\* - Theater

9:30-10:00 - C/A stage check - Theater

10:30-12:00 - Chorus Contest - Theater

12:00-12:45 - Lunch - Lunchroom

12:00-12:40 - Presidents' Luncheon - TBD -

12:45-2:15 - Quartet and VLQ Contest - Theater

2:30-2:45 - Contest Finale - Awards - Theater

3:00-5:30 Chorus and Quartet Evaluations - Classrooms

4:00-8:00 Afterglow - Mankato - Loose Moose

\*Stop by the Information Desk to reserve time for a stage check.

REGISTER NOW FOR A GREAT WEEKEND!

Just go on-line (<https://ebiz.barbershop.org>) and click on Contest Entry

Deadline for your CJ-20 is February 28th

### Calendar

#### \*March 3, 2012 - Saturday

Quartet School

Faribault

#### \*March 6, 2012 - Tuesday

Loyola High School

Regular Practice - 7 PM

#### March 11, 2012 - Sunday

Daylight Savings Time Begins

#### \*\*March 13, 2012 - Tuesday

Loyola High School

Board Meeting - 6 PM

Regular Practice - 7 PM

#### **PETE BENSON - COACHING**

#### March 17, 2011 - Saturday

Saint Patrick's Day

#### \*March 20, 2011 - Tuesday

1st Day of Spring

Loyola High School

Show Committee Meeting - 6 PM

Regular Practice - 7 PM

#### \*March 27, 2011 - Tuesday

Loyola High School

Regular Practice - 7 PM

#### \*March 31, 2012 - Saturday

Southwest/10,000 Lakes

Division Contest

Nicollet, MN

#### April 8, 2012 - Sunday

Easter Sunday

#### \*April 13, 2012

Dress Rehearsal

Crossview Covenant Church

#### \*April 14, 2012 - Saturday

Annual Shows

Crossview Covenant Church

2 & 7 p.m

#### Summer Churches

Start thinking about them

### Items of Interest

Stan Bruss has rebuild the ramp to make it lighter and stronger - Thanks Stan

Chuck Schubbe's new email address:

[chuckschubbe@gmail.com](mailto:chuckschubbe@gmail.com)

## Land O' Lakes Southwest & 10,000 Lakes Division Contests

The Mankato Riverblenders are hosting the 2012 Southwest Division and 10,000 Lakes Division Chorus, Quartet, and VLQ competitions on Saturday, March 31st, at Nicollet High School. It's a great time to learn more about our craft and spend some time with fellow barber shoppers from other chapters. This year we are expecting well over 300 barber shoppers representing 20 chapters from Southern Minnesota and Western Wisconsin – it should be a great weekend of music and fun.

We're trying something different this year to provide a more enjoyable contest and save on housing and transportation costs for everyone. Both the chorus and quartet contests will be held on one day. We tried this last year with the Southwest Division Contest and had favorable feedback from nearly everyone. The chorus contest will be held in the morning followed by a lunch break. Quartets compete in the afternoon with a much larger audience followed by just one awards ceremony and evaluations begin immediately following the contest. The Riverblenders will again compete to defend our title as Division Champions and everyone in the chorus will again pitch in to host this event. Riverblenders have a well-deserved reputation for providing congenial hosts and wonderful accommodations for these contests. Activities begin early in the morning with coffee and pastries available from Nicollet High School Youth and they will also be serving lunch between contests. The school provides great space for us and it's all on one level for easy access. After the contest and evaluations, the singing and fun continues – join the Riverblenders, the VLQs and top quartets for an afterglow with great food and beverages at the Loose Moose in Mankato.

The contest committee has been planning this event for some time and they want everyone to have a great time. Special thanks to committee members Jeff Grimmer, Stan Bruss, Ron Meyer, and Steve Pettis – and thanks to every Riverblender helping make this another memorable weekend.

Arv Zenk

2012 Spring Contest Chairman



### 2012 Southwest/10,000 Lakes *Barbershop Singing* Division Contests

#### WHAT:

**Southwest & 10,000 Lakes Division  
Chorus, VLQ, & Quartet Contests**

#### WHERE:

Nicollet High School  
1 Pine St.  
Nicollet, Minnesota

#### WHEN:

March 31, 2011

Public is welcome to attend  
Tickets for all events \$15.00 open seating

#### Chorus

	<u>Members</u>
H-046 St. Croix Valley	45
H-014 Minneapolis	80
H-076 Bloomington	22
H-073 Greater St. Paul	25
H-082 Polk County	22
H-092 Rochester	24
H-047 Mankato	33
H-015 Albert Lea	30
H-062 Faribault	20
H-032 LaCrosse	25

#### VLQ's

H-082 Polk County VLQ	12
H-014 Minneapolis VLQ	9
H-047 Mankato VLQ	11

#### Quartets

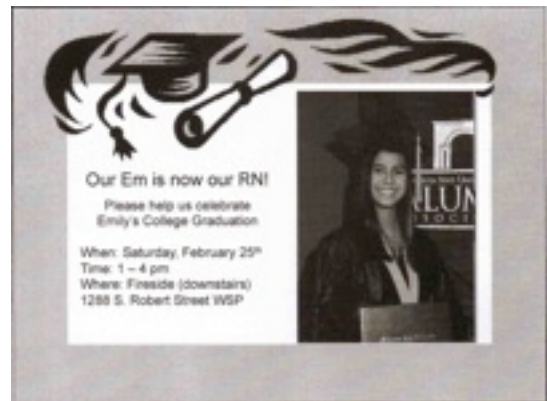
Grand Design  
Note'orious  
Name – TBD  
Clipp-Tones  
Turning Point  
Vocal Express  
Easy Listenin'  
Bottom Line



# Chorus Communications

Dear Emily,  
The Mankato Area "Riverblenders" wish to congratulate you on your passing of the National Board Exams for Nursing. We know how much time you spent studying for them! We kind of feel like we also passed them, as we were with you many nights as you listened to us rehearse and were studying all the time

**Congratulations!!**



## Singing Valentines Notes

Thank You! You guys did an awesome job - my hubby was very embarrassed! - Krista

Dear Riverblenders Chorus of Mankato,  
Thank you for visiting my husband on Valentines.

Despite my not so subtle hints, he was surprised and touched by your visit, congratulating him on the news of our family - soon to include twin boys!

It was a fun way to celebrate this news & Valentines Day. I would do this again & recommend it to my friends.

Sincerely ,  
Angela

Jeff,

I really wasn't looking forward to Valentine's Day. Then you and the other Really Fine Dudes showed up at my office. I certainly wasn't expecting that! The smiles, harmony, and hugs gave my heart a big lift. It was like there was magic in the music. Thank you very much for thinking of me and bringing The Dudes with you to sing. My day became much brighter!

Hugs,  
Jill



"I SING" buttons were recently purchased by the chorus, and the board is now trying to figure out exactly how to use them. Please let the board know your thoughts.



## "American Harmony" movie to be released for individual chapter promotion

Get ready to rent a big pop-corn machine, because beginning September 6, your chapter can sponsor a showing of "American Harmony", raising awareness of barbershop in your community, and perhaps some money too.

### "Four Wall Release" Public Screenings

Learn more about the Four Wall Release for American Harmony (PDF file)

Distributor Breaking Glass Pictures is offering a sale on the DVD! The retail price has been lowered from 24.99 to 19.99, and they are offering a five dollar additional discount for any purchase that is made. The discount code is promocode fans1 during checkout at the website [shop.breakingglasspictures.com](http://shop.breakingglasspictures.com) to receive this additional discount.

