

# River Ramblings

*Editor - Jeffrey Grimmer*

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## Holiday Harmony 2013



The Combined Choruses at Church of St. Peter Catholic Church

December 1, 2013, a day to remember. This was the day of the 3rd gathering of the Minnesota Valley Sweet Adeline Chorus and the Mankato Riverblenders Chorus, to sing at 2 different venues, a Holiday Harmony Program. The first performance was at Christ The King Lutheran Church in Mankato and the second was at Church of St. Peter Catholic Church. The main focus of this years performances was the celebration of the holiday season and to support the local food shelves.

Joel Botten was selected to be the leader of a great committee made up of Sweet Adelines and Barbershoppers. This group volunteered to do the various tasks necessary for the benefit of the performance. Boy did they do a great job! There are to many people to mention, but we want to send out a resounding THANK YOU for all of the work that they did.

We do want to send out a special thank you to Carol Grimmer, Patti Dykema, and Jacob Ritter for getting the choruses honed into a fine singing machine. We also want to thank all of the singers that made up the entire lot, for without them this would not have taken place.

Several comments from Joel and Stan that were heard by the public are listed on page 2 and page 3.

## Holiday Harmony Concert a Success

The Mankato Riverblenders and the Minnesota Valley Chorus of Sweet Adelines opened the holiday season with an enthusiastically received concert of seasonal music on December 1, 2013. About 500 guests packed Christ the King Lutheran Church and nearly 300 enjoyed the narrated concert at the Catholic Church of St. Peter.

At Christ the King, 64 pounds of food was donated for the Food Shelf and a similar amount was collected for the St. Peter shelf.

A between-concerts dinner for singing participants, their families and friends yielded a donation of \$400 for youth projects at Christ the King.

Thanks to all Blenders who sold tickets and planned and promoted the concert in any way. Remember, President Ron Meyer, declared 10,000 bonus bucks for all who met a quota of 10 tickets sold. Big thanks to all leaders, chairs and planning committee members from both choruses who did their respective jobs in supreme fashion. The result was a very successful contribution to the culture of our community. In particular, thanks to our director, Jacob Ritter who "polished us up" during a busy and demanding schedule. Carol Grimmer and Patti Dykema readied the Adelines and how good it was to have Carol at the helm after her illness.

Big thanks to the following spouses and significant others who welcomed our guests and sold and collected tickets: Dorothy Gage, Dorothy Redding, Kathy Bruss, Margaret Frazee, Edna Hawbaker and John Hall.  
Joel Botten

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As the "riser guy" I was very pleased with the response to help with the riser details. From Loyola to Christ the King, to St. Peter and back to Loyola, it was great to have so many guys helping. If I listed all their names, I know I would miss somebody, but at least 9 guys responded to my call for help, and more than that showed up to help. Thank you very much!! Our next adventure you ask - "Youth in Harmony" in early February. Don't forget to get your extra Blender Bucks!! All of the comments I've heard at my church were very very good and many hope we can do it again.

Thanks again

Stan Bruss - House Manager

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Last eve as the Spirit Singers Choir at St. John the Baptist Catholic, was assembling, our director Kim Rotchadl, asked me how our show went, and before I could answer, Jeannie Makela ( the accompanist we gave our award to this spring), [standing right there beside me], spoke right up telling Kim what a wonderful performance it was. So with a big smile on my face, I put my hand on Jeannie's shoulder and told Kim, " Well, I'm sure your never going to find a better ( i.e. more qualified) endorsement than that one!

I heard more great comments today, about our show, and one suggestion, which I thought was really good, ( because I'd had the same idea but failed to mention it to Jacob and all in charge). I'll paraphrase --- " It would have been nice to finish with inviting all to sing along with us on - something like -- JOY TO THE WORLD "

Jim Mongeau

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A very inspiring concert! Thank you! Keep America Singing, Mankato too.

Peg Bindner

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Our friends thought the program was outstanding; the music was well chosen, and the overall length of the program was just right.

Kelly Gage

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And BRAVO for the concert last night. Such beautiful harmonies, and it moved along so smoothly that I could not believe that it was over so quickly.

Thank you for using your talents in such a meaningful way . . .

Janet

## Holiday Harmony Comments Continued

A comment heard in St Peter: Ronda....."Silent Night really touched my heart."

A New Ulm visitor at CTK: Leroy...."I loved your performance today and I'm so glad we get your promotional emails."

CTK attendee: "I'm looking forward to your Christmas show next year."

CTK attendee: "You guys are just the greatest!"

Ron Meyer

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Midmorning on Monday, Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>, my wife Joyce was following two ladies on the walking track at the local YMCA. The first lady raved about the Sunday afternoon performance at Christ the King and told the second lady that it was a grand, grand way to start the Christmas season.

The Bethlehem Lutheran Choir director, Laurie Rossow, stopped rehearsal midstream and admonished the members to go to next year's concert because she enjoyed this years so much. She emphasized the enjoyable blend of sacred and secular music.

Later, my next door neighbor, who attended without my knowing, called over to me and praised the concert saying she is going to go out of her way to see next year's concert!

Great affirmations!

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Roger Kamrath

Friends of ours enjoyed the performance so much at Christ The King, they came back for more at St. Peter. They kept saying what a great way to start off the Christmas season.

We also had relatives from Texas join us and they enjoyed it so much. They are going through some personal tragedies and said that Sunday evening was just what they needed at that time.

Dwain Frazee

It was a thrilling experience for me to be in front of a large, mixed ensemble again. It has been years since I have had that opportunity and I relished it. I await our next collaboration with the Sweet Adelines with great anticipation. Did someone say "Mozart Requiem"?

Also, two pieces of music struck me profoundly during the concert: Mary Had a Baby and The Candlelight Carol. Both pieces were so unique to our style, but we handled them with great musicality and quality. So many beautiful chords...and to get to sing them in such lovely venues only added to the experience. Thank you for making me a part of this!

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Jacob

I just wanted to let you know how fun it was to do this concert with the Riverblenders! It is great to be able to sing with you and at such a wonderful time of the year. My husband said that he wouldn't have minded the concert being another 1/2 hour long! thanks again for all your work. Have a Blessed Holiday Season!

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**Our annual Youth In Harmony Festival will take place on February 8, 2013.**

**Please make plans to attend some or all of the event.**

As in the past (currently), we will need a group of Riverblenders to help the boys choir. We really want the boys to sing by themselves, but if the numbers are down we may have to help out. Please remember that if you do not rehearse for this and do not know the music you cannot sing with the boys chorus on the afternoon show.

We will be needing people to help with hauling and the setting up of the risers, greeting folks at the afternoon show, general crowd control thru out the day (keeping a eye on our guests), and helping out with whatever else comes up.

Our main man from the Riverblenders is Dwain Frazee. If you have any questions, please ask Dwain and he will have or seek out an answer.

Thank you ahead of time for generous donation of time and effort regarding this so important event.

Jeff Grimmer



## Riverblenders Salvation Army - Bell Ringing

This holiday season, the Mankato Riverblenders Chorus supported the local Salvation Armies Kettle Program by ringing the bell. We sang at Cub Food East on the 3rd, HyVee East on the 10th, and Cub Food West on December 17th. The

chorus really enjoys getting out into the community and supporting many different venus of non-profit organizations.

We have been doing this for the Salvation Army as long as I can remember. It is very rewarding to our members, to see the monies donated by our local residents and to think of all of the help that it will bring to the needy in our local communities. We look forward to continuing this volunteer work for as long as we are around.

Our thanks go out to the local Cub and HyVee stores for allowing us to sing inside their businesses while singing and supporting the Salvation Army.

We would also like to thank Bruce Gray for lining up the performances, all of the members that took their time to come and sing, and to Doug Peterson and Jacob Ritter for directing us at these performances.



Top to bottom - Cub Foods East, HyVee East, and Cub Foods West





## *Christ The King Performance*



Many rehearsal were needed to hone our songs



Warm ups before the first performance



Our local TV station KEYC  
tapes a news presentation with  
Mary Lou Kudela and Joel Botten



A few guys relaxing before the  
big performance



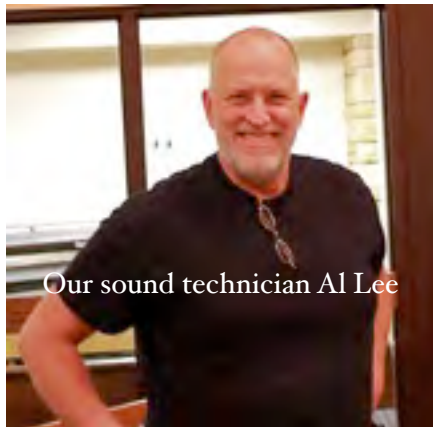
Patti Dykema warms up the  
Sweet Adelines

After months of rehearsing and attending meetings, things finally started to come together. A lot of hard work, some fun moments, and some trying times were involved in getting us to the proper place at the proper time.

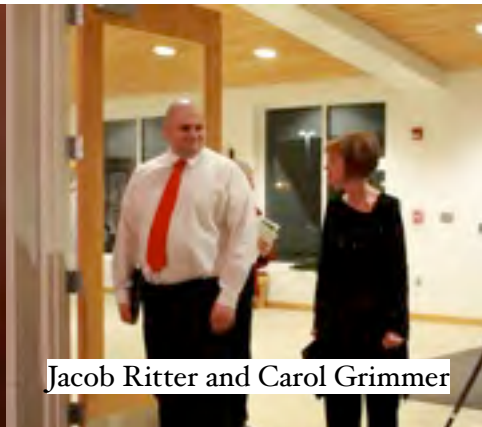
We also had a great deal of help from many people at the churches we performed at and we want to thank them for their help and for letting us use their facilities. Christ The King Church actually went out and got their Christmas Trees early, so we could have them for the concert.



## *Christ The King Performance*



Our sound technician Al Lee



Jacob Ritter and Carol Grimmer



Accompanist -  
Christine Schulz



Photo - j grimmer



MC Arvid Zenk



Sunday Punch



Fourtuosity



# Meal At Christ The King



The meal at Christ The King was served by a Youth Group from the church to raise funds. for youth activities



# *Church of St. Peter Catholic Church*





# Did Someone Say AFTERGLOW!!



# REMEMBERING RIP KIRBY

I regret that I can't be with all of you today to celebrate the life of my close friend Rip Kirby. My thoughts today are with Rip's family.

Rip was one of the most thoughtful and talented people I knew. Rip and I spent many hours together, both singing and playing music. I first met him while playing gigs while in college at MSU. At that time he was playing with the “Ernie Coopman” Old Time Band and I was playing with “Marv Tenhoff” Dance Band.

We also discovered that singing was fun! We formed a barbershop quartet, called it “The Jones Boys”. Norm Erickson and Jim Manahan joined us. Jim didn't last long so Ron Steinberg joined us for a while until Bruce Gray came along. We needed outfits, so we went to Kato Engineering where we knew Cecil Jones. We asked him if he would sponsor us, he did, and that's where we got the name and he bought us our first outfits.

We wanted to compete in the LO'L District Contest so we had to join the Minnetonka Chapter to be eligible. At competition, we discovered that we couldn't use the name “Jones”. So, on the spot, we changed the name to “Joan's” Boys. Tenor Norm Erickson's wife's first name was Joan.... We made the cut at competition, so we had to sing two more songs. The problem with that was, we didn't have two more songs to sing... Oh well!!

We then changed our name to “The Jefferson Lords”. The reason being that we had learned a song by that name and thought it was a good one.

Soon after that, we thought that a chorus would be great for the Mankato area. Yes, the Mankato “Riverblenders” were chartered and still exist today.

Still changing, Warren Hettinga joined the quartet as the new lead. Yes, we changed our name again to “The Saturday Review”. About the same time Norm decided to move to Prior Lake, so we needed a tenor. Eddie Wirtz from Waseca joined us.

We competed several times, sang several chapter shows around the area and met more wonderful people. It wasn't long before Warren and Eddie joined another quartet and we were joined by Steve Hardy and Richard Treptow. Another name change - “The Ring Of Gold” was formed. After several competitions and many chapter shows we called it quits.

Rip was always the center of attention on stage, cracking jokes and singing a wonderful bass part. Everyone knew Rip. The “The Ring Of Gold” won the coveted Land O' Lakes District Championship medal and we went on to represent the Land O' Lakes District at International Competitions five times.

Rip and I lost touch for a while. During that period of time I was approached by the district to think about the judging. So I attended Category School and became a certified judge. Twenty years later, after scoring at least 2,000 quartets and 1,500 choruses, I hung up my badge.

At the end of my judging life, I knew of a Dixie Land Band that had started to play. Yes, the “Blue Ox Jazz Band” was brought back to life. You got it!! Rip was at the center of this rebirth. I listened and watched as they regrouped. They had great leadership with Lowell and Ted Schreyer, Hal Nelson, Jim Johnson, and Karl Kittelson. Every once in a while I got a chance to sit in. Rip was always a favorite to listen to as well as his impromptu comments.

Well, so much for my ramblings.. He was a good friend, a good musician, and I will miss him greatly.

I'm missing playing today with the “Blue Ox”. Hey gang, how about playing one of Rip's favorites - like “In The Garden”. Be sure it's his tempo!! Hope to see you all right here at the “Pub” on Christmas Eve Day. Don't fail to miss it!!

**Barry Clapper**



**Celebration of Life - Rip Kirby**  
**Pub "500"**  
**November 30, 2013**



Ken Schreyer



On Saturday November 30, 2013 a large group of Rip and music lovers got together at Pub "500" in Mankato to celebrate Rip Kirby's life. As you can see, from the letter from his good friend Barry Clapper, Rip was heavily involved with music in and around Mankato for many years.

The "Blue Ox Jazz Band" played for many hours and our very own "MAGIC" quartet sang a few songs for Rip and the crowd.

Ken Schreyer read the letter from Barry to the crowd of Rip fans and several Riverblender members showed up to send Rip off to the choir and Jazz Band in the sky.

We wish all the best to Rips family and we that knew him, will miss him!



Bud Grant ????

THE RING OF GOLD  
 SATURDAY REVIEW  
 JEFFERSON LORDS  
 JOAN'S BOYS  
 THE JONES BOYS

## *Benedictine Living Community*



On Sunday December 8th the Riverblenders and Sweet Ads performed at Benedictine Living community in St. Peter. Each group sang two programs and the residents and their guests enjoyed a Christmas party. We enjoyed ourselves by singing for residents in two of the four areas of the facility.

For many years we have provided music for the Benedictine as they graciously hosted us.

A great Sunday afternoon.

Nice job Riverblenders!

Bruce Gray



**Have a great Holiday Vacation!!**

## Calendar

### **\*January 3-4, 2014 - Fri/Sat**

2012 - LO'L Leadership Training Academy - Lakes Chord College

UW River Falls-River Falls, WI

Contact Tim Schubbe

### **January 7, 2014 - Tuesday**

Loyola High School

Contest Meeting 6:30 PM

Regular Practice - 7 PM

### **\*January 14, 2014 - Tuesday**

Loyola High School

Board Meeting - 6 PM

Regular Practice - 7 PM

### **January 21, 2014 - Tuesday**

Loyola High School

Regular Practice - 7 PM

### **January 28, 2014 - Tuesday**

Loyola High School

Regular Practice - 7 PM

### **\*February 8, 2014 - Tuesday**

Youth In Harmony Festival

with Minnesota Valley Sweet Adelines

Crossview Covenant Church

See poster on Page 14

### **\*February 14, 2014 - Friday**

Singing Valentines

### **\*March 31, 2014 - Saturday**

Southwest/10,000 Lakes

Division Contest

Hosted By - Mankato, MN

Nicollet High School

### **\*April 26, 2014 - Saturday**

Annual Show:

Quartets:

"Kordal Kombat"

2013 LO'L District Champs

"Gay 90's"

Crossview Covenant Church

LO'L Humor Champs every year!



Remember the pictures in the October River Ramblings? - here are the names of the individuals pointed out in that issue. How many did you get correct?

1. Rose Hettinga
2. Warren Hettinga
3. Rod Johnson
4. Jim Foy
5. Don Hettinga
6. Bob Fricke
7. Dave Wahl
8. Gary Rogness
9. Emily Glenna
10. Ed Wirtz
11. Jim Barloom
12. Glen Arenson
13. Dave Sylte
14. Susan Schubbe
15. Marty Monson
16. Brent Gerber
17. Bob Dowma
18. John Plazek
19. Carol Grimmer
20. Bruce Odell
21. Bob Dykstra
22. Jim Richards
23. Derek Glenna
24. Matt Hall
25. Jim Hall
26. Duane Hutton
27. Joe Lyles
28. Mrs. Joe Liles
29. Peter Benson
30. Brent Graham
31. Charlie Redmond

*Happy New Year!*

Gentlemen,

Christmas is upon us and we need to start thinking of Singing Valentines. Any quartet, or anyone desiring to form or be in a quartet to deliver the singing valentines, should contact me as soon as possible, so we can get this show rolling.

Riverbend will participate, if we can get a bass for the day. Charlie will be gone during Valentines, so we are looking for someone to fill in for him. This is the only quartet that I know of that will be singing. We have on average about 80 requests for our singing valentines, so we would like to get as many quartets to go out and deliver these songs as we can get.

If you have never participated in Sing Valentines, it is such a great experience. To see the look of surprise and, yes, tears at times is all one needs to feel the joy that a spouse or relative has given. So gentlemen, please consider joining in on the fun and thank you in advance for all the support.

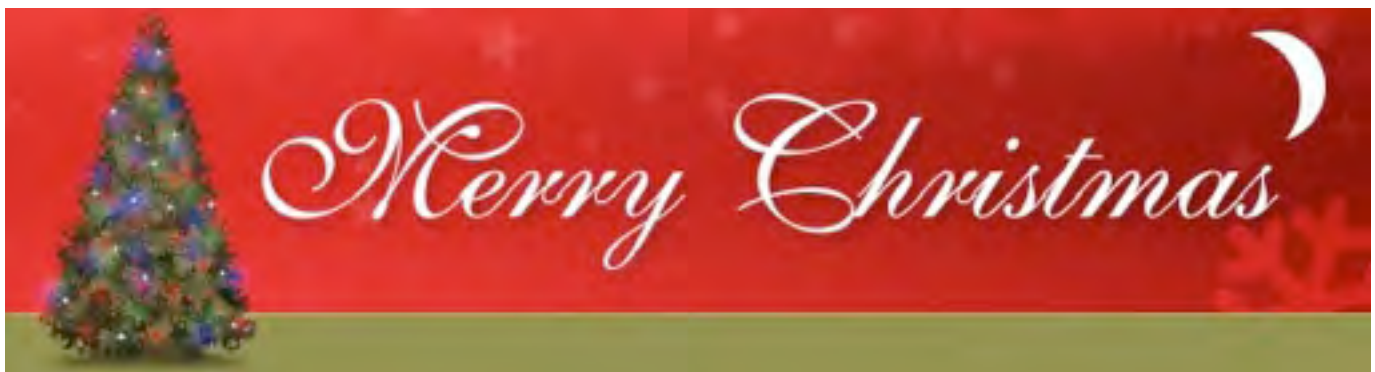
Dwain Frazee

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**A Story About Hittite Ole Olson**

Ole Olson is on his deathbed and knows the end is near. He is with his nurse, his wife, his daughter and 2 sons. "So," Ole says to them, "My oldest son Sven, I want you to take the Minnetonka houses; daughter Helga, take the apartments over in Edina; son Lars, I want you to take the offices over on Hennepin; and Lena, my dear wife, please take all the residential buildings downtown."

The nurse is just blown away by all this, and as Ole slips away, she says, "Mrs. Olson, your husband must have been such a hardworking man to have accumulated all this property."

Lena replies, "Property?..... no he yust had a paper route!



## A Few Words From 2013 President Ron Meyer

Guys:

I asked Jeff to hold the presses, so I could wax eloquent for a few lines, at this, the end of my two year presidency of the Mankato Riverblenders.

Near the later part of 2011, Frank Selvey asked me a time of two about the possibility of being your President. My first thought was that Frank was desperate and just looking for a "warm body" and maybe he was. I never asked. The more I seriously considered the request, the more I really began to appreciate what a great organization we are.

When I went to the 1st Leadership Academy, all my suspicions were confirmed. In the 40 years this chapter has been in existence, there have been some pretty amazing accomplishments. In the last few years, the Harmony Society has established measuring methods to actually give recognition to great chapters like the Mankato Riverblenders.

From the accomplishments of all the past and present members, has evolved, a truly great Barbershop Chapter that we can all be very proud of. The Mankato Riverblenders can take pride in who they are and to the great contributions the chapter has made to all the folks in the area.

My thanks to Bailey and all the others who gave me their wisdom these past two years. I'm honored to have been your President.

Ron Meyer

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L-R Loyola Choir Director Bridget Hermer,  
Father Schneider,  
2014 President Arvid Zenk,  
and 2013 President Ron Meyer



L-R Chorus Manager Stan Bruss,  
Pastor John Peterson, Mr. Christmas Tree,  
2014 President Arvid Zenk,  
and 2013 President Ron Meyer

On December 20th, a delegation from the Mankato Riverblenders, consisting of 2013 President Ron Meyer, 2014 President Arv Zenk, Chorus Manager Stan Bruss, and Photographer Jeff Grimmer, visited our 2 rehearsal locations to pay our annual rentals and to also donate some extra funds. It was determined by the board, that since we had such a good year, we should spread the joy around, and the suggestion to help support the people that support us was a great idea and was quickly approved.

We wish to thank the people at these institutions for their support of the Riverblenders and for all of the help that they have given us this and over the past years. It is because of their hospitality, generosity, and everyday help that we can relax and enjoy their facilities. Please accept a heartfelt **“THANK YOU”** from the entire Riverblenders membership! We look forward to working with you in the years to come.





BARBERSHOP  
HARMONY  
SOCIETY

LA CROSSE  
COULEE  
CHORDSMEN

P. O. BOX 902 • LA CROSSE, WI • 54602-0902 • 608-780 SING (7464) • H-032

November 30, 21013

Ronald Meyer  
1530 N 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Mankato, MN 56001

Dear Ronald,

I am writing to express our appreciation to the Mankato Riverblenders for assisting La Crosse during the LOL Fall District Contests. Of the 39 sections of risers required, yours were critical for the completion of the 3 contest sites and the YIH rehearsal hall.

As we waited to go on stage Saturday morning we can attest to the fact that Mankato opened the contest with a high quality performance. Again, thank you for contributing to this District Event.

Looking forward to see you all in 2014.

Singingly yours,

*Dale Montgomery*  
Dale Montgomery, Chairman  
La Crosse LOL 2013 Fall Convention and Contest

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**2014 - Southwest and 10,000 Lakes Divisional Contest**

Hi Guys,

I Think we've all talked on the phone, but I just wanted to follow up to make sure it's on your calendar. I've got a new planning document from Del Ryberg and will make the necessary copies of applicable "to do" lists for each of us. I know Stan won't be available for this meeting, but we can fill him in when he returns.

Check your calendars before the meeting because I'd like to plan a quick trip out to Nicollet High School that first full week in January. There are some new folks who will be helping us out and we just need to get to know them and to familiarize ourselves with the facility, layout, and equipment.

Thanks for helping out. It's always been a rather fun project and I hope you'll have a good time doing this one again.

Merry Christmas!

Arv

## Youth In Harmony 2014

### *YOUTH IN HARMONY FESTIVAL*

*GRADES 9-12*



**Saturday, February 8, 2014**

Crossview Covenant Church  
2000 Howard Drive  
North Mankato, MN

8:30 AM - 3:45 PM

4:00 PM - Concert - open to public

#### **Clinicians:**

Director - Minnesota Valley Sweet Adelines Chorus  
Carol Grimmer  
(Plus Quartets)

Director - Mankato "Riverblenders" Chorus  
Jacob Ritter  
(Plus Quartets)

**Registration Fee: \$5.00**

Sponsored by the Minnesota Valley Sweet Adelines and Mankato Riverblenders



"This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund"

