

arts and entertainment

Chord Motor Co. hums to district barbershop win



Members of the Chord Motor Co. pose with the first place trophy for barbershop quartets which they won at the Central States District competition in Kansas City. This is the first time a Lincoln quartet has won the award since 1949. Members are, clockwise from lower left, Al Dittmer, Dale Comer, Lance Powell and Dale Heiliger.

By Kent Warneke

Dale Heiliger is a communications representative with the Lincoln Telephone and Telegraph Co.

Al Dittmer is the Ombudsman for the University of Nebraska and has a doctorate in English Linguistics.

Dale Comer practices law in Omaha.

Lance Powell is a UNL law student.

When these four individuals are put together, the Chord Motor Co. is formed, a Lincoln-based barbershop quartet which last weekend won first place as the best quartet in the Central States District Barbershop Quartet and Chorus Competition. The district includes five states.

The Chord Motor Co. was formed only ten months ago at a Lincoln Chapter meeting of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. The national group commemorated its 40th anniversary at the district contest in Kansas City.

"The name of the Lincoln chapter is the Lincoln Continentals and we wanted to keep with the automobile type of name," Dittmer said. "One day I was talking to my kids and after throwing out the name Spare Parts, they suggested Chord Motor Co."

Lincoln has not won the quartet competition at the contest since 1949, when the Keymasters won the title. Dale Heiliger, tenor in the Chord Motor Co., sang bass for the Keymasters. According to Dittmer, this year's competition was "very tough, as usual."

"In the fall of every year, there is the district contest, where an average of 30 quartets compete and the top 3 qualify for the next contest in the spring," Dittmer said. "The spring contest will be full of district winners and runners-up and the top three placers there will qualify for the international contest held every year over the 4th of July weekend in Minneapolis."

"The competition at the International contest, which is composed of districts throughout the United States and Canada,

will be very stiff. I think we've got a good chance to qualify for that tournament, but not near as good of a chance to win it," Dittmer said.

The district contest is a two-round event. All 30 quartets perform in the morning. The top 10 qualifiers perform once again in the evening before a public audience. The 13 international judges select the winners.

"You have to sing songs that are between 2 to 4 minutes long and they have to be songs that are strictly four-part barbershop harmony melodies," Dittmer said.

The quartet sang two up tunes, "Ma, She's Making Eyes at Me" and "Suzy's Fella," an automobile tune, "Get Out and Get Under," and the 1940's ballad "No One To Cry To."

Although the SPEBSQSA puts restrictions on what type of songs to sing, strictly in the barbershop sense, when quartets put on shows for general audiences, they do have some variations, like four part harmony or some pop tunes," Dittmer said.

And this four part harmony, so popular in the 1950s with the Four Lads and the Four Aces, is again rising in popularity.

"I feel that barbershop music is alive and well in this part of the country," Dittmer said. "Our Lincoln chapter has 85 members and we usually have about 200,000 men at our international conventions."

"In fact, the four members of the Chord Motor Co., met at a chapter meeting, and now we've even got coaches from Iowa and Kansas to help us," he said. "Coaches can help you with stage presence, understanding of the music and the balancing of the harmony that the members of the group can't learn by themselves."

"There are so many great things about singing barbershop music, the chord structures, the unique close harmony, the ability to blend well, but most of all it's just really fun to sing."

Friend beaned by the drink of doom

By Ben T. Shomshor

As I wandered about Love Library the other day, I noticed a morose, black-garbed figure huddled on the floor in a corner. It was my old friend Ivan Turgenev.

On first glance he looked alright. Though his gaunt frame, sallow complexion, deep hollows beneath the eyes and general evidence of dissipation suggested normal health and spirits, I sensed he was in anguish.

notes from table 8

Approaching, I called out, "Turgenev, my old colleague. What troubles you so?"

As he raised his head, a faint glimmer of recognition and hope crept into his eyes.

"Alas, friend Shomshor. I am doomed, smitten by my own foolishness."

Fearing that he had preregistered for Psych 170, I urged him to continue.

"Well, as you know, for weeks I have done nothing but labor at my first published masterpiece, *The Social Implications of Vaseline Allotments Appearing on the Manifests of the Berlin Airlift*. I have taken time to feed neither body nor soul, breaking only to walk to the gaming tables. It was all going so well, so beautiful, until . . ."

Here he broke off, his body wracked with the cough of consumption. I imagined an incipient death rattle forming in his throat. ". . . until I lifted to my lips that accused draught of vending machine coffee."

Upon hearing this, my soul shuddered with a revulsion born of pity. The man may just as well have admitted to being a leper.

I walked away, leaving him to face the fateful doom which his act had sealed. He had brought it upon himself; there was nothing my meager talents could do for him.

Returning to my own work, I wondered: Turgenev was a man of the world. He had been on campus even longer than myself. How could he not have known better?

From the earliest times, coffee has been associated with wits and scholars. The Arabian discoverers of the noble bean recognized its invaluable effect on the mental faculties. Supporters of the Boston Tea Party created an entire nation of coffee drinkers in the new world almost

over night. The French Revolution was brewed in Parisian coffee houses. *Ausgleich*, which transformed the Austrian Empire, was not a creature of wine, but of *Kaffee mit schlag* and Sachertorte.

While students realize the vital role of coffee in their endeavors, they are apparently drinking the wrong type, resulting in essays not of wit and brilliance, but of stultifying turgidity.

Virtually all of the mass market coffees sold in this country are made primarily with the inferior *Coffea robusta* bean. While cheaper to grow than the prized *Coffea arabica*, it lacks mild subtleties of scent and flavor. It is worth your while (and extra pennies) to search out the specialty coffee made exclusively of *arabica*.

The Mill, 427 S. 13th St., carries the largest and best selection of coffee beans in Lincoln. If you do not choose to grind the beans yourself, store employees are happy to grind them for you. Buy only as much as you foresee using in the near future. Once ground, coffee beans can lose their flavor quickly. If possible, store your coffee in the freezer.

Once you choose a coffee merchant, you will have to decide which coffee you want. The merchant should be very helpful on such matters. Coffee is classed in two ways. The degree of roasting refers to how dark or light the coffee has been roasted. As a general rule, the darker the roast, the darker, (or stronger) the flavor is. Italian roasts are so dark they have a slightly burnt taste.

Secondly, coffee is classified by the location at which it was grown. Like wine, the effect of climate and soil affects the taste of coffee.

When you have purchased your coffee, select a method of brewing suited to bring out the best possible taste. There are worse ways of making coffee than the electric percolator, but you rarely see them.

The perfume filling the room when perking coffee is like incense to the gods. It is also flavor escaping from your drink. Why not invest in a drip coffee maker. They have been used in Europe for centuries and have earned the highest acclaim. The one-piece Chemex drip pots are my favorites, but something else may be more suitable to your needs.

Finally, the scions of pop culture tells us that coffee is chic this year. (Apparently, they thought it had been out of fashion.) Perrier water is also chic, but who can afford to pay \$1 and up to drink French club soda. So save your money, and dazzle your guests with a decent cup of coffee.

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