

Gray Matters

Official Publication Of The Association Of International Seniors Quartet Champions

June 2004



Ed Wirtz Jr
Tenor

Bruce Odell
Lead

Gary Rogness
Bass

Richard Treptow
Bari

Downstate Express

2004 International Seniors Quartet Champions

Downstate Express, representing the Land O' Lakes District, became the 2004 International Seniors Quartet Champions at the Biloxi Mid-Winter convention. Having sung together for two decades, the guys are veterans of the contest stage.

The quartet name, comes from the fact that its members are spread out all across southern Minnesota in the cities of Winona, Rochester, Waseca, and Minneapolis. Formed early in 1982, they won the Land O' Lakes District Quartet Championship on their first attempt. The quartet also represented LOL in international competition three times before disbanding in 1985, due largely to the 450 man-miles required for each rehearsal. After an eleven-year hiatus, they regrouped in 1996 and once again earned the honor of representing LOL in International competition! Ironically, the quartet man-mileage for rehearsals is now even greater than it was before! Go figure!?!?!?

Ed Wirtz, tenor, has two District Quartet Championships to his credit. Ed is a past chorus director of the Waseca chapter, is a current member of the Mankato Riverblenders, and competed with them in International chorus competition. There is absolutely nothing funny that can be said about Ed. He is an Engineering Director for a large electronics manufacturing company and has routinely made business trips to the Orient.

Bruce Odell, lead, has sung in several very popular show quartets, including the Mistersippis, the Road Runners, and saving his best for last, the Downstate Express! Bruce has served as chorus director for the Winona chapter, and also has directed the Winona Sweet Adelines to a regional championship. Professionally, Bruce has progressed through a number of high level jobs, recently having arrived at the pinnacle of his career as a part-time janitor at the local YMCA.

The quartet's stonefaced Norwegian bass singer is **Gary Rogness**, who hails from Rochester, MN. Unlike the other guys in the quartet, who can all boast of experience in several high ranking quartets, Gary is lucky to be singing in any quartet at all. Gary has problems with some of the quartet's repertoire and occasionally digs in his heels and refuses to sing some songs altogether. The guys have found it extremely difficult to sing down to Gary's level, but reluctantly admit that he is very gifted on the pitchpipe. Professionally, Gary is in the insurance and securities industry.

Bari **Richard Treptow** lives in Indianapolis. He joined the quartet in early 1997, after a three-year stint with the popular show quartet, Imagination. Richard is an experienced quartet man, and has three District Quartet Championships to his credit, as well as having sung with the International Champion Quartet, Happiness Emporium. Richard is a certified judge, and is currently the Society's new Presentation Category Specialist. Despite his credentials, the quartet has put him on temporary probation until he proves he can really sing baritone. Richard is a Senior Financial Advisor for H. J. Umbaugh & Associates.



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