



## The MVEer Monthly

August, 2016

### August begins push to District and (that's right, Virginia) Christmas!

**Aug 1 2016 - 7:15pm** [REHEARSAL & Pickup Quartet contest/Social night](#)

Aug 8 2016 - 7:15pm [REHEARSAL](#)

Aug 9 2016 - 7:00pm [Board Meeting](#)

**Aug 14 2016 - 8:30am** [St Luke's church service](#)

Aug 15 2016 - 7:15pm [REHEARSAL](#)

Aug 22 2016 - 7:15pm [REHEARSAL](#)

Aug 29 2016 - 7:15pm [REHEARSAL](#)

Sep 12 2016 - 7:15pm [REHEARSAL](#)

Note: No Labor Day Practice

### Midwest Vocal Express in Nashville by Dick Marcus

The **Midwest Vocal Express** (MVE) was proud to represent the **Land O' Lakes District** at the Barbershop Harmony Society International Chorus and Quartet Contest. We had 46 on stage, with one-fourth of them first timers to the international stage.

We had three practice times before the contest. On the first night, we received tokens from Westminster Chorus, which were appropriately enough for Nashville guitar picks with their logo on it with either the words **Carpe Diem** (seize the day) or **Be Astonishing**, the first was a phrase from their 2015 winning song and the second was from their swan song, respectively. The second practice featured jointly performing our set before **Central Standard** and the **Sound of Illinois Chorus**, and they performed their sets for us as well. The three choruses have been linked since 2013, when the three choruses all travelled together to Kansas City, then Bloomington, IL, and then to Greendale, WI for our *Best of Three Worlds Tour*. Performing before knowledgeable barbershoppers, who all want to improve in singing, performing, and moving audiences, was wonderful.

On Friday, the chorus was 14<sup>th</sup> in a group of 28 choruses to perform. We sang beautifully on our ballad, *A Whole New World*, earned the best singing scores we've had in some time. The up-tune was a roaring success with the audience. All choruses seemed to improve this year and we surely did in singing scores and crowd reaction. The MVE did not go for the highly costumed look of the past, but dressed all in black, until a moment in our up-tune *Good Times Medley* when we suddenly transitioned into more sparkly colorful neckwear.



Our chorus director **Josh Umhoefer** (starting his 6<sup>th</sup> year as director) and others in **Midnight Croon** sang beautifully in the in Quartet Contest. We were able to coordinate the chorus and quartet contest well. We would like to thank all of our families, friends, fans, and the supportive LOL District for their continuing backing of our efforts to follow our motto: *Storytelling Through Song*.

(Editor's Note: This article also appeared in the *Pitch Piper*).

**First Timers to the International Stage** - A whopping 1/4<sup>th</sup> of our singers had their "first time" experience in Nashville. Most are pictured here:



*Top Row L-R:* Nick Ganswindt, Steve Christianson, Tom Rogina, Stephen Vandenberg, and John Purvis.

*Middle Row L-R:* Robb Theil, Nate Peplinski, John Donehower, and Smyte Smithlin.

*Front Row L-T:* Jim Vandenberg, Brian Lynch, and Brian Plehn.

## Photos in and around Nashville



Signs in the  
Bridgestone Arena →

“On the rocks, with my friend Jack Daniels,” says Matt McClellan on a day trip to the distillery.



← practicing in Nashville.

↓ Our Ready Room just before performance time.

4 Dudes, on the road to Nashville ↓





More Tweets & Photos:



The MVE Fills the International Stage!





## Why I am MVE by Dick Marcus

We often highlight new members in our newsletter, but I was recently asked to say something about how and why I became a member of our great **Barbershop Harmony Society**. The story behind it has some happy and sad elements, but it is my story.

About 15 to 16 years ago, I did some soul searching of what would happen to me after my wife, who had a progressive form of MS, would not be around. I had sung in my church choir as a youth and sometimes sang in my various church choirs thereafter, but I was in band in high school and played clarinet in the **Michigan Marching Band** in college. Indeed, I got to play in the January 1972 Rose Bowl (Michigan lost to Stanford ☹). When I thought about it, I just loved being a part of the band – the rigorous practice, the performances, the applause, and the friendships. But being in my forties at the time, I couldn't quite picture myself joining a marching band.

Singing seemed to me to be the reasonable alternative. I started weekly private singing lessons with **Valerie Errante** at UWM for several months. She told me of a new men's chorus and brand new teacher coming to UWM, **Dr. Chris Peterson**, who would lead a UWM men's glee club, called the **Men of Song**. She thought I might like it. As a UWM teacher myself, I had no difficulty auditioning and then signing up for Chris' group, singing baritone. I did that for two semesters. But in the spring semester, Chris started telling me about the guys in Greendale. You were preparing for a trip to Portland. But when you got back, I joined the MVE. Russ Foris was our conductor.

My first International experience was our trip to Montreal with our **Green Army Set**. We came in 5<sup>th</sup> place and won a bronze medal. I just loved it. For fourteen years or so, I have come to see you guys as my extended family.

On April 7<sup>th</sup> this year, my wife (Kandy) didn't wake up. That night, we had a money-making eating-out event at the **Texas Roadhouse**. *Should I go to that event?* Of course I should, and did. Everyone started hugging me, saying how much they cared for Kandy, just like family members would and should. The next day, April 8<sup>th</sup>, we had a singing performance at Port Washington High School called **Acapocalypse**. *Should I go to that performance?* Of course I should, and did.

I knew long ago that my time with Kandy would not last my lifetime. I knew that I needed more life-long friends. And, when Kandy's funeral came, three rows of the church were packed with my friends from the MVE to sing and to share this time with me. That is why I am MVE.

More Pictures from Nashville – The stage, just before the MVE entered.



Across the street from our Holiday Inn Express, was a fine arts museum called the Frist Center for the Visual Arts. These flowers were in front. It had Italian motor cars and paintings. Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7G1ygg3sk>



Thumb's up.

Nate Peplinski touring Nashville.



Josh Umhoefer and Mike Lietke's post-performance interview on camera.



Besides the cars at the *Frist Center for the Visual Arts* there were paintings by Inka Essenhigh.

Here is a video on her work:

<http://fristcenter.org/calendar/detail/inka-essenhigh-between-worlds>



### **August 1, Pick Up Quartet Night** by Jim Franklin

On our August 1<sup>st</sup> Monday Rehearsal, we have a pick up quartet night. We'll sing **Santa Medley** (please revisit and learn, Candy canes for anyone who is off paper), form quartets with interested members (Derek, you're singing Tenor!) and adjourn across the parking lot to **Panther Pub** (5651 Broad Street, just across the parking lot between the Broad Street shops and St. Luke's) for a social night and quartet contest.

On **Groupanizer**, there is only one Christmas song, which is **Santa Medley**, 'cause Santa Claus is coming tonight -- or in December!



## Midnight Croon in Nashville and Quartet News – Dick Marcus

Our own quartet, **Midnight Croon**, of **Cody Whitlock**, **Tim Zielke**, **Josh Umhoefer**, and **Jake Umhoefer** sang magnificently in Nashville. We all cheered them on calling Croon, Croon, Croooooooooooooooooon!



**Byran Ziegler** (pictured far right below), our MVE alumnus, sang with **After Hours**. Bryan's quartet came in 6<sup>th</sup> in Nashville. Congratulations, After Hours!

