



The MVEer Monthly

January, 2016

Incoming President Steve Johnson – Installation Banquet Address, 1/8/16

Fifteen years ago I stood before you as the incoming President of the MVE. I look forward to serving as your President again.

Over the last 2 years Jim has guided a board that has seen us scratching to have money to being in the black. Though we need more funds to keep coming in, the success of the Christmas Show and other fundraisers has put a good amount of money in our pockets for the beginning of the year.

We have been seeing many new faces over the last few years. The new blood in our chorus is great. We have seen some previous members return to the ranks as well.

Musically we have continued to improve the caliber of our singing and performance and have added new genres of music style to our repertoire. The new songs that we will put on our show for the spring will add to that. We enjoy singing together and performing together. That's what this hobby is all about.

We've been adding some new singing experiences over the last few years, Scott Walker, Marquette Basketball, VA Hospital, Ronald McDonald House, representing the LOL District at a Youth In Harmony Festival at convention and singing around Greendale just to name a few.

I, as President can only lead and encourage, I can not magically make these things and new things happen. My goals for this year are simple.....

1. I am going to keep encouraging the music team to pursue excellence. Not just in singing but in having us sing various genres of music. They seem to be doing this, and I promise I don't want them to stop. Also keep adding to our performance package.
2. I am going to encourage our marketing team to keep coming up with ways to bring more money into the chorus, be it through easy fundraisers or more performance opportunities, some paid, some not paid. We need to get our name out in the Milwaukee area. I still



believe we are one of Milwaukee's Best Kept Secrets, and that, friends, isn't a good thing.

3. I am going to encourage our membership team to keep working at bringing in new members, reach out to old members and invite them back and retain our current members. Growth in membership is extremely important. More members means better musical balance, more fellowship and new audience members, just to name a few reasons.

None of the 3 things above can be done without you. You, as members of the MVE must work at singing better and understand how to sing the different genres. You must participate with fundraisers and singing at performances. You must help bring in new members. Invite friends, look for singers and talk to them.

Finally my last goal is to have each and every one of you do 1 thing other than sing with the chorus. Volunteer to be on a committee, volunteer to help set up, tear down, sell tickets and promote the MVE. We are going to see changes in the administration of the MVE. We will be looking for a new ticket chairman. Our show chairman for the last few years has stepped down. I know from experience as a show chairman for many years just how much work is put into it and how much the chairman relies on the membership to help out in many ways.

On Groupanizer we have 51 members. Of those 51, 9 are currently inactive for various reasons. That leaves 42 active members (including our director). There are more than 42 things that need to be done by somebody each year. Think about how you can help out the MVE and volunteer.

The future of the MVE is positive. We are a leader in the LO'L, not just in singing but in chorus activities. I don't know how many years in row, but it has been multiple years that we have lead the district in points for activities done as a chapter. It has been interesting these past years a judge. I've heard from judges and audiences alike all over the United States and Canada that admire our chorus, have fond memories of our performances and were so happy to see us back on the International Stage this past summer.

Let's continue this upward climb to success. Thank you,
Steve Johnson



Past President Jim Schmidt's Address – Installation Banquet

It's hard to believe that two years have come and gone since I became the Chapter President. When I took over, I had two main goals in mind. First, I wanted to get us back on track financially by looking at all of our expenses and making cuts where we could, reestablishing a yearly approved budget, and also looking at our income streams to see if there were any areas where we could improve our revenue.



On the expense side, we made changes to our banking practices and other items that didn't need to have including changing our phone number over to one that cost us no money to have. As far as revenue, we needed to bring in as much money as possible in a short amount of time to keep the Chapter solvent, so we embarked on our campaign to trying as many different fundraising efforts as we could to see what worked for us and what didn't. Yes, I know that we probably overloaded the members with ways to generate income, plus there was a lot of discussion regarding having each member responsible for bringing in an additional \$200 in revenue per year through a variety of ways. We discussed a practice done by many Chapters of handing each member 10 tickets for each show that they would be required to pay for whether they sold them or not. In the end, I believe we made the right decision to make the \$200 a year additional income per member requirement an expectation of each member and not one that is mandatory. We will now have some well-timed and spaced apart dinner nights along with two successful raffles, one that runs for the NFL football season and one for the college March Madness basketball tournament as our main fundraisers to supplement our show revenues.

A huge "Thank You," goes out to all of our members for their willingness to try new things over the past two years. In addition to that, we have made a push for more ticket sales to our shows to boost profits, and especially over the last year, the membership has responded at a higher level, including a nice push for the Christmas Shows that we just put on. Thanks to everyone, our Board and Chapter members, which have worked so hard over the past two years.

We started out in January of 2014 with around two thousand in the bank, enough to keep the doors open for two months. Contrast that with January 2016, in which we have a strong balance of twelve thousand to begin our year. We also went from having no approved budget to creating a basic one for 2014 and now for 2016, we have a fairly complete approved budget to help guide the Board through the coming year. Thanks to all of the VP's for their good stewardship of the funds we have to work with. In 2015, we budgeted \$42,300 and expenses of \$42,045, but we took in \$44,869 (about \$2,500 more) and spent \$38,763 (or \$4,000 less).

Now onto a major change regarding our shows, I have taken a look at them to see what kind of revenue they create for the Chapter each year. It was very obvious to me and the members of the Board that our Spring Shows have been barely breaking even over the past few years. In addition to that, a number of members have mentioned over the past few years that they could like to see more of the MVE on our shows and less from outside groups. I had made it clear to the Show Committee for the Spring of 2016 that I wanted to see a \$3,000 profit from that show. There was much discussion on how that could be accomplished using the current method and format of doing our shows. The Show Committee was tasked with putting together some proposals for the Spring Show, including if we would still do two shows or go to just one. When you have doing something the same way for such a long time, making a drastic change will always cause questions and concerns from some, but the financial health of the Chapter must always be in our thoughts when making these decisions. In the end, the committee provided their vision for a new format to generate a profit for the Chapter and the Board voted to make the change. The result is the Dinner Show planned for April, which will feature all MVE talent in one show with a small maximum number of tickets to be sold.

My other major goal was to get more of our members involved in running of our Chapter by working with the VP's and different committees to help spread the work load. That has been a lot slower in getting off the ground, but in 2015 things finally started to happen. The best evidence I can point to is the number of members that stepped up to the plate as part of the Show Committee this year. I'd love to see this continue in all of the areas we need help. Please take some time to think about it and offer a hand to the membership or marketing teams if you can this year. It will help make our Chapter even more successful in the future.

It was great to back on the International Stage this past year and to continue our return to the top this coming July. Never underestimate the power of our music and the live we touch. With our performances, whether on the International Stage or in an intimate setting such as the Ronald McDonald House where we created a small escape for a family grieving that day.



From one of our International fans here is a statement I found on Facebook after the Chorus order of appearance case out for Nashville: *"I wonder what #13 [Midwest Vocal Express](#) will dress up as next year? They've been toy soldiers, aquarium fish, Olympic synchronized swimmers, etc., but this year was their most amazing costumes yet: they dressed up as an ordinary non-comedic Barbershop Chorus and were astoundingly convincing at it! How will they top that next year!?"*



Your Chapter Officers for 2016 are:

Steve Johnson - President
Jim Schmidt - Immediate Past President
Jim Ansay - Secretary
Bob Bartkowiak - Treasurer
Jim Franklin - Music VP
Jake Umhoefer - Marketing VP
Derek Balke - Membership VP
Clint Dodds - Member At Large
Tom Weber - Member At Large
Cody Whitlock - Member At Large

Your Award Winners at the January 8, 2016 Banquet:

Jake Umhoefer - Barbershopper of the Year (BOTY)
Cody Whitlock - Rookie of the Year
Laura Bartkowiak and **Sarah Nagel** - Volunteers of the Year
Bob Bartkowiak - The President's Award
Jim Ansay - The Do It Award
Bret Kelso - The Director's Award



Congratulations to the Bartkowiak Family: Bob with the **President's Award** and daughter Laura with one of the two **Volunteer Appreciation Awards** (the other went to Sarah Nagel, pictured next page).





Ann Elizabeth-Nagel, DeAnne Haugen, and Sarah Nagel
Enjoying the MVE Banquet at Alioto's

Here are a few of the introductions to award winners:

Josh Umhoefer said: "This year's winner of the Russell A Foris Director's Award was an obvious choice, simply because Russ Foris was a believer in utilizing your leadership team, entrusting individuals who volunteered to help and watching them flourish. When Mike Lietke announced that he would likely be moving to Bloomington, Illinois, the leadership wondered who would help us with our visual presentation. This gentleman stepped up and volunteered to help in any way he could. He worked with our choreographers, helped to teach visuals, ran early bird rehearsals, and many other things too make our visual presentation a success. You all know him as one of the youngest-looking doctors ever, and one of the nicest guys you'll ever know. Please join me in thanking our 2015 Russell A Foris Director's Award winner, **Bret Kelso**."



Dick Marcus said: "Gerry Feldman, who was last year's winner of the Do-it Award has named **Jim Ansay** to be this year's recipient and has asked me to fill in for him tonight. When Gerry had to step down as our Chapter Secretary due to the birth of a second child, Jim Ansay was there to say he'd do it, and he did. When we needed a financial review, Jim Ansay stepped up to say he'd do it, and he did. When we needed a soloist for *We Need a Little Christmas* at our Christmas show and in other songs, Jim Ansay stepped up to the mike and did it marvelously. When Bob Bartkowiak wanted to revamp the treasurer reports to make them easier to read and review each year, Jim Ansay did this as well. Whether quarteting on shows or putting the risers away, Jim Ansay is always ready to Do it. Therefore, let us give a Mighty MVE Applause for our most recent recipient of the Do It Award, **Jim Ansay**.

Do you have a shoveling or mowing song you sing?

The Bass part for some of the Christmas songs are great for shoveling or mowing, especially *A Holly Jolly Christmas*, said **Dick Marcus**.



I just work on my breath control as I walk behind my Lawnboy to cover a half acre in an hour, said **Dale Heinen**.

Mike Lietke added, "This is hilarious...Because I sing while mowing too. I would say we SHOULD practice humming and experimenting in ways that we can produce tones. Experimenting in relaxing all muscles related to singing. Try to do scales while keeping the "buzz" feeling in the same part of the mask. Work on lyrics that you don't have down, and make not of those you need to re-check. Great stuff. I do the same while on the treadmill (actual treadmill, not a metaphor for workaday life).

Or you could listen to this guitar piece called *The Shoveling Song*.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTAPcNfJgX4>

Calendar Events in January

Singing Contest on January 30 will be held at **Turner Hall**. For more of the history of Turner Hall, go to:
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turner_Hall_\(Milwaukee,_Wisconsin\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turner_Hall_(Milwaukee,_Wisconsin))

