



# The MVEer Monthly

May, 2018

**May Calendar** – note that start time of rehearsals are **7pm** not 7:15pm.

- Monday, April 30 7pm MVE Rehearsal at St. Luke's Lutheran  
Friday, May 4 Quartet contest at the Saber Center, Franklin H.S.  
**Saturday, May 5** Saber Center, Franklin H.S. LOL prelim and Division One, we compete at about 12:30. **\*Call times coming.**  
Monday, May 7 7pm MVE Rehearsal at St. Luke's Lutheran  
Monday, May 14 7pm MVE Rehearsal at St. Luke's Lutheran  
**Thursday, May 17** 7pm MVE Rehearsal at Oak Creek Community Center  
**Friday, May 18** Spring Show at Oak Creek Community Center **\*call times**  
**Sunday, May 20** Spring Show at Oak Creek Community Center **\*call times**  
Monday, May 21 No Practice  
Tuesday, May 22 7pm MVE Board of Directors' Meeting at St. Luke's - Members and guests are always welcome.  
Monday, May 28 Memorial Day – No Practice

## **Great Photos from Acapocalypse** –

Friday, April, 6, 2018 – photos with permission of Robert Tyree





Midnight Croon



**Limited Edition**  
Port Washington High School

**Vocalight** and their avid fans

For more photos, go to <https://www.facebook.com/Acapolypse/> and search down to **April 9<sup>th</sup>** set of over 40 photos. More photos on page 6 of this newsletter as well.

**What is the Division One and Prelim contest?** – Steve Johnson

*We are hosts and the MVE must sing at the contest in order to be able to compete at District this year! Friday May 4 is the Quartet Contest. We need volunteers at Franklin HS and drives. Our goal is to win and improve in every way.*

*Saturday, May 5 is the chorus contest. We sing last, at about 12:30pm. We'll sing *Naughty Angelina* and *If I Can Dream*. More info coming on our call time, but we know and love the stage at Franklin High School. It is where we did our Christmas Show.*

Place: **Franklin H.S. - Saber Center. May 4-5th.**

**MVE Interview with new member Niel Johnson**

**MVEer asks:** Niel, you've a great voice and we were so happy to have you with us. What has been your past experience in singing and performing?



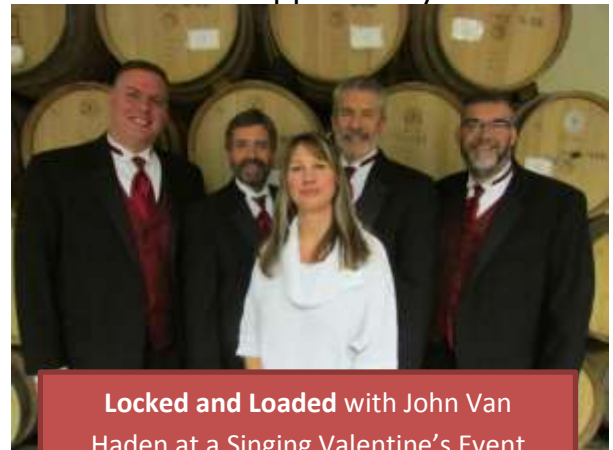
Locked and Loaded with Niel Johnson on the right



**Niel replies:** I'm glad to be here. I started singing in 1988 while in medical school. A group of us got together to sing funny songs at the end of year freshman banquet. We had a lot of fun and continued to get together once in a while to sing just for the fun of it. We performed many times, and more folks joined us, and when we graduated, the group continued. It's now a small glee club whose name is the "**Dermatomes**," and they still are going strong.

I began singing barbershop when I was assigned to Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia. A group of doctors was singing after work and I heard them. They started singing together in Desert Storm to help pass the time. We went to see the local chapter show, and **Keepsake** was the headline quartet.

After hearing them and getting involved with the afterglow, I was hooked. My first quartet while in the Army was named **Deployable Harmony**. (*Editor's Note: Love that name!*) Being in the Army, I have had the fortune of living in many places. Also, I have been able to sing with many courses and quartets over the years. At last count, MVE was my 19<sup>th</sup> chorus. I have had the opportunity to perform with "A"-level choruses at international on several occasions. I've been an active quartet member for many years, although it's been difficult to establish a long-term quartet because of my moving around so frequently. As a result, I have become very involved with the **Extreme Quartetting Harmony Brigades**. This way, I have been able to quartet year-round regardless of whether or not there is a chapter locally, or if the local chapter doesn't support quartetting. I am currently singing with 2 quartets, **Locked and Loaded**, which has been together in various forms for 12 years, and a new quartet called **Brew City Harmony**.



Locked and Loaded with John Van Haden at a Singing Valentine's Event

**MVEer asks:** What part do you sing, Niel? Also, please tell us about your musical background beyond barbershopping?

**Niel replies:** I like to sing tenor. My other musical background is mostly limited to playing piano. I played bar piano throughout college for extra beer money, but that's about as far as I have taken it.

**MVEer asks:** Outside of music, what are some of your other interests or hobbies?

**Niel replies:** I used to be a competitive swimmer, but it's been a while since I've been able to do that or play water polo. I like hockey, but again have not had much opportunity to play with the career I've had. I consider myself a huge movie buff, and I love watching movies.

**MVEer asks:** How did you find out about the MVE chorus?

**Niel replies:** I saw the MVE chorus at international when they performed the aquarium set. I was so impressed with their creativity and presentation. I've enjoyed watching this chorus entertain and have fun at international. One of the criteria of where I wanted to settle after retiring from the Army was there needed to be a barbershop chorus, so Milwaukee made the list.

**MVEer asks:** The readers of this newsletter want to know more about you. Tell us about your medical work, Niel?

**Niel replies:** I am a family practice physician at Aurora Health Care in Brookfield. I retired after 30 years in the US Army as an Army physician. While in the Army I had many different jobs at all levels from clinical to executive, from academic to operational. I've been all over the world and I've done some very interesting jobs over the years. But it was time to settle down. I like getting back to just being a physician again.



**MVEer asks:** Did you grow up in Wisconsin? Have you have family in the area?

**Niel replies:** No. I am originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and I grew up in Medford, New Jersey. My wife, Penny, is from Minnesota. When I retired, I wanted to live near the beach and she wanted to live in the Midwest, so we compromised, and we moved to the Midwest.

**MVE says:** We are so very happy to have you with us, Niel.



Locked & Loaded Quartet in 2008



**Spring Show** <https://www.mve.org/spring-show-info>  
and click TICKETS.

**Oak Creek Community Center**  
**8580 S. Howell Ave.**  
**Oak Creek, WI 53154**

On **Friday, May 18** at the Oak Creek Community Center doors open at 6pm, dinner at 6:30pm, and show at 7:30pm. Raffle for great gift baskets. Enjoy dinner, singing, and laughter.



Or come on **Sunday, May 20** at the same location with doors open at 3:30pm, dinner at 4pm, and show at 5pm. There are two great shows for you to enjoy. More great raffle baskets on Sunday.



### **What does Bryan Ziegler Say?**

“This is great, but wouldn’t it be even better with **20 more dudes?**”

**Midnight Croon** sang for the chorus on Monday, April 23.



## **Baskets for the Spring Show**

At the last show at the Oak Creek Center we did, we had very successful fundraiser by doing a gift basket raffle. We made \$900 in profit.

Put together a gift basket on your own, with friends, etc. I only ask that it has a theme, is worth a minimum of \$50. All baskets must be turned into me by the Monday rehearsal before the show, Monday May 14th. Turning them in earlier puts a smile on my face.

A few guys went to local businesses, even Josh got Hallmark to donate, hmmm. If a business donates we will put that on the information next to the basket.

We will use half the baskets on Friday and half the baskets on Sunday. Let me know in advance of what you may be thinking for your basket(s). Some duplicates are ok, but not too many.

Steve Johnson, Basket Dude, [steve.johnson61@gmail.com](mailto:steve.johnson61@gmail.com), see if you can find me in the picture above.



## **Every barbershopper has a story**

YouTube video from the Cardinal District, but it could be told by any of us anywhere. I bet that you see yourself in one of the several of the mini-stories told as we all have our own reasons for singing, friendship, fellowship, and changing lives in this hobby. Click this wonderful nine-minute video and smile at the stories told. We are these guys.



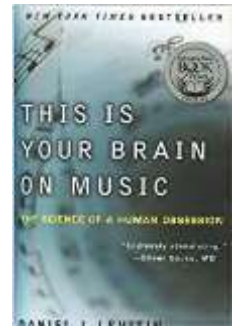
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLGyF2X3RW8ui\\_sXpQLOiYvx-e02cnDgce&time\\_continue=532&v=5mxX8IUN-FY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLGyF2X3RW8ui_sXpQLOiYvx-e02cnDgce&time_continue=532&v=5mxX8IUN-FY)

Excerpts from: **The Science Behind Why Singing is Good for You**

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/blogs/the-science-behind-why-choir-singing-is-good-for-you-1.4594292>

*(Editor's note: This article comes from the CBC in Canada and is actively being circulated. The essence of it can be found in 7 paragraphs, lightly edited. You'll love it.)*

**Daniel Levitin**, psychology professor at McGill University and author of *This is Your Brain on Music*, 2007, says group singing isn't just good for the soul — it's good for the body. By analyzing the changes in people's brain activity when they sing together, he comes to the conclusion that feelings of belonging and mood elevation are biologically ingrained to surface with communal.



## Evolutionary history

Levitin says group singing has been an essential human trait for tens of thousands of years. It was traditionally a community building exercise that everyone participated in. "Still today you can go to hunter-gatherer societies, pre-industrial tribes, and everybody sings, everybody dances," he said.

That communal approach changed in most of Western society, however. Levitin traces it to the first concert halls in Europe from about 500 years ago. "The audience was meant to sit there with their hands politely folded in their laps and their mouths shut" while onstage performers sang, Levitin said.

Singing was now something that specialists did, while others watched. It became an exclusionary act, rather than a communal one. It effectively silenced those who didn't think they had a special talent. "You hear people say all the time, 'Oh, I can't sing' or 'I'm not good enough to sing,' and I really think that's a shame. It goes against our evolutionary history."

## Group singing makes you feel closer to others

Levitin points to a wealth of neurological research that suggests our brains release oxytocin when we sing with others. "That's a chemical that's involved in social bonding and it's believed to give rise to the feelings of togetherness and friendship that comes from singing together," he said.

Group singing, in other words, scientifically strengthens a community. Levitin also says the act of listening when singing in groups causes participants' brain responses to synchronize with one another. "If your brain waves themselves are synchronized, that would sure be a way to make you feel closer to others wouldn't it?"



## Choir-singing as an anti-depressant?

Singing in choirs doesn't just connect us with others; it also has the powerful capacity to elevate our mood. "I can go into a rehearsal feeling gross, or having like a really bad mental health day, and I will leave there feeling uplifted, and elated, and grounded, and comforted," says singer Alexis Hillyard of Kokopelli Choir Association. "It's pretty fantastic." As Levitin explains, the healing potential of singing is due in part to deep breathing. As an aerobic activity, singing increases the amount of oxygenated blood rushing to the brain. "We feel good after breathing, and breathing deeply, and controlling our breaths in the way that we do when we're singing," he said.