

Sean's BIG dream story... in his own words.

A few years ago, my sister, Kendra, was hired as the lead singer in a cover band in the Appleton, WI area. She has an amazing voice and I really had a good time going up to see her band play. Usually on these occasions we would also end up (either the night before or after their gig) at a local karaoke joint. We'd always have a blast doing it, and I learned that I could carry a tune. A couple of weeks before one of her band's gigs, Kendra ended up having to have some shoulder surgery. Still in some pain, she joked that me and her husband, Mike, might have to get up and do a couple songs if she was hurting by the third set. Well, she was, so she called me up there and I sang a song with the band. I was pretty much hooked at that point. What a great time! I always wondered what it would be like to front a band and play on a fairly regular basis.



A couple years later, the son of a close co-worker was performing at a local establishment with a band he and some friends had formed through this program called Weekend Warriors. I went over to be supportive of CJ and take it all in. They were really good! The problem was that no one in the group really wanted to sing. They all preferred to just play their instruments. I'll just say they were better instrumentally than they were vocally. After the show they explained this all to me and I joked with them, "if you ever get stuck without a vocalist for Weekend Warriors, give me a call..." I got a call from CJ in time for the next session...

Weekend Warriors is a national program (I think) that is organized through participating music stores throughout the country. Basically, it's intended for anyone who ever wanted to try their hand at being on stage with a rock band. Mostly groups consist of amateur musicians (some of whom are very good), rookies (like me), and musicians that are somewhat more advanced, but who don't have the time to gig full

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time with a band or who just don't have opportunities to play. You show up at West Music, throw down your \$100 and off you go. We came in somewhat organized as a band. Others come on their own and are placed in bands based on their musical interests, etc... The bands select a set of songs to work on, get together once a week for 8 weeks at West Music to rehearse (with the guidance of our "coach", Shannon Price, who has been singing with bands for years and years), and then perform live at The Mill, a local live music venue.

We had a great time and grew closer together as a band over the 8 weeks and the performance. Of special note to me was that we asked Kendra to come down and sing some background vocals for us on a number of songs. Kendra has been waging a battle with something called Stevens-Johnson Syndrome for the last 2 1/2 years (learn more at <http://www.sjsupport.org/>). Long story short, she spent 3 1/2 months in the hospital and on a couple different occasions over that time we almost lost her. It was particularly special to be up on stage singing with her.

Anyway, the gig itself went very well. It was an absolute blast... one of those things in life that can give you a natural high. As a result of that gig we were asked to play at a local Relay for Life event (American Cancer Society) on June 11 which should be fun and obviously it's for a good cause. We were also offered our first paid gig on July 9 at Mt. Vernon's Heritage Days celebration. We will be opening up for Friday night's headliner...Other opportunities seem to be popping up all the time, and we've decided to keep on playing when we can as a band.

And that's pretty much the story of Rattlebox in a nutshell :)