

Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young At Heart Chorus Members

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Some Things That Can Hurt Your Voice

As a singer, it's important to protect your voice. We've mentioned the importance of keeping your vocal cords hydrated by drinking enough fluids, but a lot of things you may not think about can cause temporary or permanent damage to your voice. This is especially true as we get older and our body tissues lose some of their elasticity. Here are a few things to watch out for:

- Coughing can irritate your vocal cords, so try not to cough or clear your throat any more than necessary. Try "hard swallowing" instead.
- Yelling, shouting or trying to talk in noisy places can stress the voice, dry it out and damage it. Be careful, and don't overdo it at sports events.
- Singing or talking loudly in the car can hurt your voice, especially over the road noise if you have the windows open.
- Excessive talking on airplanes, with their dry air and engine noise, can leave your throat sore by the end of your flight.

Just remember that your voice is an instrument, so treat it gently, with respect, and it will serve you well.



Skipper sings of the Old Orange Flute during our March program.

Just read that 4,153,237 people got married last year. Not to cause any trouble but shouldn't that be an even number?



Jo and Eleanor perform Cuanto le Gusta at The Aristocrat in March

Summer Schedule

Although we're off for the summer, be sure to keep your voice in shape by singing wherever you can...in church, in the shower or along with the radio. The voice is a muscle that needs to be exercised to stay in shape.

Also, remember that our first practice will be on Monday, August 24th. We'll be sending reminders as the time gets closed. Have a great summer in the meantime!



Lanny & Sara Norris both joined Young at Heart last year after singing with the Mesilla Valley Chorale for many years. They also sang in the Chorale's "Close Encounters" ensemble. While in college, Lanny sang with the Apache Four, a barbershop quartet. They've both also sung in church choirs for most of their lives. Happily married for 56 years, they met in Tyler, Texas, where Sara was born and Lanny moved as a child from Shreveport, Louisiana.

Although Lanny left Tyler after high school and junior college to attend Texas Western College (now UTEP), they got together again when Lanny's brother was dating Sara's sister, whom he later married. Sara had spent a year at SMU in Dallas, but then married Lanny and joined him at Texas Western, where they both graduated.

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In college, Lanny took engineering courses and graduated with a degree in Geology with minors in Chemistry and Mathematics. He joined Southwestern Portland Cement's plant engineering department and soon was promoted to plant engineer. He spent 27-1/2 years with the company, eventually managing the plant until the company closed it.

Sara meanwhile was busy raising their four children and teaching biology, chemistry and mathematics at the high school level once the children were older. Their oldest daughter is a doctor in the Dallas area, while their first their son now lives in Las Cruces, having moved here recently from Seattle. Their second son lives in Austin, while their other daughter is an administrator in the Arlington, TX education system. They have 12 living grandchildren and another who died in an accident, in addition to two great-grandchildren and another on the way.

All four children have musical talent and made it to All-State in Texas while in school. Among them, they play or have played violin, cello, bass, piano and maybe more. Lanny says that, when he married Sara, he needed to buy her two things; a piano and a sewing machine.

After living in El Paso for so many years, they moved to Las Cruces in 1985 when Lanny became involved with a local chili processing plant that he had helped a friend start. The company, known as Joy Canning, eventually was sold to Basic American Foods, and Lanny and his business partner who founded the company stayed there for another 10 years.



Marcie Palmer grew up in the Sandhills of West Texas, where she was born, and in Roswell. After graduation from Roswell High School, she studied dance at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, majoring in Physical Education. She always has sung in church choirs and loves all music.

She has worked in banking and the medical profession, taught kindergarten and ballet. She worked for Grieves Group Realtors in Roswell and Prepared Foods in Santa Teresa before retiring the first time. Three years later, she went back to work as a realtor at Steinborn GMAC before retiring for good in 2009.

Marcie came to Las Cruces in 1997 and has been busy ever since. In addition to singing with Young at Heart, she volunteers at New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum and is a member of the Dona Ana Arts Council, Friends of the University Art Gallery, Las Cruces Symphony, Las Cruces Museums System and the Dona Ana County Historical Society. She also has worked with Special Olympics and Habitat for Humanities and volunteered on the telephone lines for the KRWG FM and TV fund drives.

She moved to Good Samaritan Village in 2015, where she sang in a singalong group that included Phil Hosford (who founded the Mesilla Valley Chorale), Bob Shade and Skipper Bottsford. Bob and Skipper asked her to join Young at Heart. Although she missed singing for four months after an accident, she came back in January, 2016 and has been active ever since.

At Good Sam, Marcie stays busy with several kinds of exercise, volunteering in the gift shop and library, playing bridge and attending as many meetings and classes as possible. She also is chairperson of the Employee Christmas Fund and is on the welcoming committee for "A" Building. Wonder what she does in her spare time?

Marcie's close family includes two brothers, one sister, four daughters and one son, as well as five granddaughters and three grandsons, three great-granddaughters and one great-grandson. She is looking forward to two more great grandchildren due in July. When not busy with her family, she enjoys playing bridge, gardening, beading, quilting and painting on gourds and fabric, plus sports and music of all kinds.

Too bad there isn't a way you can donate fat like you donate blood!

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Murray Kugler joined the chorus last year, after singing with the Mesilla Valley Chorale since about 2007. He was born in Missouri and attended school there. When his birth mother died, an uncle took him into his home, and he was adopted into the Kugler family.

In 1953, Murray was drafted into the Army and sent to Fort Bliss and then to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where he worked in communications as part of the 59th Field Artillery Battalion. Upon leaving the Army in 1955, he majored in Social Studies at Central Missouri State Teachers College, where he and his first wife both received degrees.

After college, he came to New Mexico, where he taught social studies in Lordsburg and then in Grants before heading to another teaching position in Eureka, Montana. After two years in Montana, he returned to New Mexico and enrolled at Highlands University in Las Vegas. There he worked as a teaching assistant to a history professor while studying for his Master's degree.

After teaching for one more year, Murray left that profession and worked for a title company in Las Vegas until 2002. He still works part-time for a title company here in Las Cruces, mainly examining final paper work on title policies to check for errors.

Following a divorce in 1973, Murray married Barbara. They took a lot of auto trips in the 1980s and 1990s, but when she became ill, they moved to Las Cruces in 2002 to be near her daughter. Barbara died in 2003, and in 2005, Murray moved to Good Samaritan Independent Living, where he has served as vice-president and president of the Resident Council.

Murray is a proud father and grandfather, with four sons, four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. His oldest son, Danny, works for Hewlett Packard in Oregon. His next-oldest, Chris, was an archaeologist

in Texas but died in April of this year. His next son, Barry, has retired from the Air Force and lives in Las Vegas, and his youngest, Darren, has now retired but was a lawyer and judge in Las Cruces.

At Good Sam, Murray stays busy playing bridge, attending exercise class and reading, especially history. In addition to singing with Young at Heart, he has sung in his church choir, the Mesilla Valley chorale and the Village Singers, when they were active at Good Samaritan. He also has sung the National Anthem during Flag Day ceremonies.

What Hydrates the Best?

British researchers have created a beverage hydration index (BHI) that measures how long a liquid you drink is retained by your body compared to water, which is rated "1." Minerals and proteins, like sodium and casein protein in milk, can raise the score. Researcher Stuart Galloway says a few cups of beer or tea can be as hydrating as water!



Courtesy National Geographic

The Chorus Scrapbook

For some time, Jo Banks has been keeping the chorus scrapbook updated with clippings, photos, newsletters and other bits of our history. Some of you may have seen it at our party after our Northrise performance in May. If you have any photos or other things to contribute, give them to Jo. If you'd like to look at it, let Jo know.

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Sing and Feel Good

Music is awash with neurochemical rewards for working up the courage to sing. That rush, or “singer's high,” comes in part through a surge of endorphins, which at the same time alleviate pain. When the voices of the singers surrounding me hit my ear, I'm bathed in dopamine, a neurotransmitter in the brain that is associated with feelings of pleasure and alertness. Music lowers cortisol, a chemical that signals levels of stress. Studies have found that people who listened to music before surgery were more relaxed and needed less anesthesia, and afterward they got by with smaller amounts of pain medication. Music also releases serotonin, a neurotransmitter associated with feelings of euphoria and contentment. “Every week when I go to rehearsal,” a choral friend told me, “I'm dead tired and don't think I'll make through. But then something magic happens and I revive ... it happens almost every time.”

Ohio State music professor David Huron believes singing may generate prolactin, which is released in nursing women, and in tears of sorrow. Prolactin has a tranquilizing, consoling effect, and this is why sad music makes us feel better, according to Huron. There's even evidence that singing about death not only feels good, it's good for you. Researchers discovered that a choir singing Mozart's Requiem showed an increase in s-IgA, an immunoglobulin that enhances our immune defense.

It doesn't even matter if you can sing well! I can't. The best I can manage is singing in tune. Most of the time. Hopefully. One of my main goals in our weekly rehearsals is not being heard. Over the years I've become a master in the art of voice camouflage, perfecting a cunning combination of seat choice, head tilt, and volume. Luckily, in a 2005 study, investigators found that group singers experienced the same benefits even when “the sound produced by the vocal instrument is of mediocre quality.”

*Adapted from **Imperfect Harmony: Finding Happiness While Singing with Others**, by Stacy Horn*

Guess Who?



The Hi-Brows were a Wisconsin barbershop quartet in the 1970s, as you probably can tell from the costumes. They chose the name because of their hairlines, not their intellect or class. You may recognize the bass, second from the left. Not sure how he got in the quartet, as the guy he replaced was completely bald.

More from the Archives...



The late, great Roger McCandless directs the chorus in one of our Western-themed programs.

