

# Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

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Editor: Ray Scroggins

**I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing** started out in 1971 as an advertising jingle, "Buy the World a Coke." It was born when Bill Backer, an executive with Coca-Cola's advertising agency, was delayed at Ireland's Shannon Airport. After a long layover that left travelers with hot tempers, he noticed the next morning that the travelers were talking and joking while drinking Coca-Cola.

Backer wrote the line "I'd like to buy the world a Coke" on a napkin and shared it with British songwriters Roger Cook and Roger Greenaway, who reworked one of their previous melodies into the Coke jingle. The song became so popular that its creators revised it, adding three verses and removing the product references to create a full-length song, which we now will sing as part of our October program instead of May.

**Speaking of Singing**, what can you do to keep your voice in shape and hold you over until we can get back to our usual chorus routine? Here are a few ideas:

- Sing in the shower. The warm, humid air will help keep your voice in shape, and the shower enclosure will become your own private sound chamber.
- Sing in church, once it re-opens, either in the choir or in the congregation. A lot of church music has melodies that are easy to follow like the songs we sing.
- Listen to music like the songs we sing, on YouTube or your favorite channel. You can sing along, but even if you just listen, your vocal cords will exercise silently.
- Finally, don't forget to hydrate. With the Coronavirus threat, keeping body tissues properly hydrated is critical.



**Jim Webb** moved to The Aristocrat recently from Solstice (formerly Golden Mesa). He came to Las Cruces about five years ago from Kerrville, Texas after his wife died. Jim enjoys our style of music, and it's hard to believe he is turning 98. He played trombone in the school bands, in high school and college at Texas A&M, and also in a dance band. He says he never got a chance to dance because he was always playing in the band.

In Texas, Jim was the general manager of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Authority in Brownsville for 40 years. It supplied water for crop irrigation and for many city water systems in the area. Previously, he spent 10 years in the cotton business in Mexico, buying cotton that was shipped to Europe to help it rebuild after World War II. During the war, Jim spent 3-1/2 years in the Philippines and South Pacific. There he served in the U.S. Army Bushmasters special unit, which trained for jungle fighting in Panama.

Born in Haskell, Texas, north of Abilene, Jim grew up on a ranch. His pet was a horse, which he rode six miles to school every day. He says the horse knew the way there and back home very well. He has a son in Corpus Christie, Texas, and a daughter who lives in Las Cruces. She is a bookkeeper at the Mesilla Valley Christian School, and her husband retired recently from the White Sands Missile Range.

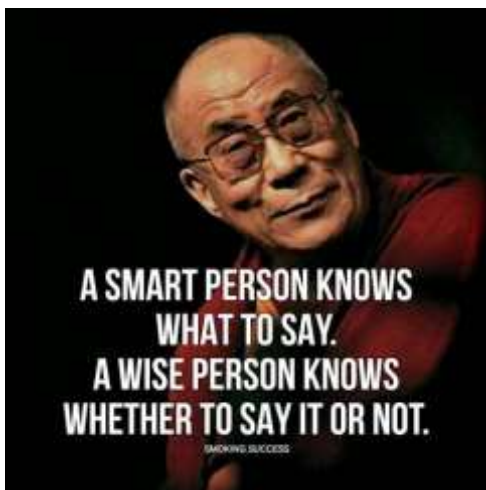
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**George & Ira Gershwin** were born in Brooklyn to parents of Russian and Lithuanian Jewish ancestry. Together, George (born Jacob Gershowitz in 1898) and his older brother Ira (born Israel Gershowitz in 1896) wrote more than a dozen Broadway shows, including some of the songs we sing.

As a composer, George's works blended elements of classical and popular music. Ira was a lyricist who collaborated with his brother to write more than a dozen Broadway shows that featured songs such as "I Got Rhythm," "Embraceable You," and "Someone to Watch Over Me." George died of a brain tumor in 1937, having composed many such classics as "Porgy and Bess" and "Rhapsody in Blue." After his brother's death, Ira continued to write hit songs, collaborating with composers Jerome Kern, Kurt Weill, Harry Warren and Harold Arlen.

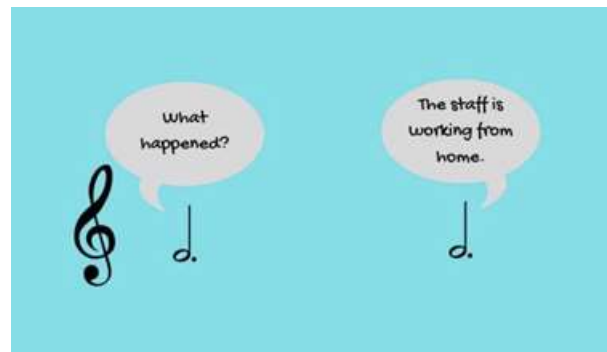


## Music as Medicine

We know that listening to a mellow song can calm us or an upbeat song can make us feel energized. But music's power over our minds and bodies runs deeper than most people realize. It can trigger the release of mood-altering chemicals in the brain and activate brain regions associated with memory, emotion and creativity.

But you might not reap the potential benefits of music by simply turning on the radio. The songs you select matter, as does the way you interact with those songs. Participating in the creation of music tends to be more effective than just listening. Even humming or singing privately in the shower helps deliver benefits. Looks like we're on the right track!

*Barbara Else in Bottom Line Personal*



*Submitted by Joan Kowalski*

## Senior Moments

While there are many jokes about senior moments, older brains have enormous potential *because of* the aging and learning process, says Marc Agronin, MD. He says that seniors make better decisions, are more at peace with themselves and also have more informed perspectives on life. Aging can be a jumping-off point for a renewed sense of purpose and growth if you are willing to explore some new directions. Here are a few ideas:

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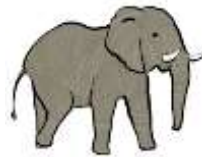
- Try a more creative approach. A mature brain can be better at finding new ways of facing challenges and working around them.
- Find ways to reinvent yourself. Look for new directions when old paths no longer work
- Think of yourself as liberated. It's not just the domain of the young. Older people often feel less encumbered by previous approaches and ideologies.
- Take stock of all your personal assets. They are different for each of us. Identify yours and capitalize on them.
- Be open to new directions. It's not too late to try the things you want to do now. *BottomLinePERSONAL*

**Play a Simple Melody** is a song from the 1914 musical *Watch Your Step*, with words and music by Irving Berlin. It was the first stage musical he wrote, and it now will be on our October program instead of in May. The song is one of the few examples of counterpoint in American popular music, where one melody runs against a second melody, each with independent lyrics.

As written, the "simple melody" first plays alone, followed by the contrasting melody. Finally, the two play together. In the lyrics, the first singer yearns for the music that mother sang, in the style of a bygone generation. The other singer disdains such classical fare as lacking interest and rhythm, preferring the "rag" popular at the time. Later, the song was featured in a vaudeville sequence of the 1954 movie *There's No Business Like Show Business*, which showcased many Irving Berlin songs

## Tell Me a Story

The melody and words of a song paint a musical story, but a good performance is more than just singing the notes and words correctly. Jack Benny once said, "Get the audience to like you as soon as possible." One of the best ways to connect with them is by telling our story the best we possibly can. Think about the message you are trying to convey to our audience when you sing. Make sure your facial expression and body language help tell the story. Hold your music up, look at the audience (and you can see the director better that way too), smile, raise your eyebrows, look enthusiastic, and sell the song. You'll be surprised how good you will feel and how much more our audience will enjoy the music we bring to them. *Reprinted from Issue #6*



*Elephants are capable of swimming 20 miles per day, but it doesn't seem to help their figure.*

