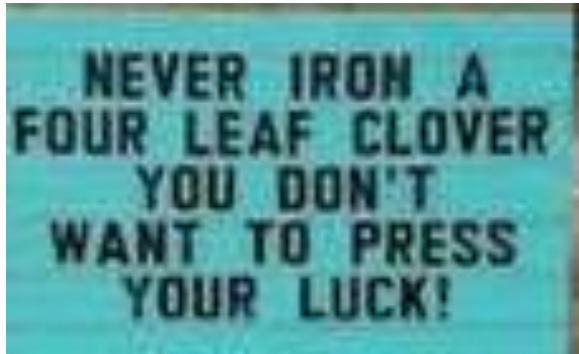


Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

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can be. May this story of the pencil inspire you to fulfill the purpose for which you were born.

Fr. Hugh Duffy

Lessons of the Pencil



Before putting a pencil into the box, the pencil maker reflected on its importance, saying:

"There are 5 things you need to know before I

send you out into the world. Always remember them and never forget them, and you will become the best pencil you can be."



"**One:** You will be able to do a great many things, but only if you allow yourself to be held in someone's hand.

"**Two:** You will experience a painful sharpening from time to time, but you'll need it to become a better pencil.

"**Three:** You will be able to correct mistakes you might make if you have hope.

"**Four:** The most important part of you will always be what's inside.

"**And Five:** On every surface you are used on, you must leave your mark. No matter what the condition, you must continue to write."

Now, place yourself in the role of the pencil if you want to become the best person you

Did You Know?

- The # symbol isn't officially called hashtag or pound. Its technical name is *octothorpe*. The "octo-" refers to its eight points while "thorpe" may be named after Olympian Jim Thorpe or just a nonsense suffix.
- The "Windy City" name has nothing to do with Chicago weather. Instead, Chicago's nickname was coined by 19th-century journalists who were referring to the fact that its residents were "windbags" and "full of hot air."

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- The first oranges weren't orange.
The original oranges came from Southeast Asia and were a tangerine-pomelo hybrid. They were actually green, and oranges in warmer regions like Vietnam and Thailand still stay green through maturity.
- There's only one letter that doesn't appear in any U.S. state name. You'll find a Z (Arizona), a J (New Jersey), and even two X's (New Mexico and Texas)—but not a single Q.
- Peanuts actually aren't nuts. They're legumes. According to Merriam-Webster, a nut is only a nut if it's "a hard-shelled dry fruit or seed with a separable rind or shell and interior kernel." That means walnuts, almonds, cashews, and pistachios aren't nuts either. They're seeds.



The Benefits of Music

Music has profound benefits for fighting stress, depression, anxiety and insomnia. In a *Psychology Today* article, Michael J. Breus, PhD, discussed the many ways music can help alleviate these maladies. He wrote of the calming effects of slower, more gentle music and the uplifting effects of faster-paced, louder, more vibrant music.

From relaxing music:

- Slower breathing
- Lower heart rate
- Lower blood pressure
- Quieting the nervous system
- Easing muscle tension
- Reducing stress and anxiety
- Triggering of sleep-inducing hormones
- Reducing stress-inducing hormones

From upbeat, stimulating music:

- Higher heart rate
- Greater stamina and endurance
- Increased creativity, attention and mental focus as well as better physical coordination

For better sleep, Breus suggests a "wind-down" period before bed, using slower, more calming and preferably lyric-free music. He says a few nights might not be enough, so give it more time, and be consistent. Avoid earbuds, he adds, because you don't want to fall asleep with them in your ears.

Someone once observed that anything said in French sounds romantic, anything said in German sounds like an order, in Italian-an argument, and in a Slavic language-a sneeze.

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Do I Really Sound Like That?

Yes, you do. The only voice on earth we do not know is ours. That is because it reaches us not solely through the air but in vibrations that pass through the hard and soft tissues of our head and neck. This creates in our brain's auditory cortex a sound completely different from what everyone else hears when we talk. The stark difference is clear the first time we listen to a recording of our voice. A recording disembodies the voice, holds it at a distance from us, so we can hear with pitiless objectivity all the aspects of how we speak, including the unconscious way we manipulate things like pace and pronunciation to create the voice we wish we had.

For this reason, people generally perceive their voice as deeper and richer when they speak. The recorded voice, in comparison, can sound thinner and higher pitched, which many find cringeworthy.

There's a second reason hearing a recording of your voice can be so disconcerting. It really is a new voice—one that exposes a difference between your self-perception and reality. Because your voice is unique and an important component of self-identity, this mismatch can be jarring. Suddenly you realize other people have been hearing something else all along. Even though we may actually sound more like our recorded voice to others, the

reason so many of us squirm upon hearing it is not that the recorded voice is necessarily worse than our perceived voice. Instead, we're simply more used to hearing ourselves sound a certain way. It's probably your inner critic overreacting—and you're judging yourself a bit too harshly.

John Colapinto in "This is the Voice," and Neel Bhatt, Assistant Professor of Otolaryngology at the University of Washington.

Grandfather's Clock



When a guy's old grandfather clock stopped working, he called a repair shop, but they wanted \$50 to come and pick it up. "I'll bring it to you," the guy said. So, he strapped the clock to his back and started walking down the big hill where he lived. Halfway down, he slipped and slid down the hill into town, just as a lady was crossing the street. He barreled into her and knocked her down. Dazed and disgruntled, she asked, "Why can't you just wear a wristwatch like everybody else?"

Reader's Digest

If you're sitting in public and a stranger takes the seat next to you, just stare straight ahead and say "Did you bring the money?"

When someone asks what I did over the weekend, I squint and ask, "Why, what did you hear?"