

# CHORUS CHATTER

News and Musings for Young At Heart Chorus Members

---

Issue #4 ...October 15, 2016

## Our Thoughts... for a Song

Last year, Marilyn Gioannini started a newsletter to help keep chorus members informed and engaged. We're hoping to continue what she began and send an issue whenever there is enough news to talk about and we have the time to write it.

Among the things it could include are our monthly calendars, some information on who does what behind the scenes, answers to questions from members, some tips on singing at our best, and any guest columns or contributed information from members who wish to share their thoughts.

One more feature we'd like to include is a series profiling all of our members, a few at a time. We don't all know the newest members, and they probably don't know who we all are, so a little background and a photo will help us all get better acquainted. *Ray*



*Editors: Ray Scroggins & Dennis Cherry*

## Who Does What Around Here?

Here's a list of jobs that keep the chorus going and who is doing them. If you'd like to volunteer to help out, talk to the person listed.

**Board of Directors:** George Rushing, Joan Kowalski, Joy Webb, Ray Scroggins, Rob Pearson

**Chairman & Treasurer:** Ray Scroggins

**Music Committee:** Dennis Cherry, George Rushing, Joan Kowalski, Joanie Eisenbraun, Ray Scroggins, Rob Pearson

**Directors:** Dennis Cherry, Ray Scroggins

**Accompanist:** Joanie Eisenbraun (piano), Joy Webb (rhythm), Flonnie Cross (rhythm)

**Announcer:** George Rushing

**Sound System & Equipment:** George Rushing, Jim Gibson, Skipper Bottsford

**Music Files & Preparation:** Joan Kowalski, Joy Webb

**Telephone Committee:** Jo Banks

**Calendars & Word Processing:** Gayle Trantham; Joy Webb

**Sunshine:** Joan Kowalski

.....  
*Some people age like wine; others age like milk*

# CHORUS CHATTER

News and Musings for Young At Heart Chorus Members

## November 2016 Young At Heart Chorus Schedule

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 2:30 Aristocrate	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 2:30 Good Sam Assisted Living	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 2:30 Good Sam Health Care	18	19
20	21 1:15 Practice	22 2:30 Northrise	23	24 <i>Happy Thanksgiving</i>	25	26
27	28	29	30	Dress: Standard black and white, or military uniform if you have it and can still fit into it!  Note: No practice on Nov. 28, as Joanie will be gone. We will practice our Dec. music only on November 21 <sup>st</sup> .		

## December 2016 Young At Heart Chorus Schedule

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Dress: Christmas/Holiday (red and green, scarves, hats, etc.)				1 Aristocrat 2:30 PM	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 Good Sam Assisted Living 2:30 PM	9	10
11	12	13 Retired Educators at NMSU Clubhouse 12:00 Noon	14	15 Good Sam Health Care 2:30 PM	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Northrise Morningside 2:30 PM	23	24
25 <i>Merry Christmas</i>	26	27	28	29	30	31

Practice is at 1:15 - First Baptist Church unless otherwise noted.

# CHORUS CHATTER

News and Musings for Young At Heart Chorus Members

---

## Member Profiles

We'll feature several members in each issue, starting here with the "performance team."



**Ray Scroggins** joined the chorus in 2008 after moving here from Wisconsin. He also sings with the Mesilla Valley Chorale and previously sang with New Desert Harmony Singers and the Cactus Chords barbershop quartet. In Wisconsin, he sang with several barbershop quartets, as well as Milwaukee's Festival City Chorus. He and his wife, Vi, have four children and 11 grandchildren. Ray continues his career writing magazine articles for a wide variety of manufacturing firms. He is chairman of the board and alternating director.



**Joanie Eisenbraun** and her husband, John, moved to Las Cruces from Casper, Wyoming four years ago to be closer to their children. They have four daughters and one son and have been married 55 years. They have 9 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Joanie started playing the piano when she was three. She would listen to a song on the radio and then play it with one finger on the piano. She plays mainly play by ear but can read notes. She played the piano and organ for many years in nightclubs and restaurants and also has been a church organist for 48 years. Joanie says she really enjoys the YAH. Because it gives her something to look forward to every Thursday and everyone is so gracious and loving. She says it is a wonderful organization to belong to.



**Dennis Cherry** joined Young at Heart in October 2015 after retiring as the Director of Medical Imaging at Alaska Regional Hospital, working for HCA. He and his wife moved to Las Cruces in 2000. Dennis has extensive music experience, having played the pipe organ and directing choirs in parishes for the Archdiocese of Detroit. While living in Iowa, he was the organist at Sacred Heart Church. His wife, Denise, is the Director of Las Perlas Del Pueblo Folklorico Dance Group here in Las Cruces. She also directs a Belly Dance Troupe here in town. They have 3 children and 6 grandchildren who live across the country. Dennis not only keeps busy with Young at Heart but also serves as President of The Executive Board of The Friends of The Thomas Branigan Memorial Library.



**George Rushing** joined the chorus in 2007. He moved here in 1997 from the Washington DC area after retiring from the CIA. Unlike most chorus members he had no musical background. He was a long distance runner for 30 years until having his left knee replaced from years of running. When he arrived in Las Cruces, he joined the State's master gardening program and is a very active backyard gardener. He was never a member of a singing group, and the only singing he did was while the shower was running. He has a daughter living back east, and he and his wife, Letha, have 3 dogs, Archie, Hanna and Weezy.

# CHORUS CHATTER

News and Musings for Young At Heart Chorus Members

## Sing! It's Good for You

The *Readers Digest* just had an article telling how singing can prevent a cold, but you have to sing with other people. Singing with other people increases the levels of an antibody that helps defend against bacterial and viral infections. A study showed that choir singers have lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol and better moods overall, which probably plays a role in boosting the immune system. The article quoted a professor as saying, "There's something about having to coordinate your actions with those of others that brings particular health benefits," so sing and be happy and healthy!

## Music and Word Sheets

At the first practice for each month's program, Joan brings folders for each member with their preference in music or word sheets. Keep these sheets until we have finished the month's final performance, and then turn them back to Joan at the last show.

It takes a lot of work to get the music ready for each month's performances, and one big task is making copies and assembling the books. George has been handling the printing and Joan the assembly. While some of us have the notes and others just the words, some people like to have copies of both. If you really don't need both copies, it would help if you would let Joan know. This would cut down on some of the paperwork. If you do need both types to help you learn and perform the music, please feel free to keep things as they are.

## Our Mission

The Young at Heart Chorus really has two missions. First, we want to entertain the residents of assisted living and nursing homes, as well as other senior centers in the Las Cruces area with our music. Second, we want to provide an opportunity for people in the Las Cruces area to belong to a choral group, to sing and to enjoy music and friendship together.

**Remember, don't take life too seriously.  
Nobody ever got out of it alive.**



## Need a copy of anything?

If you need a printed copy of any chorus document (calendar, directions to where we sing, roster, etc), see either George or Ray.

## Points to Ponder

*Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit.  
Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.*

*We never really grow up -- we only learn how to act in public.*

# CHORUS CHATTER

News and Musings for Young At Heart Chorus Members

---

## Breathing-essential to life...and singing

Most of us don't think about breathing very often, but as singers, breath is the mechanism we use to create and project the songs we sing. Good breathing technique can make you a better singer and help protect your vocal instrument.

You can start to check your breathing by putting your hands on your waist, thumbs in back. Now let your lungs fill with air. You should be able to do this quietly, and you should be able to feel your ribs move outward as your lungs take in air.

The diaphragm is a muscle that separates the chest cavity from the abdomen. When it is relaxed, it is dome-shaped. When you inhale, it flattens and the center moves down and the abdomen extends to allow the lungs to expand. When you exhale, the abdominal muscles control the upward movement of the diaphragm, which causes air to pass through the vocal chords (actually vocal folds) and create the sound we control when we sing.

You can check to see if you are breathing properly by lying on your back, placing a book on your diaphragm, then placing one hand on the book and the other on your chest. You should raise the book as you breathe in without raising your chest.



Deep breathing, using the diaphragm rather than breathing from the chest, will help keep you healthier as well as making you a better singer.

# # #

## How Do We Choose the Music?

The Music Committee members (George, Joan and Rob), along with the director for the month (Dennis or Ray), each submit a list of six songs to fit the upcoming month's theme. Then the full committee (including Joanie and Joy) meets and selects songs from the combined list. Each member gets to pick two songs from the list, with a few more chosen by mutual agreement. The final list includes about 15 songs, including one religious and one patriotic number.

Our monthly themes tend to follow a pattern:

February: Love songs

March: Irish and other cultures

April: (often a selection of favorites)

May: Spring and Summer

September: Places and Travel

October: Americana (Country, Western, Folk)

November: Patriotic, Armed Forces, War Era

December: Christmas and Holiday Season

## Be a Star

If you are inspired to sing a solo, duet or other ensemble, check the list of monthly themes above and pick a song that will fit one of them. The chorus has a large selection of music in its files, so check with one of the music committee members or a director to see if we have it. Then work with Joanie to practice your song.

*You'll never know unless you try.*