

Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

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Morningside is the assisted living facility where we have our last performance most months. Morningside, a part of the senior care community at The Village at Northrise, is licensed as a Senior Living Facility. It offers private accommodations supplemented with personal care.



Kladaisa McLaurin, the Activities Coordinator, has been there since June, 2017. She says their mission as a Genesis Healthcare Facility is “We improve the lives we touch through the delivery of high-quality health care and everyday compassion.”

Before coming to Morningside, Kladaisa was a chiropractic assistant at Heritage Chiropractic, LLC while getting her Bachelor’s degree in Kinesiology/Exercise Science at NMSU. Now she is going for her Master of Science degree in Kinesiology and Orthopedic Rehabilitation. While at Morningside, she says she hopes to grow the Health and Wellness program and keep smiles on the residents’ faces with many activities.

Kladaisa says that music plays an important role in the residents’ lives because it adds joy and helps wipe away any depression that may be setting in because of their health concerns. The residents are grateful to have us sing for them because of the joy and cheer we display while singing. She

says, “We thank you so much for choosing to sing here, because when you aren’t here in the summer and during Christmas break, they cannot wait to have all your lovely voices filling the halls again.”

When not working or studying, Kladaisa enjoys outdoor activities, including hiking, swimming, running and rock climbing. She also is an avid reader, sight-seer and traveler.



Jan Porter was raised in Utah, where she sang in high school choirs and played saxophone in the band. Later she moved to California for about 20 years before her husband’s job brought them to New Mexico in 1988. They both worked at and retired from White Sands.

Now, Jan does Karaoke with a group of friends every Thursday night and also enjoys making greeting cards and playing card games with friends. Her grandchildren live in California, where she likes to visit with them whenever she can. She still has family in Utah that she visits whenever possible.

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Slightly older
in other places.

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Chuck Riggs joined the chorus the first time about 10 years ago. He left for about three years and spent time singing with the Cactus Chords barbershop quartet and performing with the Las Cruces Ukes, a group with which he still is active. We're glad he recently re-joined Young at Heart.

While living in California, Chuck sang with a barbershop chorus and a quartet called The Aftershocks, which is still in existence. After arriving in Las Cruces about 12 years ago, he sang with Vos Vaqueros and then New Desert Harmony Singers, each for about six months, before joining Young at Heart. He says, "YAH is my favorite, not only because of the music, but because it's usually a daytime event, and also because of all the friends I've made there." He also sang with the Mesilla Valley Chorale for a couple of years but getting to their nighttime practices was a problem.

Chuck says he is an Army/Air Force brat, so he's lived in a lot of different places. He went through grade school in Alamogordo, junior high in Wiesbaden, Germany, and high school in Ohio. Prior to moving to Las Cruces, he and his wife, Norma, lived in Southern California for about 40 years. They moved here with five cats and a dog, although they now are down to just one cat.

After his discharge from the U.S. Army, Chuck started working in the insurance business in Ohio and continued in that business after moving to California in 1968. After graduating from law school and passing the bar exam in 1976, he went on to become the national division underwriting counsel for the largest title insurance company before he retired. He continues to stay involved as an arbitrator and mediator for several organizations, including FINRA and also has been a consultant/expert witness in many real estate-related cases.

Chuck's family has a history of military service. His father was an Air Force pilot, as was his brother, who was commander/leader of the Air Force Thunderbirds for a few years. His brother's oldest son also was an Air Force pilot, now retired, and his brother's younger son is on a "hot shot" crew, fighting fires all over the West.

Chuck and Norma both are interested in animal welfare issues, and he has worked with many local animal welfare groups. Recently, he helped Cat's Meow get incorporated and registered as a 502(c)3 organization. He also was secretary of the Ad Hoc committee that rewrote all the animal ordinances for the City of Las Cruces and Dona Ana County.



Virginia Crane grew up in a house filled with music. She says her family gathered around the piano to sing in the evenings and whenever they had company. She sang in the church choir from an early age, as

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well as in operettas, music contests and school talent shows. She says she took piano lessons and played the cornet in band, without any noticeable success. She took private voice lessons in college and continued to sing in church choirs for most of her adult life, although not lately. Virginia says, "I'm hoping Young at Heart and church choir will help my voice recover from neglect. I am really enjoying singing with the Young at Heart chorus."

Virginia has lived in Las Cruces for the past 18 years but spent most of her adult life in Wyoming as a special education teacher. For 10 years after moving here, she wrote children's stories and edited other people's stories. She says she lost her husband in 2016 after 45 years of wonderful marriage.

Now, she is active in Lions Club, church, two square dance clubs, and the Lions Crane Reading Lab for struggling readers. Lately she also has become an avid walker.



Gary sings "Almost Like Being in Love" on our February program

Part of the secret of success in life is to eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside.

Mark Twain

Silence is Golden; Duct Tape is Silver!

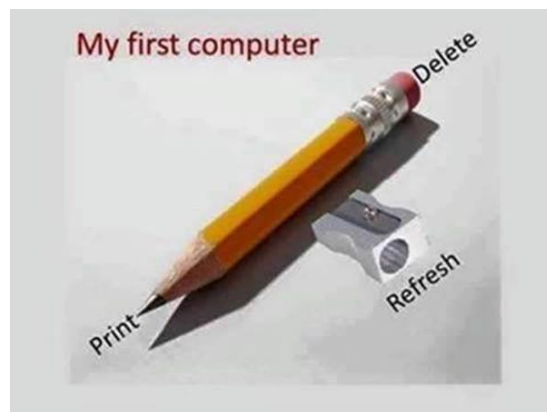
Singing Tips from Johnny Mathis and Others

In a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal*, singer Johnny Mathis said the biggest lesson his vocal teacher taught him was to open his throat so air could flow unrestricted over his vocal chords. She said, "Your throat is open the fullest when you yawn. Yawn as much as possible until you feel it." That worked, he said.

Another tip, which I learned from my days of barbershop quartet singing, was to put my hand in front of my mouth when singing to check that warm air was coming out. That also indicates an open throat, much better for producing sound and protecting the voice.

Lollipop, which we will sing in April, was written in 1958 when Julius Dixon was late for a songwriting session with Beverly Ross. He explained that his daughter had gotten a lollipop stuck in her hair, which caused him to be late. Ross was so inspired by the word "lollipop" that she sat down at the piano and produced a version of the song on the spot.

Beverly Ross recorded a demo of the song with a 13-year old neighbor of Dixon, under the name Ronald and Ruby. Ross's mother insisted she use a pseudonym, because they were an interracial duo. The demo, owned by Dixon, was released by RCA and reached #20 on the charts, but the later version by *The Chordettes* reached #2 and #3 on the Billboard pop and R&B charts, respectively.



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The Healing Power of Music

An example of the healing power of music comes from Australia, where a choral group called Stroke a Chord is giving voice through the power of song to people who lost their ability to speak because of a stroke. The group began when a stroke survivor noticed that people who were left without speech after their stroke (a condition known as aphasia) could still sing. The group meets every week to sing and socialize and has given concerts. Performances provide positive emotional experiences and are invaluable opportunities for self-expression. They showcase the stroke survivors' developing musical abilities.

Cabaret, which we will sing in May, is the title song to a 1966 Broadway musical and 1972 movie of the same name. Set in 1931 Berlin as the Nazis are rising to power, the productions focus on the nightlife at the seedy Kit Kat Klub and revolve around young American writer Cliff Bradshaw and his relationship with English cabaret performer Sally Bowles. The club serves as a metaphor for ominous political developments in late Weimar Germany.

In the musical, the song is performed by Sally Bowles, whose lover (Bradshaw) has told her he is taking her back to American so they can raise their baby together in safety. Sally protests, as she thinks their life in Berlin is wonderful and that politics have nothing to do with them. After a heated row, she goes on stage singing the song "Cabaret," confirming her decision to live in carefree ignorance of the impending problems in Germany.

The secret to happiness is a good sense of humor and a bad memory.

A Friend in the News



Bonnie Short, a long-time resident of Good Samaritan Health Care that you may know, was pictured in the January 19th issue of *The Bulletin* during a visit with a student volunteer, Annalizia Peña.

Las Cruces Bulletin photo

Great Password

During a recent password audit, a company found that an employee was using the following password:

*MickeyMinniePlutoHueyLouieDeweyDonald
GoofySacramento*

When asked why she had such a long password, she rolled her eyes and said, "Hello! It has to be at least 8 characters and include at least one capital."

Why Do We sometimes sing through our program backwards at practice? Usually it's because we've not spent enough time on the last songs on the list during the first rehearsal. By starting at the back and working forward the second time around, we get to concentrate on the songs we may have breezed through the first week. Whatever we do at practices, you can be sure we will go through the list front-to-back when we perform.

Just burned 2,000 calories. That's the last time I leave brownies in the oven while I nap!