

Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

Issue #18...September 1, 2018

Editor: Ray Scroggins

Breathing to Reduce Stress

Proper breathing can do more than help your singing. It also can help reduce stress. Deep breathing, which uses the diaphragm instead of the chest muscles, pulls oxygen in more effectively than shallower breathing. To practice it, sit straight in a comfortable chair with feet flat on the floor, or lie down flat...close your eyes, and place one hand on your stomach. Breathe deeply through your nose, into the back of your throat and down to your belly, letting your chest expand. Let your abdomen slowly deflate as you breathe out. Repeat several times, increasing the amount of time for inhalation and exhalation. Direct your breath into your upper back, letting your ribs spread and relax with each breath in and out. Don't force it. Let your breath flow naturally.

HealthLetter.MayoClinic.com

I hate it when I see an old person and then realize that we went to high school together.

Are We a Chorus or a Choir?

Apparently, the answer is "yes!" Most people seem to think of a choir as a group that sings mainly in church. You may have had somebody refer to Young at Heart as a choir. They're not really wrong. Both "chorus" and "choir" can be traced to the Greek word "χορός" (khorós), which translates to "dance accompanied by song." The two words are synonymous. Chorus is to choir as Fall is to Autumn.



Ken Neidig is the Arts Committee Chair at Good Samaritan Village. You'll recognize him as the guy who always welcomes us and presents the chorus with a certificate when we sing at the Good Sam auditorium. We have seen some of his clarinet skills while jamming with Joanie before one of our programs and look forward to more. Ken also has played saxophone and bassoon.

He was born and grew up in the small town of Washington, New Jersey. After high school, he attended Murray, Kentucky State College and joined the U.S. Army Band at Fort Knox after graduation. Soon afterward, he was sent to Japan where he served his enlistment in another Army band during the Korean conflict era.

It seems Ken's connection with music began early, hanging out with friends that included future bandleader Les Brown, who was dating and later married a neighbor girl.

After the Army, Ken was the band director and taught music at a school in Elizabethtown, Kentucky for 15 years and then taught for seven more years at Fort Knox Dependent Schools. There, all fifth-graders were required to study the Tonette, and after teaching them, he then worked with beginners on regular wind instruments in the sixth grade. On the side, he

Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

edited *Bluegrass Music News*, official magazine of the Kentucky Music Educators Association. It was named for the state, not the style of music.

Editing took on a larger role in Ken's life when he became editor of *The Instrumentalist*, a magazine for school band directors that was published in Chicago. In the 14 years he spent there, he had the opportunity to interview many well-known band directors from diverse fields, including legends such as Benny Goodman, Woody Herman and Stan Kenton.

Leaving that publication, he moved to the Traverse City, Michigan area where he started his own magazine. Known as *BD Guide*, it reached band directors worldwide. Along the way, he also wrote several books, including *The Band Director's Guide* and *Choral Director's Guide*.

After 10 years, he retired and moved to Las Cruces in 1995 after meeting Marianna Gabbi at a convention in Albuquerque. Dr. Gabbi, the original conductor of the Las Cruces Symphony Orchestra and now of the New Horizons Symphony, was guest conductor with many orchestras around the world. Ken, retired by then, was able to travel extensively with her on these trips. One memorable event was when she conducted the Moscow State Symphony in works that included Aaron Copeland's *Lincoln Portrait*, for which Ken did the readings. He says it was a moving experience, reading Lincoln's words there shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Ken has four children, seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He has lived at Good Samaritan Village since 2011.

October Performance List

Chorus Music for October, 2018 Theme: Americana (Country, Folk, Etc.)		Director: Ray
Jambalaya	3 verses with chorus after each verse	
Abilene (change "women" to "people")	Once as written; repeat 1 st verse at end.	
Pistol Packin' Mama	5 verses with chorus after each	
Along the Navajo Trail Trail	Once, end with "oo, oo, oo the Navajo Trail"	
Does your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavor? music)	2 verses per word sheets (1 & 3 on music)	
I Never Promised You a Rose Garden (Women)	Once as written	
Deep in the Heart of Texas (Men)	2 verses; interlude; repeat 1 st verse Women clap in rhythm as noted	
Oh Susanna/Clementine Medley Clementine	2 verses Oh Susanna/4 verses Clementine	
Break: Birthdays; Ray (Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans?) Others TBD		
Tom Dooley	Both verses	
Wayward Wind	All on chorus; men on 1 st verse; all on chorus; women on 2 nd verse; all on chorus	
Tie a Yellow Ribbon	All verses	
Cold, Cold Heart	1 st verse; repeat last line	
It's Hard to Be Humble	Solos on verses, all on chorus	
Oklahoma Hills	Verses 1 & 2	
Gonna Build a Mountain	All 4 verses	

Jimmy Fallon says zebras are the perfect referees for a game of horse.

What's My Note?



If you've always learned music by ear but would like to improve your music reading skills, there's an app you can use on an Android or Apple smart phone or tablet. Just take a picture of the music pages or import them as a PDF. Then touch the individual notes in the photo to hear them played. It only works with choral music (the kind we sing).

Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

You control which notes are played and how fast, as if they were played on a piano. You also can play a phrase by sliding a finger from the start of the phrase to the end. Intervals between notes can be repeated by sliding back and forth between the two adjacent notes.

I tried it on my Samsung Android phone, and it worked. Probably would be better on a tablet because of the larger size though.

You can download the What's My Note app from the Google or Apple stores for 99 cents and get more information on how it works by Googling "What's My Note?"

Music School in China



The Ultimate Brain Booster

Why is music so great for brain health? Scientists know that it's one of the few activities that engage many areas of your brain at the same time. Scans show that parts of the brain governing auditory, visual, sensory and motor and emotional function are all engaged when a musician practices and performs. It's not surprising that scans have also revealed that musicians have superior memories and executive functions—brain processes that are tied to planning, solving problems and focusing.

There also are health benefits. Music-making can lower your heart rate and blood pressure, according to a study from the Netherlands. Plus, your body pumps out extra *oxytocin*, a hormone that can make you feel less anxious and more connected to your fellow musicians.

Pistol Packin' Mama, one of the songs we will sing in October, was written in 1943 by Al Dexter, who adapted the melody from an earlier song called "Boil Them Cabbage Down." Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters recorded the song later that year for Decca Records. Patty Andrews recalled that she and her sisters were quite amused and had to restrain their laughter when Crosby adlibbed, "lay that thing down before it goes off and hurts somebody."



In 1944, these women Army Air Corps pilots named their B-17 Flying Fortress "Pistol Packin' Mama." This is the same kind of plane Bob Shade got to fly in here at our airport last year.

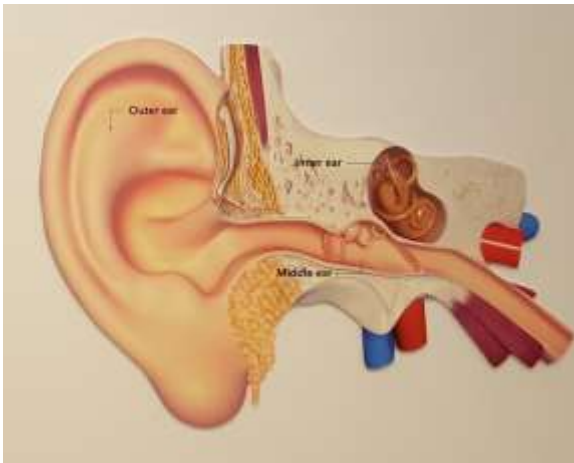
Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree is another song we'll be singing in October. Sung most famously by Tony Orlando and Dawn, it was written by Irwin Levine and L. Russell Brown. The song is told from the point of view of someone who has "done his time" but is uncertain if he will be welcomed home. Although it is generally thought to be about someone returning from prison, songwriter L. Russell Brown said, "This is

Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

NOT the story of a convict who told his love to tie a ribbon to a tree outside of town. I know because I wrote the song one morning in 15 minutes with the late lyrical genius Irwin Levine. The genesis of this idea came from the age-old folk tale about a Union prisoner of war-who sent a letter to his girl that he was coming home from a confederate POW camp in Georgia...Anything about a criminal is pure fantasy.”

Hearing: Making Sense of Sound



The human ear is a complex and sensitive organ. It allows us to hear sounds all around us, including music. The frequency of a sound wave is expressed in cycles per second or hertz (Hz). Humans are capable of hearing sounds with frequencies that range from about 20 Hz to about 20,000 Hz. Dogs can hear frequencies as high as approximately 45,000 Hz and dolphins can hear frequencies in excess of 100,000 Hz!

When we listen to music, sound waves enter the ear and are converted to nerve impulses that are then interpreted in the brain. We may recognize the sound of a familiar musical instrument or the voice of a favorite artist, we may feel emotion, or we may even tap our feet along to a beat.

Music engages the brain. Neuroscientists are studying the effects that listening to music-and even playing music can have on the human brain. While listening to music engages multiple areas of the brain at the same time, playing music engages even more. This is partly due to the additional fine motor coordination required to play an instrument.

As we age, it may become more difficult to hear sounds of certain frequencies. It is important to be mindful of hearing safety to avoid unnecessary damage to our ears.

Based on information from the Musical Instrument Museum (Phoenix)

One More Time for Joanie



Joanie did it again, winning a second-place medal in the 40th State Senior Olympics talent competition held in Albuquerque in July. Way to go Joanie!