

# Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

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Editor: Ray Scroggins

## The Irish Millionaire



Mick, from Dublin, was appearing on 'Who Wants to Be A Millionaire' and had

already won 500,000 euros. "You've done very well so far," said Chris Tarrant, the show's presenter, "but for a million euros you've only got one life-line left, phone a friend. Everything is riding on this question. Will you go for it?" "Sure," said Mick. "I'll have a go!" "Which of the following birds does NOT build its own nest? a) Sparrow b) Thrush c) Magpie, d) Cuckoo?"

I haven't got a clue." said Mick, "So I'll use my last lifeline and phone my friend Paddy back home in Dublin." Mick called up his mate, told him the circumstances and repeated the question. "Blinkin' hell, Mick!" cried Paddy. "Dat's simple, it's a cuckoo." "Are you sure?" "I'm bloody sure." Mick hung up the phone and told Chris, "I'll go with cuckoo." "Is that your final answer?" asked Chris. "Dat it is." There was a long, long pause, and then the presenter screamed, "Cuckoo is the correct answer! Mick, you've won 1 million euros!" The next night, Mick invited Paddy to their local pub to buy him a drink. "Tell me, Paddy? How in Heaven's name did you know it was da Cuckoo that doesn't build its own nest?" "Because he lives in a bloomin' clock!"

## Daydreaming Delivers

We've had a lot more time to daydream lately, but sometimes we feel guilty that we aren't getting more done. Turns out that there are some benefits to daydreaming. Research in psychology and neuroscience provides new understanding of the value of the wandering mind. Studies show that taking breaks and allowing your thoughts to drift can help your brain retain information, refocus, gain fresh perspective and make new connections between ideas.

Just think of the "eureka moments" that occur when we're engaged in the most mundane tasks, such as showering or doing the dishes. A study by the University of British Columbia shows that brain activity in the brain areas that deal with problem solving increases with mind-wandering, when a person is not focused on the outside world. So, if you have some extra time, let your mind wander a bit. *Jeffrey Davis on PSYCHOLOGYTODAY.COM*



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## From a Single Seed



Where we live in Southern New Mexico, the pistachio is becoming more popular, along with our main crops of chiles and pecans. Until the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis, Iran was our country's biggest supplier of pistachios. California produced its first

commercial crop of just 1.5 million pounds in 1976. Now the U.S industry produces about a billion pounds each year. It all started in the 1930s, when a botanist named William E. Whitehouse managed to get one seed from a specific variety called Kernan while on a tour of Iranian orchards. It barely took hold in California but survived and became the parent of all American pistachios. Their earthy-sweet flavor, richness and crunch make them a favorite as both snacks and ingredients. With the same amount of protein as almonds but slightly less fat, their fiber and the need to crack each one before eating it also makes them a favorite with dieters.

*Reader's Digest-March 2021*



"YOU SAY YOU HAVE ILLUSIONS OF BEING A SINGER—  
POP, OPERA OR SEWING MACHINE?"



## Dogs Are Their Own Drying Machines

With a woof and a splash, a very happy

dog launches itself straight into a lake or pool. After some goofy frolicking, it will clamber out, shake itself off and trot away to investigate a nearby squirrel as if nothing had happened. The drying process takes about four seconds and it's done. Here's how it works: When a wet dog is standing still, the water is pulled downward by gravity and drips from the hair on its belly. It's a slow process, but the dog speeds it up by creating a force that boosts gravity, similar to what a spin dryer does.

It's not just dogs either. In a 2012 paper, David Hu and colleagues at the Georgia Institute of Technology looked at 16 species that shake themselves dry, including mice, bears, kangaroos, sheep, and a lion.

Mice, dogs and bears can twist their spine, oscillating their body round and back to produce an effective outward force. This is what they're doing when they shake themselves dry. But that's not enough by itself: It turns out that many animals also have loose skin that helps amplify the shaking. For many species, the skin can travel sideways much further than the body underneath, which speeds up the "spin" of the wet fur to create an effective force between 10 and 70 times as strong as

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gravity. To reach those forces, a small animal needs to shake itself much faster than a big one, so mice shake 30 times per second, and a bear only four times per second.

*Wall Street Journal*

LIFE IS LIKE A ROLL OF TOILET PAPER.  
THE CLOSER IT GETS TO THE  
END.....THE FASTER IT GOES.

Submitted by Joan Kowalski

### **Being Kind Helps You, Too**

It's a good thing to make another person feel good. But being kind-doing something to help someone else-can help you, too. Research links kindness to a wealth of physical and emotional benefits. Studies show that when people are kind, they have lower levels of stress hormones, and their fight-or-flight response calms down. They're less depressed, less lonely and happier. They have better cardiovascular health and live longer. They may be physically stronger. They're more popular. And a soon-to-be published study found that they may even be considered better-looking. Being kind is an excellent coping skill for the Covid-19 era. In a time of isolation, kindness fosters connection to others. It helps provide purpose and meaning to our life, allowing us to put our values into practice. And it diminishes our negative thoughts.

Psychologists call kindness altruism and talk of two types: reciprocal (you help someone because it will benefit you in

some way-like giving money to get a tax break) and pure (you have no expectation of reward). Humans evolved to do both. We're not the biggest, strongest or fastest animal in the kingdom, so we needed to band together to survive. "The key to our success is not the survival of the fittest," says Jamil Zaki, a neuroscientist and associate psychology professor at Stanford. "It's survival of the friendliest." Yet, nature accounts for just half of our propensity to be kind, says Dr. Zaki. The rest is nurture-we learn it from our parents, our family and our community. And we can also teach ourselves. "Kindness is a skill we can strengthen, much as we would build a muscle," says Dr. Zaki, the author of "The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World."

*Wall Street Journal*



*The "We Three Trio," Ginny, George & Ray, presented another program in their series of concerts at Good Samaritan Village in May.*