

# Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

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**Johnny Marks**, born John David Marks in 1909 at Mount Vernon, New York, was an American songwriter who specialized in Christmas

songs and wrote many holiday standards. Among those we have sung over the years are *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, *Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree*, *A Holly Jolly Christmas*, and *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*. His wife, Margaret May Marks, was the sister of Robert L. May who wrote the original story of Rudolph. Marks was Jewish, as were many other composers of popular Christmas songs. They included *White Christmas* by Irving Berlin, and *The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire)* by Robert Wells and Mel Tormé. Others include *Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!* by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne, *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year* by Edward Pola and George Wyle, and *Silver Bells* by Jay Livingston and Ray Evans. So glad they shared these wonderful talents!

## Should I Sing with a Sore Throat?

Jennifer Winston, a speech-language pathologist and clinical voice specialist, says it's not a good idea to sing (or speak) with a sore throat caused by a virus or acute illness, an allergy flare or other problem. Pain is your body's way of telling

you to stop doing whatever is causing the pain, so skip singing if you can. This is especially true if you are hoarse and especially if the hoarseness gets worse with voice use. Hoarseness can lead to chronic voice disorders, and coughing can make the problem worse by creating excessive collision force on your vocal folds.

Some throat issues create excess mucus, to which most people respond by clearing the throat and/or coughing. If the mucus is in your throat and not your lungs, your vocal folds are probably producing the mucus to protect themselves. To clear your throat, try "hard swallowing" or clearing very gently—silently is best. You can also use a "huff cough," which is exhaling warm air quickly, as if you were fogging a mirror. One of the best remedies, other than resting your voice, is inhaling steam for a few minutes at a time, a few times per day, using a personal steamer. Winston also suggests humming, noting that the low-impact nature of a resonant hum may inhibit vocal fold inflammation and promote wound healing. She says that, used over a few days, the technique can improve the ability of the vocal folds to vibrate more easily, with reduced inflammation.

Other remedies include getting plenty of sleep, consuming fluids, eating well, avoiding

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shouting and whispering, and avoiding drying or dehydrating substances like caffeine, menthol and decongestants.

*The Harmonizer - March/April 2020*



"Other men just sing  
in the bath..."

## Learn to Read Music

If you want to learn to read music, or to improve your note-reading skills, here are some online sources to help. Use ctrl +click to follow the links.

**MusicTheory.net** is a free site that offers quality content to help you learn to read music, with exercises and interactive tools so you can practice the lessons you learn. It's also available as an iOS app for \$2.99.

[MusicTheory.net](http://MusicTheory.net)

**Music Tutor** is a simple app that provides exercises for sight-reading proficiency to develop your speed and accuracy while

reading sheet music. It's free for Android or iOS systems at [Music Tutor](http://MusicTutor.com)

*Bottom Line Personal*

## Soon to be Married.

Jacob, 92, and Rebecca, 89, were getting married. As they discussed their wedding, they passed a drug store, and Jacob suggested they go in. Addressing the man behind the counter, Jacob asked if they have heart medication. "Yes, we do!" "How about medicine for arthritis, jaundice and rheumatism?" "Indeed, we do. Any medication your doctor prescribes," says the pharmacist. "How about for constipation, memory loss, Geritol, hemorrhoids? Do you have walkers, wheelchairs, safety bars?" "Yes sir, we carry a good variety of supplies!" "Great," said Jacob. "We would like to use this store as our Bridal Registry!"

My grandma talking to my mom about her new hearing aid, "it's the most expensive one you can buy, it cost me \$4,000"

My mom: "What kind is it"

My grandma: "it's 4:15pm"

## Greetings

The military salute is a motion that evolved from medieval times, when knights in armor raised their visors to reveal their identity. In ancient times, strangers shook hands to show that they were unarmed.

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## Why the Brits Put Milk in Tea

Turns out, it has little to do with flavor and a lot with tradition. The Brits' habit of



putting milk in tea extends all the way back to the 18th century, when tea was brewed in pots. Tea was a big deal at the time, and people tended to drink it

out of China cups. However, most people couldn't afford fancy fine bone China, and the cups available would crack from the heat of the boiling hot tea. The solution? Pour milk into the cup first, then add the tea. The cold milk cooled down the tea enough to keep the China from breaking, and the reduced bitterness was just an added benefit! According to some sources, tea was also incredibly valuable at the time, so families who couldn't afford large amounts would add a large amount of milk and a splash of tea, while well-off families tended to do the opposite. *Reader's Digest*

In the book *This is Your Brain on Music*, musician and neurophysiologist Daniel Levitin describes what happens when melodies resolve; that is, when a tune satisfyingly arrives back on the note that established the melody's key. This actually causes the release of dopamine in the brain, giving a listener the pleasurable sensation of reward.

John Colapinto in *This is the Voice*

## Red sky in the morning...



sailor's warning, red sky at night, sailor's delight, so the old saying goes. But is it true?

The colors we see in the sky are due to the rays of sunlight being split into colors of the spectrum as they ricochet off the water vapor and dust particles in the atmosphere. We see a red sky because red wavelengths are the longest in the color spectrum and break through the atmosphere., while the other colors are scattered.

Weather generally moves from west to east, especially in the mid-latitudes. Because the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, a red sunrise in the morning can mean that a high-pressure system (good weather) has already passed, and a low-pressure storm system is moving in. A red sky at night indicates that the setting sun is sending its light through a high concentration of dust particles, meaning a high-pressure system and stable air are bringing good weather from the west.

*Scientific American*