

# Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

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Editor: Ray Scroggins

## Christmas and Hanukkah



Hanukkah and Christmas both are widely observed gift-giving holidays that fall in December. But the similarities mostly end there.

Christmas is perhaps the most significant Christian observance of the year, marking the birth of Jesus. Hanukkah was a fairly minor Jewish observance until modern times and is not mentioned at all in the Bible. The rabbis established it much later to commemorate events that took place in the second century B.C.E. when the Jews revolted against the Greek King Antiochus.

Christmas falls every year on December 25 of the solar calendar. Hanukkah also falls on the 25th of the month — but of the Hebrew month of Kislev, which is determined by the lunar calendar. As a result, Hanukkah falls on a different date each year on the secular calendar.

Hanukkah is an eight-day holiday because it commemorates the miracle that a single vial of oil, sufficient to light the ancient Temple light for one day, burned for a full eight days. Christmas lasts one day; however, some Christian denominations celebrate Christmas as a 12-day festival known as Twelvetide.

Hanukkah is celebrated by lighting candles, giving gifts and eating fried foods, while the main moments of Christmas celebrations include going to Christmas Mass, enjoying a hearty dinner, and opening presents left under a Christmas tree. Going to synagogue is not actually an important part of Hanukkah. There are special blessings incorporated into regular services during the days of Hanukkah, but there is no special Hanukkah service.

*Wikipedia*

## New Roads to Explore

Until we can sing together again and enjoy our new themed programs each month, we can't share news of the songs we'll be singing, their composers and their histories. So, to keep the newsletters coming, I'll be including articles on a broader range of subjects in this and future issues. I hope you'll find them informative and entertaining.

## Filter Your Coffee

Swedish researchers discovered that coffee can reduce the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes-but only if it's filtered coffee. People who drank two to three cups of filtered coffee a day lowered their risk by 60 percent. But boiled coffee does not have this effect. Diterpenes, which are molecules found in boiled coffee, increase the risk of heart and vascular disease and may also influence diabetes. Filters capture diterpenes but allow beneficial phenols to pass through. The researchers speculate that espresso, coffee pods and coffee made using a French press could be similar to boiled coffee in terms of diabetes risk.

*Newsmax Magazine*

The trouble with stealing quotes off the Internet is you never know if they are genuine.

*Abraham Lincoln*

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## Don't Forget to Hydrate!

Even though we're not singing, it's still important to stay hydrated for our health. Physician Arnaldo Liechtenstein is a general practitioner at Hospital das Clínicas and a collaborating professor in the Department of Clinical Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of São Paulo (USP). He says the three most common causes of mental confusion in the elderly are uncontrolled diabetes, urinary infection and dehydration.

People over 60 often stop feeling thirsty and consequently stop drinking fluids. When no one is around to remind them to drink fluids, they quickly dehydrate. Dehydration is severe and affects the entire body. It may cause abrupt mental confusion, a drop in blood pressure, increased heart palpitations, angina (chest pain), coma and even death.

After age 60, people have just over 50% of the water we should have in their bodies, so they have a lower water reserve. This is part of the natural aging process. Although they are dehydrated, they don't feel like drinking water, because their internal balance mechanisms don't work very well.

If you realize that you are irritable, breathless or display a lack of attention, you probably are experiencing dehydration. So, here's what you can do: Get into the habit of drinking liquids every two hours, including water, juices, teas, coconut water, milk, soups, and water-rich fruits, such as watermelon, melon, peaches and pineapple. Oranges and tangerines also work.

**IS ANYONE REALLY  
CONFIDENT WITH  
HOW THEY SAY  
"WORCESTERSHIRE  
SAUCE" ?**



This is my step ladder. I never knew my real ladder.

## How Cats and Dogs See the World



As children, many of us learned that cats and dogs are "colorblind" or see the world in "black and white"—but that's not entirely true. "They can't see all the different colors that we can see," says Katherine Houpt, a professor at Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine. "From what we can tell, they see the world in shades of blue and yellow." Their other senses make up for the fact that they can't see some colors.

"Because dogs and cats are predators, they don't have to be able to tell the difference between some similar shades," Houpt says we're better at color discrimination so we can find the correct foods. We have to know whether a persimmon is ripe or not. To a dog, a grey rabbit is just as tasty as a brown one. However, dogs seem to prefer toys that are blue and yellow. A red toy thrown onto green grass may be more difficult for a dog to retrieve

But our pets' eyes aren't built to process crystal clear images of the world. What a dog can see from 20 feet away, a human can see from 60 feet. What a cat can see from 20 feet, a human can see 100 or even 200 feet out. The animals do have an advantage, however, when it comes to perceiving movement—a skill honed to help

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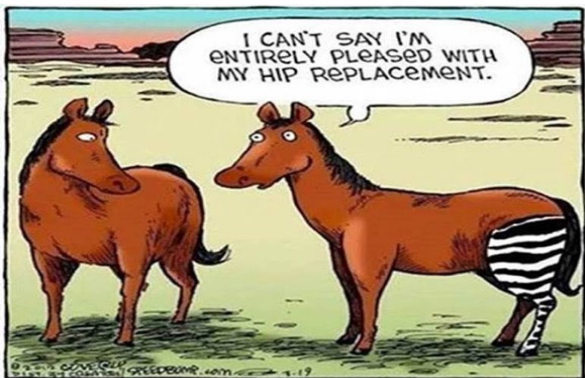
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them catch their fast-moving food. While most cats and dogs have trouble spotting still objects very close to them, they are able to spot movement for up to a half-mile, even if it's relatively subtle.

## Oxymorons

In 1986, Professor Warren S. Blumenfeld published a booklet of **Oxymorons**; combinations of two contradicting words that are used together. The classic oxymoron is *Jumbo Shrimp*. Here are a few others, some familiar and some perhaps not:

- Military Intelligence
- Airline Food
- Working Vacation
- Light Opera
- Near Miss
- Open Secret
- Home Office
- Real Magic
- Pretty Ugly
- Old News
- Negative Income
- Ill Health
- Loose Tights
- Nondairy Creamer
- White Chocolate
- Dry Ice
- United Nations
- Rap Music



## Hidden dangers of Heartburn Drugs

New studies bring new warnings about proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) used to treat heartburn. People who use PPIs like Prilosec (omeprazole), Nexium (esomeprazole) and Prevacid (lansoprazole) regularly for months or years face increased risk of serious conditions and even death. Here are some of the dangers:

**Heart Disease:** Medical scientists who followed more than 200,000 veterans for 10 years found that PPI users had almost an 18 percent higher risk of cardiovascular death.

**Dementia:** While not proving a conclusive link, one study of 73,000 men and women over 75 who did not have dementia determined that nearly 40 percent of PPI users in the group developed dementia over a five-year period.

**Osteoporosis:** While about 40 percent of women age 50 and over develop osteoporosis, studies that showed a link between the disease and PPIs caused the FDA to issue a warning in 2010.

**Gastroenteritis:** While it seems counterintuitive that a drug designed to ease stomach problems would actually increase the risk of intestinal infection, a large study showed that patients 45 and older who took PPIs were twice as likely to develop gastroenteritis.

**Stomach Cancer:** A recent study showed that patients who had used PPIs for more than 36 months were almost three times more likely to develop gastric cancer.

**Vitamin B Deficiency:** Stomach acid releases vitamin B, which is essential for all cell metabolism. A study of 200,000 patients who used PPIs for more than two years showed a 65 percent greater risk for vitamin B deficiency.

**Kidney Disease:** In a study that followed more than 10,000 people with normal kidney function for 14 years, PPI users had a 20 to 50 percent greater chance of developing kidney disease.

**Bottom Line:** Use them carefully and only when needed medically. Newsmax magazine