

Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

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Our National Hymn and National Motto



Most Americans know that our National Hymn, "The Star-Spangled Banner" was written by Francis Scott Key. As a Washington lawyer, he had gone to Baltimore to negotiate the release of an American civilian who was being held prisoner by the British during the War of 1812. Key and another negotiator were being held on a truce ship in Baltimore Harbor so they wouldn't disclose details of a planned 25-hour attack on Fort McHenry.

As Key witnessed the fearsome attack from the British side of the battle, he was overjoyed to see the U.S. flag still flying on the morning of September 14, 1814. All the sights and sounds of the attack, followed by the fort's and flag's survival, inspired him to write a four-stanza poem he called "Defence of Fort McHenry." Key finished the poem within a day at the Baltimore in where he was staying.

Evidence suggests that Key suggested setting his poem to music, using the melody of a song called "To Anacreon in Heaven," which had been written nearly four decades earlier by a British composer, John Stafford Smit. Although it is technically correct that this was a British drinking song, it conjures up visions of a rowdy British pub, which is an inaccurate perception.

What's not so well known is that the National Motto on our coins, "In God We Trust," is taken from the seldom-sung fourth stanza of the song: *Then conquer we must, when our cause is just And this be our motto, "In God is our Trust."*

Although the search for a suitable coinage motto began in 1861, it wasn't made official until July 20, 1956, when President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed legislation establishing "In God, We Trust" as our nation's only official motto. Previously, many people falsely believed that "E Pluribus Unum" was our nation's motto, and some people still do.



Amber Rascon is the new Assistant Director of Activities at Northrise-Morningside. She started working at Northrise in the Desert Willows Transitional Care Unit (TCU), a 31-bed short-term rehabilitation nursing center, in March, 2018. That October, she saw an opportunity posted and applied for the position of Morningside Certified Medication Aid. Amber says she loved working at the TCU but needed a schedule better suited to spending time with her three-year-old son, Julian Rascon, who is "her entire world."

Amber is very persistent and a firm believer in individual perseverance, which paid off when she was offered her present job in January, 2019. Since taking that position on February 1st, she says it is everything she loves to do. She

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loves all the different types of people and enjoys listening, learning and making people happy. She says the team across the Village at Northrise is amazing, the residents are wonderful, and the campus is full of life, laughter and has a family environment.

Amber says the residents love music as entertainment, and it helps make mundane activities more enjoyable. She explains that the health benefits that music has on the elderly include:

- A happier outlook on life.
- Bettered social interaction.
- Encouraged self-expression and discovery of personal identity.
- Enhanced moods.
- Improved interest levels.
- Increased communication in dementia and Alzheimer's patients.
- Increased positive emotions.
- Increased relaxation.
- Increased self-esteem.
- Reduced tension and anxiety.

Amber notes that the residents love everything about the Young at Heart Chorus. They love that we are a big group, and they see life in each of us. She explains, "They notice how you laugh, how you do your hair, and the beautiful scarves that represent each holiday." When they have a doctor's appointment and have to miss a performance, they get upset. She says, "Young at Heart is a keeper."

Reinforcing what we have found as we sing, Amber points out that music promotes positive overall health. Studies show that those who listen to music demonstrate:

- Better nights of sleep.
- Diminished pain.
- Improved memory and recall.
- Improved recovery time.
- Increased ability to concentrate.
- Increased awareness.
- Increased mobility and coordination.
- Increased overall cognitive abilities.
- Lessened need for medication.
- Reduced pain.
- Reduced recovery time.

Finding the Song's Key

You may never need to know what key a song is written in, but in case you do, here's the road map:

The image displays two sets of musical notation. The first set, titled "FLATS", shows a treble clef staff with notes C, F, B^b, E^b, A^b, D^b, and G^b. Below this is a bass clef staff with the same notes. The second set, titled "SHARPS", shows a treble clef staff with notes C, G, D, A, E, B, and F[#]. Below this is a bass clef staff with the same notes.

A "sharp" looks like this # and means go up a half tone. A "flat" looks like this *b* and means go down a half tone. The chart above shows what key a song is written in by the number of sharps

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or flats shown at left of a line of music. An easy rule to remember is, for Sharps, the key is a half-step higher than the last sharp to the right; for Flats, the key is the name of the next-to-the-last flat to the right. You may want to refer to the article on names of the notes in newsletter #19. (Check it out in our website archives if you don't have a copy.)



Betty Boop is one of many cartoon characters patterned after real-life personalities. In her case, it was **Helen Kane**, a baby-faced popular singer with dark ringlet curls during the flapper era of the 1920s.



While performing at New York's Paramount Theater, she ad-libbed "boop-boop-a-doop" into a song. Soon the entire country was boop-boop-a-dooping, and animator Max Fleischer took notice. In 1932, his company created Betty Boop, a baby-voiced flapper with dark ringlet curls.

Another Reason to Hydrate

A study from the Georgia Institute of Technology discovered people who were dehydrated when they took tests that required

attention to details showed declines in problem-solving ability, as well as coordination and attention span. Add that to the way hydration helps protect our voice when we sing and its benefits to our general health. Keep that water bottle handy!
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"Anyone of my age knows that days pass at a far greater speed than when they were young."

Prince Charles



The "Young at Heart Jazz Trio" at Good Samaritan Auditorium in February, including Joy Webb, Ken Neidig and Joanie Eisenbraun.

Putting a Song into Hearts

When we meet to rehearse and sing together, we minister to each other and support each other. When we perform, we touch audience members, who can forget about their problems. Sometimes we can see the effect our singing has on them. Music goes straight from the ears and speaks to hearts and souls. We don't have to be an award-winning chorus to touch people's hearts. We just have to sing with our heart in the harmony of music and spirit.

Carolyn Brandenburg in The Harmonizer

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Lost Words from Our Childhood

Millennials have their own language, consisting mostly of texting abbreviations such as LOL, OMG and BFF. The language of our youth was much more colorful even though it is lost forever.

Heavens to *Murgatroyd* ...spell-checker doesn't even recognize that word! Lots of us drove *Jalopies*. We were *in like Flynn* and *living the life of Riley*. Even a regular guy couldn't accuse us of being a *knucklehead*, a *nincompoop* or a *pill*. Back in the olden days, life used to be *swell*, but when was the last time anything was *swell*? It's gone the way of *beehives*, *pageboys* and *the D.A.*; of *spats*, *knickers*, *poodle skirts*, *saddle shoes* and *pedal pushers*. We used to be *going like sixty* when that really meant something. *Kilroy was here*, but he isn't any more. Neither are these and a lot of other expressions, but if you remember them, we have our own secret code that the millennials will never understand.

Thanks to Joan for sharing this.

A 6-year-old was asked where his grandma lived. "Oh," he said, "she lives at the airport, and when we want her, we just go get her. Then, when we're done having her visit, we take her back to the airport."



Gary & Karen sang *I Wonder Why* in April

The nicest thing about the future is that it always starts tomorrow.



Joy was "in the pink" for her solo on *Rocky Top* in April

Reviving the Old-Time Radio Classics

We who grew up listening to old-time radio programs like *Jack Benny*, *Gunsmoke*, *Fibber McGee & Molly* and *Lux Radio Theater* experienced entertainment at a whole different level than today's TV-watchers. "With TV you see it. But with radio you have to imagine it," says Martin Grams, Jr., who has one of the world's largest collections of old-time radio show recordings. "It's like reading a novel—you envision what the character looks like, you envision the streets they are walking."

You can listen to them all again on a website curiously named Dumb.com. Thousands of the old shows are available and free to listen to, neatly broken up into categories: Adventure, Comedy, Crime, Detective, Drama, Gossip, History, Kids, Music, Mystery, Quiz, Sci-fi; Soap Opera, Thriller, Variety, Westerns and World War II. Check it out!

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