

# Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

<https://www.youngatheartlascruces.website/>

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## Remembering Godfrey Crane



Godfrey joined YAH last Fall after singing Bass with the Mesilla Valley Chorale for a few years. Sadly, he passed away unexpectedly just

before Thanksgiving. In case you didn't get to know him well, here is his story:

Godfrey was brought up in England and said he came here as a green-card alien in 1958 to bum around a bit. He ended up staying and spent two years in the Army as a draftee. After that, he spent 18 years in Manhattan, using his VA money to earn degrees in chemistry and helping to bring up four children.

Godfrey worked primarily in sales, marketing, and development of analytical instruments, during which time he managed to spend at least one night in every one of the 50 States. He said that the most fun he had for pay, however, was the

last thing he did: teaching high school chemistry for 10 years in Socorro, Texas. It was a pleasure to have known him, and we send our condolences to his wife, Johanna, and their family.

## How Mistletoe Became Everyone's Favorite Parasite



This holiday favorite inspires smooches, feeds birds, and may help treat cancer. But it also has a dark side. One of the more

romantic Christmas traditions is kissing under a sprig of mistletoe, hung from a ceiling or doorway. Those who find themselves under its green leaves might not know that this symbol of love is actually a vicious parasite that survives by sucking the nutrients from trees.

Don't think that making out under a parasite sounds very romantic? Well, it gets weirder. The plant's parasitic nature is probably why people began to think mistletoe was special enough to kiss under in the first

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place. Mistletoe seems to stay green miraculously all winter, and this is "the fundamental basis of all mid-winter traditions relating to mistletoe," says Jonathan Briggs, a mistletoe expert and consultant. But it keeps that lively green color by stealing water and soil minerals from its host tree.

It's not clear why people began kissing under mistletoe. One Norse myth claims that, after the god Balder was killed with a mistletoe arrow, people began to kiss under the parasite. The details of why they started kissing under it are somewhat fuzzy—it might have something to do with making peace under the plant. Other stories say that people started kissing under mistletoe because they believed it was a sign of fertility.

*National Geographic 12/18/2015*

### Why Not a Blanket?

In the Christmas song, "Do You Hear What I Hear?" there's a verse that says: *A child, a child, shivers in the cold. Let us bring him silver and gold. Not to cause any trouble, but wouldn't a blanket be a better idea?*



*The Bulletin wanted a photo of Virginia and the piano she donated but only ran a small size, so here's a better copy. Thanks again, Virginia.*

**"Feliz Navidad"** was written and first recorded by the Puerto Rican singer-songwriter José Feliciano in 1970. With its simple, heartfelt lyrics, "Feliz Navidad, próspero año y felicidad" ("Merry Christmas, a prosperous year and happiness"), followed by the text in English, "I wanna wish you a Merry Christmas from the bottom of my heart," it has

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become a Christmas classic and has gained popularity around the world. Feliciano says he recorded the song while feeling homesick as he remembered celebrating Christmas Eve with his brothers, eating traditional Puerto Rican foods, drinking rum, and going caroling.

*Wikipedia*



as a protection against the devil snatching your soul. During the Middle Ages in 14th century Europe, the bubonic plague (also known as the Black Death) was widespread. Because it was usually a fatal disease, and people were often very religious, the phrase "God Bless You" offered a benediction to someone who might no longer be living soon.

Nowadays, it is generally just the polite thing to say, which is probably the main reason why this practice persists. In place of "Bless you," some Americans instead may say "Gesundheit," the German word for "health." Many Americans do not even realize this is a German word (and usually are unaware of the true meaning).

### Why We Bless a Sneeze

When someone sneezes in the United States, more often than not, someone else says "Bless you!" The phrase first originated as "God bless you," because people used to believe a sneeze caused someone to expel their soul out of their body. "God bless you" or "Bless you" were used



*The Grinch Choir*