

Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

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Editor: Ray Scroggins

Benefits of Choral Singing

Researchers in Finland found that elderly choir singers had better verbal and cognitive flexibility than their non-singing peers. Choir singing involves complex information processing. According to Emmi Pentikäinen, PhD, a doctoral student at the University of Helsinki, it combines learning and memorizing lyrics and melodies, processing sensory stimuli, using motor functions related to voice production and control, and linguistic output. It also stirs emotions. What's more, choir singers in the study reported greater happiness. (Let's hope we can all get together again soon!) *Bottom Line Health*



George M. Cohan was an American entertainer, playwright, composer, lyricist, actor, singer, dancer and theatrical producer.

He began his career as a child, performing with his parents and sister in a vaudeville act known as "The Four Cohans". Beginning with *Little Johnny Jones* in 1904, he wrote, composed, produced, and appeared in more than three dozen Broadway musicals. Cohan wrote more than 50 shows and published more than 300 songs during his lifetime. We've sung many of them, including the standards "Over There", "Give My Regards to Broadway", "The Yankee Doodle Boy" and "You're a Grand Old Flag".

Cohan was born in 1878 in Providence, Rhode Island, to Irish Catholic parents. A baptismal certificate from St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church indicated that he was born on July 3, but Cohan and his family always insisted that George had been "born on the Fourth of July!"

George's parents were traveling vaudeville performers, and he joined them on stage while still an infant, first as a prop, then learning to dance and sing soon after he could walk and talk. A statue of Cohan in Times Square, New York City commemorates his contributions to American musical theatre.



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Only in America

Here are a few words you'll find used only in American English.:

Cheesy- Other languages have words that mean false, tacky, or trying too hard, but only the English slang term "cheesy" can fully express something so fake that it stinks like Camembert,

Serendipity- This word comes from Serendip, an ancient name for Sri Lanka, and means the state of finding pleasant or desirable things by accident. In 18th century Britain, the writer Horace Walpole created the word in a folk tale about 'the three princes of Serendip,' who "were always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things they were not in quest of."

Silly- There are plenty of synonyms for ridiculous or foolish, but this one also means lighthearted, playful, and kind of fun. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, 500 years ago silly meant "happy, blissful, lucky, or blessed. From there it came to mean innocent, or deserving of compassion," which morphed into the absurdity we enjoy today in silly hats, silly jokes, and, perhaps best of all, Monty Python's "Ministry of Silly Walks".

Gobbledygook- although it sounds like Middle English. this delightful term for unintelligible jargon dates only from World War II, when American Congressman Maury Maverick used it in a memo dated March 30, 1944, banning 'gobbledygook language.' Apparently, Maverick was thinking of a turkey's "gobble."

Spam- Before 'spam' was a word for unwanted emails, it represented the successful repackaging of unwanted meats. Introduced in 1937, SPAM was a clever way to repackage the undesirable cut of pork shoulder. The brand name is a combination of "spiced" and "ham," invented in a naming contest. The newer meaning derives from a skit by the 1970s British comedy troupe Monty Python, in which a band of Vikings drown out all other conversation by shouting the word "spam" over and over again—much as a barrage of unsolicited emails overwhelms everything else in your inbox.

Reader's Digest

After all is said and done, there's a lot more said than done.

Anonymous



"Ignore it. Telemarketer."

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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.

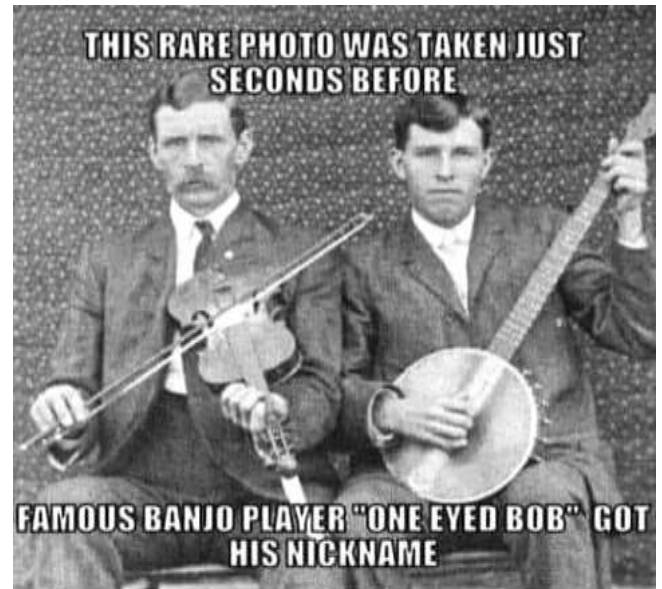
Just think of the "eureka moments" that occur when we're engaged in the most mundane tasks, such as showering or doing the dishes. A study by the University of British Columbia shows that brain activity in the brain areas that deal with problem solving increases with mind-wandering, when a person is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

Jeffrey Davis on PSYCHOLOGYTODAY.COM



The longest word in the English language is 189,819 letters long! It's the proper name for the human protein nicknamed "Titin" and allegedly takes a person three-and-a-half hours to read out loud.

Zia Natural Gas News



The tale of one eyed Bob

Do Couples Grow to Look Alike?

Although it seems that many couples grow to look more like each other over the years, it only appears that way. According to a study published in *Scientific Reports* by researchers at Stanford University, who studied photos of 517 couples taken within two years of marriage and between 20 and 69 years later, people seek out partners with features similar to their own. Then, over time, they tend to use each other's gestures and facial expressions, which may make it seem that they come to resemble one another.

BottomLine Personal