

# Chorus Chatter

News and Musings for Young at Heart Chorus Members

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**Arbors of del Rey** is a memory-care facility on Del Rey. A small group of Young at Heart members sang there a couple of times in the last two years, as there isn't room for the full chorus. In an interview with Cheryl Fallstead, editor of *Southwest Senior*, last year, Executive Director Lupe Rios said, "It is a freestanding assisted living home dedicated to a holistic approach to memory care and is the only community in southern New Mexico associated with the Eden Alternative, an international movement designed to address the three plagues that come from moving someone from what they have always known to be home to a new home: Boredom, loneliness and helplessness."

Rios explained, "Listening to their favorite genre of music has proved to be especially helpful for those with dementia, making them feel happier, calmer, and often awakening positive memories." We're glad to be able to help with the music we bring.



## What You Can Learn from a Vocal Coach

An article in the Sun-News a couple of months ago featured local vocal coach Annie Pennies, whose voice lessons are geared to improving her students' overall health as well as their vocal talent. Most of us aren't planning to take voice lessons, but she has some good advice about singing and health.

Pennies, who is also certified in yoga therapeutics, says both singing and yoga help improve breathing, which is a key to good health. She says, "People don't realize a simple hum, a simple vibration in your body using your breath and vocal cords...can help vibrate your central nervous system. It's a way for you to release that no other things can do."

She teaches from her home studio and has more than 30 students of all ages. She says that the older members have increased their lung capacity, enabling them to sing longer lines of music by taking deeper breaths.

Pennies is working on her doctorate and continues to explore and refine the ways in which singing impacts people's health. Students often tell her that working with her feels more like a therapy session than a voice lesson.

Every semester, her students have a recital at Good Samaritan. Maybe you have attended one if you live there. You might even be interested in lessons. Not everyone who takes them wants to become a star performer. If interested, you can contact her by email at [penniesa@icloud.com](mailto:penniesa@icloud.com) to explore whether they might work for you.

*Ant: a small insect that, though always at work, still finds time to go on picnics.*

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**Mike Weichmann** says he joined the chorus after attending our inspiring February concert at Good Sam's. He's now working to get his old voice back after a seven-year hiatus from singing.

Mike's first exposure to music, he says, was "as a scrawny middle-schooler, lugging an alto saxophone as big as me in one hand and loose books in the other." According to Mike, he accomplished this while trudging for a mile through the snow-covered hills and streets of Madison, uphill both ways, dodging mad dogs and rabid badgers." In high school, he played in concert and marching bands.

At age 50, with "zero" singing experience, he joined a three-man, five-woman Madrigal group called Tudor Rose. He notes they sang the real oldies, which dated back about seven centuries! After retiring to Las Cruces in 2003, Mike sang with Vos Vaqueros for a few years and also with Nancy Ritchey's church choir, including some solos. He says they included songs from Enya, John Denver and Sound of Music. He also dabbled with acapella songs at the Howling Coyote open mic. We're glad he's back to singing and look forward to a solo now and then when he's ready.

Mike left Madison at the age of 17 for the sunny climes of Ft. Campbell, Kentucky and Viet Nam for a year, after which he enjoyed a year in southern Germany and tours of the Mid-East and Europe for six weeks.

Moving to Denton, Texas, he attended NTSU year-round for three years, then on to Tulsa, Oklahoma to get an MS in Urban Affairs while also working two years with Social Security. His career took him to Albuquerque as an investigator for the Labor Department and then to the Roswell area, where he was the lone lawman for 22 years before retiring.

On the bicentennial, July 4, 1976, he and Marilyn were married. They have two single sons living here, "in the 40-year old's first house," according to Mike.



*Jo and Eleanor sing "May You Always" on our April program.*

## Do Sing in the Shower

The shower, with its cocoon of privacy and superlative acoustics, brings out the diva in us all. And we would be wise to take the stage and croon away. Research shows that singing enhances immunity and boosts your mood, so sing your heart out, and soak in a song's benefits.

Prevention Magazine

*Don't worry about what other people think. They don't do it very often anyhow.*

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**Eileen Rosenblatt** joined the chorus in March. She says she had no other musical background, but she's doing just fine singing with us. Eileen came to Las Cruces almost three years ago, in September, 2015.

Before that, she was a bus operator for the New York City transit system in Manhattan for 20 years and then in Orlando, Florida for another 10 years. She said traffic moved so slowly in Manhattan that she sometimes passed out magazines for her passengers to read. One 10-block stretch took an hour, and she invited passengers to get off and window shop before she picked them up again at the next corner!

Eileen was widowed in January, 2016 after 17 years of marriage to her husband, Leonard. From a previous marriage of 25 years, she has two daughters, Jennifer and Cathleen, and two grandchildren, Erin, who is 14, and John, who is 11. In her spare time, Eileen says she loves to cook and read.



**John Gardenhire** joined Young at Heart just a couple of months ago, but previously he sung with the Good Time Singers here in Las Cruces for several years and as well as in church choirs.

John has lived in Las Cruces for the past five years. He retired from the Air Force after 22 years of service and then worked as a government contractor in the Boeing space and missile programs. His wife died about six years ago after 47 years of marriage but has a son who lives here.

John says he likes the way we're all comfortable singing together, whether we have sheets with words or notes. The sociability and friendship are as much a part of who we are as is our music.



### A Step Up

Our new location for practices, in the choir room of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, on Alameda, is a big step up from our previous location, which had served us well for many years. It's set up just for choral rehearsals, so we all can see and hear better. A big thanks to Doug Weeks and the folks at St. Paul's for letting us use their terrific room.

Note that there is plenty of parking in the big lot just to the south of the church. Also, if you use the restrooms, be sure the hallway door leading from the choir room to the restrooms is blocked open. It's locked from the back side, so you could be locked in the hallway! Also, because most of the flat surfaces in the choir room are filled with the church's materials, George said he would bring the folding table he uses to our first practice each month so Joan can put out the music folders.

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## What to Wear

If you've been wondering what to wear for our performances, here's a list of what we plan for each month:

February---*Women*: White tops, black pants, red scarves

*Men*: White shirts, black pants, red ties

March---*Women*: White tops, black pants, green scarves

*Men*: White or green shirts, black pants, green ties

April---*Women*: Pastel tops, tan pants

*Men*: Tan pants, pastel shirts

May---*Women*: Pastel tops, tan pants

*Men*: Tan pants, Hawaiian or pastel shirts

September---*Women*: Fall colored tops, tan pants

*Men*: White shirts, string ties, tan pants

October--- *Women*: Western attire

*Men*: Western attire

November---*Women*: Jewel colored tops, black pants

*Men*: White shirts, string ties, black pants or Military dress

December--- *Women*: Christmas colored tops, scarves, black pants

*Men*: Christmas colored shirts or white shirts, red or green ties, black pants.

## Songbirds

*Here's a nice article submitted by Marcie Palmer. It was written recently by Good Samaritan Village resident Chris Sharpe.*

With the arrival of spring and summer, we are not only treated to blooming flowers, bushes and luscious greenery, but we also experience several of nature's other

presentations. One of the most appealing treats are sounds, when the early morning gifts us with concerts by our feathered friends. It is a good day when we hear the happy chirping and calling and the melodic trill that lets their little souls shine so brightly. The persistent cooing of doves communicating makes the performance complete.

Here at Good Sam we are privileged to have quite a few songbirds of our very own. Several times a week, one can hear harmonious vocalizing coming from different parts of the village. When singing, we express ourselves in a most joyful way. During worship or in a more relaxed gathering, the sound of our voice lifts our inner being.

Singing! It is the ability to create music with our voice. What a heavenly gift. A certain melody can stir our emotions and take us back to a special place in our earlier life, to the protective arms of our family, to long-gone friends, and to our greatest love.

Whether it is the sweet tune of a bird or the warmth of a human voice engaged in song, their dear sounds touch our hearts, comfort us, and make us smile. So, keep on singing, all you songbirds. We are listening.

*Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance.*

*Good judgement comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgement!*