



The New MexiChords Barbershop Chorus

The
SERENADER

*Celebrating 73 Years of Barbershop Harmony in Albuquerque
Chartered September 14, 1952 - Incorporated October 2, 1953*

E-Newsletter



Editor: Fred Green poolvacman@gmail.com ■ February 2026 ■ An Occasional Publication As the Need Arises

Are You Singing Enough? A Music Therapist Breaks Down the Surprising Health Benefits - “It’s a Way to Feel Human Again”

Singing is one of those rare activities that don’t require talent to be enjoyable — those of us who can’t carry a tune often have just as much fun as professional crooners. If you need proof, drop it on a karaoke night at your local bar. Partaking in song is one of the great joys of being human, and there’s plenty of research behind that.

“For millennia, humans have used song to soothe, grieve, celebrate, and connect. It’s one of our oldest forms of communication,” [Elisha Ellis Madsen](#), board-certified music therapist and master of social work candidate, told Nice News. “Now, science is catching up. Physiologically, singing regulates the nervous system through rhythmic breathing and vibration, which calm the body whether or not it ‘sounds good.’ Emotionally, it reawakens our capacity for play and self-expression — things many adults have lost touch with.”

In addition to those boons, there are myriad other mental and physical benefits of channeling your inner rock star (beyond just livening up long road trips). In fact, these benefits are impactful enough for us to make the case that you should be singing much more than you currently do ... unless you’re someone who already turns every third thought into a melody. In that case, congrats on taking care of your health!

Keep reading for a rundown of singing’s unexpected upsides.

The Benefits of Singing

Reduces Stress

You may be well aware that singing “just feels good” — and here’s the likely explanation for that: According to research, we’re actually reducing cortisol when we sing, which in turn reduces stress. In a [2016 study](#) of cancer patients and their caregivers, researchers found that singing decreased cortisol in both groups. Likewise, a [2021 study](#) found that belting out tunes dropped cortisol levels in both solo and group singers.

That said, [another study](#) of professional singers found that while low-stakes singing (i.e., not in front of an audience) *did* reduce cortisol and stress, those levels actually increased when participants were put in a “high-stress” singing situation (a public performance). So if you’re someone who balks at singing in front of others, perhaps stick to shower solos for the stress-busting benefits.

In general, though, the tension-relieving power of singing is well-established. “Singing is one of the most accessible forms of stress relief we have,” said Madsen. “It slows the breath, steadies the nervous system, and strengthens both body and brain.”

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Boosts Cognitive Health

This one might surprise you, but according to several studies, singing may be a great way to boost cognitive function. [A paper](#) published this past September found that “lifetime duration of choir singing was associated with enhanced episodic memory and verbal fluency,” and a [2021 cross-sectional study](#) found that “choir singers performed better than controls on the verbal flexibility domain of executive function.”

“Neurologically, research shows that singing lights up multiple areas of the brain — language, memory, motor, and emotion,” explained Madsen, “which helps preserve cognitive flexibility and protect against cognitive decline.”

A [2025 literature review](#) that assessed the impact of singing on cognitive health in aging adults concluded that “as a low-cost, scalable intervention, singing holds promise for addressing cognitive and emotional challenges associated with aging, offering an accessible avenue to support healthy aging and enhance quality of life across diverse populations.”

Improves Respiratory Function

When you take a deep breath and let it out by singing, you’re actually improving your respiratory function, research suggests. A [2016 study](#) found that the average lung capacity of university choir participants was higher than that of non-choir students, and [a 2021 review](#) determined that, while more research is needed, “there is a good theoretical rationale to support the therapeutic use of singing for people with COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease] as a method of improving physiological parameters and breath control.”

Stimulates the Immune Response

In the 2016 study of cancer patients and their caregivers, group singing was also associated with an increase in the activity of [cytokines](#) — proteins that assist the immune system in defending against disease. The authors posited that this could be related to the decrease in cortisol, though they noted it was impossible to determine causality over correlation.

Facilitates Social Bonding

One of the more well-documented benefits of singing is its ability to foster social bonding. At least two studies have found that crooning alongside others raised levels of [oxytocin](#) — including [this 2025 paper](#). Additionally, a [2012 study](#) determined that social connectedness was one of the positive outcomes of a choir singing program for adults living with chronic mental illness or disability.

And research from 2015 that evaluated adult education participants in singing and non-singing classes found that those in the former felt connected to each other faster than those in the latter. This was dubbed “[the icebreaker effect](#)” (and has us wondering if singalongs would be a better idea for warming up at work retreats than sharing fun facts about ourselves).

Madsen has observed these advantages in her music therapy practice as well. “In group settings, I see what researchers call the ‘social equalizer’ effect,” she said. “Singing together creates belonging, empathy, and shared joy. That’s part of why it’s so healing.”

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Make Music Your Mission

In conclusion, regardless of how talented (or tone-deaf) you are, expressing yourself through song should be a self-care priority. And there are plenty of opportunities to partake — you just have to seek them out. You can begin by searching for community choirs in your area, checking in for opportunities at your church or temple, or even starting your own singing group with friends. Music is a free, accessible way to improve your mental and physical well-being.

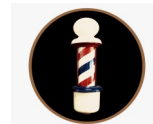
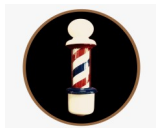
There are also less tangible but perhaps even more profound rewards. Just ask a music therapist: “In a world where isolation is rising and technology often replaces real connection, singing helps us return to our roots,” said Madsen. “It’s creative, embodied, and communal. It’s a simple way to feel human again.”



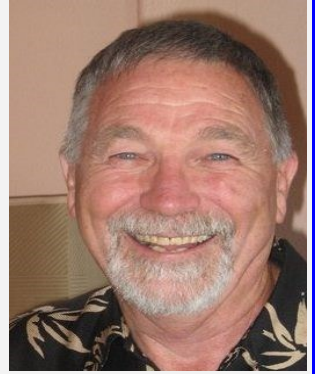
Put a little Sunshine in your life.
Come Sing with Us!!



Together 
in Harmony



**FROM OUR DIRECTOR:
“BIFFLEISMS”**



Hello, fellow harmonizers! As always, I hope this finds you well.

A shorty this month, I think. The spring show is coming and a rehearsal schedule has been created. Watch for it soon. I am mulling over a couple of new songs to keep us, and our repertoire, fresh, so we'll not program some of our current repertoire.

Chattanooga Choo Choo has some spots that were learned wrong, and unlearning is much harder than learning, as we know. I won't schedule it if it doesn't have a good chance of coming up to our standards of excellence, so spend some serious time with the learning tracks on this, please. The "trouble" spots are in measures 21-24 and 29-32. The first two bars of these are the same notes – different words – but the last two bars are DIFFERENT. Important to get this into your memory. I'm going to give it another week or so to see how it goes before I make a final decision on it for the show.

Please be on the lookout for potential guests. It's a great time to invite people to see who we are and what magic we create together. Imagine the joy you can bring into their lives by inviting them to join us some Tuesday. Biggest favor you can do for them. Don't you wish you had started this hobby earlier? I know I do!

And fire up your ad sales engine, too. This is the single most important revenue source we have. Everyone should sell at least one ad. It's easy. All you gotta do is ask!

For the record, the show is the weekend of May 8 and 9. Mark your calendars now, and don't plan a wedding or vacation or some such on that weekend.

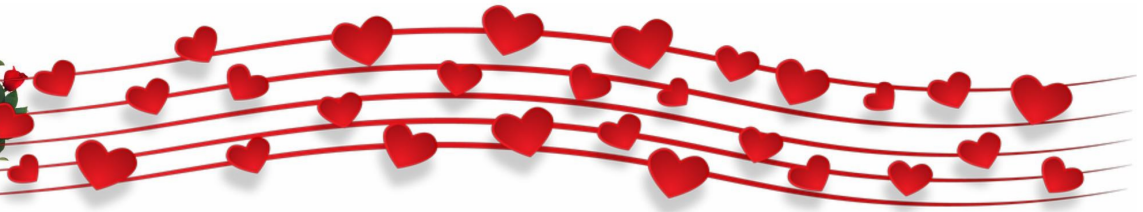
Thanks for reading. See you Tuesday, Champs.

Bill

If you haven't seen our 2025 Xmas show yet, it can be viewed on Youtube at:

New MexiChords Christmas 12-12-2025 7 PM,
1st Half - <https://youtu.be/Delby-HiUi0>
2nd Half - <https://youtu.be/jeK03RGzKtE>

New MexiChords Christmas 12-13-2025 2 PM,
1st Half - <https://youtu.be/4mO9abw4GJo>
2nd Half - <https://youtu.be/y5INwpkIKeA>



This year do something EXTRAORDINARY!

Singing Valentines

Surprise someone special with a unique Valentine serenade!
A talented quartet, from one of Albuquerque's five award winning choruses, will appear bearing gifts, at the place of your choice in Albuquerque - Rio Rancho to share the gift of song in perfect, four-part harmony.

Make your reservation early!

February 13-14

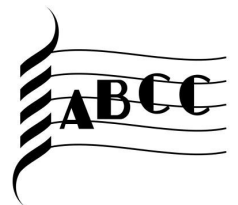
Singing Valentines begin at \$75

For reservation and more details:



Albuquerque Florist

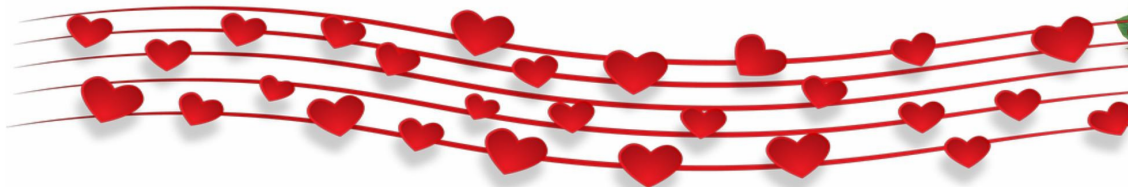
ABQValentines.com



Or Call 505-323-SING (7464)

Send by phone, \$20 anywhere in the US!

Senior Buyers Discount Available. Additional fees apply for travel outside the Albuquerque Metro area, same day orders, and extra gift items or songs.



The New MexiChords Lineup

As of 1 February 2026

DIRECTOR

Bill Biffle

BARITONE

Koury, Ruth
Randall, Ron
Strohl, Bill
Vertrees, Joe

BASS

Butler, Larry
Grady, Richard
Green, Fred
Lobaton, Jay
Maxwell, Nick
Porter, Doug
Quintana, Jerry
Ring, Dave
Taylor, John
Twiggs, Leo

TENORS

Baker, Charlene
Berardinelli, Bev
Browning, Jo
Green, Debbie
Meyer, Cam
Ratcliff, Hal
Yates, Janet

LEAD

Andrews, Tina
Cardillo, Joe
Cole, Tom
Courtney, Bob
Green, Eric
Lash, Mike
Leverett, Juliette
Miracle, John
Nelson, Arlo
Parsons, Walt
Preston, Judy
Stavert, Xannie
Taylor, Lynn



Do you love to sing? Tired of entertaining only yourself
in your car or the shower? C'mon out and see how
much fun it can be to sing with a group of others!

See us at:

www.NMChords.com

Our chorus and quartets love to sing for our audiences and to share our love of barbershop.
You are invited to join with us to enjoy an evening of camaraderie and great barbershop
harmony. Don't miss out on the fun. Come and see what it's all about!

What? Weekly Chapter Meeting & Rehearsal

When? Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

Where? St John's United Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St NE, ABQ 87110



Here's a barbershop shout-out to our members with birthdays in February!

Bill Strohl	12 Feb
Joe Cardillo	20 Feb
John Miracle	24 Feb
Cam Meyer	28 Feb

**IMAGINE 80 SINGERS ON THE RISERS
BE A SINGER-BRINGER**

Membership
begins with Me

The New MexiChords Calendar

Upcoming Chorus Events

2026

13-14 Feb - Singing Valentines, Order now at ABQValentines.com or call 505-323-7464

8 May - Spring Show, 7pm, St John's Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St, ABQ

9 May - Spring Show, 2pm, St John's Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St, ABQ

Stay up-to-date with us by visiting our "Shows & Events" page on the website at:

www.NMChords.com

We are a local chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) and a member of the Rocky Mountain District (RMD), which includes parts of the following States/Areas:

Wyoming

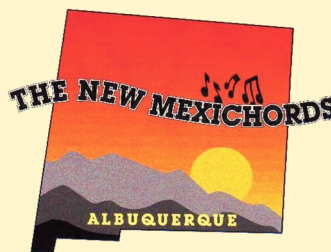
Colorado

Most of *Utah*

eastern *Idaho*

southern *Montana*

northern New
western por-
*Dakota, Ne-
Kansas*



*Mexico
tions of South
braska, and*

The Serenader is *your* newsletter and vehicle for sharing information, stories, and news about the chapter, chorus, quartets, and the people in them. To make it interesting and a fun read, I would encourage all of you to provide articles for publication, photos of quartets in action, our members, chorus on the risers..... Anything that you find interesting and would like to see in the newsletter to share with others. — The Editor



Your Chuckles for February

I could tell a joke about pizza ... but it's a little cheesy!

I found a wooden shoe in my toilet. It was clogged.

I met a nun who wiped her nose on her clothes. She had a very nasty habit.

If a pig loses its voice ... Does it become disgruntled?

I used to run a dating service for chickens ... But I was struggling to make hens meet.

I named my puppies Rolex and Timex ... So I could have watch dogs....

Where do pirates get their hooks? Second hand stores!

Never criticize someone until you have walked a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them, you'll be a mile away, and you'll have their shoes.

I couldn't believe that the highway department called my brother a thief. But when I got home, all the signs were there.

What's a foot long and slippery? A slipper.

What happened to the guy who sued the airline company over his missing luggage? He lost his case.

I've gone to the dentist so many times now... Trust me, I know the drill.

I lost my wife's audio book. Now, I'll never hear the end of it!

Never tell a lie to an x-ray technician. They can see right through you.

I saw two birds eating ice cream out in the sun. They were Baskin' Robins!!

The town's Italian chef pasta away last night. Now, he's just a pizza history!

I drove by a sign the other day that read, "Broken puppets for sale. No strings attached."



Our Mission:

The members of the Albuquerque Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society dedicate themselves to:

- **Continually seek the joy to be found in singing well in the barbershop style**
- **Promote the benefits of our hobby at every available opportunity**
- **Provide our community with high quality musical entertainment, and**
- **Foster continual musical growth and fellowship among the members**

To be added to our fan list, send your name and email address to subscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com
To be removed, send your email address to unsubscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com