



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 ■ April 2026 ■ An Occasional Publication As the Need Arises



A Musical Note

from Brian Sellnow (*Las Vegas Silver Statesmen*)

Singing is a physical as well as a mental activity. When we work together as a group, we concentrate almost exclusively on the mental aspect - listening to the guys around us, tuning and balancing, following the director, making sure we sing the right notes and words. Even our warmups are focused on instilling muscle “memory” as we practice matching vowel sounds and achieving harmony. We rarely encourage chorus members to sing as loud as they can and avoid non-musical vocal production. We expect people to blend in rather than sticking out.

What this means is that we don’t do much during our rehearsal periods to become physically stronger singers. But our breathing apparatus and vocal cords are muscles, and we can do exercises that help us sing with better tonal consistency, duration and support. These are exercises you can make part of your daily routine, in the shower or in the car.

For most physical exercise, the mantra is “no pain, no gain” - running or lifting weights until your muscles are sore provides the maximum benefit. Singing doesn’t work like that - if you feel discomfort, you’re doing something wrong. Damaging your vocal cords through overexertion will not improve your singing.

The first step should be the first thing we do at the beginning of each singing session: make sure your alignment is good, to allow breath support. Stand or sit upright, with your body relaxed. Then try some of the exercises below, and see which ones are helpful: With your mouth closed, sniff strongly three times, then sing “HA HA HA” as loudly as you can. The sniffing forces your vocal cords open. Singing “ha” with a hard attack will exercise your vocal cords without a sustained effort. Keep the syllables short.

Sing long tones, as loud as you can without over-singing. Ensure the note is fully supported throughout. Try timing yourself - if you can hold a note for thirty seconds, try to get to thirty-five. Try to stay on pitch, but duration is the goal.

Glide, up and down, to the extremes of your range. Use breath support to minimize the “break” between chest voice and head voice. At the bottom of your range, try singing something in the vocal “fry” zone, like something out of a horror movie. Hum a scale or a song as loud as you can. Your lips should be together, but your jaw and everything else should be fully relaxed.

Singing (or doing any of these exercises) through a straw will help maximize sound production while minimizing use of air. Breathing correctly is important, but the point is how much sound you can make with the air.

There are a number of exercises and variations. Try them and find which work best for you. And of course, stay hydrated, all year around. Avoid caffeine before you sing!

Smile Often . . .

It keeps other people guessing!

Friendly Alert!

The Big Band concert this season will be on Wednesday evening, April 8th, at 7:00pm.

The Outpost Performance Space

210 Yale Blvd SE, Albuquerque

Reserved Seating

The concert is FREE (no admission cost), but you must have a ticket

There are not many seats, so if you want to come, please go to

<https://tickets.holdmyticket.com/tickets/458618>

to reserve tickets at this new venue.



It's being in a Chorus I discovered ...

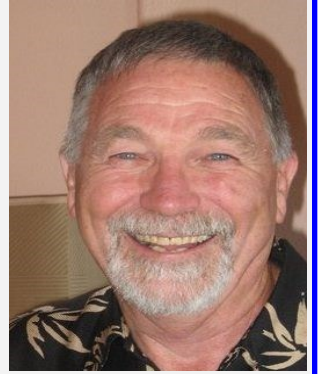
- ... I had a voice that was valued.
- ... my confidence - both musical and personal.
- ... discipline, focus, and selflessness.
- ... there were other people just like me.
- ... I was good at something.
- ... that hard work pays off.
- ... how to interact with people of all ages.
- ... how my actions impact others.
- ... how to manage my nerves.
- ... the sheer joy of making music with others.
- ... that being prepared isn't always enough.
- ... how to deal with making mistakes.
- ... myself.
- ... my calling.
- ... how awesome making music with other people is.

It's being in a chorus that I always have a source of comfort, a family, and a sanctuary away from the world around

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FROM OUR DIRECTOR:

“BIFFLEISMS”



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

As I write this, we have seven, count 'em, seven rehearsals until the show. All the songs are coming along nicely and most of them are at the place we can now add musicality, emotion, and meaning to them. The only songs that still need work – to be able to relax and make music from them – are Gang That Sang and, of course, Consider Yourself. We're going to start running GTS to get it smooth and “in the voice”, over the next few weeks. Consider Yourself is the remaining challenge. The first part is coming well, but the run up to the key change and the part after that are still in need of serious work. This is the most challenging part of the song and will require a fair amount of rehearsal time – and more time on your own with the learning tracks - to get up to performance speed by the show weekend. So, please, put the time in on that at home.

Again, here are the songs on the show:

Hi, Neighbor
Consider Yourself
The Gang That Sang Heart of my Heart
Georgia On My Mind
Kentucky Babe
Chattanooga Choo Choo
Softly, as I Leave You
Bye, Neighbor

This is not the exact order, more thought needs to go into that, but they're all good songs that we'll love to sing, and our audience will love to hear.

We have booked a great guest quartet from Southern California, 2024 Far Western District Champs, *Moving Parts*, for the show. I promised you some more information this month, so here goes.

The quartet is chock full of big-time barbershop talent. The tenor and baritone – James and Dallas Halvorson - are brothers from a long-time barbershop family that are stalwarts in the Las Vegas Chapter, where our fearless editor, Fred, and bottomless bass, Larry, used to sing with them. It will be nice to help Fred and Larry welcome them here and show them the hospitality the New MexiChords are famous for.

The other two guys are sorta famous, too. The lead is Alan Gordon, two-time gold medalist quartet singer – *Gotcha* in 2004 and *Masterpiece* in 2013 - and is the director of the Masters of Harmony Chorus. The bass, Dr. Dan Wessler, is director of the Westminster Chorus and 2018 gold medalist with *After Hours* quartet.

So, qualifications, credentials, talent, and skills galore. It's a great quartet, full of really nice guys, and our fans – and we – are gonna love them!

Keep firing up your ad sales engine, too. The deadline for ad copy draweth nigh. 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!

Thanks for reading. See you Tuesday, Champs.

Bill

The New MexiChords Proudly Presents

New MexiChords Chorus



Friday May 8, 2026 7 PM
Saturday May 9, 2026 2 PM

Moving Parts Quartet



2626 Arizona NE, Albuquerque
St. John's United Methodist Church

The New MexiChords Lineup

DIRECTOR

Bill Biffle

BARITONE

Koury, Ruth
Randall, Ron
Strohl, Bill

BASS

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

TENORS

Baker, Charlene
Berardinelli, Bev
Ratcliff, Hal
Yates, Janet

LEAD

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



AN ARTICLE for You

We can continue to borrow most of our content from other newsletters and the internet, or we can actually have more news from OUR OWN CHAPTER. This, however, requires input from you, our chorus.

Become immortalized with your name on the by-line and an article filled with your own words. There's no limit on what you can say (within the bounds of good taste). It can be a short piece on something you have done or know about. It can be a long piece on something you are passionate about. It can be an installment on a series of articles. It can even be a regular column.

What is your quartet doing? How do you think the chorus is doing? What could the chapter be doing better? Do you have some pictures of us doing something, performing somewhere, enjoying our time together someplace? Can you share some historical perspective about the New MexiChords in word or photos? Are you having fun?

Do you have a funny story? What do you think a prospective member would like to see?

It's YOUR chapter, YOUR chorus, and YOUR newsletter. I'm only the editor... Thanks!!

Durango Ragtime and Early Jazz Festival - April 16-19th:

If you enjoy ragtime—whether it's piano, guitar, ukulele, horns, or vocals—you might want to consider an easy 3½-hour drive to beautiful Durango, CO in mid-April. It's the perfect excuse to immerse yourself in the wonderful music people were listening to over 100 years ago.

The Durango Ragtime & Early Jazz Festival brings together seven of the finest musicians in the world for a weekend that's just plain fun. You'll hear classic ragtime piano with that irresistible syncopated bounce, early New Orleans-style jazz, blues, and those great Tin Pan Alley songs we all love. It's music from roughly 1890 through the early 1930s—full of melody, charm, and rhythm—the kind that makes you tap your foot, hum along, or even burst into song.

And the variety is terrific. On piano, you'll hear Adam Swanson, Richard Dowling, Frederick Hodges, and Domingo Mancuello. But it's not just piano—far from it. The wonderful Don Neely will be playing saxophone, clarinet, and even musical saw. Craig Ventresco brings his ragtime guitar, ukulele, and mandolin (you may know him from the R. Crumb film *Crumb*), and everything will be driven along by the incomparable Danny Coats on drums.

Here is a short video on Youtube so you can learn more.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36gw8dJ4AVw&t=64s>

For more information, and to purchase tickets, please visit durangoragtime.com. The full festival passes are almost sold out.

Provided by Judy Muldawer

Harry Warren:

Anyone familiar with Looney Tunes, is certainly familiar with these songs. But do you know who wrote them?

- Jeepers Creepers
- September in the Rain
- Lulu's Back in Town
- You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby
- Shuffle Off To Buffalo
- We're In The Money

They (and many others) were written by Harry Warren, one of the most successful songwriters of the American popular song era. He actually wrote more songs—and had more #1 hits—than Irving Berlin, yet many people have never heard his name.

Born in Brooklyn in 1893, he wrote hundreds of songs that became standards, especially during Hollywood's golden age. If you watched Looney Tunes, you've probably heard his music without realizing it.

Here is a delightful piece about him by Mark Steyn (sung by Nat King Cole) — well worth a listen:

<https://www.steynonline.com/15646/i-found-a-million-dollar-baby-in-a-five-and-ten>

Provided by Judy Muldawer

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 April!

Dave Ring 1 Apr

John Taylor 2 Apr

Juliette Leverett 25 Apr



Here is *Delta Quadrant*, just one of our quartets. Does your quartet have a more current photo than what is shown on our website?

<https://www.nmchords.com/our-quartets.html>

If you are a new quartet or wish to update your photo, please send your contact info and photo to:

webmaster@newmexichords.groupanizer.com

The New MexiChords Calendar

Upcoming Chorus Events

2026

- 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
- 23 Jun - National Anthem at Isotopes Ballgame, 6:30pm, 1601 Avenida Cesar Chavez SE
- 4 Jul - Naturalization Ceremony, 10am, Expo New Mexico, 300 San Pedro Dr NE

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

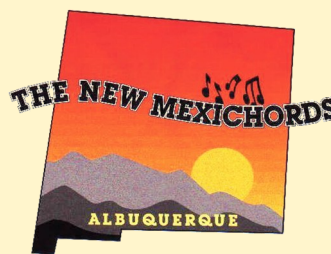
Most of Utah

eastern Idaho

southern Montana

northern New Mexico

western portions of South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas



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 April

Which rock group has four guys who can't sing or play instruments? Mount Rushmore.
What do you call two bananas? Slippers.
There are three types of people in the world: Those who can count and those who can't...
Why can't a nose be 12 inches long? Because then it'd be a foot...
I told my daughter she was drawing her eyebrows too high. She looked at me surprised...
Did you hear about the lady who couldn't stop collecting magazines? She had issues...
Why did the invisible man turn down the job offer? He couldn't see himself doing it.
Why did the roofer go to the doctor? He had shingles....
A book hit my head and I've only my shelf to blame.
My three favorite things are eating my family and not using commas...
I snack so my kitchen doesn't get lonely between meals...
What happened when the cat swallowed a ball of yarn? She had mittens.
What do you get when you cross a vampire with a snowman? Frostbite!
Why do birds fly south for the winter? Because it's too far to walk.
Where did the music teacher leave her keys? In the piano!
What gets wetter the more it dries? A towel...
How do billboards talk? Sign language.
One of the shortest wills ever written: "Being of sound mind, I spent all the money."



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