



The

# SERENADER

*Celebrating 72 Years of Barbershop Harmony in Albuquerque  
Chartered September 14, 1952 - Incorporated October 2, 1953*

E-Newsletter

Editor: Fred Green poolvacman@gmail.com ■ April 2025 ■ An Occasional Publication As the Need Arises



## ONE TIP TO FREE UP YOUR SINGING VOICE

by Arden Kaywin

In all my years of singing and teaching, the most important single concept I have come to understand is that singing sounds and feels a whole lot better when the singer trusts that their body already knows how to make a resonant sound. This trust has come from the knowledge that as humans, our bodies are one of the most efficient mechanisms for making sound that exists in nature. We are all born with the ability to make an incredibly resonant sound and the majority of us have no problem trusting that idea when we talk. Yet when we sing, all of a sudden trust goes out the window and we think we need to control, force, push, or help the voice come out a certain way to ensure we sound good. In an effort to sound good, our best intentions sabotage the efficiency and resonance that we already have, and we end up with a less resonant, less efficient, and less “good” sound.

So, what to do? Stop “singing” and start “talking on pitch.”

This may sound simplistic and like mere semantics to you, but the moment you switch the script inside your head to stop singing and start talking on pitch instead, you take the pressure off of needing to sound “good,” the habits of control loosen their grip, and the voice will start to align more freely with the efficiency and resonance your body is innately built to produce.

Here is an exercise to get in touch with what it feels like to “talk on pitch.”

1. Begin with a simple breathing exercise. Focus on releasing the belly and releasing the ribs to allow the breath to come in freely. Be careful not to suck air in or pull the shoulders upwards in an effort to get more air. Rather, as you inhale, visualize sending the breath on an imaginary journey down through your body, through your feet, and into the floor as though you were growing roots with this breath beneath your feet. Then, exhale on a hiss, being sure to engage the support in your lower abdomen and oblique muscles. Place the palm of your hand over your lower abdomen (very low, just above your pelvic bone), and what you should feel when you hiss is that these muscles go from being soft to being taut, and they stay taut without pushing inwards throughout the duration of the hiss. If you feel these muscles shoving towards your spine as you hiss, you are doing too much. You do not need to push them inwards to move your air, rather just engage them and keep them taut as you hiss, then release them on the next inhale. Do several hisses this way to get in touch with solid support.

2. Now, allow a nice free breath to come in and instead of hissing, say the word “hey” in a drawn-out fashion over two or three beats as though you were trying to get the attention of someone across the room. Keep the same solid breath support you had while hissing, the only difference here being that you are adding a vibration in the form of the word “hey.” Do this “hey” a few times, playing with duration of time you draw it out. Then play with talking it in different pitch centers in your voice (head voice, chest voice, mix, etc.). But no matter what you are experimenting with, keep to the intention of talking. Do not “sing” in any way because thinking, “sing” will put you right back in your old technique habit.

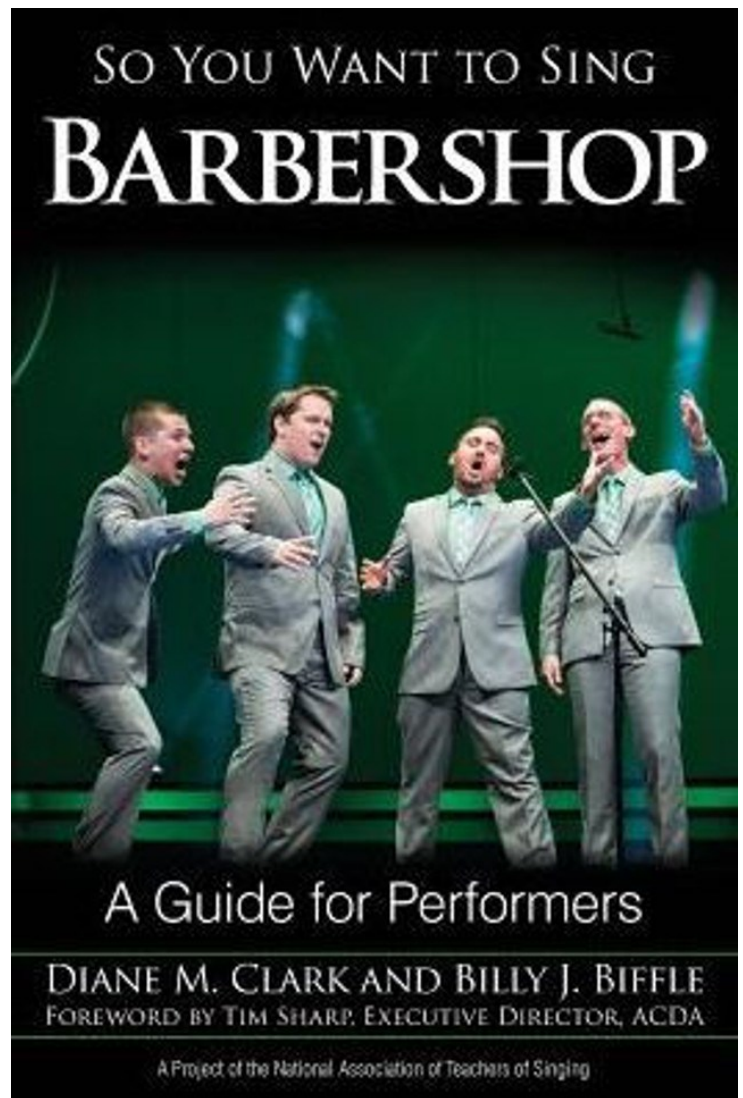
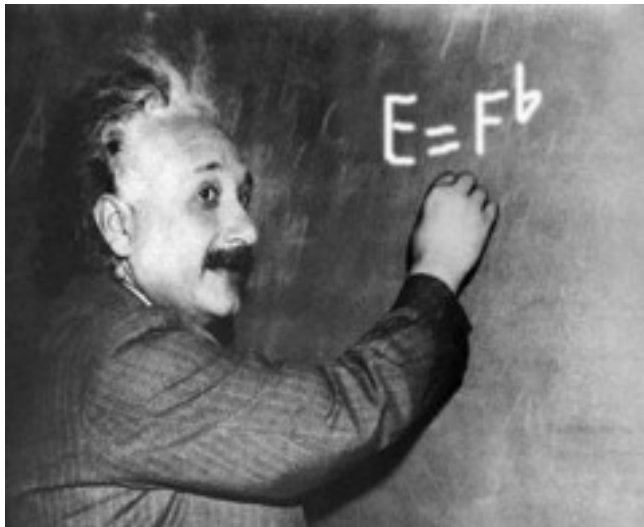
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3. Now find a comfortable pitch center in your range and talk the numbers one through five slowly on one pitch, lengthening the vowels of each number so they are nice and long, and the numbers sound drawn out. Stay on your breath support.

4. Now talk the numbers one through five rising in pitch up a five-note major scale continuing to lengthen the vowels of the numbers to be long and drawn out.

By the end of this exercise, you should have some idea of what it feels like to “talk on pitch.” Talking on pitch is really singing, and singing is really just talking on pitch. The way we frame it in our consciousness is important because it has an effect on the attachments we have to the action, which makes the outgoing sound more or less resonant and free depending on how our body reacts to the instructions our brain has been giving.



**DID YOU KNOW THIS?**

A few years ago, our director, Bill Biffle, co-authored a book for anyone wanting to learn more about the art of barbershop singing and performing.

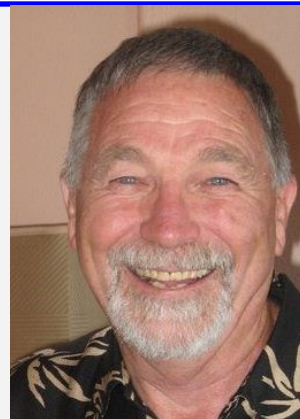
The New MexiChords Proudly Presents  
*The Music of Our Lives*



**Friday May 2, 2025 7 PM**  
**Saturday May 3, 2025 2 PM**  
2626 Arizona NE, Albuquerque  
St. John's United Methodist Church

**Admission: \$20, Kids 6 and Under Free**  
**Cash, Checks, VISA, AMEX**  
**and Mastercard Accepted**

**FROM OUR DIRECTOR:  
“BIFFLEISMS”**



Hello, folks. As usual, I hope that this finds you well.

We're in the home stretch for our show – and it's gonna be a great one! I think our patrons will enjoy our new songs, as I hope you've enjoyed learning them. Please stick with the learning tapes to solidify the notes and words. And get off the paper as soon as possible so we can turn the notes and words into music!

It's going to be interesting to have a traditional jazz band as our guest this year. Thanks to the board for inviting us. It's an unusual gig for us, and we're excited to play for you and for our patrons. As a prelude, here are the short bios of the band personnel that will appear in the program.

**The Storyville Five**

**Bill Biffle** played cornet from the 7th grade through college, then took 35 years off. He's old enough that it's been more than 25 years since he came back to the horn! In addition to The Storyville Five, he plays in Die Polka Schlingel/DPS Swing Band and the New Mexico Jazz Workshop Community Big Band. He loves to sing and teach barbershop, direct the New MexiChords, and play his many horns. Call him to book some live music for your party! 505-401-4963

**Bernie Higgins** taught public school music in New Mexico for 35 years and has played with every musician of any significance in Albuquerque over a 75-year career. Born in Nashville, he grew up in Albuquerque, graduated from Albuquerque High School, and received a Music Education degree from UNM. He plays all the reeds.

**Phil Arnold** is a professional musician who specializes in performing and teaching jazz. His credentials include performing as soloist with jazz artists such as Clark Terry, Woody Shaw and Dizzy Gillespie, and he has also played with Blues, Latin and Pop artists such as Tito Puente, Marc Anthony, Mariah Carey and B.B. King. Phil is currently working as Musical Director of the Youth Jazz Collaborative, and teaches weekly jazz classes for young musicians at the African American Performing Arts Center in Albuquerque.

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**Dan Dowling** is a jazz guitarist and educator in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Dan has performed at many jazz and blues festivals/concerts over the years (Telluride Jazz Festival, W.C Handy Festival, Memphis in May, Enchantment Blues and Guitars, NMJW Jeff Beck Tribute). He has been teaching guitar both privately (Dan Dowling Studio) and group classes for the New Mexico Jazz Workshop.

**Jay Payette** was born and raised in the Chicago area. He earned his undergraduate degree in Music Education from University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and also studied math and physics. He's played everywhere from the lowest dive bars in Chicago (the Get Me High Lounge in particular) to the fanciest Michigan Avenue hotels and suburban country clubs. He lived in Hot Springs, Arkansas, for twenty-some years, and has lived in New Mexico for three years, where he enjoys sitting in at jam sessions and playing with The Storyville Five.

Thanks for reading. See you Tuesday, Champs!

Bill

### The New MexiChords "Lineup" as of 1 April 2025

#### DIRECTOR

Bill Biffle

#### BARITONE

Hudgens, Tom  
Hudson, Hal  
Koury, Ruth  
Randall, Ron  
Romero, Max  
Strohl, Bill

#### BASS

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

#### TENORS

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

#### LEAD

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





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](http://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

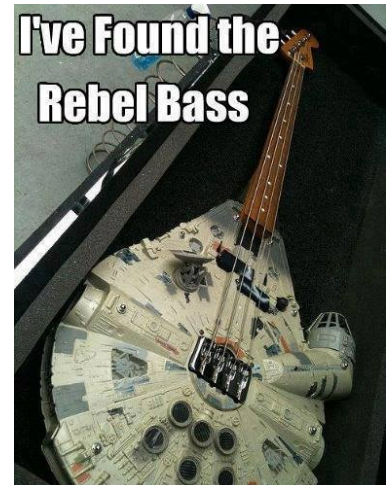
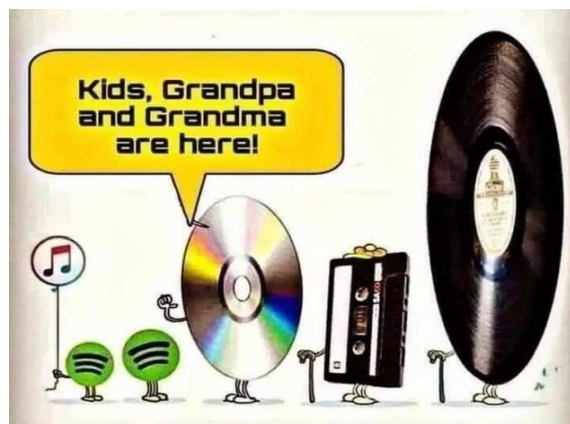
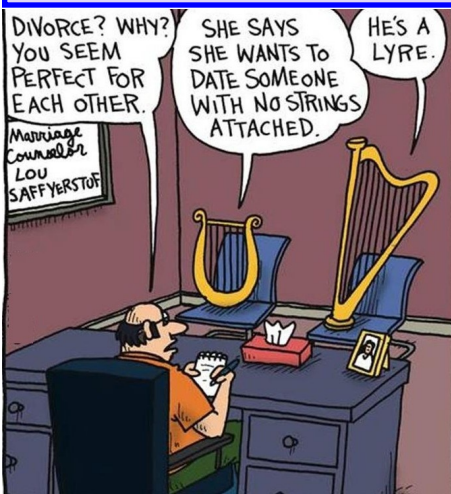


Here's a barbershop shout-out to our members with birthdays in April!

Dave Ring - 1 Apr

John Taylor - 2 Apr

Juliette Leverett - 25 Apr



# The New MexiChords Calendar

## Upcoming Chorus Events

### 2025

- 11 Apr - Alegria Road Show, 901 Cottonwood Cir, Bernalillo
- 22 Apr - The Neighborhood Road Show, 900 Loma Colorado Blvd NE, Rio Rancho
- 2 May - Spring Concert, 7pm, St John's Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St NE
- 3 May - Spring Concert, 2pm, St John's Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St NE
- 10 Jun - National Anthem (game opener), Isotopes Park, 1601 Avenida Cesar Chavez SE
- 4 Jul - Naturalization Ceremony, 10am, ABQ Convention Center, 401 2nd St NW
- 25-27 Sep - Rocky Mountain District Convention & Contest, Ogden, Utah
- 5 Dec - Naturalization Ceremony, 10am, ABQ Convention Center, 401 2nd St NW

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

[www.NMChords.com](http://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*

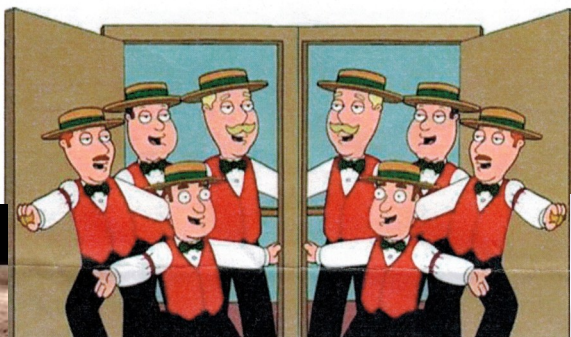
northern *New Mexico*

western portions of *South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas*

The awkward moment when you drive your Chevy to the levy and the levy isn't dry.



*This is what happens when you're drinking whiskey and rye.*



I DON'T ALWAYS  
*Sing...*  
OH WAIT. *Yes I do*

## Your Chuckles for April

I'm starting a business to teach short people math. It's called making the little things count.

What happens if someone slaps you at a high frequency? It Hertz.

What color is the wind? Blew.

Guess who I bumped into on my way to get my glasses fixed? Everybody.

My wife complains I don't buy her flowers. To be honest, I didn't know she sold flowers.

My friend David had his ID stolen ... I now call him Dav.

Just saw a real dummy at the gym. He put a water bottle in the Pringles holder on the treadmill.

Did you know Albert Einstein had a younger brother named Frank? He was a monster.

Not everyone thinks Cleopatra is beautiful... But that's how Julius Caesar.

What do you call a boat full of buddies? A friendship.

I figured out why Teslas are so expensive. It's because they charge a lot.

5/4 of people admit that they're bad with fractions.



### **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](mailto:subscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com)  
To be removed, send your email address to [unsubscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com](mailto:unsubscribe@newmexichords.groupanizer.com)