



The **SERENADER**

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

E-Newsletter

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## COURTING FAILURE

by Jerry Frank

Nobody actually likes to fail and everyone likes to succeed but how do you count the challenge avoided or the choice not made? Where do you put the girls that you never dated because you feared rejection? Or the job for which you didn't apply? The road not traveled is full of bumps that you never felt but you gave up the destination as well.

Edison is given the default title as inventor for the light bulb even though there were lousy light bulbs available for fifty years before he found a way to increase the life of the lamps from about 23 hours of dim light to 3200 hours of actually useful light.

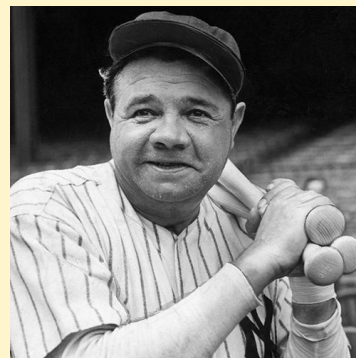
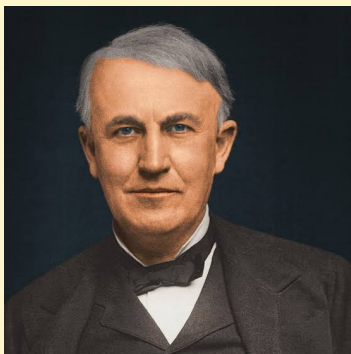
During the years of experimenting he was asked how he found the courage to continue in spite of years of failure. His exact reply is lost but the context became legend: "I haven't failed. I have found 700 ways to not make a (better) light bulb."

How many times have we kept our chapter business cards safely in our wallets for fear of rejection. You might be thinking that your offer of a card might be considered pushy or your invitation might be thought to be invasive. Sometimes failure to act is comforting because the imagined "crisis" is avoided. The opportunity to make a new friend passes uneventfully. I just read a book that wasn't all that inspiring but one piece of wisdom struck a chord with me. "Don't believe everything you think." The human mind is a wanderer and many passing thoughts should just be just that. Passing. If you acknowledge the thoughts and just let them pass, they can no longer control your reactions. Take the plunge and share the comforts that your hobby has given you. Make the choice to offer and leave the response to your contact person. Don't make the choice for them and immediately deny them the opportunity to do and be something that they had not considered before. If they reject your choice, that is their right, privilege and loss. You didn't fail. You never had control of the response, only the offer.

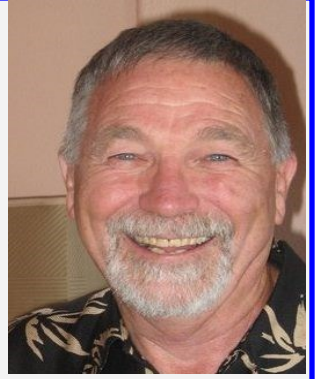
An excellent salesman that I was privileged to know, told me that one order received for every twelve customer calls was considered a normal response. Talk about courting failure. Some people make a livelihood of it. We shouldn't despair when every attempt doesn't result in a new member.

Few people bother to remember that "Babe" Ruth struck out more than half the time when he came to bat but everyone remembers his home runs.

If I didn't get my point across, perhaps you weren't listening. At least, I gave it a shot. Maybe, I just struck out again, but I did go down swinging.



## FROM OUR DIRECTOR: “BIFFLEISMS”



Hello, fellow Harmonizers! Hope this finds you well.

We're well into the summer, of course, and I hope you're finding the slightly less intense rehearsals fun and enjoyable. What? You didn't know they were slightly less intense? Well, dang. I thought they were.

We're learning a couple of new tags and two new songs – well, one new and one old: The Gang That Sang Heart of my Heart and Chattanooga Choo Choo. The former is new and the latter isn't. Although, even if you think you have CCC down, please check out the LTs and sheet music. We've altered the words in the beginning to more accurately fit the times and I bet you'll find a spot or two that you have learned, well, wrong. There! I said it. Anyway, check it out and let's get it right. (Important to know when the baris take over the melody from the leads and make that adjustment.)

Both of these will be good additions to our repertoire.

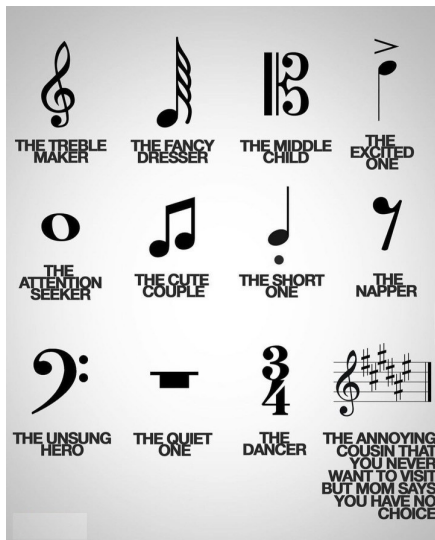
I'm delighted – as I know you are – that Jay has agreed to help us with the vocal production stuff, including warmups. His travel schedule is complicated, but when he's available, he'll be a wonderful asset to us all. Thanks, Jay!

We'll start looking at the Christmas show songs very soon. Get a jump on the season. Nothing like singing holiday songs in the summer!

I know summer travel is summer travel, but come when you can – I know you will! It's not the same without you!

See you Tuesday, Champs. Or whenever you're there. We'll keep learning, having fun, and celebrating the gift of four part harmony together!

Bill



A few years ago I was rummaging around the Masters of Harmony website looking for a photo or two to put in this issue. I happened to read some really good information that probably helped to make the Masters so great. The following is some insight from Dr. Greg Lyne back in 1989. Because it helped the Masters become one of the most successful choruses in Society history, I thought it might help the New MexiChords too. Maybe not to become international champions, but surely in our preparation and musicality for our audiences. Some of this I'm sure you have heard before, but coming from a director of Greg Lyne's stature you might take it more seriously.

## **THE MOST OFTEN ASKED MUSICAL QUESTIONS**

(A Primer for Incoming Members and a Listing of Accepted Principles for the Masters of Harmony)

By Dr. Greg Lyne

**1. What is the posture of this chorus?** The body should be in line and prepared before a note is sung. Proper body alignment affects the mind and spirit, and consequently the tone.

- A. Allow for relaxation in the upper body by allowing the neck and head to move easily from side to side.
- B. The jaw should be relaxed and "unhinged."
- C. The shoulders to not raise upon inhalation. Set the upper torso (chest) in a lifted position so that the diaphragm can do its job.
- D. Elongate the space from the top of the spine to the top of the head. Feel as if there's a string lifting you at the top of your head.
- E. Keep your feet and legs aligned with your body by having them even with our shoulders. The outside foot should be slightly forward and your weight on the balls of your feet. Never sing "on your heels."

**2. Vowels - are they important?** Yes! Concentrate on them, as they will always be of primary concern to us. Keep the tip of the tongue down and against the lower gum ridge at all times except when it must move to create certain consonants. Then, and only then, use the tip of the tongue to lightly touch the consonants.

- A. Shape the vowel in the mouth. An "oh" should look like an "oh", an "oo" should look like an "oo." The mouth must be active to sing proper vowels.
- B. Sing the primary vowel (vowel target) immediately. Sustain that vowel as long as you possibly can.

**3. Does the director sometimes expect the face to be animated?** He always expects it to be animated. Keep your face and body aligned. Every moment you sing should show energy and involvement. Act - show emotion!

**4. May I sing in a choppy, bumpy manner?** Yes - but only when we tell you! So far we're working only on smo-o-o-oth singing. We don't want "cobblestones" in our music, so it's necessary to take out all "bumps." Allow one sound to flow smoothly into the next. Work on connecting one sound to the next.

**5. Do you like "T's", "P's", and "S's"?** Not too much, because these sounds do not contain pitch and tend to stop the flow of tone. However, we do like "m's" and "n's" and "ng's" and "v's" because they are singable consonants. Practice energizing ("singing through") these, and practice minimizing those which are "not singable."

**6. When I breathe, does my mouth need to remember anything?** Yes. As you breathe, tell your mouth to form the upcoming vowel.

**7. When do I quit singing and how?** Music is made up of phrases, or musical/lyrical thoughts. In singing, we sing to the end of each phrase, making certain that the final word is completed - i.e., that musical tone is maintained as long as possible and not cut short. Moreover, we never "just stop" singing. Do not allow the pitch to droop or the tone to stop abruptly. Maintain "life" at the end of phrases, but be careful not to accent the weak syllables of words unnecessarily.

**8. Sometimes the chorus sings very softly.** Would this be a good time for me to rest? Not at all. In fact, when singing softly you'll want to work harder to assure that the tone is projected, energized and "spinning." Rest after the rehearsal!

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**9. Do you know I've done solo work?** Yes, and we're all very proud! Here, however, we work hard on contributing our respective voices to the chorus and yours should "fit" with the others. We don't want voices that shake, warble, cut or bellow, but we are interested in having the best qualities of your voice join with the others.

**10. How do I breathe?** We'll continue to help you with this one in rehearsal. Do strive to keep a constant quality and volume of air underlying your tone. Get a full, 100% breath from deep within you every time you breathe.

**11. Some of the guys speak of staggered breathing.** What is this? Sometimes when we sing extended phrases the singers are permitted to "stagger" or individualize their breathing. This means that they may breathe when necessary, but only in unobtrusive spots and at places where their neighbors might not be breathing. When doing this it is important that you "sneak out" to breathe, and (of even more importance) that you "sneak back in" again at a lesser dynamic level in the middle of another word. The main thing, though is for you to sneak, but without letting anyone else catch you being sneaky!

**12. What is this thing called "resonation?"** A good tone has freedom and ring to it. It happens when you fill all of the cavities in your head with sound. A free, spinning tone will have resonance and richness to it. An uninspired or hard tone will not contain any of those special qualities we associate with a pleasing, resonant tone.

**13. Is it a good idea to sing louder the higher I sing?** No. The higher you progress in your range, the lighter you'll want to sing. Use a free, "header" quality and "round out" the tone as you move up the scale. However, when you sing lower in your range, you'll want to increase your volume in order to "fill" the tone.

**14. Do you really do physical actions (moves) in the chorus?** Yes. We try to present as interesting a visual package as we do a musical one. When you have a move to do, don't just do it - get completely involved! Make any gesture look artistic and convincing.

**15. Do the singers stand on the risers all night?** We'll always take a short break in our rehearsals, but we don't sing seated in chairs. When we're "on the risers," a positive, focused mental approach to singing is expected. You'll have to concentrate because one must expend both mental and physical effort to sing well.

**16. Are we expected to work on our music and our singing outside of rehearsals?** Yes. This chorus learns quickly and you'll have to work regularly on your own in order to keep up. More importantly, you'll want to work at home in order to improve!

**17. Being in the chorus sounds like a lot of effort. Is it?** Yes, it is. Come prepared to work, as work pays off and people will respect you for your efforts. You'll also find that you sing better than ever before and it will give you a tremendous sense of personal achievement and satisfaction.

## **In Conclusion**

1. It is easy to read through these questions and responses.

2. It is not so easy to assimilate the principles and be able to perform them successfully on a consistent basis. Practice will help, though. Try working in front of a mirror. Listening to recordings of other fine choruses and quartets will also help. But what will help most is a desire on your part to constantly improve. Good luck and good singing!

### FREE SINGING TIPS by Yvonne DeBandi

I = Increase your breathing capacity and control by doing breathing exercises every day. Be sure to avoid patterned breathing. Singers must negotiate phrase lengths of all different sizes, so it is important to be versatile.

### FREE SINGING TIPS by Yvonne DeBandi

W = Water. Water. Water. Drink room temperature water as often as you can to keep your voice organ hydrated. If you only have cold or hot water available, swish it around in your mouth for a moment. This action will keep your voice organ from being startled or stressed by different temperatures.

### FREE SINGING TIPS by Nicole LeGault

I is for Imagery. When you are describing through song an event, an emotion, an experience, your surroundings, specific people, etc... you must have a clear vision in your mind's eye of the images you are describing. If you neglect to do this, the words will seem to have no meaning.

### FREE SINGING TIPS by Nicole LeGault

W is for Warm Up! I would not be caught dead singing without warming up first. You go to hit a note... and a different one comes out! Your delicate little vocal folds were not made to go from 0 to 60 in three seconds. You must stretch them to their full range gently and gradually.

### FREE SINGING TIPS by Teri Danz

I = Initiate -- Look for opportunities to sing. They are out there. Be like a tiger, watch for opportunities and do the work to be able to take them.

### FREE SINGING TIPS by Teri Danz

W=Warm Up -- This is critical to a great performance -- you must warm up your muscles. A rule of thumb is to do at least 20 minutes of vocal exercises and 40 minutes of singing. If you perform a lot, it could take less time. If you perform infrequently, warm up longer. Otherwise you warm up on your audience or, worse, you find congestion, range weakness or other problems on stage rather than in the privacy of your home -- where you can work to overcome them. If you're sick or tired or very congested, having enough warm up time allows you to make good decisions on song selection and the actual set list.

### FREE SINGING TIPS by Mick Walsh

I. Imagination is the singer's greatest asset. Use it wisely. Eliminate all negative thoughts and think positive. If you imagine that you can do something then you almost certainly can. The opposite also applies. If you are having trouble with a song try imagining you are the singer who sings it. Unlike guitar players or other musicians (and yes, singers are musicians) we do not have fret boards, keys or buttons to press so we must develop our imagination to hit the right notes, in the right key, at the right time.

### FREE SINGING TIPS by Mick Walsh

W. Water. Always drink lots of room temperature water. Water is your body's principal chemical component, comprising, on average, 60 percent of your weight. Every system in your body depends on water. For example, water flushes toxins out of vital organs, carries nutrients to your cells and provides a moist environment for ear, nose and throat tissues. The Institute of Medicine advises that men consume roughly 3.0 liters (about 13 cups) of total beverages a day and women consume 2.2 liters (about 9 cups) of total beverages a day. Interesting huh!

July Birthdays were celebrated and sung to two of our members at the rehearsal on July 22nd. Lynn Taylor and Walt Parsons were all smiles!



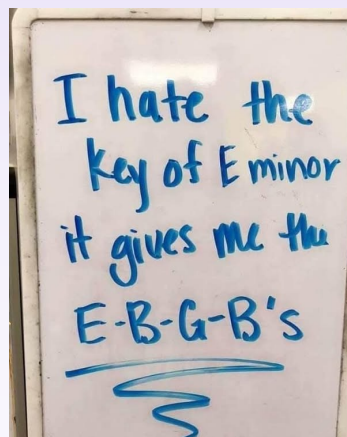
Membership VP, Nick Maxwell, announces our newest member, Jay, to the bass section and the chorus.

Judy, gets her membership renewal for three years in the New MexiChords.

Visitor, Tom, plans to rejoin the chorus after taking a few years off. Welcome Back, Tom!



**After Deportations,  
Mexican Restaurants Forced  
To Replace Mariachi Bands  
With Barbershop Quartets**



Child: What's after G?

English Teacher: H

Musicians:

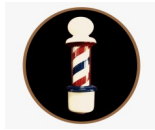




Put a little Sunshine in your life.  
Come Sing with Us!!



Together  
in Harmony



The New MexiChords "Lineup" as of 1 August 2025

**DIRECTOR**

Bill Biffle

**BARITONE**

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

**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  
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 July!

Larry Butler	10 Aug
Mary Turner	12 Aug
Pat Kneen	12 Aug

*Good singers think in terms  
of hitting the notes.*

*Great singers think in terms  
of telling the story.*

# The New MexiChords Calendar

## Upcoming Chorus Events

### 2025

- 25-27 Sep - Rocky Mountain District Convention & Contest, Ogden, Utah  
12 Oct - Balloon Fiesta, approx. 6:15-7:00am, Balloon Fiesta Park  
5 Dec - Naturalization Ceremony, 10am, ABQ Convention Center, 401 2nd St NW  
19 Dec - Holiday Show, 7pm, St John's Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St NE  
20 Dec - Holiday Show, 2pm, St John's Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona St NE

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*

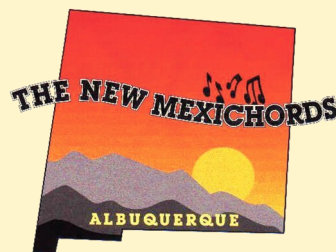
Most of *Utah*

eastern *Idaho*

southern *Montana*

northern *New Mexico*

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



### NEW WORD USAGES

**Arbitrator** - A cook that leaves Arby's to work at McDonalds.

**Heroes** - What a man in a boat does.

**Parasites** - What you see from The Eiffel Tower.

**Rubberneck** - What you do to relax your wife.

## Your Chuckles for August

What did the doctor say to the panicked man who was afraid he was shrinking? “Settle down...you’ll have to learn to be a little patient.”

Why can’t you send a duck to space? Because the bill would be astronomical...

How many chorus directors does it take to change a light bulb? No one knows, because no one ever looks at him.

What’s the difference between a pianist and God? God doesn’t think he’s a pianist.

How many Folk Singers does it take to change a light bulb? One to change it and five to sing about how good the old one was.

What’s the difference between a banjo and an onion? Nobody cries when you chop up a banjo.

What do you call a drummer in a three-piece suit? “The Defendant”

What do clarinetists use for birth control? Their personality.

What did the drummer get on his IQ test? Saliva.

What do you call a guitar player without a girlfriend? Homeless.

What’s the latest crime wave in New York City? Drive-by accordion solos.

How do you get an oboist to play A flat? Take the batteries out of their electric tuner.

What’s the difference between a drummer and a vacuum cleaner? You have to plug one of them in before it sucks.

Why do some people have an instant aversion to oboe players? It saves time in the long run.

What is the dynamic range of a bass guitar? On or off.



### **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)