

It's 'singtime' in Sisters

By Craig F. Eisenbeis
Correspondent

Springtime in Sisters? Well, yes; but, according to the Sisters High Desert Chorale, it's also "Singtime in Sisters!" That's what the chorale hit upon for the title of their annual free, spring concerts for the community, which will be conducted next week on May 18 and 20.

"The music for this year's spring concert is as whimsical and eclectic as a Central Oregon springtime," said the group's director, Connie Gunterman. "Musically we offer a little bit of everything and there are sure to be favorites for everyone. We continue to challenge ourselves and build on each performance. We were thrilled by the standing-room-only audience for the winter concerts and are bringing that same enthusiasm for the spring."

Gunterman is in her second year as director of the Sisters community choir, which is in its 26th season. "I am so honored and privileged to be a part of this group," she said. "The chorale has been working since March to create a wonderful choral experience that will please the Sisters community. You have no idea how happy we all are when the people of Sisters show up and cheer us on."

One of the selections for this concert is "Ol' Man River" from the 1927 musical "Showboat," with music by Jerome Kern and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein. Showboat was a ground-breaking production in that it was the first time a musical was used in a dramatic presentation. Prior to that time, musicals tended to be light and frivolous or follies-type revues.

The novel "Showboat," which tackled serious social issues, racism in particular, was written in 1926 by Edna Ferber. When Kern approached Ferber about turning her novel into a musical, Ferber was appalled, given her understanding of the nature of musicals up to that point in

time. However, Kern was able to convince her of the idea, and a new genre of musical productions was born. Since 1927, Showboat has been revived on stage numerous times and produced on film in 1929, 1936, and – most notably – 1951.

Another sure-to-please selection is the Negro spiritual, "Down by the Riverside," which dates to the antebellum South, although it was not published until 1918. With pacifist lyrics that include "I'm goin' to lay down my sword and shield," and the refrain, "I ain't gonna study war no more," the song was a popular anti-war protest song during the Vietnam War.

The piece's central theme is one of spiritual hope, including baptism, reaching the promised land, and ascending to heaven. As with many such spirituals, a hidden or implied message is that of escaping – or at least transcending – slavery. Midway through the song, this particular arrangement, by English composer John Rutter, splits the choir with a rousing "glory hallelujah" countermelody. Curiously, much of Rutter's widely celebrated work involves religious music; and, although describing himself as "spiritual," he professes not to be especially religious, himself.

Another highlight will be Robert Frost's iconic poem, "The Road Not Taken," set to music by Randall Thompson. Other musical highlights for the spring concert include "It's a Most Unusual Day," "Ease on Down the Road," "Swinging on a Star," "Georgia on My Mind," and several patriotic selections, concluding with

"The Star Spangled Banner."

The choir is made up of talented personnel of all ages and all walks of life, who come together to present quality choral music to the people of Sisters and Central Oregon. The chorale presents free public concerts twice a year; the second pair of concerts takes place during the holiday season prior to Christmas.

The chorale's two spring concerts will be held next week on Friday, May 18 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, May 20 at 2:30 p.m. at Sisters Community Church, at 1300 W. McKenzie Hwy., on the west side of town. The chorale's accompanist is Donna Moyer. Recorder and ukulele music will serve as opening acts for the two-part concert, with cookies served during the intermission.

New chorale members for future concerts are always welcome. In keeping with the community nature of the group, auditions and solos are not required. Rehearsals for the annual holiday season concerts will begin in the fall. Rehearsals are held at the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration on Monday evenings. For further information, visit www.sistershighdesertchorale.com or call Connie Gunterman at 541-588-0362.

WRANGLER: Young cowboy had a rough road to Sisters

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animals he hunts.

After trekking around the country for a year, Mitchell realized that the Pacific Northwest was where he needed and wanted to settle. While in Tennessee, an acquaintance told him about a possible job with Koch at Black Butte Stables.

It turned out that Mitchell and Koch had attended the same high school in Redmond, Washington and both knew the acquaintance who alerted Mitchell to the job prospect in Sisters.

Mitchell's arrival in Central Oregon wasn't without its challenges. His truck, towing a well-used trailer and his horse, Red, broke down near Tumalo State Park. He was parked in a lay-by, head under the hood of the truck, with Red tied on a highline nearby when a Deschutes

County sheriff's deputy stopped to see what was going on. When Mitchell's story checked out, the deputy went on his way, returning later on with food for a grateful Mitchell. He was down to his last can of beans and wondering if dog food was edible.

The next day, in the Sisters Bi-Mart parking lot, seven miles from his destination, the truck broke down again. With 30 minutes to spare before Mitchell was due to meet Koch, Good Samaritan Dave Swisher noticed the trouble and offered to tow Mitchell's horse trailer up to Black Butte Ranch.

Koch is pleased with Mitchell's work ethic. "He's an extremely hard worker, which is hard to find in many young people these days," he said. He added that Mitchell's engaging personality and stories are already making an impression on the guests he takes out for rides.

Both men are hoping that this latest adventure of Mitchell's lasts for a good long time.

How Women Can Overcome Four Financial Challenges

For women today, life can be a balancing act between family, career, and personal obligations. At the same time, women often face unique challenges when it comes to managing their finances. If you are a woman working to build your financial confidence today and tomorrow, understanding key challenges is the first step to overcoming them.

Challenge #1 – The income gap According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, median weekly earnings for women age 16 and older was 82 percent of the amount earned by men in the same age group.¹ This earnings disadvantage can affect how women manage living expenses and long-term goals like retirement or saving for a child's college tuition.

How to overcome the income gap You can help close the gap in several ways. First, keep informed of salary trends for your industry, role, and experience, and use the knowledge to negotiate future compensation. Second, take full advantage of your workplace benefits – both financial (e.g. stock options, retirement plans) and nonfinancial (e.g. fitness center, onsite healthcare). Set aside 10-15 percent of your income in your retirement plan – or at least enough to capture the matching contribution offered by your employer, if applicable. And third, invest wisely according to your risk tolerance and time horizon. Diversifying your investments and staying invested over time can help you achieve your long-term objectives.

Challenge #2 – The likelihood of a longer retirement According to the National Center for Health Statistics, life expectancy for U.S. women exceeds that of men by five years (81.1 years for women vs. 76.1 years for men as of 2016).² Five years may not seem like much, but rising inflation and healthcare costs may require retirees to save more.

How to plan for longevity Life expectancy trends serve as a reminder to pay yourself first. Commit to saving part of each paycheck, as well as any windfalls you receive (e.g. tax refunds, bonuses). If you're near retirement, carefully select the timing of when you, or your spouse if you're married, begin claiming Social Security benefits. Your monthly benefit increases with time, which can be an important piece of your retirement paycheck.

Challenge #3 – Balancing multiple priorities Life can be a juggling act for many women who are balancing their career with raising children or caring for an aging parent. It is also not unusual to see women take the lead on caring for aging parents or other family members. Such significant commitments can limit the time that can be devoted to pursuing career goals and making sure financial plans are on track.

How to balance multiple priorities Decide what your financial goals are, and determine a process for saving, paying bills, and handling other financial tasks. Good communication about your priorities can alleviate pain points and anticipate future expenses. If you have children, it's never too early to start saving for college. That said, it's important to prioritize preparing for your own retirement first. Remember, your child could have scholarships and loans to help with college expenses. The same options are not available for your retirement.

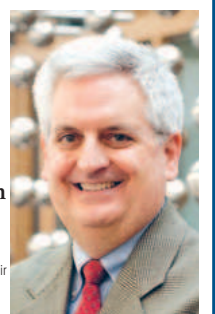
Challenge #4 – Coping with major life changes No matter how carefully you plan your life, you will experience occasional curveballs. For example, divorce can create a situation where income that formerly supported one household must now be split between two. The death of a spouse can have a dramatic financial impact on the future income of your family. Other unanticipated events can also have financial considerations.

How to plan for uncertainty Building up your liquid savings is a great place to start. Having adequate savings can give you the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. Additionally, evaluate your insurance policies to ensure you have the proper protection in key areas, including life, health, disability and long-term care. If you've experienced divorce or widowhood, update the beneficiaries on each of your accounts to reflect your wishes.

Start planning today It's easy to let financial planning take a back seat to family, career, and other demands. Consider partnering with a financial advisor who can help you navigate the unique challenges and goals you have. Know that whatever your current circumstances, diligent planning, saving and investing can help you reach your financial goals.

¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Women's and men's earnings by age in 2016," August 25, 2017.
² Kenneth D. Kochanek, Sherry L. Murphy, Jiaquan Xu, Elizabeth Arias, "Mortality in the United States, 2016," National Center for Health Statistics Data Brief, No. 293, December 2017.

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