

Celebrate community through song

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Do you belt out songs in the shower, your car, or out on the trail? Or do you never sing because your fourth-grade teacher said you couldn't carry a tune? Maybe you are a very experienced singer and/or musician looking for other voices.

Whatever label you have put on yourself, remove it and come to The Belfry on Friday night, November 22, to join in a community sing, where your voice will join with others to create beautiful spirited music.

Eight local organizations have collaborated to bring the leaders and musicians of the Portland-based Low Bar Chorale to Sisters to create a celebration of community through song. With financial support from the Ford Family Foundation, The Roundhouse Foundation, St. Charles Health System, and Sisters Folk Festival, along with organization by Citizens4Community, The Belfry, Age Friendly Sisters Country, and Sisters Park and Recreation District, the evening of stress-free fun, while connecting with others, is for singers and non-singers of all ages and abilities.

The free event, which offers two hours of good cheer and singing with gusto, begins at 7:30 p.m. at The Belfry, 302 E. Main Avenue. Start the evening at the Sisters Fourth Friday Art Stroll and then move on to The Belfry. Beginning at 6:30 p.m., an hour before singing begins, there will be food and drink options available for purchase. Complimentary snacks and water will also be provided.

The music for the evening



PHOTO PROVIDED

Portland-based Low Bar Chorale is coming to Sisters to lead a community singing event November 22.

will include pop, rock, and alt indie songs from the mid-70s to today. The organizers choose songs with great harmonies, and the occasional fist-pumping power ballad. No ability to read music is needed as songs are learned "by ear."

The Low Bar Chorale was created in March 2016 by Portland's Kate Sokoloff and Ben Landsverk and is backed by a band of professional touring musicians who play with Blind Pilot, Brandi Carlisle, Pink Martini, and other well-known groups.

Landsverk, the Chorale's music director and arranger, began a life filled with music as a child. As an undergraduate at Yale University he directed the Whiffenpoofs, one of the oldest and most well-known collegiate a cappella groups. After college, he got his start as a conductor at Wilson High School in Portland. He also produces music in the band Wonderly, scoring for films and creating songs for podcasts like *The New York Times'* *The Daily*.

Sokoloff, a brand strategist, is the Chorale's creative director and marketing manager. She also founded

Live Wire, a show which currently airs on OPB. She grew up singing folk songs with her family, performing in school choirs, and in several musicals.

The motto for Low Bar Chorale is "We're just OK," reflecting its no-audition, no-commitment approach to singing with a group. With each session backed by professional musicians, the Chorale sounds much better than "just OK." The only requirement to participate is a desire to sing.

In Portland, people gather twice a month at Revolution Hall (the former Washington High School) for libations and singing an ever-changing lineup of hits. They also put on larger events, like an annual holiday singalong, a yearly Jesus Christ Superstar bash, and last summer's

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Self-defense fundraiser to aid Sisters family

A fundraiser self-defense class for the Rich Hummel family will be held Saturday, November 16 at 10 a.m., at Sweat PNW, 392 W. Main Ave.

Hummel went in for a routine inguinal hernia surgery in October, but his recovery did not go as expected. He was taken back to the hospital, where it was discovered that he had a small perforation in his colon, leading to an infection in his abdomen. Due to complications he was taken back in for a second, then a third surgery. His wife, Beth, spent three weeks with him in the hospital and both of their jobs were put on hold.

"The ultimate mission of Sweat PNW is to help support the community by offering monthly fundraising events at the gym," said gym owner Ashlee Francis. "Rich and Beth are the first to offer their support and help for others in need. They are a very important and special part of the Sisters community. This is an opportunity for us to come together and give back to them in their time of need."

The fundraiser will be a two-hour self-defense class led by Sherri Hermens. Twenty-two years ago, Sherri started taking taekwondo with her children to help build character and self-esteem. Her zeal for the practice expanded and she became certified and began teaching taekwondo and self-defense in Central

Oregon. She has become very passionate about "giving simple tools to others to increase self-awareness and, if need be, defend themselves." Her approach to teaching is very hands-on.

"Everyone will be practicing what they learn," Hermens said about the class. "Self-defense is usually targeted towards just women. I do feel there are important things in this class for men as well. After all, women are not the only people who get targeted."

"Please join us this Saturday for an opportunity to add to your tool belt while giving back to the Hummels," Francis said.

Class size is limited to 15 people, but you don't have to attend to contribute to the fundraiser. Donations can be made at Sweat PNW or Green Ridge Physical Therapy. Sign up online at www.sweatpnw.com. Email Ashlee Francis with any questions about the event or future fundraisers at hello@sweatpnw.com.



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