

11/25/08

“Italy and Barbershop”

by
Tom Holbrook

Good morning all you fortunate and blessed guys and gals out there. I trust you will be faithful day after tomorrow to thank your maker for all the blessings with which you have been endowed. I know we've all got some negative happenings in our lives but I also know that our positives will outweigh our negatives if we just dwell on them long enough. What a great time to be alive!

I'm going to be covering another segment of our trip to Italy for those who are interested, and by your response there are many of you out there who are. But first I want to give everybody a heads up on a couple of happenings coming up on December 5th and 6th. I know a great number of you are Barbershop Harmony fans and you should be aware of the free concert on December 5th, at Church On The Square, that will be given by The Village's own 'Belle Chords,' a ladies' Barbershop chorus under the direction of Jan Haley. In addition to the regular Christmas songs performed by the chorus and quartets, there will be some selections with a 'hint' of Mozart threaded throughout them that I know you will enjoy. The ladies always give a great show and you won't be disappointed with this one.

Then there is the long awaited Christmas Concert that will be presented by The Heart Of Florida Barbershop Chorus, under the direction of Scott Werner that will be given at the Savannah Center, December 6th at 5:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.. This will be a Christmas concert unlike any you have heard this wonderful group perform in the past. In addition to the fantastically talented "Humdingers" quartet (you've probably heard them sing many times at Disney and didn't know who they were,) who will mesmerize you with their multi-talented segment, there will also be a beautifully arranged, live nativity reading accompanied by the appropriate Christmas songs. You know these tickets sell out quickly so please get to the Villages' Box Offices and buy yours today.

Now back to beautiful Italy. Remember folks, I am reporting on this trip as seen through the eyes of an old man (me) and I'm just trying to put things into perspective for you, just in case you decide to go on a jaunt of your own. I was made aware, after the trip, that tours where walking is involved are classified with a numerical level to prepare one for a lot, or very little, strain on the feet and legs.

Many tours use a difficulty rating system ranging from 1 to 5. To quote 'Walking Tours International,' "A walk rated 1 is flat and level throughout. A walk rated 5 is a very difficult hike with steep grades over challenging terrain. Though the clubs sometimes pre-select the route, we usually have options and normally opt for walks rated 3 or lower. Most physically fit people have no difficulty with this type of steady 2 to 3 hour walk."

For more information: <http://www.walkingadventures.com/faqs.php#6>

Our tour, because we traveled the entire country of Italy consisted of a lot of bus travel but we walked a great deal as well. Some said ours was rated at a '3' difficulty level. However, my feet and legs were screaming 'They lied, they lied, it's a 4.' Most of our group did very well but there was one couple that truly had a difficult time keeping pace. Be sure you determine the amount of walking expected before you sign the dotted line. Some of my friends have traveled Europe on tours that are rated -1 in difficulty... they just walk from their bed to the bathroom in the hotels and from the elevator to the cab out front.

Much of the e-mail I've received wanted me to remind you that not only were there no lids on the public toilets but many of them, also, required an 'entry fee' of 1 Euro, which during our trip was the equivalent of \$1.41 American dollars. Trust me, many times I would have paid 5 Euros for the opportunity.

Okay, time to go... see you next week.

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