

Speech to the Solana Beach City Council

June 15, 2004

Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Council, city staff and fellow citizens:

My name is Dr. Ed Siegel. I am a thirty-year resident of Solana Beach.

Our nation may be the only one in the world in which the vast majority of its citizens cannot sing its own national anthem. The main reason for this dilemma is because it is traditionally played in the key of B-flat. This key was selected by the armed forces in 1916 because it provided uniformity and "paralleled the most common civilian rendition at that time." (I'm guessing that voices were much higher back then).

For the past eighteen years, I have led diversified groups playing and singing the Star Spangled Banner in the key of G-major. I have done it at my weekly Community Sing, in numerous schools, at several retirement communities, at the Del Mar Fair, at several Annual Meetings of the American Psychiatric Association (in such venues as Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.), at an Annual Meeting of the National Organization of Women Legislators, at my Rotary Club, for our Civic and Historic Society, and at numerous Fourth of July parties.

The response has been uniformly positive. Most Americans love our National Anthem, and even more so when they can actually sing it.

My crusade to lower the key of our National Anthem has been enthusiastically received by our Congressman Duke Cunningham, the New York Times, the Boston Globe, and the San Diego Union-Tribune as well as National Public Radio, NBC, CNN, ABC, CBS, MSNBC and several other newspapers and radio stations across the nation.

I would now like to lead our gathered citizens in my arrangement, singing the Star Spangled Banner in G-major, with the hopes that you will see fit to pass the resolution I brought before you two weeks ago: "be it resolved that whenever audiences are asked to sing our National Anthem, it should be played and sung in the key of G-major." Thank you so much for your gracious consideration.

And now, please rise for our National Anthem.

- Ed Siegel, M.D.