

IDENTIFICATION CHALLENGE

1989-1991

OUR 30th year started out calmly enough. Typically, on-going efforts were being made to make improvements where necessary, and to create new and exciting programs where possible. More and more members were voluntarily contributing their time, talents and support to the cause. Whether by serving on the International Board, working as Assistants to the Board, chairing or reinforcing committee activities, or judging our contests, numerous individuals contributed to the improvement of all aspects of the organization. Meanwhile the general membership responded with honest opinions and gratitude for the numerous opportunities afforded them within Harmony, Inc.

The second week of February was designated "Harmony Awareness Week." The Chapter Manual was revised and rewritten. Thanks to hostess chapter ABEGWEIT CHIMES, Harmony Intensive Training School (HITS) attendees in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, were treated to a London double-decker bus tour of the island's scenic north shore and a traditional island lobster supper, not to mention a weekend of education and camaraderie.

A recommendation from a chapter that the Championship Chorus be required to sit out of Contest for a period of two years, instead of the current one, was defeated by the Board stating that eliminating a high-caliber chorus from eligibility to compete would not serve to improve the quality of Harmony, Inc.'s Contests.

With the Area rotation system for International Conventions in motion, we returned to the Westin Hotel in Ottawa, Ontario, and Area 2, where the CAPITAL CHORDETTES welcomed us to join them "Over the Rainbow." The 1000 plus in attendance included the 1988 LABBS

Chorus Champions from Leeds, England, the WHITE ROSETTES, whose spirited performance, under the direction of Clive Landey, delighted the Parade of Champions audience.

What do you get when you mix two seasoned veterans with the gifted (nee) Dodge sisters? A winning combination!...and in joyful tribute to the new Harmony Queens, the audience cheered (to) its HEART'S DELIGHT (Harbor Belles Chapter, Associate Members). At the end of this brilliant rainbow event in Ottawa, the VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS collected their seventh pot of gold!

Sandra Morris, 1988-1990 International President.



1989 Harmony Queens, HEART'S DELIGHT, Gardner and Townsend, Massachusetts, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, (clockwise from left) Debbie Borsari, tenor; Jean Patterson, lead; Wendy Flanagan, bari; Debi Stoll, bass.

Another restructuring of the International Board of Directors was implemented. Over the previous several years the Board was moving in the direction of overseeing the day-to-day routine of the organization, planning the future of Harmony, Inc.,

moving away from chairing committees and performing routine tasks. This change made the positions of Membership, Music and Education permanent chairs (Assistants to the Board). Those elected Members of the Board, not serving on the



1989 International Chorus Champions – **VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS** (Metro Chicago, Illinois), Jeanne O'Connor, Director.

Executive Committee, continued to serve in positions called Board Member-At-Large.

It had been three years since the issue of retiring the red velvet capes worn by the current Harmony Queens was first raised. In that time the custom had been altered from the quartet members wearing the capes for most performances during their reigning year to being ceremonial at the Convention site only. Now the capes were officially retired, the tradition of honor reflected by presentation of blue-ribboned medallions. The presentation of traveling crowns (passed on year-to-year from the retiring Queens to the new Queens) would be the next change in custom. The new 1989 Harmony Queens received their permanent crowns the night of victory, the traveling crowns discontinued.

Protocol was established affecting replacement members of championship or medalist quartets. In the event that one of the original members of the Harmony Queens or Medalist Quartets left the quartet, her replacement would not be allowed to wear a permanent crown or a quartet medallion unless

she had previously earned these awards. The crown and other awards were symbols of the individual's achievement, having won Harmony's highest honor as a member of a quartet. Since the replacement quartet member would not have earned this award, she would not be entitled to wear its symbol(s).

At the time of our 25th Anniversary celebration, three ladies had met the exacting judging standards of S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc. and were named Harmony, Inc. Certified Judges. Five years later, inspired by the courage and dedication of Barbara-Ann, Nancy and Lauren, others followed their lead. Having fulfilled the requirements and rigorous assignments of the Harmony Judges Training Program, 16 additional ladies held the distinctive title of Certified Judge within the administrative categories of Secretary or Chairman of Judges, and/or the performance categories of Sound, Interpretation or Stage Presence. Others were in applicant or candidate status. Anticipated long-term training in the fourth scoring category, Arrangement, began this year with its first applicant,

Lauren Lindeman (current Certified Sound Judge).

To date, our Judges in the performance categories had served on judging panels (along with S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc. personnel) at the Area Contests only. However, a milestone occurred at the 1989 Convention when, for the first time, a Harmony, Inc. Certified Judge adjudicated the International Contests. The contestants were well served as Stage Presence Judge Diane (Levin) Lorion pioneered this creditable endeavor for the judging community and the organization.

The calm of our 30th year came to an abrupt halt when International President, Sandra Morris, confirmed a disturbing rumor. The Sweet Adelines, Inc. Board of Directors had announced that by early 1990 the name of its organization would officially be changed to "Harmony International!" We closed out the exciting eighties contemplating the puzzlement of such an action and its repercussions. With our identity challenged, tranquility suddenly became turbulent uncertainty.

CAPES HISTORY

In the early 1950s, Sweet Adelines, Inc. added a crowning ceremony to increase the excitement and thrill at International Convention. The ceremony was planned and produced by the hostess chapter which also donated the crowns as a gift for the new Queens.

In 1955 the ceremony was patterned after the Miss America Pageant, complete with red velvet capes, scepters and Miss America crowns. These items were gifts to the new Queens and, except for the crowns, were not used again. Singing lead in that year's Championship Quartet, **The Notables**, was Ruth Geils.

Five years later, Ruth found herself involved with a young, tiny organization, Harmony, Inc. In "History of Harmony Crowns/Capes" Ruth wrote: "In an attempt to upgrade the Quartet Contest and provide some of the thrills I had known...to the Harmony members I loved...I persuaded my own chapter (Village Vocal Chords) to donate four capes to be used in the crowning ceremony. Somewhere along the line, it was decided to make these (capes) a permanent and traveling feature of the contest..."

The original red velvet capes had been provided by able seamstress, Mickey Hanna, and presented at the 1961 Convention in Montreal to the 1961 Harmony Queens, **Key Chords**. Ruth Geils was the lead of that Championship Quartet!

Twenty-five sets of Queens have worn capes which have been replaced twice during that period: the first time in 1971; the second time in 1982. The four members of our 1988 Harmony Queens quartet, **Talk of the Town**, were the last to wear the capes.

While the worrisome distraction of efforts to protect our name continued, a valiant effort to maintain an atmosphere of "business as usual" prevailed. Such routine included government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives - democracy in action.

The Area 2 HTP was held in DeLand, Florida, hometown of hostess SUNSHINE EXPRESS, the first Florida chapter to have chartered with Harmony, Inc. three years before. Another "first" took place at that HTP when International President, Sandra Morris, presented charters to two chapters: PRIDE OF CHARLOTTE from Punta Gorda, Florida, the second chapter in the state; and WOMEN OF NOTE from Hudson, Massachusetts, directed by three-time Harmony Queen lead, Jean Patterson.

Financial security for the organization was ensured when the membership approved a dues increase to \$28. To represent the total scope of the event more accurately, the name of Harmony Training Program (HTP) was changed to Area Convention and Contest (AC&C). Harmony, Inc. was listed on page 107, Volume 2, of the

1990 edition of The World Book Encyclopedia, under the heading "Barbershop quartet singing."

A proposal to change the official title of the highest-ranking quartet from "Harmony Queens" to "International Championship Quartet," making it consistent with the title awarded our highest ranking (International Championship) Chorus, was defeated by the membership. Although "Harmony Queens" remained the organization's official in-house title, "International Championship Quartet" was deemed permissible in public appearances, promotions, shows, etc.

The members completed ballots voting on amendments to two existing Bylaws. The first vote rendered the current membership pin of Harmony, Inc. the official emblem/logo. This stipulation, while protecting a tradition, does not prohibit the use of other designs when publicizing a Harmony function. The second approved Bylaw change reduced the grace period for delinquent dues payment from 60 to 30 days.

Further approval by vote of the membership came in the form of initiating a Chapter Charter Renewal



1990 Harmony Queens, **FIRST CLASS**, Metro Chicago, Illinois, (left to right) Debbie Westergaard, bari; Allynn Kairis, bass; Claudia Prokupek, lead; Wendy Ahlgrim, tenor.

Fee. This fee, paid annually at the time of renewal of chapter membership, would cover the costs of third-party liability insurance for Harmony, Inc. and its aggregates, including Area and chapter events, and other chapter services.

The four individuals elected to serve on the Board, as Members-At-Large, were assigned special interest responsibilities of Membership, Education, Music and Communications. These individuals would now serve as liaisons between the Assistants to the Board and the International Board of Directors. The Immediate Past President became a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Executive and Finance Committees.

A fund was established to receive donations toward legal expenses incurred in Harmony's effort to protect its name. Our operating expenses were covered, but there was little reserve and litigation would be a costly venture. Understanding the

seriousness of the situation, the membership responded positively and immediately to support legal action financially. Some found creative ways to show that support: quartets donated to the fund instead of exchanging gifts with other quartets (a friendship gesture at contests); coaches asked that donations replace payment of coaching fees; large-sum pledges were made by many; some donated entire expense checks! As overwhelming and heartwarming as the response was, the legal action would take time and a substantial amount of money; nevertheless, the Board was encouraged to forge ahead. Protecting the name of our beloved organization was paramount.

A welcome distraction from legal woes found us "Under The Big Top" at Inn On The Park in Toronto, where the CHORD SPINNERS (Maryhill, Ontario) turned somersaults to present a fun Convention for us all. There was no clowning around when the

crowns were placed on the heads of four ladies who were synonymous with their quartet name, FIRST CLASS (of VVCs). Meanwhile, the CHAMPLAIN ECHOES, for the second time, did back flips home to Burlington, Vermont, with the coveted blue ribbons in hand.

There had been much interest (both positive and negative) in possibly changing the Harmony, Inc. theme song from "Song of Friendship," adopted in 1973, to the 1984 song-contest winner of the 25th Anniversary. Upon requests late the previous year to consider the change to a song with the word "Harmony" in its title, the Board sent it to the membership to decide. There is no way of knowing if or how the emotions raised by the litigation proceedings affected the voters, but the change was made when their tallied message came through loud and clear... "We're Harmony, We're Strong!"



*1990 International Chorus Champions – CHAMPLAIN ECHOES, INC. (Burlington, Vermont)
Greg Morrill and Alice Kruidenier, Co-Directors.*

THE SONG IS ENDED...

Friends do not live in harmony merely, as some say, but in melody.
— Henry David Thoreau

In the year 1990, we were saddened by the passing of three dear friends who have contributed, in numerous and varying ways, to the growth of the organization. All of us in Harmony, Inc. have been touched by, and have benefited from the impassioned labors of love they so willingly shared.

Marg Tait was a past International President, a past International Manual Chairman and Harmony's first International Historian. She promoted and helped to develop chapters in the Maritimes and Ontario, and in 1960 co-founded the HAPPY TONES (later renamed MONTREAL CHAPTER). Marg and her husband, Fred, are donors

of the most-improved Chorus award at International Contest, the Tait Trophy.

Jerry Dunlop was the revered Director of the CAPITAL CHORDETTES for 19 years, leading the group to numerous Medalist positions and two International Chorus Championships. Jerry claimed the highlight of his barbershop career was receiving the Bob Turcotte Award because of the respect he had for Bob and his talents. With great humility, Jerry earned his own love and respect by all in Harmony who knew this talented, kind and gentle man.

Ruth Geils served in many leadership roles including Executive Secretary, Vice President, Membership Chairman and Editor of THE KEY-NOTE. She won the title

of Harmony Queen twice (1961 KEY CHORDS and 1964 SCALE BLAZERS). Ruth co-founded the VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS, and in directing the chorus for 16 years won numerous Medalist honors. Upon retiring to the west coast, she co-founded and directed our first chapter in California, the PACIFIC BELLE CHORDS. Ruth penned the Harmony Creed and is the author of Harmony From Our Hearts, the Silver Anniversary Booklet.

For these three special friends in Harmony, the song is ended ... but the melody lingers on.

— 1991 —

Donations to the litigation fund continued to pour in from our own members and friends, as well as from a number of members of Sweet Adelines, Inc. who were disgruntled with the decision of their Board of Directors to change the organization's name. Numerous instances of confusion had served to support our claim. Harmony, "Incorporated" was incorrectly being identified as Harmony "International," and vice versa, in barbershop circles around the world, as well as media coverage. It was very evident that legal efforts would be necessary in order to preserve and protect our identity.

Two new chorus awards were approved and presented for the first time at the International Convention in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The Dunlop family donated the Jerry Dunlop Memorial Award to be presented to the novice director whose chorus places highest in the Chorus Contest.

(This award criteria defined a novice director as one who has directed on the Harmony, Inc. International Contest stage no more than three times, including the current contest.) The Geils family donated the G. Ruth Geils Memorial Award to be presented to the highest-scoring chorus with the least number of appearances on Harmony, Inc.'s International Contest stage.

It was an emotional moment for all when the Dunlop family (wife, Elaine and daughter, Carolyn) presented the Jerry Dunlop Memorial Award to their own chorus leader, Carol Gardner, the new Director of the CAPITAL CHORDETTES and Jerry's successor. The SUGAR AND SPICE Chapter (Gardiner, Maine), directed by Debbie Hanson, received the G. Ruth Geils Memorial Award.

The three Florida chapters held a successful and exciting Inter-Chapter Education Day. The highlight of the event was the presentation of a new Chapter Charter to the HERNANDO

HILLS HI-LITES (Springhill, Florida). International President Pennie Barbour was on hand for the special occasion. With three chapters now chartered in this expansion area, prospects of the formation of a new Area in Florida seemed encouraging.

Contest entry fees increased, to \$10 for quartets and to \$20 for choruses, to



Pennie Barbour, 1990-1992 International President.



1991 Harmony Queens, **METRO MUSIC MACHINE**, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, (left to right) Rene Boymook, bari; Jane Fritz, bass; Shelagh Radcliffe, lead; Connie Armstrong, tenor.

reflect current processing costs. "Here's Harmony Series" music prices were raised to 50 cents per copy.

For the second time in five years, the membership defeated a proposal to change the restrictions placed on eligibility of Harmony Queens to compete. Also for the second time, the margin of defeat was extremely narrow. It was noted that a large number of ballots was either not returned, returned blank, or could not be counted due to invalid voting procedures (i.e., exceeding the return deadline). It might be concluded that the vote results reflected the general membership's disinterest in this particular matter.

An invitation was issued by

S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc. to the **VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS** to perform on the World Harmony Jamboree at the Society's 1991 International Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. The Jamboree, a single performance special event that drew several thousand interested barbershop fans, staged quartet and chorus representatives from barbershop organizations throughout the world. Jamboree organizer, Bob Bisio, wrote: "The audience loved the **VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS**. They were awesome...The Jamboree was a success and Harmony, Inc.'s contribution was monumental." Although this initial invitation to participate was made directly to the

first women's chorus to perform on this show, the VVCs, a subsequent invitation was issued to the International Board to send a championship quartet – of Harmony's choice – to perform at the 1992 Jamboree in New Orleans. The choice was made to have **KALEIDOSCOPE** represent the organization at this exciting event.

A one...a two...a doodle-dee doodle-dee doo. "Harmony Soft Shoe Style" was hosted by the **SCOTIANAIRES** (Dartmouth, Nova Scotia) at the World Trade and Convention Centre, in Halifax, where there was an explosion – of applause, that is – when the local favorite **METRO MUSIC MACHINE** won the coveted "glass hats." (Harmony's first Queens from Area 1 were also members of the hostess chapter.) You can bet the **VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS** danced more than the "old soft shoe" upon the announcement of their First Place honors. It really topped off an exciting year for these championship ambassadors of and for Harmony!

Monthly updates in the Corporate Mailings kept the membership informed of the on-going, albeit slow-moving, legal proceedings. Our Board thanked the members of Harmony, Inc. for their financial support, pointing out that due to the generous donations, Harmony did not have to cut back on any of its educational programs. Our purpose – and our dignity – continued to be upheld.



1991 International Chorus Champions – **VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS** (Metro Chicago, Illinois), Jeanne O'Connor, Director.