

A GEM OF A RUBY JUBILATION 1999

THE ORGANIZATION was able to strike a proper balance between business and pleasure in this, our 40th year. Long-range planning and important decision-making proceeded during the year while the anticipation of an exciting ruby anniversary celebration at International Convention steadily crescendoed.

Harmony, Inc. has always been a volunteer-run organization (Board Members elected, Assistants appointed), and the labors of love by few – for the many – continued to fuel the engine. Members of the International Board of Directors conduct two business meetings a year, Mid-Year in May and Annual in November. With the amount of business to be conducted on the rise, members of the Executive and Finance Committees added a three-day summer meeting to their August calendars.

Director Search Guidelines were developed for use by chapters. Duties were expanded for the six Nominating

Committee Assistants appointed annually by each Area to seek candidates for election to the International Board of Directors. These Assistants (established in 1994) were renamed International Board of Directors Recruiters. A promotional video project was well underway with an anticipated completion date of Convention 2000. The multi-purpose video would serve: as a promotional tool for membership recruitment by quartets and choruses; as an educator's presentation of barbershop-style singing by facilitators in the "Here's Harmony For Young Women" Program; and as a useful addition to the "Discover Harmony" Package.

The Board accepted a proposal from Russ and Nancy Foris to produce a 40th Anniversary recording of past Harmony, Inc. Championship performances. A pre-order of the recording was made available to the membership while production proceeds. The compact disc and cassette tape recordings, which would include performances of 40 years of

Quartet and Chorus Champions, would be available for purchase at the 2000 International Convention.

Harmony, Inc. permits a quartet to petition the International Contest & Judging Committee to compete in an Area Contest other than its own if faced with an emergency or an unavoidable circumstance making it impossible to compete in its own Area qualifying round for International. Although this petition system was initiated in 1995, this was the first year a quartet's (family member medical) emergency ultimately resulted in an out-of-Area appearance. Area 5 graciously welcomed Area 3 foursome "MISCELLANEOUS" to its May AC&C where the quartet competed and qualified by score to continue to International. That's Harmony hospitality at its best!

The Annual Membership Meeting was determined to be a suitable forum for the public recognition of significant milestones for chapters and individuals. Certificates marking 25 years and up (in five-year increments) of membership with Harmony, Inc. are to be presented by the International President. The tradition began this year.

International Medalist medallions were introduced, replacing the star guard and placement ribbons previously presented to the four highest-scoring choruses. The medallion color and accompanying ribbon would identify the placement: Champion – gold/blue; Second – silver/red; Third – bronze/white; Fourth – bronze/green.

The wording in criteria for several awards presented at our International Contests was reviewed and revised. The original intent of three Awards was to encourage novices, as in: the Findlay Plaque (novice quartet); the Jerry Dunlop Memorial Award (novice Director); and the G. Ruth



FOUNDING MEMBERS OF HARMONY, INC. (seated left to right): Joanne Willett, Jeanne Maino, Frances Jackvony, Nancy Rudolph; (Row 2 left to right): Alice Marotte, Elizabeth "Skidge" Heath, Eileen Valade, Elizabeth "Betty" Costellow, Phyllis Marsden.

Geils Memorial Award (chorus with least number of appearances/highest scoring). Following revisions, that intent was maintained but redefined, changing a common determining factor from the number of appearances "on a Harmony, Inc. International Contest stage" to the number of appearances "on a barbershop International Contest stage." In addition, International Medalists named in the current contest were eliminated from eligibility for these Awards.

The titles of our International Medalists (Quartet and Chorus) were renamed to eliminate the dual-year designation (e.g., 1998/99 2nd Place Medalist), and replaced with a one-year designation for the year of the contest. Rationale for this change included the fact that a contestant winning an International Contest title has had to experience success at two levels: qualification at the Area Contest; and the ultimate success of Medalist winner at the International level. The title is a result of musical accomplishments culminating within that single year.

More than 1200 members and friends gathered in Springfield, Massachusetts, guests of the WOMEN OF NOTE Chapter (Hudson, Massachusetts), for the 40th International Convention and

Contests. The clever hostess chapter, led by Co-Chairs Diane Lorion and Martha Wilson, had guests enter an ingenious time machine to be taken "Back To The Barbershop Future." This trip back in time, to revisit Harmony's historical highlights of the past four decades, was mixed with new millennium memories yet to be created!

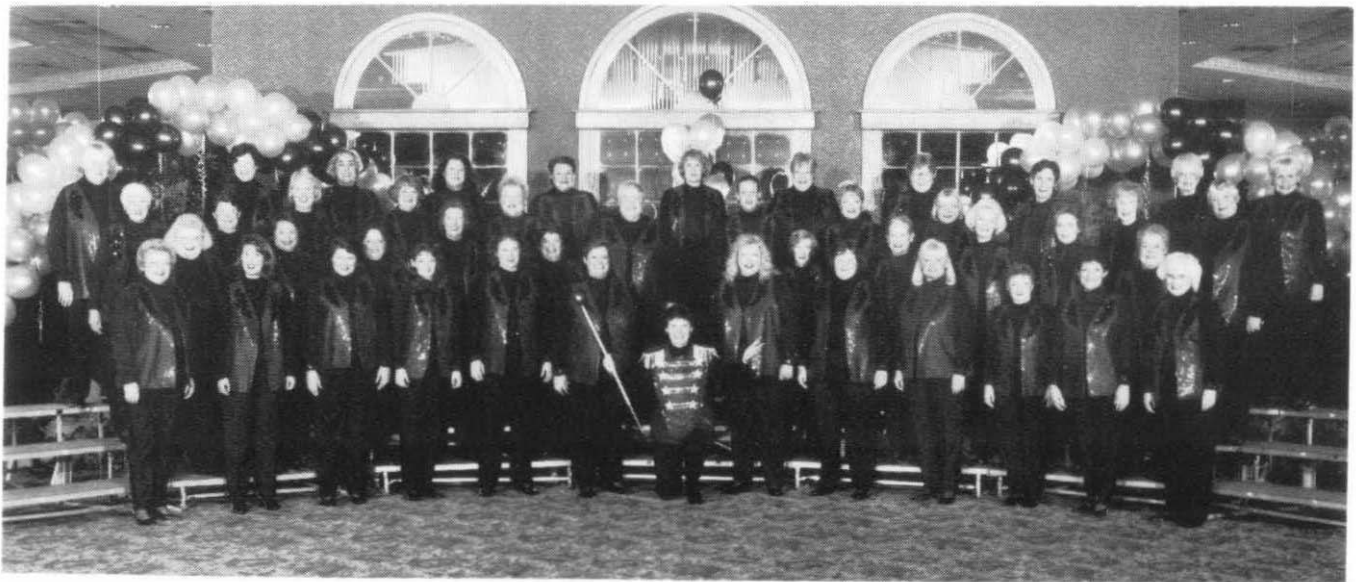
The fun and excitement began on Wednesday evening with the very first Geographically-Outlying Quartet (GOQ) Contest. Associate Members from Bella Vista, Arkansas, SPECIAL D'SIGN, won top honors and the right to compete in the International Quartet Contest. Their good fortune followed them on Friday when they won the Findlay Plaque and placed tenth in the Finals!

Chapter and International History Books were displayed in the Turn of the Century Salon. The Millennium Museum displayed pictures and costumes of all Harmony Queens Quartets and Championship Choruses, plus memorabilia from past International Conventions and events. How enjoyable it was to view the items and to relive fond memories of our friends and musical heroines!

A reunion of past Harmony Queens was organized, thanks to three-time Harmony Queen and Director of WOMEN OF NOTE, Jean Patterson.

Those quartets represented ranged from our first Champions, PITCH PIPE PALS (1960), to the reigning Queens, BLUE CHAMPAGNE (1998), and many in between. More than 60 performed in the Association of Harmony Queens Chorus (directed by "IMAGES" lead, Sue Trenchard) on the Parade of Champions Thursday night. Rhinestone crowns sparkled, lush voices blended, and tears fell – an awesome, emotional experience for the audience, as well as the participants.

At the Annual Membership Meeting, International President Beverley Jackson welcomed everyone to the 40th Anniversary celebration of Harmony, Inc. In honor of the special occasion, Bev accepted the key to the city from the Mayor of Springfield and read a proclamation received from the Governor and one from the Massachusetts Senate declaring November 7 - 14, 1999, "Week of Harmony, Inc." in the state of Massachusetts. The Chairman of the Autism Society of America expressed thanks to Harmony for the twenty-four-year association with Autism, our International Charity. Letters of congratulations on our Ruby Anniversary were received from S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc., from LABBS, and from Peter May, Chairman of the World Harmony Council. We



1999 International Chorus Champions – *VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS* (Metro Chicago, Illinois), Jeanne O'Connor, Director.

welcomed Sweet Adelines International President-elect, Rita Hull, to the special Convention celebration.

Prior to the Installation Ceremony of the International Board of Directors, the highlight of the meeting was the introduction of 11 of our Founding Members present. The standing ovation they received was a heartfelt tribute to: Betty Costellow, Elizabeth (Skidge) Heath, Frances Jackvony, Gloria Jordan, Jeanne Maino, Alice Marotte, Constance Marotte, Phyllis Marsden, Nancy Rudolph, Eileen Valade, Joanne Willett, and other pioneers unable to be at this Convention. Each received a commemorative certificate along with a gold/red 40th Anniversary Pin (see design on cover of this booklet). It was at this time that the winner of the 40th Anniversary Pin design contest was first divulged. Skidge Heath was genuinely surprised and touched when she was presented with a special bronzed 40th Pin, as an acknowledgment of her winning efforts. Skidge proudly pinned it on her lapel, beside the Membership Pin she designed 40 years before! (Her legendary efforts never cease.)

Also receiving special recognition at this meeting for 40 years of membership in Harmony, Inc. were Corrinne Bissonette, Joan Flynn and Patricia Longchamp, along with THE HARMONETTES and the CHAMPLAIN ECHOES Chapters.

Friday's International Quartet Contest was a real "barn burner," and the victors, CHANGE OF HEART (appearing in flashy, fire-engine-red, sequined dresses), really fired up the crowd with outstanding performances. Two choruses were blessed with the membership of Janet, Sara, Susan (Heart of Indiana) and Robin (VVCs). The entire organization was graced with the leadership and entertainment these dedicated ladies provided as our 1999 Harmony Queens.

Twenty-three years ago, the VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS performed on this very stage in Symphony Hall and won their first blue ribbon. (That performance was also the directing debut of Jeanne O'Connor.) Going "Back To The Barbershop Future" was a lucky



1999 Harmony Queens, **CHANGE OF HEART**, Indianapolis, Indiana and Metro Chicago, Illinois, (left to right) Janet Foster, tenor; Sara Stone, lead; Robin Gould, bass; Susan Spencer, bari.

charm for this amazing chorus as it triumphed for an unprecedented twelfth International Chorus Championship. The members were proud to be the first to receive the newly-issued gold medallions on blue ribbons for their accomplishment. Tears of joy shed by chorus veterans, as well as first-timers, were sincere expression of appreciation to Harmony, Inc. for the love, support, admiration and friendship – mutually shared.

Harmony did, indeed, party hearty at the Saturday night Showcase! Titled "Champagne Cabaret," the New Year's Eve party was an elaborate tribute to the Quartet and Chorus Contest Medalists. Voices were raised in a musical toast to auld lang syne, and to the new millennium awaiting our barbershop future.

Our 40th Anniversary was a spectacular salute to the past, the present, and the future. It was noted that the last four decades have had their share of obstacles to overcome and challenges to meet. We were reminded that there have been occasions (some for better, some for worse) when history repeated itself. Having learned and grown from such experiences of the past, we

exuberantly celebrated the present. We recognized that at no time in our history had the sentiments of our Mission Statement been more evident than in this, our 40th year of existence:

Harmony, Inc. is a vibrant international singing organization of women who are dedicated to the performance and promotion of four-part a cappella harmony in the barbershop style, the celebration of friendship, personal growth and development through education and the practice of democratic principles.



WERE HARMONY, WERE STRONG!

Lyric: Nancy Fone
Music: Beth Ramson
Arr.: Russ Fone

TAG

The heroic endeavors of our founders – starting a new organization in a field already so well covered – have been rewarded. Their determination to prove that good music can co-exist with good government has been authenticated. Today's leadership – administrative and musical – continues to be inspired by their courage. Today's membership – proud of their legacy – remains committed to the preservation of barbershop harmony and energized by the joyful fulfillment of its performance.

Harmony has been a steady "work in progress," and veritable "progress at work" throughout its brief forty-year lifetime. In light of a strong heritage and fervent resolve, the vision of its new-millennium destiny is clear. **Harmony, Incorporated** – our acclaimed, progressive international organization of women celebrating song and friendship – shall remain true to its Creed and forever be *Young in heart...for singing keeps us young!*

With love and devotion,
Jeanne O'Connor