

SUNNY CONDITIONS IN MID-EIGHTIES 1985-1988

FOLLOWING THE memorable Silver Jubilee celebration where nostalgia, excitement and hope for the future of Harmony, Inc. flourished, the voice of democracy continued to be sounded by the membership as clearly as ever before. The elected officials, serving on the International Board of Directors, continued to respond discernibly, making adjustments to benefit the majority.

The International Chorus was to have made its final appearance at the 1984 Convention in Providence. It had become apparent over the years that the practice of allowing as many as wished to participate was now a safety issue, as it approached 200 on stage. The Board grappled with the necessity to discontinue this popular Chorus' performance, while sympathetic to the members' quest to reconsider the decision. Compromise prevailed. Following a survey of the membership, the Board devised a feasible solution. The new format would stage a (no larger than) 100-voice chorus from singing-part assignments issued to all chapters by the International Music Chairman. This colorful and thrilling event would continue, after all!

Following trial presentations, the Board approved the continuance of several major activities at future International Conventions: the International President's Reception to thank those serving Harmony, Inc. during the past year; the Quartet Medalist Reception following the Quartet Contest on Friday night; and the Saturday night Showcase, featuring the new Quartet and Chorus Contest Medalists and Champions that topped off the Convention excitement. Other Convention-related decisions included the assignment of hostess chapter duties to specific Areas on a rotation basis, versus the practice of a

random volunteer chapter anywhere in the organization. Such a rotation system among the Areas would better equalize travel expenses for all members. The advance knowledge of Convention-site Areas would make it easier for members to budget finances and time, and for the Area chapters to consider undertaking hostess duties years ahead of the event.

The membership was polled to assess the current policy of having a late-entering contestant sing last in the order of appearance. In addition to administrative concerns of extra phone costs, additional paperwork and scheduling changes to accommodate the late entry, they were asked if singing last was an appropriate "penalty" position, as intended. Results of the poll changed the penalty position to singing first in the contest and assessing each member a \$3 penalty fee.



Jacquie Jensen, 1984-1986 International President.

An International Board restructuring resulted in the removal of the Membership and Education Chairs from the First and Second Vice President positions, enabling more time to be spent in the critical jobs of educating our members and promoting

membership growth, and more time for the Vice Presidents to focus on Executive Committee duties. In addition, the Public Relations, Quartet and Convention Coordinator Chairs were removed from the Board and made permanent chairmanships, allowing for more specialized skills and continuity in the appointed positions.

New pins were designed to recognize achievement and identify Harmony's Certified Judges and chapters' Barbershopper of the Year honorees. Medallions were incorporated (gold with blue velvet ribbon, silver with red velvet ribbon, bronze with white velvet ribbon and bronze with green velvet ribbon) for presentation to the Harmony Queens and Medalist Quartets achieving Second, Third and Fourth Place respectively.

At the same time these new forms of identification were initiated, a traditional symbol of identity for Harmony Queens, red velvet capes, was to be retired. Supporting the decision was rationale from the Q.U.I.T.S. organization over the past several years, claiming the capes could inhibit a quartet's choice of costume, might not be appropriate with all costumes and could, in fact, bring ridicule upon the organization from non-Harmony members who did not understand the significance of the capes. Q.U.I.T.S. claimed that retiring the red garments would avoid a winning quartet's having to tailor its costume to coordinate with the capes. At the Mid-Year Meeting, the Board agreed and declared the capes retired, effective with the 1985 Convention. But the membership wasn't quite so ready or willing to discontinue this tradition!

As if retiring red capes weren't ample cause for unrest, the Board was

also requested to consider amending the existing Quartet Contest rule that disallowed a competing quartet to consist of more than two past champions. The amendment would allow a competing quartet to consist of as many as four past champions, but no more than two from any one Harmony Queens' quartet. This delicate issue was tabled.

A new method was adopted for calculating qualifying positions for choruses competing at the Area level and continuing to the International Contest. Current calculation was based on the total number of chapters in an Area, regardless of how many actually competed. Over time it was determined this formulation could be detrimental to Areas with high participation and beneficial to Areas that have many chapters but low participation in their Area Contest. The newly-adopted method was based on participation at Area Contests, rather than the number of chapters in an Area.

The out-going 1984 International Chorus Champions, the CAPITAL CHORDETTES, reigned as supreme hostesses of the 1985 Convention held at the Westin Hotel in Ottawa, Ontario. The "Flapper Frolics" theme was ingeniously carried out in every detail of the event.

In spite of their brief appearance as a foursome to date, CAMEO

PERFORMANCE won the title of Harmony Queens. Two chapters proudly claimed the quartet members: Carol (Do-Re-Mi's); Karen, Robin and the now triple-crown champ, Nancy (VVCs). The post-convention victory party in Metro Chicago was a most memorable occasion for the VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS, celebrating their fifth International Championship.



1985 Harmony Queens, *CAMEO PERFORMANCE*, Metro Chicago and Libertyville, Illinois, (clockwise from top left) Robin Gould, bass; Nancy Foris, bari; Karen Gungel, tenor; Carol Campbell, lead.

In the midst of the fun and frolic of Convention, it was reported at the Delegates Meeting that the International Board was requesting an immediate vote on an interim dues increase, as Harmony was experiencing a serious financial situation. Members paid dues in the currency of their residence; our membership was divided rather evenly between the United States and Canada; however, ninety percent of the expenditures of the organization originated in the United States. The government-regulated exchange rate was not favorable to Canada at the time, affecting buying power of our two-currency income. As a result of these facts, Harmony had been spending more per member than income collected! Immediate action was necessary to solve the short-term needs and long-term prospects for financial stability.

The response of the membership in the months ahead was overwhelmingly positive, supporting a one-time assessment, and voting to increase dues to \$25 to be paid in U.S. funds, or its equivalent in Canadian funds, effective the next fiscal year.

Although the 25th Anniversary party in Providence had evoked joy, contentment and stability in our organization, we found ourselves one year later experiencing some difficulties related to progress and



1985 International Chorus Champions – *VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS* (Metro Chicago, Illinois), Jeanne O'Connor, Director.

modernization. These changes in form and custom, so soon following the celebration of our embryonic and debutante stages, were unsettling; however, this period would prove to strengthen the organization's resolve in preparation for greater challenges ahead.

— 1986 —

The return of calm followed the turbulent atmosphere of the past year. Harmony had weathered its brief, stormy financial woes and sunnier days were projected for the immediate future.

As a reciprocal gesture of friendship, a traveling trophy (similar to that donated to Harmony, Inc. in 1984) was donated to the Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers (LABBS) on the occasion of their 10th Anniversary Convention in Blackpool, England. Several Harmony members attended the convention and contests, including Area 2 Representative, Phyllis Bowles, who proudly presented the engraved Vermont granite plaque, on behalf of Harmony, Inc., to our "sister" organization across the ocean. The trophy was designated by LABBS to be presented annually to the Third-Place Chorus.

Upon recommendation of the Study and Review Committee, to serve current and projected membership more efficiently, Area 3 was divided into two Areas (3 and 5) effective at the 1986 Annual Meeting of the International Board. An Area Representative for the newly-established Area 5 was elected in the spring to serve on the Board, and a permanent HTP contest weekend was chosen.

The previously tabled item relative to the proposed Quartet Contest rule change (to allow more than two Harmony Queens in a competing quartet) was again discussed by the Board with no definitive outcome.

In response to a plea from the Q.U.I.T.S. organization, a Board decision to retire the red velvet capes presented to and worn by reigning Harmony Queens, was to become effective with the 1985 Convention;

however, the ruling was suspended at Convention 1985 pending further input from Q.U.I.T.S. At the 1986 Annual Meeting, the Board reinstated the capes on a permanent basis, to be worn by the Queens only at International Convention.

Chapter Reserve Status was newly defined. Regulations were established for dual chapter membership. The Mass Sing at Convention was proposed, effective the following year, using selections from the "Here's Harmony Series." The appointment of Cynthia Seeden to the Convention Coordinator position would begin a much-needed organization and standardization, both on-site and off-site, for our annual main event, the International Convention.

Additional long-range planning included the purchase of a computer for the Corporate Office and consideration of the corporate headquarters moving from the residence of the Executive Secretary to a permanent facility. As technological advances could translate into savings of time and money, the computer purchase would become immediate reality. Despite clever fund-raising gimmicks (e.g., "Inch Our Way" — donation of 10 cents per inch waist measurement from each chapter member), the costly venture of securing a permanent office would be postponed indefinitely.

At last, the organization of

Harmony Queens divulged the meaning of its name. Chairman Lorraine Pavlosky announced at the Parade of Champions that "Q.U.I.T.S." is an acronym for Queens United Internationally Through Song! Mystery solved with a lovely sentiment.

Four spirited Associate Members from Corning, New York had burst on the scene a year ago, and won the quartet silver medals. They returned to battle in the 27th International Convention and Contests, titled "Red Coats & Rebels," hosted by the SEA BELLES in the Loyalist City of Saint John, New Brunswick. Armed with song and innovation, FOUR IN ACCORD claimed victory and donned the "red coats" and crowns as our newest Harmony Queens.

This was the first International Convention to be held in Harmony's Area 1, and the hospitality of our gracious hostesses flowed freely. It was also the first International Chorus Championship for the CHAMPLAIN ECHOES of Burlington, Vermont, under the direction of the husband/wife dynamic duo, Greg Morrill and Alice Kruidenier.

Two years ago the Chris Scott Memorial Trophy had been designated a Quartet Service Award to recognize the years of service to Harmony, Inc., the chapter, and the community by one of Harmony's registered quartets. It was unfortunate that this year's



1986 Harmony Queens, **FOUR IN ACCORD**, Corning, New York, (clockwise from top left) Bonnie Gill, bass, Anne Leinen, bari; Donna Hill, tenor; Karen Trotter, lead.

winning quartet was unable to attend the November Convention where the announcement took place; however, their absence didn't lessen the appreciation and admiration Harmony expressed to CAP O' TEX 4 (The Singing Noteables Chapter) from Austin, Texas. In 1986 these ladies had sung at nursing homes, retirement centers, shopping malls, the Capitol building, weddings, funerals and many other private and public gatherings—85 performances in all—and raised \$950 for their local Autism Support Program. It was extraordinary service and typical of this foursome's busy schedule through the years. (By 1999, this quartet is still going strong. There have been some personnel changes along the way, but originals Tommy Lane and Betty Sampler remain the bass/lead foundation of the group.) Obviously, love flows deep in the heart of (these) Texans!

Another year older and free of debt, Harmony's forecasted rays of hope and tranquility were once again shining brightly. Harmony, Inc. was learning that it takes both rain and sunshine to make beautiful rainbows.

— 1987 —

The first annual Harmony Intensive Training School (HITS) was held at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario. This educational opportunity combined the former Directors' Seminar and Music School, with



Jeanne O'Connor, 1986-1988 International President.



1987 Harmony Queens KALEIDOSCOPE, Metro Chicago, Illinois, (left to right) Betty Gunterman, lead; Beth Ramsson, bass; Beth Diefenback, havi; Karen Benjamin, tenor. Jeanne O'Connor began singing baritone with Kaleidoscope in May 1988.

additional classes developed for the general membership. Its successful debut ensured its future as an annual event.

Chapters were encouraged to incorporate, as a means of protection from liability (for chapters' individual members and officers and for Harmony, Inc.) in case of a major lawsuit.

The first Harmony, Inc. chapter to form in the state of Florida, SUNSHINE EXPRESS, chartered in February. The prospect of forming a new Area in the southeast was set in motion.

Due to rising production costs and sales trends of Harmony's official recordings, the production of championship (vinyl) records was eliminated. In the future, the recordings would be available on cassette tapes only, and would include songs performed by all International Quartet Finalists and the top ten choruses. The tape jacket would include pictures of the Harmony Queens, the Championship Chorus and notes from the International President.

During the year, personal obligations found Peg Lanoue (Executive Secretary) and Diane Lorion (THE KEY-NOTE Editor) having to resign their respective positions. International President,

Jeanne O'Connor, quickly learned the meaning of "The show must go on!" With the help of four VVCs, minutes of the Mid-Year Meeting were recorded; Jeanne then requested and received the willing assistance of Jacquie Jensen, Sandra Morris and Lauren Lindeman to maintain routine activities of the Corporate Office. For five months these ladies accepted added responsibilities of processing membership renewals and correspondence until new Executive Secretary appointee, Win Andrews, came to the rescue. In the winter, Jeanne and Jacquie again teamed up to design and publish two issues of the official publication before the new Editor, Joanne Rohrer, was appointed in 1988. Where there's a will (and willing volunteers), there's a way!

Two Bylaw changes voted on by the membership were (1) to move the start of the fiscal year from November 1 to December 1 and (2) to increase from 14 to 18 the number of members required to apply for a chapter charter. Autism Liaison Kathy Russell was commended for her published article, "Harmony, Inc. Supports Autism," in the 1987 issue of Autism Society Canada. Discussion continued on the issue regarding the number of Harmony Queens in a competing quartet.

Newly-appointed Public Relations Chairman Gail Brown introduced the "C.A.R.E. Package" (Committee for Aggressive Recruitment and Extension), a new project that combined membership development and retention suggestions with publicity ideas. Area Membership and Publicity Coordinators would be trained on ways to disseminate this material to their Area chapters. Chapters would also be encouraged to utilize news release samples and ad

slicks. Gail further initiated means to present a more professional image of the organization to the general public, as well as our membership.

In early 1987 and for the first time, the post-Convention issue (1986 International) of THE KEY-NOTE contained pictures of all competing quartets and choruses. Although the photos nearly doubled publishing costs, the members' favorable response prompted the continuation of this practice.

Speaking of photos, we should report that Eastman Kodak country (Rochester, New York) was the site of the 1987 International Convention hosted by the ALPHA CHORDS. Although Mother Nature attempted to thwart their travel with snowstorms throughout Ontario and the east coast, 1200 members and friends arrived safely to participate in the event. All Contests and major events were conducted in the beautiful Riverside Convention Center, accessible by a



*1986 International Chorus Champions – CHAMPLAIN ECHOES, INC. (Burlington, Vermont)
Greg Morrill and Alice Kruidenier, Co-Directors.*



1987 International Chorus Champions – VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS (Metro Chicago, Illinois), Jeanne O'Connor, Director.

covered walkway from the hotel. Following the Annual Membership Meeting, all gathered in the huge lobby of the Convention Center (including up and down the immobile escalators!) for Harmony's first Mass Sing. A camera crew of the "Good Morning America" television program was also on hand filming the exciting sight and sounds. On cue, the cameras zeroed in on the group, led by the International President, all joined together in a rousing "Good morning, America!!!" for the live ABC Television broadcast.

Playing the leading role in the Quartet Finals was KALEIDOSCOPE of Metro Chicago, the seventh VVCs quartet to attain Harmony Queen honors. It was an unprecedented fourth crown for the talented lead singer, Betty Gunterman.

After staging a thrilling production, the VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS Chorus was a cast of ecstatic characters upon hearing their name announced as the International Chorus Champions of Harmony, Inc.!

At the "Roscars & Remmies" (Showcase) on Saturday night, tuxedo-clad master of ceremonies, Mike Morgan, and hostess chapter "movie stars" presented a trophy to each Medalist Quartet member and each Medalist Chorus Director as the respective groups were called to the stage to perform.

Convention lights, camera and action fade out - the images would remain vivid in memory.

- 1988 -

On April 11th S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc. celebrated its 50th Anniversary and Harmony, Inc. sent a congratulatory mailgram to our dear friends in recognition of the momentous occasion. Three months later, International President, Jeanne O'Connor, attended the Society's 50th Anniversary Convention in San Antonio, Texas. Speaking from the podium before the 10,000 barbershoppers in attendance, and on behalf of all Harmony, Inc. members, Jeanne presented Society President, James Warner, with an engraved plaque which read: "Congratulations



1988 Harmony Queens, *TALK OF THE TOWN* North Attleboro, Massachusetts, (left to right) Lynn Randall, lead; Jean Wylie, tenor; Marjory Gillis, bari; Joan Noreau, bass.

on your first 50 years, and thank you for leading the way in establishing that barbershop harmony is more than music to the ears. It is "accord" progression to the heart!"

A "Years of Membership" pin guard was designed and available in 1-year, 5-years, etc., in five-year increments. A green stone was added to the Director's pin design. These guards and all official pins and attachments were now available through the Corporate Office.

A new member \$5 registration fee was initiated to help defray the processing costs. The Harmony Memorial Fund was established to which donations made would be earmarked for education, unless otherwise specified by the donor.

The Quartet Contest rules were changed resulting in the formation of qualifying rounds for quartets. Effective at the 1989 Area Contests, a quartet wishing to enter the International Contest must have competed in its respective Area HTP Quartet Contest in one of the two years immediately preceding the International Contest. Additionally, a quartet would be allowed to compete in only one Area; if the members of the quartet represented more than one Area, they must declare one official Area when registering the quartet with Harmony, Inc.

Quartet rules pertaining to the number of Harmony Queens allowed in a competing quartet remained

unchanged for the time being. A vote to allow any number, but no more than two from any one championship quartet, was put to a membership vote. The motion for change was defeated by the narrowest of margins, with a significant number of ballots deemed "invalid" for exceeding the return deadline date. Time would prove this defeat would not kill the issue or discourage its advocates.

With Areas becoming stronger and more cohesive, the International Board willingly yielded control to the Areas over almost every aspect of the Area's Harmony Training Program (HTP). Because the individual HTPs differ significantly in scheduling, length, Area financial policies, etc., each Area would now develop and personalize its own guidelines, incorporating International policies in such matters as qualifying contests and education...yet another sign of healthy synergism within Harmony, Inc.

To encourage quartets to register with the International organization, Area 3 initiated a "Registered Quartet Quarus" that performed after the Area's HTP Chorus Contest. Comments were so positive that this chorus made up of Area 3 quartet personnel would continue to appear annually.

Video taping of the International Contests was initiated. The performance of every competing group would be filmed live. Immediately following the contest, each group would be able

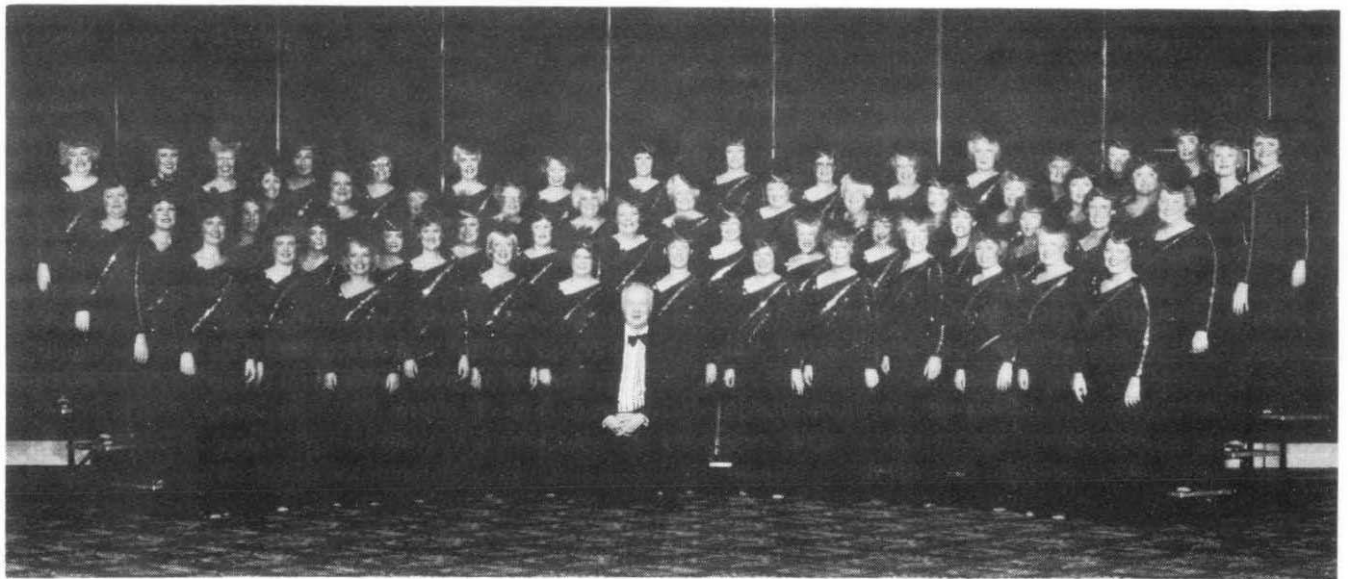
to purchase a video recording of its performance. The master videotape of all contestants in the contest would be utilized for training purposes in the International Contest & Judging Program. (Each competing group would receive a complimentary audio cassette tape of its live performance. The master would be used in producing the official recording of Harmony, Inc.'s top Quartets and Choruses.)

The 1986 Harmony Queens, FOUR IN ACCORD, donated an award to be presented at the International Quartet Contest each year to the most-

improved quartet (from the previous International Contest). At the time of our International Convention, hosted at Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, Illinois, by the VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS, the donors of "The Accord Award" were attending the LABBS Convention in England, so could not make the presentation personally. Too bad they missed seeing and hearing the first recipient of their award, TALK OF THE TOWN (The Harmonettes Chapter) who, in addition to being the most improved, were named our new Harmony Queens!

The Mardi Gras theme of the Convention (titled "Celebrate!") was accented by Desdemona, a colorful dragon that led the parade of attendees to every major event. The dragon was last seen at the Showcase escorting the blue-ribboned CAPITAL CHORDETTES, and their proud Director, Jerry Dunlop, through the cheering throng.

As the activities of 1988 drew to a close, it was most evident among its members that Harmony, Inc. truly had much to celebrate as an organization uniting music with colleagues, forming a harmonious "Blend With Friendship" unique in all the world.



1988 International Chorus Champions – CAPITAL CHORDETTES, INC. (Ottawa, Ontario), Jerry Dunlop, Director.

