

# THE NEXT TEN YEARS

## 1964 - 1973

AS THE years flew by, Harmony, Inc. was plagued with some continuing problems. It wasn't easy for inexperienced women to conduct the business of an International organization without professional help. There was much trial-and-error as each year the Board found itself coping with the same problems, many involving time-consuming paperwork. Frequent and necessary changes in procedures, due to growth, created the problem of keeping the corporate and chapter manuals up to date.

New chapters also had problems of a similar nature, if smaller in scope. Some choruses had few or no members with office experience. Time and again the Board was asked to give approval for an unregistered member to compete "because of the laxity of chapter officers." This was finally put to rest in 1974, when the Board decided there would be no more waivers of the membership requirements.

There were problems with finances, area demarkation lines, convention pictures, production and sales of records, music publishing, copyright permission, procurement of judges, competition rules and

1964-65 Harmony Queens, SCALE BLAZERS, Oak Park, Illinois, (left to right): Jeanne Eme, bari; Holly Hogrefe, tenor; Ruth Geils, bass; Betty Somogyi, lead.



business procedures. There were always vacancies on the Board to fill, as some members grew discouraged or had to resign due to personal problems. Then there was the constant struggle to find a way to educate our members. Still, somehow, things did get done and we did grow, slowly but surely. By 1964 we counted 511 members in our 16 chapters, joined by 43 Associate Members.

It was decided at the 1964 Board Meetings that the judges training

program would definitely be initiated at the 1965 convention, this time under the jurisdiction of the Competition and Judging Chairman.

Among the four new chapters gained that year were the GAY TEMPOS from Hamilton, Ontario. This large former Sweet Adeline chapter lost no time showing its ability by winning the championship in Orillia. The Harmony Queens that year, the SCALE BLAZERS, were an anomaly. Not only were they newly-organized, but three of the members



1964 International Chorus Champions — GAY TEMPOS (Hamilton, Ontario), Becky Daniels, Director.

*Lucille Coppage, 1964-1966 International President.*



were teenagers. There was no age restriction for membership at that time, but two members of a competing quartette had to be 18 or over. Jeanne (Eme) O'Connor and Holly (Hogrefe) Singer were both 17, and Betty (Somogyi) Gunterman 18. Ruth Geils was also of legal age!

It wasn't until 1971 that the over-18 age restriction was imposed, much to the distress of chapters like the VVCs who had benefited so much from their youthful singers. Jeanne O'Connor, blue-ribbon director,

Area Representative, International Board Member and twice a quartette champion was baritone of the SCALE BLAZERS. Lead Betty Gunterman has since added two more crowns to her collection, besides acting as assistant director and section leader for years and holding nearly every chapter office. Both ladies are positive proof that it pays to start young in this hobby.

— 1965 —

It may be amusing to know that at the 1965 convention in Providence, accommodations cost \$17 double and \$3 for each additional person in a room. Compare that with today's rates!

We enjoyed a spurt of growth that year to almost 800 members in 23 chapters. The KEYNOTES finally won their richly-deserved crowns, with the chorus blue ribbons going back to THE HARMONETTES. At this convention, too, it was decided to recognize belatedly our first champions, the PITCH PIPE PALS, by presenting them with crowns.

The Board was cautioned that in-

*1965-66 Harmony Queens, KEYNOTES, Providence, Rhode Island, (left to right): Grace Irons, tenor; Joanne Willett, lead; Joan Duffy, bari; Betty Costellow, bass.*



teresting and/or controversial matters must always be brought before the membership so that members could, through their delegates, express their opinions. Harmony, Inc. members continued to safeguard their hard-won democracy.



*1965 International Chorus Champions — THE HARMONETTES (North Attleboro, Massachusetts), Bob Turcotte, Director.*

In 1966 a unique problem was posed by one chapter that all wished they could share. The Board was asked what a chapter should do when it was growing so rapidly "that it may soon become unmanageably large!" The Board did not spend much time on this knotty problem, but murmurs were heard that sounded like, "Wish we had

that problem."

It was back to Chicago that year, this time to a big downtown hotel soon to be demolished, providing reasonable rates. Perhaps that's why the equipment was not properly cared for and the air conditioning went out of control, but in reverse. It went from cold to colder to coldest, as the weekend progressed. The VVCs, whose 1962 convention had gone perfectly, ran around beg-

ging the staff for relief, to no avail. Our gallant visitors donned sweaters and coats and made the best of it, but costumes for contestants had not been planned for 60° temperatures. As if that weren't enough, the beautiful room reserved for the quartette competition was still occupied at curtain time by the previous cigar-smoking conventioners and their huge soft drink machines. When we finally got them out, the hostesses and some of the judges grabbed brooms to sweep up the debris, while the lights were being tested and the guests waited patiently in line, bundled up, with tickets in hand. It was a hostess chapter's nightmare come true.

None of this kept the hot, new SOPHISTI-KORDS from Elgin from winning the crowns and capes, with their chapter VALLEY BELLES, making it a double the following night by walking away with the blue ribbons.

Quite a few other things walked away that weekend, too, when



1966-67 Harmony Queens, SOPHISTI-KORDS, Elgin, Illinois, (left to right): Twyla Larssen, tenor; Wynn Davis, lead; Doris Dissmeyer, bari; Audrey Fillmore, bass.



1966 International Chorus Champions — VALLEY BELLES (Elgin, Illinois), Russell Foris, Director.

several guest rooms were pilfered, as one last, final blow.

Fortunately, the VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS were to have two chances to redeem themselves as hostesses before our 25th anniversary.

By 1966 some chapters, particularly in the midwest, were beginning to feel the need to get together and share with other Harmony members their friendship and love of barber-shopping. Isolated as they were from Harmony's mainstream in the east and in Canada, their once-a-year contact with their organization did not provide the impetus they needed to grow and learn.

Since there were no area designations as yet, nor had Harmony, Inc. solved the problem of educating its members at grass roots level, the VILLAGE VOCAL CHORDS took the bull by the horns and hosted a meeting for all midwest chapters in Chicago. Besides fun and good food, the all-day affair had a few educational classes and an evening program, featuring, of course, the guests. Attendance was excellent, enthusiasm high, so this "trial run" in the formation of one area was enormously successful. Bids for future meetings came spontaneously from other chapters and "Harmony Midwest" was born.

Each hostessing chapter added its own creative touch to make the meetings more entertaining. Sometimes it was a new class, other times an informal contest. The fun-loving MULTI-CHORDS from Moline featured a comedy contest that still lives in the memory of all who were there. Soon officers were needed to coordinate the area effort and dues were paid to finance it. Among the guests who attended, from time, to time, were some International Board Members who seemed amazed at what could be accomplished by chapters working together at the local level.

The next year the first area divisions were designated by the Board, each with its own "Area Representative," who were first introduced to the members at the 1968 Annual Membership Meeting.

## — 1967 —

By 1967 we had 27 chapters but still no theme song. Contest No. 2 was announced with new and different rules. While the chapters waited for an official theme song, they solved the problem in creative ways. Some composed original songs to be used as opening and/or closing numbers. Some used Ruth Geils' "Sing and the World Will Smile," which she had introduced to Harmony in 1963. Others used "My Country 'Tis of Thee/God Save the Queen." In retrospect, with the Harmony Motto and Harmony Creed approved so early in our history, it was incredible that we had to wait thirteen years for "A Song of Friendship" composed by Joanne Chambers of Elgin, Illinois in 1973.

At the 1967 Mid-Year Meeting a major change in contest rules concerning the announcement of the winners was approved. It had previously been the practice to announce our winners in 1-2-3 order, rather than the reverse order used by the other two organizations. In addition to setting us apart from Sweet Adelines and S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc., this was intended to put more value on the performances of the runners-up. It was felt that this would de-emphasize the "cut-throat" aspects of competition, which Harmony preferred to regard as a learning tool. It served another practical purpose by giving the winners, announced first, time to compose themselves and go backstage to prepare for their first appearance as champions, while the other awards were announced and presented. This procedure had worked well until an MC had erroneously announced the winners in reverse order one year. Apparently the Board, after seeing the mistake, liked it, so they approved the change.

The new method of announcing winners in reverse order was in place at the 1967 convention hosted by the Ottawa CAPITAL CHORDETTES, with THE HARMONETTES winning the blue ribbons for the fifth time and

their delightful DEBONAIREs crowned the Harmony Queens.



1967-68 Harmony Queens, DEBONAIREs, North Attleboro, Massachusetts, (left to right): Claire Burtchell, lead; Joan Saulnier, tenor; Nancy Miller, bari; Eileen Valade, bass.

## — 1968 —

The GAY TEMPOS were our hostesses for the 1968 Hamilton, Ontario convention where Illinois walked off with both top honors. The Harmony Queens were the QUAD-RA-TONES from the MULTI-CHORDS Chapter of Moline, while the VALLEY BELLES won back the blue ribbons they had first won in 1966.



1968-69 Harmony Queens, QUAD-RA-TONES, Moline, Illinois, (left to right): Marsha Kurth, bari; Lois Saunders, bass; Mardell Peterson, lead; Carol Harshbarger, tenor.



1967 International Chorus Champions — *THE HARMONETTES* (North Attleboro, Massachusetts), Bob Turcotte, Director.

Our thirty chapters boasted almost 1,000 members, 569 of whom attended convention. There were 25 registered quartettes and, for the first time, the subject of quartette eliminations was raised.

Record sales were slow and threatened to produce a financial loss, but this did not totally account for the deficit we were experiencing. The \$1.00 dues increase proposed by the Board was increased to \$2.00 by the delegates, who expressed concern for the financial welfare of their organization. The Harmony Training Programs in the Areas where they had been tried had also produced losses due to poor attendance, and Harmony, Inc. was forced to absorb these losses. Shortages of funds meant it was not possible to double the panel of judges, as so many chapters were requesting.

On the more positive side, it was announced at the Annual Meeting that a new organization called Q.U.I.T.S. had been formed. President Marilyn Kelsey informed the

members at the Annual Meeting that if they wanted to find out "what it means and what its purpose is," they would just have to win an International Quartette Contest so they could join.

Also at the Annual Meeting in 1968, plaque awards for both the bulletin and history book contests were donated by the CAPITAL CHORDETTES of Ottawa, while THE HARMONETTES presented a new chorus winners' plaque to replace



*Marilyn Kelsey, 1966-1968 International President.*

the one they had filled.

A special pin for male chorus directors was introduced by Design Chairman Skidge Heath.

Ilene Findlay made a trip to the Maritimes to promote Harmony, Inc. which resulted in three prospective chapters.

The idea of accepting paid advertisements in THE KEY-NOTE was considered, but not deemed feasible at that time.

It was decided that no Harmony member could sing with more than one competing chorus in any given competition.

The matter of a new patriotic song for Harmony functions was discussed, and one called "Two Nations" was being considered.

It was reaffirmed that Harmony quartettes and choruses should not be permitted to use names of well-known groups from other organizations, including medalists, which was to be taken into consideration when names were submitted for charter approval or quartette registration.



1968 International Chorus Champions — *VALLEY BELLES* (Elgin, Illinois), Russell Foris, Director.

— 1969 —

The 1969 convention in Burlington, Vermont, hosted by the CHAMPLAIN ECHOES, was memorable for more than the snow. Valarie Pethick made an unexpected appearance and was dubbed Harmony's First Baby. Little Valarie could not know that mama Dianne was destined to become International President of Harmony, Inc. ten years later. Since the Pethicks were Canadians, the birth of Valarie in the U.S.A. created some citizenship problems for a while, but she warmed the hearts of the chilly Harmony members who plowed through the snow to wait in the wind for the busses.

THE HARMONETTES won back the plaque they had donated for winning choruses, as they would do again in 1970 and 1971. At that time, a chorus had to win for three consecutive years before being ineligible to compete. By now, many Harmony members were seeing green, as well as red and white, over the fine director, Bob Turcotte, who was the envy of all. The rapport between Bob and THE HARMONETTES was so obvious that it was as thrilling to watch as their singing was to hear. Bob's contributions extended far beyond his own chorus, as he



Hannah Zavitz, 1968-1969 International President.

found many ways to be helpful to Harmony, Inc. over the years, never refusing a request for help from anyone.

The 1969 crowns sat neatly on the sisterly heads of the legendary PINKERTONES, the pride of Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

Since Associate Members had become an important factor in Harmony's continued growth, they were accorded the privilege of voting for International Board Members in 1969. The subject of age limitation was raised, but the Board agreed



1969-70 Harmony Queens, *PINKERTONES*, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, (left to right): Julie Beals, lead; Eileen Campbell, bass; Linda Delmolino, bari; Therese Cote, tenor.

there was nothing in the Corporate By-Laws covering this subject, so it should be left to chapter option and covered in their standing rules.

— 1970 —

The tenth anniversary convention in 1970 was suitably held in Providence, hosted by the Providence Chapter. Two new awards appeared on the scene that year. The Tait Trophy, presented by Marg Hardie Tait, for the chorus showing the greatest improvement from one contest to the next, went to the happy **TORONTO ACCOLADES**. Ilene

Findlay's Findlay Plaque, for the highest-scoring novice quartette, was won by the **A-DO-RE-BELLES** from Ottawa. Permanent records of these annual awards are kept in the Corporate Manual, along with the lists of other winners.

"You-know-who" won the chorus competition again. For the second time a quartet from Moline, Illinois — this time the **CHORD TEASERS** — charmed both audience and judges by winning the crowns.

But there was much more to celebrate at our 10th anniversary party. We had finally broken the 1,000-member barrier! Our 39



*Ilene Findlay, 1969-1970 International President.*



*1969 International Chorus Champions — THE HARMONETTES (North Attleboro, Massachusetts), Bob Turcotte, Director.*



*1970 International Chorus Champions — THE HARMONETTES (North Attleboro, Massachusetts), Bob Turcotte, Director.*



1970-71 Harmony Queens, **CHORD TEASERS**, Moline, Illinois, (left to right): Katie Scherz, bari; Donna Johnson, bass; Roberta Breckling, lead; Jane Boyer, tenor. Jane Boyer reigned the year with the Chord Teasers when tenor Marsha Kurth moved to California one month after the 1970 International contest.

chapters and 80 Associates actually totalled over 1,200. Though tiny compared with the other two barbershop organizations, those who had been there from the painful beginning were elated. Our Canadian sisters were especially proud that their chapters now outnumbered those south of the border.

Our treasury was also growing. Our financial condition had im-

proved so much that one of our fondest dreams was coming true — 10 JUDGES! The thrill of achieving that long-awaited goal would only be matched thirteen years later, when three Harmony, Inc. members were to be certified as judges.

Another sign of our improved financial condition was the decision to pay hotel expenses during the Annual Meetings of the International Board not only for Board Members,

but for the Board-elect and permanent committee chairmen.

But results of the theme song contest were the same as ever. Another contest was announced.

— 1971 —

1971 had its ups and downs. We were overwhelmed with no less than eleven entries for the theme song contest, after all those dry years. The first Director's Seminar in March drew 55 eager-to-learn members, enough encouragement to make this an annual event. Russ and Nancy Foris made an educational field trip to six points in Northern Ontario, resulting in such growth of Area 3 that the new Area 6 was formed.

It was decided that all Areas should now hold Harmony Training Programs. Areas were encouraged to hold contests "for the purpose of promoting Harmony, Inc. and educating the membership," but not to be construed as an elimination contest.

The ever-watchful delegates raised the question of finances and, at their meeting, voted to recommend a dues increase. A chapter poll had resulted in the decision to add a day to conventions which, in 1972, would begin on Thursday.



1971 International Chorus Champions — **THE HARMONETTES** (North Attleboro, Massachusetts), Bob Turcotte, Director.



On the down side the age restriction was imposed for the first time at International level. Membership in Harmony, Inc. was to be available to women 18 years of age and older. Chapters which had previously admitted younger members were advised that they must conform with International policy. This was bound to have a discouraging effect on those chapters which had enjoyed the bright young voices and various talents of their junior members. This subject was far from closed.

The VALLEY BELLES hosted the 1971 convention and their quartette entry, the ON CHORDS, donned the crowns and capes.



1971-72 Harmony Queens, ON CHORDS, Elgin, Illinois, (left to right): Karen McDonald, tenor; Charlene Centanni, bass, Nancy Foris, lead; Conni Schultz, bari.



Barbara-Ann MacIntosh, 1971-1973 International President.

— 1972 —

By 1972, the three top entries in the theme song contest had been selected. Members panted with anticipation that we would finally have a song of our very own.

The Harmony Grace, arranged by R. J. Margison, was selected as the song to be sung before meals at Harmony functions.

Historian Jean Freimund Patterson compiled a History of Awards book, now that there were so many to keep track of each year.

Apparently the 1972 Board was unaware that the 1968 Board had decided no member could sing on stage with more than one competing chorus, or the previous decision had not found its way into the rules. In any case, another vote was taken and the same decision reached. It had also been previously decided that no competing quartette could consist of more than two previous Harmony Queens.

Conflict with Society district contests was making it more and more difficult to acquire a panel of Certified Judges for conventions. As a result, it was decided to hold our conventions in November, instead



Lois Bruce, 1970-1971 International President.



1972 International Chorus Champions — MULTI-CHORDS (Moline, Illinois), Carol Harshbarger, Director.

of October, effective in 1976.

We already knew the TORONTO ACCOLADES were great hostesses after enjoying their wine and cheese parties at convention every year, but they outdid themselves with the 1972 convention in Toronto.

Chorus competition was intense, with THE HARMONETTES out of the contest after their three wins. The MULTI-CHORDS flew home to the Quad-Cities with the coveted blue ribbons and someone else finally had their name on that new plaque! A beautiful quartette, the CHATELAINES from Rosemere, Quebec, looked even lovelier in crowns and capes.

The delegates were coming into their own, as they freely discussed any and all matters raised by their chapters during the year. Among the matters discussed in their 1972 meeting, though not instituted, was the possibility of changing the chapter fiscal year to coincide with the calendar year. A proposal that chorus competition be held on Friday at convention and quartette competition on Saturday was defeated by their own vote. Some of their ideas were never instituted, others were referred to the Board with the request that the chapters be polled. The question of a possible merger with Sweet Adelines was raised by a delegate of an eastern chapter, but elicited no positive response or discussion. What was important about these discussions was the freedom that permitted the airing of any and every subject. It was also a learning process for delegates who might later serve on the International Board.

Although a judges training program had been discussed hopefully ten years ago, and members had been invited to trial judge, this year the climate was different. A proposal by the TORONTO ACCOLADES that a judges training program be set up was roundly defeated by the International Board for the following reasons: “. . . most women don't care to be judged by other women; there is a lack of training facilities and funds; and most



1972-73 Harmony Queens, CHATELAINES, Rosemere, Quebec, (left to right): Margaret Finlayson, tenor; Mary Cook, lead; Yolande Gibson, bass; Sheila Murray, bari.



Reta Brown, 1973-1974 International President.



1973-74 Harmony Queens, MOLINE TRADITION, Moline, Illinois, (left to right): Judy Love, tenor; Phyllis Maniscalco, bass; Carol Harshbarger, lead; Katie Scherz, bari.

women are not free to attend several years of training." Time alone would prove this reasoning faulty.

Some dissatisfaction had been expressed about the "Kooky Queen" contests which had always been held on Thursday nights at convention. Some chapters and members believed that this time could be put to better use by showing off Harmony's top talent and previous winners. It was decided to relabel the evening's entertainment as "Fun Night," leaving it to the discretion of the hostess chapter how to use the time. More important, the event was moved to Wednesday night effective in 1974 which, in effect, added a much-needed day to convention.

Russ and Nancy Foris had met with officials of S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc. and received permission to transpose, edit and publish original copyrighted Society material, so a lengthy discussion took place at the Board Meetings about the proposed "Here's Harmony" music publishing program. However desirable this program might be, the Board regretfully decided that Harmony, Inc. was financially unable to undertake the program at that time.

— 1973 —



In 1973 the May-June issue of THE KEY-NOTE contained — are you ready? — the Harmony Theme Song! "A Song of Friendship" it has proven to be, over the years, and well worth the wait. The VALLEY BELLES were very proud of member Joanne Chambers, composer, as we all were and are.

Another first at that convention was a "Meet Your Area Rep" meeting. Areas were becoming more important all the time.



1973 International Chorus Champions — VALLEY BELLES (Elgin, Illinois), Russell Foris, Director.

A SONG OF FRIENDSHIP

Harmony, Inc. Theme Song

Words and Music by  
John J. ...

It was back to Canada for convention hostessed by THE HAPPY TONES and the NORTHERN-AIRES,

where we applauded the VALLEY BELLES on their third win. MOLINE TRADITION was the third quartette from the MULTI-CHORDS to wear the crowns and capes, making us wonder if there were anything but potential champions in that chorus. Or did those Illinois barbershoppers know something we all should know?

As we reached the end of Harmony's 15th year, we had many sources of pride. Some of us cherished most the genuine respect and encouragement we received from our many S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc. friends, on whom we depended so much for our judges, educators and directors. After each convention, they overwhelmed us with praise, not only for our musical improvement, but for the friendship

that so obviously prevailed among Harmony members.

One judge was heard to say, after spending the weekend exposed to our special blend with friendship, "You girls remind me of the way our Society used to be before we became so large we don't really know each other any more." Those who heard this comment realized that however much we might wish to grow, there are advantages to being a small organization. We vowed to try hard to maintain close ties with all our friends in Harmony, as they added so much to the pleasure of our hobby. The "name of the game" in Harmony, Inc. has always been mutual support and appreciation, applauding rather than resenting those who achieve success. May it always be so!