

HISTORY OF BARBERSHOP

compiled by David Wright

Lesson 10: MODERN TIMES

1996 Convention, Salt Lake City. Smooth and rich sounding Nightlife, from Foothill Cities (Los Angeles), won the Quartet Contest. Their song “Cross the Mason Dixon Line”, arranged by David Wright, was controversial because of the degree of non-homophonic devices; however it won the Contemporary A Cappella Society of America’s (CASA) award for Best Barbershop Song/Arrangement in 1998.

Chorus Contest was won by the Masters of Harmony, of Foothills Cities, California, under the charismatic direction of Greg Lyne. This marked only the second year in which the Quartet and Chorus Champions hailed from the same chapter (the other being the 1978 sweep by Louisville, when the Thoroughbreds and the Bluegrass Student Union both won gold).

The 1996 College Quartet winner, Four Voices, would go on to become International Champions in 2002, becoming the first quartet to win both championships.

Darryl Flinn becomes Executive Director. This happened in June, 1996. Flinn had barbershop administrative experience as a former President of Harmony Foundation, Future II and 2001 Committees, and Society President. He was also an accomplished coach, director, and judge.

1997 Convention, Indianapolis. Yesteryear, from Elyria, Ohio, wins the Quartet Contest. Their song “Let the Rest of the World Go By” became one of the most oft-heard contest ballads for several years thereafter. Yesteryear’s ringing sound was complimented by a well-developed comedic personality. Baritone Rod Nixon, at age 59, remains the oldest competitor to win the quartet gold.

Continuing the dynasty, the Dallas Vocal Majority won the Chorus Contest, reviving two of their past contest numbers: “Who’ll Take My Place When I’m Gone” and “Redhead”. Directed by Jim Clancy, it was their (and his) eighth championship.

Greg Lyne becomes Musical Services Director. Hiring Greg Lyne to this position was considered a real *coup* on the part of Executive Director Darryl Flinn. Lyne had been a barbershopper since 1962 and had distinguished himself as an arranger and by becoming a judge and even Category Specialist of the Arrangement Category at a young age. He was replacement baritone in the Dealers Choice and was a four-time director of an International Championship chorus, in addition to being a superb coach and a judge currently in the Music Category. Lyne is also a respected musician in the academic world. At the time of his hiring he was Director of Choral Activities at Arizona State University, having earned a Master of Science in composition from Kansas State University, and a Doctor of Arts in conducting from the University of Northern Colorado. He served the Society as Musical Services Director until 2005.

1998 Convention, Atlanta. Revival, of Foothill Cities, California, were Quartet Champions. The elegance of their rendition of “Lover Come Back To Me” exemplifies Revival’s renowned artistry, as well arranger Ed Waesche’s masterful handling of ballads.

Chorus Winners were Virginia’s Alexandria Harmonizers, for a fourth time, under the direction of Scott Werner. Most memorable is their performance of “In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning”, arranged by the veteran Walter Latzko.

1999 Convention, Anaheim. After many trips to International, the immensely popular comedy quartet FRED finally won the gold. This quartet, still active and quite popular, is certainly the greatest comedy quartet of modern times and perhaps of all time. Baritone Clay Hine is one of the Society’s most prominent arrangers, creating many custom charts for top quartets and choruses, both men’s and women’s.

The Chorus Championship was taken again by the Masters of Harmony from Santa Fe Springs (formerly Foothill Cities), California, this time under the direction of Jeff Oxley, original bass of Acoustix, who took the directorship not long after Greg Lyne's departure to become the Society's Musical Services Director.

Jay Giallombardo. The Silver Medalist was the New Tradition Chorus, from Northbrook Illinois, whose daring and controversial package of two songs from the musical "Les Miserables" (especially the ballad "Bring Him Home") triggered considerable debate about the performance and the appropriateness of the material. The songs were arranged by Jay Giallombardo, director of the Northbrook Chorus and baritone of the 1979 championship Quartet, Grandma's Boys.

In addition to being a highly accomplished arranger and director, Giallombardo is also a sought after coach for choruses and quartets, both men's and women's, and a judge in the Music Category. In recent years he has argued for an approach to the adjudication of style issues based more on general characteristics such as four-part consonant harmony, less on specific criteria such as percentage of sevenths.

2000 Convention, Kansas City. PLATINUM, with an overwhelming sound and an unbelievable array of ringing tags, easily won the Quartet championship. With this, Joe Connelly became the first person in either the Barbershop Harmony Society or Sweet Adelines to win a third gold medal (Interstate Rivals, 1987; Keepsake 1992). It was Tony DeRosa's second, having sung with Joe in Keepsake. Several of PLATINUM's songs played on Tony's prodigious ability to post a long "hanger" at the tag.

Chorus Champions, to no one's surprise, were the Vocal Majority, under Jim Clancy's direction, for the ninth time.

2001 Convention, Nashville. The Quartet Champion was Michigan Jake, from Louisville, Kentucky. Taking its name from a Warner Brothers cartoon character (a frog), this quartet developed a unique style and a loyal following.

Their song "Dinah", arranged by David Wright, demonstrates the quartets facility for backbeat rhythm, something that had not been developed to this extent in barbershop harmony. Though this type rhythmic lilt and accentuation generated some controversy, it made a huge impact and an enduring mark on barbershop, and inspired a generation of young barbershoppers. Though the quartet is no longer active, Michigan Jake's style is widely emulated today.

And after eight consecutive years of second place, the New Tradition chorus of Northbrook, Illinois, under the direction of Jay Giallombardo, finally won the gold. Their stirring rendition of "There's Something About A Soldier" had been heard before at International, but this year's performance was a winner.

Conventioneers were delighted by a quartet of Russian boys, all around 12 years old, which Greg Lyne and the Gas House Gang had met in Russia the previous year.

This convention was held in conjunction with an event called Sing, a festival which featured performances by a number of *a cappella* groups of various musical styles, including the Swingle Singers, Chanticleer, M-pact, the House Jacks, and Glad, as well as demonstrations, lectures, and master classes.

2002 Convention, Portland. This winner of the 1996 College Quartet Championship, Four Voices, stepped up to take the gold, the first College Champion to do so. (Vocal Spectrum became the second in 2006.) Many of their songs were arranged by Clay Hine, who also coached the quartet. Two of their memorable songs are "If I Only Had A Brain", arranged by Hine, and "Lazy Bones", arranged by David Wright. Four Voices won with a stellar, ringing sound and an engaging, youthful personality. Notable is Lestor Rector's often full voice tenor, and Jayson VanHook's low, low bass, evoking the style of the old southern gospel quartets.

The Masters of Harmony, now under the direction of Mark Hale (lead of Michigan Jake), won its fifth International Chorus Championship, singing "Song of the South" and "Here Comes the Showboat".

2003 Convention, Montreal. At Canada's third International Convention (Toronto, 1963; Calgary, 1993) the family quartet Power Play (a father, his two sons, and his nephew), had first competed at International in 1990; this year they won the Quartet Championship. Two of their ballads, "Time After Time", arranged by Ed Waesche, and "The Sunshine of Your Smile", arranged by Tom Gentry, brought forth the lyrical mastery of lead singer Mike Slamka, and gave the quartet a special

connect with the audience. The quartet's trademark and strength was its sincerity and from-the-heart performances, as well as fine singing.

The Chorus Contest was won, for a tenth time, by the Vocal Majority of Dallas, Texas, under Jim Clancy's direction. The package consisted of an unusual ballad "You don't Know Me", arranged by Jim Clancy, and Irving Berlin's "Puttin' On the Ritz", arranged by David Wright.

2004 Convention, Louisville. Nobody knew who would win this one. Speculation centered on three quartets: Gotcha, from Los Angeles and Denver, Max Q from Dallas and Orlando, and Metropolis from Los Angeles. But from the first round it became clear that Gotcha had the right stuff. They won in a walk. This quartet had been noted for (sometimes criticized for) its overpowering sound. This year the power was graced with added musicality, which gave them the winning edge. Veteran bass Jim Kline had logged 28 previous International contest appearances, including 20 top ten finishes and 8 medals (3 silver) with the popular 139th Street Quartet.

The Ambassadors of Harmony, from St. Charles (St. Louis), Missouri had been lurking in the medals for years, having won a top five position every year since 1994 except for 2000, when they tied for sixth. This year it was all theirs, as they vaulted to first place under the directorship of Jim Henry, bass of the popular Gas House Gang, 1993 Quartet Champions. Their two songs, both arranged by David Wright, were Rodgers and Hammerstein's "I Have Dreamed" and Frank Loesser's "The New Ashmolean Marching Society and Students' Conservatory Band".

Society Hall of Fame. The Barbershop Harmony Society Hall of Fame inducted its first members at the 2004 Louisville convention. The Hall of Fame was established by action of the Society Board of Directors as a means of bestowing Society recognition and honor to members and quartets – living or dead – for exceptional contributions made that have enhanced the life blood of the barbershop experience for the Society. Honorees are selected by a majority vote of a five-man committee, each committeeman serving a five-year term; terms are staggered so that each year the current Society president selects the chairman and the replacement for the retiring member. Any living or deceased Society member, Society staff member, or quartet, with the exception of the current Society President and/or any current Hall of Fame committee member, is eligible for nomination. Quartet nominations are considered to be for the quartet as an entity and not as individuals. Honorees are selected by a majority vote of the committee, and there is no maximum or minimum limit on the number of inductees in a given year.

The award criteria used by the committee fall into general categories of music and administration/leadership. In music, judging, arranging, composing, chorus directing, coaching and singing are important. In administration/leadership, service as an officer, advisor, and in planning, writing or editing are considered. Inductees to date are as follows:

2004: Carroll Adams, Bud Arberg, The Buffalo Bills, O. C. Cash, Floyd Connett, Phil Embury, Rupert Hall, Val Hicks, Freddie King, Deac Martin, Geoffrey O'Hara, Molly Reagan, Dean Snyder, Sigmund Spaeth, Wilbur Sparks, Frank Thorne

2005: The Suntones, Jim Clancy, Joe Stern, Dave Stevens, Bob Johnson, Jim Miller, Ed Waesche

2006: Don Amos, S. K. Grundy, Buzz Haeger, Walter Latzko, Marty Mendro, Lou Perry, Hal Staab

2007: The Confederates, Larry Ajer, Joe Liles, Lloyd Steinkamp

2008: The Gas House Gang, George Shields, Dan Waselchuk, David Wright

2009: Gene Cokeroff, Hugh Ingraham, Roger Lewis, Richard Mathey, Jim Richards, Burt Szabo

2010: The Mid-States Four, Willis Diekema, Darryl Flinn, Mac Huff, Lyle Pilcher

2011: Earl Moon, Jerry Orloff

2012: The Bluegrass Student Union, Jay Giallombardo, Rudy Hart, Lou Laurel, Drayton Justus

2013: Greg Backwell, Greg Lyne, Charles David "Bub" Thomas

2014: The Boston Common, Morris Rector, 139th Street Quartet

2015: The Dealer's Choice

2016: The Four Renegades, John Miller

This listing with photos of inductees can be found at <http://barbershop.org/history/our-heroes/society-hall-of-fame.html>.

Name Change. At the Louisville Convention the International Board voted to replace the name SPEBSQSA by the simpler Barbershop Harmony Society. The original name SPEBSQSA had been intended as a lampoon on Roosevelt's New Deal agencies. Because of name's length and the difficult-to-pronounce acronym, barbershoppers often referred to SPEBSQSA as "The Society". For decades, SPEBSQSA was the official name, while the Barbershop Harmony Society was an officially recognized and sanctioned alternate. Members were encouraged to use the alternate name, because it was felt that the official name was an in-joke that did not resonate outside the Society. In mid-2004, faced with declining membership, the Society adopted a marketing plan that called for using "Barbershop Harmony Society" consistently and retaining the old name for certain legal purposes.

Joe Liles returns as Musical Services Director. In 2005 Greg Lyne stepped down and the veteran Joe Liles, now 74, who still worked for the Society in its music publications division, returned as Musical Services Director on an interim basis.

2005 Convention, Salt Lake City. In 2004 a new quartet from Vancouver made their first appearance at International, placing seventh and impressing many people with their musicality and clean sound. In Salt Lake City this quartet, Realtime, soared to a convincing first place, becoming the Society's first Canadian quartet champion. Their performances were stunning; some believe this was the best singing ever by a quartet in contest.

In recent times the Presentation Category had lately been taking an increasingly relaxed interpretation of the contest rule limiting spoken lines in songs. This came to the forefront at this contest, as a number of quartets preceded their songs with spoken introductions.

Chorus Championship went to the Masters of Harmony, under the direction of Mark Hale. They sang "Time After Time", arranged by Ed Waesche and first sung by Power Play, and "Roll On, Mississippi", arranged by David Wright. This was the Masters' sixth championship.

The venue for Chorus Contest differed from all recent International contests of the Barbershop Harmony Society in that there was no curtain, so that singers had to file on, or use their entrance in some theatric way (which many did). This was not unfamiliar to many barbershoppers because the International Chorus Contest of Sweet Adelines International also is conducted without a curtain.

Rick Spencer takes over as the last Director of Music and Education. The position vacated by Dr. Greg Lyne, and taken over temporarily by Joe Liles, was filled in 2006 by Rick Spencer, from the Northeast District (NED). He had been a district champion and international quarter-finalist quartet singer as well as a district "small chorus" championship music director. Rick's duties eventually changed substantially and today the purview of Director of Music and Education is not handled by a single person. Rick left his position with the Society in 2014.

2006 Convention, Indianapolis. Both the Quartet and Chorus Contests were very close. A young quartet from St. Charles, Missouri, Vocal Spectrum, edged out the more experienced Max Q, handing them their third consecutive silver medal. The personnel of Max Q contained three past Gold Medalists. Vocal Spectrum had won the College Quartet Championship just two years earlier. They became the second College Champion to win the Gold (the first: Four Voices, 2002).

A memorable moment in the contest occurred when tenor Tim Waurick held what was probably the longest "hanger" ever performed in contest in the tag of "Cruella DeVil", arranged by David Wright. Tim Waurick has propelled himself to fame not only with his tenor virtuosity, but also by producing and marketing high-quality learning tracks in which he sings all four parts.

The Chorus Contest was taken, as expected, by the Dallas Vocal Majority. This was their eleventh win. Unexpectedly, a chorus of young men from Los Angeles, the Westminster Chorus, delighted the audience with their blend and freshness, and almost won, placing second only 17 points behind. They were certainly the talk of the convention, and some believed they had defeated the Vocal Majority (which they did in their next encounter in 2010).

2007 Convention, Denver. In a dramatic point tie, broken by the score in the Singing Category, the young and exciting Westminster Chorus of Los Angeles defeated the reigning Ambassadors of Harmony of St. Charles, Missouri. This was the second time a point tie had occurred in the International Chorus Contest, the first being in 1990, when the Sound Category gave the Masters of Harmony the win over the Louisville Thoroughbreds.

And the quartet gold was finally taken by Max Q, who had been silver medalists the previous three years. A number of Max Q's songs were arranged by Clay Hine, including the "Smile Medley", which has since become very popular. This added another double gold medalist: baritone Gary Lewis (tenor of Platinum, 2000), and two more triple gold medalists: lead Tony DeRosa (baritone of Keepsake, 1992, and PLATINUM, 2000) and bass Jeff Oxley (bass of Rapscallions, 1984, and Acoustix, 1990).

Clay Hine. The baritone of the 1999 champion quartet FRED and long-time director of Marietta Georgia's Big Chicken Chorus had served as the prime arranger for Keepsake (1992) and slowly became one of the most sought after arrangers of material for top barbershop ensembles. He produced masterpieces such as "Auld Lang Syne" for PLATINUM and "Put Your Arms Around Me" for Max Q, songs which helped propel these quartets to the gold.

Society moves headquarters to Nashville. Since 1957 the Society's headquarters had been located in Kenosha, Wisconsin. In 2003, in preparation for a new headquarters location, the Society had sold both Harmony Hall, its historic lakefront mansion in Kenosha, and its nearby facility, known as Harmony Hall West, located in a strip mall that the Society purchased in 1976 and renovated. Harmony Hall West had housed finance, merchandising, IT, and membership. Operations and staff from both buildings were consolidated into a remodeled Harmony Hall West. In 2006 the Society announced plans to move its headquarters to Nashville, Tennessee. In August 2007, the Society completed the relocation to 110 Seventh Avenue North, in Nashville.

2008 Convention, Nashville. This was the third consecutive year of extremely close chorus contests. The reigning Masters of Harmony continued their dynasty by defeating the Ambassadors of Harmony by just seven points. It was their seventh consecutive win.

The quartet gold medal was taken by the young and popular OC Times of Los Angeles, whose repertoire featured many arrangements, such as "Love Me" and "Good Luck Charm", by the talented young arranger Aaron Dale. This charismatic quartet presented a new fresh image both visually and musically.

Aaron Dale. The arranger mentioned above was by now established as one of the most prominent arrangers of songs for top-level barbershop groups. In addition to arranging most of the contest songs sung by OC Times, Dale was the arranger of the Masters of Harmony's winning uptune, an updated version of an old barbershop standard, "Yona From Arizona". He also writes arrangements for Crossroads, Vocal Spectrum, the Vocal Majority, and the Westminster Chorus. He lives in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, where he directs the Kentucky Vocal Union.

2009 Convention, Anaheim. The winning streak of the Dallas Vocal Majority was broken this year as the chorus contest was taken by the Ambassadors of Harmony, from St. Charles, Missouri, performing two arrangements of AOH member David Wright. The uptune, Seventy Six Trombones, was a smash, thereafter becoming a favorite on Youtube. The Vocal Majority had won 10 consecutive gold medals, not having been defeated since 1978. In accepting the trophy, the Ambassadors recognized the Vocal Majority's outstanding legacy, bringing on a huge standing ovation in appreciation of the VM's accomplishments. The scores of the top two choruses were the highest two in history at that time.

The quartet contest went to Crossroads, also from St. Charles, Missouri. As bass of Crossroads and director of the Ambassadors of Harmony, Jim Henry became the first person to direct the winning chorus and win a quartet gold medal in the same year. Their semifinals rendition of "That Lucky Old Sun" propelled them to victory.

All four members of Crossroads became double gold medalists at this time. Tenor Fred Farrell had won with Second Edition in 1989, Lead Mike Slamka with Power Play in 2003, baritone Brandon Guyton with Four Voices in 2002, and bass Jim Henry with Gas House Gang in 1993.

2010 Convention, Philadelphia. The first Society convention to be held in the city of brotherly love since 1977 saw an upset in the quartet contest: The expected winner was Old School, with veteran lead Joe Connelly. But the comedy quartet Storm Front stormed past them in the finals, brandishing their own self-effacing style of hilarity. Also of note was the presence of two medalist quartets representing affiliate organizations: Ringmasters, from Sweden, and Musical Island Boys, from New Zealand. Both quartets are former College Champions.

The chorus contest was a showdown between the eleven-time champion Vocal Majority and the 2007 champions Westminster. In the end it was Westminster, outscoring the previous high set by the Ambassadors of Harmony the year before.

2011 Convention, Kansas City. Old School would not be outdone this year, winning the gold by a comfortable margin over silver medalist Musical Island Boys, from New Zealand. With this victory, lead singer Joe Connelly became the first four-time quartet gold medalist – in any organization. His previous International Championship quartets are Interstate Rivals (1987), Keepsake (1992), and PLATINUM (2000).

In the Chorus Contest, the Masters of Harmony, under Mark Hale, extended their consecutive winning streak to eight. This win, like their previous one, was a close one: five points above the Great Northern Union, of Hilltop, Minnesota.

2012 Convention, Portland. History was made as Ringmasters took the gold, the first quartet from outside the United States to achieve that honor. This quartet displayed a striking contemporary musical and visual style that captured the admiration of the barbershop world. With Musical Island Boys placing second, the top two quartets represented affiliate organizations.

The chorus contest was taken by the Ambassadors of Harmony, with a comfortable margin over the Great Northern Union, who again placed second. This was the third win for the Ambassadors (previous golds were in 2004 and 2009). The chorus uptune was Step In Time, from the musical Mary Poppins, arranged by David Wright, with brief appearances by Vocal Spectrum and Crossroads, with Crossroads' tenor Fred Farrell (actually his stunt man look-alike) doing summersaults across the stage.

World Mixed Contest in Germany. In 2012 the German barbershop organization BinG (Barbershop in Germany) organized and hosted the first international mixed quartet contest. The winning quartet was ?????, from Helsingborg, Sweden. This event now an ongoing part of the BinG convention, which occurs every other year.

Marty Monson appointed CEO. In 2012 the Society announced the appointment of a new CEO/Executive Director. Twenty-three-year member Martin "Marty" Monson was named to the post after an extensive search process conducted by the Barbershop Harmony Society's Board of Directors and a professional search firm. Nearly 60 candidates, many with extensive musical and association management experience, were considered for the position. Marty's appointment was greeted applause from many quarters, as his energy, optimism, and characteristic laugh brought a renewed feeling of hope for the future of barbershop.

2013 Convention, Toronto. This was the second convention for Toronto, and only the fourth convention to be held in Canada (previous Canadian conventions: Toronto 1963, Calgary 1993, Montreal 2003). It was a year of unexpected results. In the quartet contest, Masterpiece, from the Los Angeles area, won over the popular Musical Island Boys, handing them their third consecutive silver medal.

An upset also occurred in the chorus contest, with the hometown Toronto Northern Lights, under the direction of Steve Armstrong and Jordan Travis, edging the Westminster Chorus by two points. Toronto's presentation won the hearts of conventioners singing a veggie medley/parody with the singers colorfully dressed as vegetables.

Sri Lankan chorus wins World Choir Games barbershop division. In July of 2014 an event caught the attention of the barbershop world. The World Choir Games, an international choir festival, has a barbershop division that this year was won by a chorus of young men from Sri Lanka, the Old Joe's Choir. This chorus sang quite well, though these men had no coaching from, or even contact with, the barbershop world. The chorus was subsequently visited by a representative of the World Harmony Council to encourage them to continue. This group exemplifies spontaneous appearances of barbershop harmony in areas of the world where no organized barbershop exists. Such interest is typically sparked by

recordings or youtube videos.

Harmony University moves to Nashville. Closing the books on a hallowed 39-year institution, the 2014 Harmony University was conducted in a new environment: the campus of Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. This marked the first time it was not at Missouri Western University, St. Joseph, Missouri, since 1975, except for the widely seen as ill-advised move to Ohio State University in 2005. Though HU was generally well-served by Missouri Western over the years, in recent times the accommodation had become decidedly less desirable because the University was simultaneously hosting the Kansas City Chief's training camp, which meant the usual cafeteria facilities and the newest dormitory were unavailable. The last general session at Missouri Western had been held August 3, 2013 in the theater on campus; the last harmony to ring there was the tag "I'm So Alone With A Crowd", taught by David Wright, which was arranged by Rex Reeve in 1952. It was a place of many memories, being the stage from which Bob Johnson and all subsequent HU deans had conducted general sessions, international champion quartets had sung, and Dave Stevens had delivered his famous discourse "What Are We Trying To Preserve."

2014 Convention, Las Vegas. At the first International Convention ever to be held in Las Vegas, housed entirely in one hotel, the MGM Grand, the Musical Island Boys of Wellington, New Zealand, became the second quartet gold medalist from outside North America. (The Ringmasters from Stockholm, Sweden, had been the first, two years earlier.)

The chorus contest was taken by the Vocal Majority, whose resounding return to supremacy was directed by Greg Clancy, son of veteran director Jim Clancy. They sang a memorable rendition of "You'll Never Know If You Don't Know Now", arranged by Jim Clancy, and a rousing "When Johnny Comes Marching Home", arranged by David Wright. Placing second was the Masters of Harmony, now under the direction of Justin Miller. The Masters had gone undefeated since their first gold medal in 1990, with eight consecutive wins.

There was an impressive showing by the Swedish contingency, as Lemon Squeezy and Zero8 both placed fifth, in the quartet and chorus contests, respectively.

2015 Convention, Pittsburgh. The International contest was held in Pittsburgh for the third time (previously 1982, 1994). The quartet winners, Instant Classic, were a surprise, lurching from an eighth place finish the previous year. They thrilled the audience with their vibrant, youthful sound. The quartet hails from the Indianapolis area and is the first Cardinal District winner since 2001 (Michigan Jake).

The fabulous Westminster Chorus came roaring back from their 2013 defeat to win their third Championship, outscoring the Ambassadors of Harmony, who placed second. They opened with the Disney ballad "A Dream Is A Wish Your Heart Makes", arranged by David Wright, and followed with a rousing production of "Seize the Day", arranged by Aaron Dale.

2016 Convention, Nashville. Again the convention was held in Nashville, home of BHS headquarters (previous Nashville conventions were in 2001 and 2008). The quartet winner was Forefront, second consecutive champ from the Cardinal District, who some had expected to win the previous year. Bass Brian O'Dell became the first African American Society quartet champion. His resonant bass provided the foundation for this quartet's huge sound.

The Ambassadors of Harmony won the chorus gold, for the fourth time, singing David Wright's arrangements of "Something Good", from The Sound of Music, and "Top of the World Medley", which put a Carpenters song together with an old barbershop classic. In second place was the rising Central Standard, from Kansas City. This is the first time representatives from the same district (CSD) won gold and silver in the same year.

Midwinter features mixed youth ensembles. For several years the Midwinter Convention had been featuring a youth festival in which high school choir directors were invited to bring the male choirs to perform and be evaluated. At the Midwinter of 2017, held in San Antonio, gender restrictions were dropped and male, female, and mixed ensembles were invited. This led to much greater participation and was viewed as a remarkable success, resulting in life-changing experiences for the youths, and for their teachers.

Membership. Membership in the Society remains a concern. The September/October 1998 *Harmonizer* reported 34,000 United States and Canadian members in 804 chapters. In June of 2004 there were 31,144 in 818 chapters. The current membership is now around 22,000. These numbers are receding from a high of 38,000 in 1983, and are even below the average membership in the 1950s. Sweet Adelines reports a membership of some 24,000 members, in 600 choruses.

Counterbalancing these negatives are the musical quality, which appears to be substantially higher than it was in the heyday of high membership, and the increased participation of youth through the College Quartet Contest, the Youth Chorus Festival held at the Midwinter Convention as well as numerous youth festivals and music camps conducted in many places around the country, the increasing size and caliber of the worldwide harmony movement, and the warm relationship BHS now enjoys with the organizations ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) and NAFME (National Association for Music Education).

Barbershop associations are indeed global, with independent organizations in Australia, Germany, England, Finland, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden/Norway/Denmark, The Netherlands, and Spain, with fledgling activity now appearing in France and Brazil. There are also barbershop singers in Japan, China, Russia, Taiwan, India, and Sri Lanka. Sweet Adelines International is, as the name indicates, an international organization with members from the U.S, Canada, Sweden, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, The Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, and Japan.

Concluding remarks. We have spanned the history of quartet singing from its earliest roots to the present. As we continue through the new millennium, we see that barbershop quartet singing, as well as its choral derivative, has changed, yet remained the same. It behooves us as practitioners of this time-honored craft to respect and preserve the characteristic elements of our style that have remained intact over so many years; it is also our joy and freedom to grace it with new ideas in music and performance so that it can continue its upward journey. This look into the past hopefully has increased our appreciation of this heritage and imbued us with a keener insight as we carry on the tradition that we love so much.

May the magic long endure.