



KEYS CIRCULAR

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www.circularkeys.org



VICKI DWYER
- OUR
DIRECTOR

In thinking about where we are today, I referred back to a "Director's Review" written in May 2002. It was three weeks before we headed off to competition in Wollongong. I read through all the things I wanted our members to concentrate on and the areas that we had all improved on since January that same year.

This time I look back over the two years of solid work we've each put in, each month raising the bar in line with the goals we had set down following the Wollongong competition. Yes, it has definitely been a tougher path to travel. For one thing, the incline has been constant. We've welcomed so many new members along the way and their voices have added to the quality sound that we are now becoming renowned for.

For all of us, our expectations are different this time around. There is no doubt that we've worked VERY hard and our songs are more difficult. Each and every one of us can stand up and say, "I've done the work - I deserve to be here". I wouldn't be surprised if each of us thinks about the ballad and uptune and says - "these are the hardest songs I have ever had to sing". I can honestly say that each time I have gone into competition, I have applied greater effort and energy to that competition's repertoire than the previous year's. Each time, they *have been* the hardest songs I have ever sung.

The wonderful truth is that the hard work over these past two years since last competition is reflected in a truly resonant and cohesive sound. It's reflected in a quality package including attention to detail that extends into our visual and emotional presentation.

Each new rung on the ladder has been a little more nerve-wracking than the last. Thinking about the last twelve months alone - a new show format for our **Mother's Day Show** and then *really* stepping out of any preconceived ideas of a "comfort zone" when we produced our very successful "The Secret's Out".

I have great faith in each and every one of you that you will give your very best performance in **Adelaide** this year. We've covered all the stuff that we know the judges will look for, now let's get out there and perform for our audience.

You are already champions. Lynne Smith said, "rip open the shower curtain" - I say "Lock and Load" you've got the ammo - let's see some **FIREWORKS!** Let's **REACH** out and show them what we're made of -

Risk Everything And Climb Higher!

Our Journey As "Sisters Doin' It For Themselves"

(Thanks to former Director Doris Ward)



Our sisters are still doin' it for themselves - and we have been doin' it since we were baby sisters in **January 1995**. A brave, timid little group of 8 bewildered women wondering why they had come, found their way to a cottage at the back of **West Epping Uniting Church** and there we sang our first chord. After we placed each one in a part, we learned our first song, "The Five-Chord Change" and barbershop was born in The Hills.

*** **Carolyn Watt and Ros Lumsdaine** were there that first day, and by the time we moved into the main hall of the church, we were already adding such notables as **Mary Owen, Liz Vrhovsek, Maria Priestley, Helen Drew, Di Godwin, Marilyn Harwood, Pamela Tolmie, Edwina Day and Jo Rogerson**.

We were thrilled to be asked to sing in the **Sydney Siders Men's Chorus'** annual show that year. Everyone who could joined in the sewing bee and we put together our first costume. We sang **San Francisco Bay Blues, I Don't Want to Walk Without You and Alexander's Ragtime Band** (we still sing 'Bay Blues').

We got the opportunity to rehearse at Marsden Uniting Church Hall. The ceiling was vaulted which gave us the headroom we needed. We decided to make our first set of risers. A working bee was set up in Di Godwin's garage and we produced a well-constructed safe set of styrofoam risers that were only sold when we purchased our present set.

Around the same time, we were most excited when we received our chorus charter in March of 1996. This was great news because it meant that we could participate in the chorus competition that was being held in the **Gold Coast**.

Twenty-six brave and still a little timid, wide-eyed women performed in our very first competition. We thought we had died and gone to heaven when we were awarded second in the small chorus section with what seems now a tiny score. We hit the jackpot with a couple of new membership intakes which netted us **Steph Wallbank, Jan Black, Joan Chamberlain, Roz Blair, Judi Castle, Mary Schultz, Elizabeth Przeklasa-Adamski, Jackie Connor and Vicki Dwyer**, who is now our beloved director (also **Lynn Lollback and Josie McNeilly** who still actively support the chorus).

We broke new ground when we put on our first show "Another Openin', Another Show" in 1997, at the Don Moore Community Centre, North Rocks, and performed to two sell-out audiences. We were overjoyed at this result and began gearing up for our next convention to be held in **Adelaide 1998**. We were happy when we greatly improved our scores from the first time and achieved a B minus rating.



The chorus went through some unplanned changes over the months that followed the competition but we gathered our forces once again and put on our second successful show "I Got the Music in Me" in 1999 at Castle Hill High School. Our program included **Tuxedo Junction, Operator, 42nd Street and Breakin' Up is Hard to Do**.

By the time we were ready to compete in **Perth** in 2000, we were pleased to take with us our newest talents of **Janet New, Christine Kemp, Christine Jose and Deborah Martin**.



In 2001, we put on *"The Best of Times"* at the Castle Hill RSL Club. We included a segment called *"Let it all Hang Out!!"*. The highlight of the show was performing *"California Dreamin'"* dressed in hippie clothing and wigs. What a hoot!



Right from the beginning the chorus wanted to perform and share their love of music and singing with the community, and we certainly have done that. We have performed in dozens of venues from the Entertainment Centre to nursing homes, and from shopping centers to the Olympic Pool, etc.

The chorus has also provided our members with many opportunities on the management side of things to show their leadership talents and willingness to consistently work for the good of the chorus, from team management and committees like membership, fund raising, social, costume, show, etc. We thank them for their continued dedication. We also thank our families for their love and support.

When **Doris** decided to step down as director and take up a life of ease instead, **Vicki** was the obvious choice to replace her. Vicki and her family were returning to Australia after being in California for three years. Her valued experience singing with the 5th place *Bay Area Showcase Chorus* on the international competition stage and participating in numerous seminars, leadership workshops and coaching sessions in the U.S., had enhanced her natural talent and ability as a singer, dancer and teacher (and pianist) and prepared her wonderfully for her new role as director of our chorus. And the rest, as we say, is history.



New history is being written as we speak for Circular Keys Chorus under the direction of this energetic and dynamic lady. Since taking up her post in 2002, the chorus won the **First Place** award in the small chorus category and achieved a B rating, coming 6th (out of 29) in Australia in the **Wollongong** competition of 2002 with a most respectable score this time. **Jenny McPhee, Pauline Davey, Maeve Buultjens, Alison Bickford** (on leave), **Cathy Bartley, Rhonda Crooks, Heather Finch, Rosemary Cariola, Iona Mathias, Jan Bird, Gail Miles and Liz Perry** sang with us on this very happy occasion.



In 2003, we created a **Mother's Day Show** at our hall featuring mothers existing in different eras from the 40's to now.

Also in 2003, we took a leap of faith and performed our now highly rated *"The Secret's Out"* to sell out shows at the Lennox Theatre, (Parramatta Riverside Theatres) – a Circular Keys' triumph!



The chorus has grown tremendously since 2002 and we welcome all our newest sisters on the risers – **Elizabeth Murphy, Diane Jenkins, Beryl Crockford, Betty Fuller, Brenda Stewart, Hayley Mackenzie, Jo-Anne Brice, Joan Morrison, Liz Brawn, Mary Beth Long - more, Roz Gyzen, Vicki Sutton, Amanda Andrews, Anna Fouracre, Bev Jackson, Donna Thomas, Janet Dunn, Meg Hood, Pam Sadler, Rosemary Champion, Barbara Chantrey, Juliet Besly, Maddy Knodt, Sue Gourdie, Robyn Shaheen and Jan Bligh**. We are pleased that you have come and joined us and it's been great getting to know you.

We will be considered a mid-sized chorus in the next competition in **Adelaide** June 2004....only a few weeks from now !!!

This is a chorus going places and I, for one, am proud and excited to be taking part in its amazing journey.



BREAKING NEWS

Our friends will be happy to share our 2 good-news items this week:

Firstly – International President of Sweet Adelines International, Diane Huber, has just announced that our Region – 34 - (Southern Cross) has won the First Place in the **2004 Add-a-Voice Regional Membership Growth Contest!** That's because we had a regional growth of 21.4%! This brings our Region a monetary reward of \$2000 which I'm sure will be put to good use by the regional managers to support our choruses.

Secondly – we have also learnt that our Chorus has won \$US750 for coming 2nd IN THE WORLD in the above competition – and this isn't even counting our 'new' members from Spirit of Sydney or Brindabella since they counted as transfers!

Guess we helped Region 34 percentages a bit eh! All the more reason to cherish our 'newbies' and wish them a very happy experience in Adelaide in June. (PS bring your woollens!!!)



COMING EVENTS

Sat 22nd May: dress rehearsal for family & friends 2 pm (CKC arrive 9am, 'daughters' arrive 12 noon)- **ALL FRIENDS WELCOME!**

Sat 29th May: extra rehearsal for comp. package (choreo morning) 9-4 pm

**11-14th June:
COMPETITION!
Adelaide here we come!**

