

## Alexandria Harmonizers 70th Anniversary Throwback Thursdays

### No. 7 – 1953 First International Chorus Contest

Fifteenth Annual International Convention of SPEBSQSA Inc., Detroit, Mich, June 10-14, 1953. Music Director Dr. Harold (Bud) Arberg (1951-62). Contest songs: "Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie, Blues" and "The Railroad Song (I've Been Workin' on the Railroad. " (The Harmonizer journey to Detroit was made via railroad in a special passenger coach). The 25 Harmonizers wore their third chorus uniform, blue cutaway tunics.

In the first chorus contest sponsored by the Society, the winner, the **Great Lakes Chorus**, was designated as the "International Convention Chorus Champion" and was the first and the last chorus to be so named. This unique title was chosen because the 16 participating choruses were not selected through District competition.

Although the judges ranked the Harmonizers next to last in 1953, the fact remains that Alexandria represented the Mid-Atlantic District at the first, albeit experimental, Society-wide chorus contest. They would not represent the District in an International Chorus Contest again until 1978, nearly a quarter of a century later.

The first official International Chorus Contest in 1954 at Washington, D.C., attracted a large audience and many additional convention registrations among the 23 competing choruses. The Society's first official winner was the 72-man **Singing Capital Chorus** directed by Lew Sims.

