

# Women's group enjoys sisterhood

By Pamela Dillon

Contributing Writer

Admit it, most of us would love to impress that bored skeptic, Simon Cowell, on an American Idol audition. Then we'd continue to entertain the TV audience week after week with our perfect pitch and charisma. Since the odds of that happening are too astronomical to mention, joining a local singing group is the next best thing.

Ohio Harmony is a 19-member, a cappella women's group based in Springboro. It's a local chapter of Harmony Inc., a nationwide barbershop women's organization that was begun in 1959.

Six years ago, Jim and Diane Coates founded Ohio Harmony with eight members. They have since moved to Massachusetts. RoseMary Courts is one of the earliest members of the organization. "It's a wonderful sisterhood we have; very close friendships. The point of the group is not only singing, but enjoying the music we make together," said Courts, a resident of Cincinnati who now directs the group.

Ohio Harmony performs at community festivals, business functions, and nursing homes. The next public performance is scheduled for 2 p.m. Feb. 17 at Bellbrook Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center, 1957 N. Lakeman Drive. They will be featured on a local cable news magazine show, Springboro 45066, hosted by Don Wright and Mayor John Agenbroad. The Ohio Harmony program will be shown 30 times during March and April on Channel 21.

Ohio Harmony rehearses from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays at the Hampton Inn, 25 Greenwood Lane, in Springboro. The group is planning a special guest night Feb. 28, with special activities and refreshments.

"We've had plenty of people come to rehearsal and say, 'I can't sing,' " said Courts, who lives in Cincinnati. "But by the end of the evening they'll say, 'Well, maybe I can do this after all.' "

The group's first public performance was during Christmas in Springboro in 2002. They've also performed a cappella four-part harmony at the Golden Lamb and the Dayton Children's Christmas Parade.

They enjoy singing classic tunes such as God Bless America, Fit as a Fiddle and Pretty Baby. In addition to old-style barbershop songs, they've added songs such as One Fine Day by Carol King to their repertoire.

"RoseMary is a wonderful director. She has enthusiasm and knowledge," said member Karel Stevens, a resident of Springboro. "She just loves singing and that love is infectious."

The current roster of Ohio Harmony includes Warren County residents Cathy Hoffman and Nancy Renz of Springboro, and Diane Graham and Karen Dean of Lebanon. Besides Cincinnati, the rest of the group spans the Miami Valley area from Vandalia and Washington Court House to the north and Wilmington to the east.

Ohio Harmony is looking for new members.

For more information, call Cathy Hoffman at (937) 748-5277 or e-mail [tmhcsh@woh.rr.com](mailto:tmhcsh@woh.rr.com).

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