



The Captain's Log

Newsletter of the Stockton Portsman
April 2023 - Issue #45

**President's Message:
By Al Wolter**



THE VIEW FROM THE HELM

BALANCE OF POWER & CODE OF ETHICS #8 – ISSUE 16

In that last first 'View from the Helm' I stated that the Captain of our Ship is the Director and Chapter President's are the Harbor Pilots that come aboard to guide the Captain through the dangerous channels of the harbor. This often leads to the conflict of "who is in charge?" and "of what?" It is too often that one or the other either take on too much or do too little. What works best is when there is true balance of power, where everyone encourages each other, praises jobs done well, and provides gentle and supportive reminders when things are yet to be completed. This is true for all the members of the Leadership Teams.

I like to write these when I have an idea (or two), not necessarily when the deadline has been established. As always, I want to share insight and experience so I can educate and inspire. Sometimes these ideas come from things that have happened or I expect to happen, and sometimes it is just an idea that runs across my mind for some reason. This idea is one of those, so relax – there has not been an issue between Bill and I; actually, I feel that we work well together in this capacity, each of us have strong and weak points that mesh well. The fact that we have been quartet-mates and friends for nearly 20 years helps a lot.

Some of where this topic came from is the hiatus that Gabe Caretto has taken from the Voices of California Chorus Directorship and watching Zach Stillman who directs the Golden Valley Chorus. I have long said that a change in Directorship can make or most-

likely kill a Chapter. I have witnessed the later over the years too many times: Chapter leadership or membership wants to do better, so they release their Director and bring in a 'name' that ultimately drive folks away or the Director gets tired of seeing diminishing returns and steps down.

Again, this is a balance of power issue, both between the Director and Leadership, but also between him and membership. Chapters and choruses that grow and sing well (as evidenced by contest scores) are those that enjoy a good balance and share an equal idea of effort and commitment. Thankfully, I believe we are enjoying the best level of these since I have been a Portsmen.

Now you may be wondering what does any of this have to do with Item 8 of the Code of Ethics? Maybe you have no idea what that Item is, or even if what the Code of Ethics are. Last I checked, they were listed on the back of your membership card, and as a Fraternal Organization, they are kind of required. #8 is prohibition on politics and religion and other issue getting into Chapter & Chorus' business: *"We shall not permit political, religious, or other controversial issues to hinder or inhibit the enjoyment of barbershop harmony."*

Now life is full of all those things, and they often hinder and/or inhibit our enjoyment. Many of us are people of faith and some of us are ministers and/or politicians (well no current Portsmen). We do sing religious songs, sing for Church services and funerals, we sing for patriotic events. But we can't let these things prevent us from performing or make any of us bothered or feel less of themselves. There is a very grey area about singing for purely political events, like a campaign event – highly discouraged as it gives the appearance of supporting a particular political viewpoint/candidate. Still, the idea is balance.

'Everyone in Harmony' kind of qualifies as a 'controversial issue' these days. I am proud that we lead the way on being inclusive, even though we strive to not change our sound away from the S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A. sound, while others manipulate keys and such to accommodate members. The fact that we help everyone find their voice that properly fits the Barbershop Sound is the right way to proceed in my opinion.

The fact that we can keep everything in balance and we can find pleasure and camaraderie each Chapter meeting helps make us a place to be and our swelling numbers tend to indicate that. I hope that our contest scores show the same growth.

Here's to keeping everything in balance!

Musical Director's Message: **By Bill Litz**

What an exciting weekend at the **Far Western District, Northeast & Northwest Divisions Convention**. The growth of **The Portsmen** as a performing group has been a fantastic journey. In the **last 5 years**, through each of your attention to improving your performance, our **69.6** score has taken us to the **top of the AA Plateau** – just another point and we will be a AAA chorus!!!

When I became director of the Stockton Portsmen, there was little desire to compete, and there were even times that putting on a show was something that members didn't want to work toward. Just coming to chorus on Tuesday nights has value in being with friends and singing for the fun we have individually. But performing and competing give us reason to improve our skills. Reason to Learn new songs. And reason to be better performers.

We've talked about performance:

- Knowing Words to be Understood
- Knowing Notes to make beautiful Harmony
- Developing Phrases to tell a Story
- Being Vocally and Physically Fit to not cause distractions in our performance
- Being Rhythmic so that we deliver the performance as a unified body
- Using Dynamics to Add Drama
- Using Facial Expression to interact directly with our Audience
- Having Freedom of Movement to be genuine in our delivery
- Wearing an appropriate outfit to help deliver your story and not distract from it

Those are building blocks and tasks that when put together logically, should have the outcome of a good performance. Each one of those is a tool or device that when put together correctly should create artistry. But to be genuine, the delivery **NEEDS TO COMMUNICATE** to someone.

It makes sense to me that I've been more successful in performing for small audiences that I can make eye contact with. However, in an intimate setting like that, most often the message of the song isn't for the specific person for whom you are singing, so it can be uncomfortable making eye contact with the person right in front of you. My quartet, Tune Struck once delivered a Singing Valentine to my son's girlfriend – it was a nice sentiment but felt very awkward – for both of us.

I learned something new during evaluations on Saturday. Jon Kready talked about communicating to a mental image – the “person” we are telling the story to. I've always had a hard time knowing how to explain and visualizing that “performing to” idea. The “person” we are communicating to can vary for different songs or even phrase by phrase during a song.

- Create a mental image that you can deliver your performance to
That “person” can be the object of the song or someone you are telling the story to
- That “person” can change from phrase to phrase depending on what is appropriate in your vision
- Put your “person” in a location appropriate for the song or phrase
- See the “person” closer for intimate moments instead of just singing softer
- Envision the “person” or maybe a “group of people” at a distance for a louder dynamic
- Establish where the “person” is when singing in a group for collective focus
- Express the facial expression that conveys the message to your “person”
- Exhibit body language and movement that emphasizes the story you are telling
- Keep your attention on the conversation you are having with your “person” – don't get distracted or drop your focus

When you can perform for your “person”, the actual audience can enjoy the artistry of it. Some people will see themselves as your “person”. Some will see themselves as you, the one telling the story. And others will simply enjoy the drama as it plays out.

QUARTET MUSTER

Tune Struck

Tune Struck slowed down a little in March, with only one performance, that being the chilly First Presbyterian 100th Anniversary Celebration with the Chorus and Three Lads & Alas!. We did sing for the Chapter once on the Tuesday before, as Chuck, who will be our MC, came to get a sense of our new songs.



We are scheduled to help recognize the Ripon First Responders the First of April with the singing of the National Anthem. It is always good to support those that support us – so look for photos next issue.

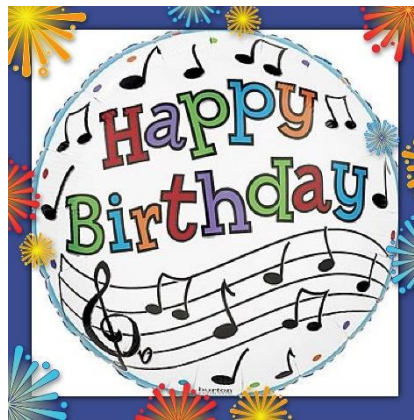
Not having solidified a solid pair of Contest songs, and not having specific goals or interests, we decided to not compete in the Divisional Quartet Contest. Here is to Three Lads & Alas! and Royal Flush in their endeavors on the Contest Stage.

THREE
LEADS
and...
ALAS!




VLQ Rehearsal





Celebrations

April Birthdays

Ron Allison	April 8 th
Raphael Pazo	April 26 th

THE STOCKTON PORTSMEN CHORUS
PROUDLY PRESENTS OUR
66TH ANNUAL SHOW

"SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY"

A MUSICAL RETURN TO WHAT ONCE WAS

MAY 6TH @ 2:30PM

Special Guests:

"NEVER TOO LATE"

TICKETS: \$20 GENERAL ADMISSION
\$15 YOUTH/SENIORS

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
808 W. PORTER AVE
STOCKTON, CA 95207

www.stocktonportsmen.org

Weekly Chapter Meetings:

Location: Zion Lutheran Church – 808 W Porter Avenue (Stockton, CA)

Tuesdays: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM (Fireside Room)

VLQ (Quarteting) 7:30 PM – 8:30 PM (except board meeting nights)

(Please verify for location of rehearsal as it may change)

See calendar for up-to-date information:

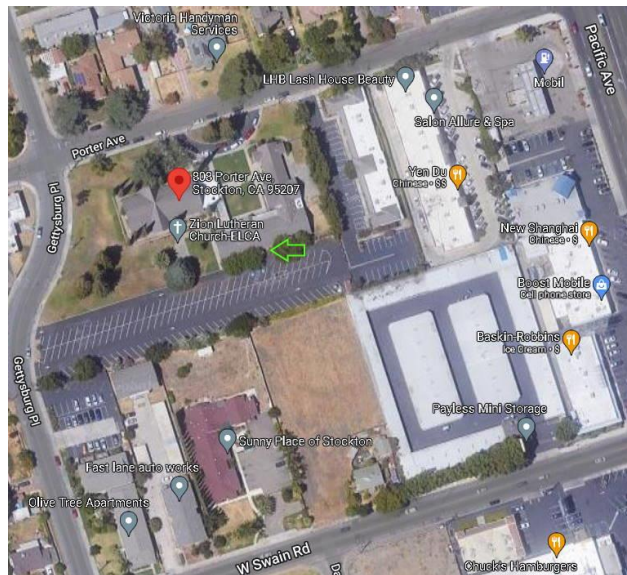
[Click here to access the Stockton Portsmen Calendar](#)

Website:

<http://www.stocktonportsmen.org/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/194542747456>



Directions:

- From Pacific Avenue go west on Porter Way turn south on Gettysburg Pl then turn east into the Zion Lutheran Church parking lot.
- From Pershing Avenue go east on W. Swain Rd turn north on Gettysburg Pl then turn east into Zion Lutheran Church parking lot.

Mission Statement:

Provide the greater Stockton area with quality Barbershop chorus and quartet music and wholesome family entertainment, while encouraging every individual of good character who loves to sing the opportunity to find their place with us.

Hire Us:

Book us for your next event:

- Community Concerts
- Fairs
- Festivals
- Grand Openings
- Holiday Tree Lightings
- Memorial Services
- National Anthem
- Singing Valentines
- Summer Concerts

Performance times usually range from 20 to 40 minutes but can be adjusted up or down to fit your specific program. Contact us by email or phone below for a proposal:

- Info@StocktonPortsmen.org
- Phone (209) 881-SING (7464)

****SAVE THE DATE****

- 5/6 2023 Stockton Portsmen Spring Show
- 5/29 Memorial Day at Cherokee Memorial (Lodi, CA)
- 6/4 Friend of the Fox Cinema Classis showing Strategic Air Command
- 7/2-7/9 2023 International Convention (Louisville, Kentucky)
- 10/12 2023 FWD Fall Convention (Gilbert, AZ)

Barbershop Links

- Barbershop Harmony Society <http://www.barbershop.org/>
- Far Western District <https://www.farwesterndistrict.org/>
- Mixed Barbershop Harmony Association <https://www.mixedbarbershop.org/>
- VoCal Voices of California <http://voicesofcalifornia.org/>