



The Captain's Log

Newsletter of the Stockton Portsman
October 2023 - Issue #51

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



THE VIEW FROM THE HELM

EQUILIBRIUM – ISSUE 22

I usually write these musings early, when I think of something I feel is necessary to share. As I say, I see myself as the Harbor Pilot – they that come on board to assist the vessel's Captain to traverse the tricky routes into a harbor. The pilots are local, are well versed in the hazards and how to avoid them. They do not replace the captain's authority, only provide guidance and advice. My viewpoint in this comes from a couple of areas; my service in the Navy, my past travels on cruise ships, and my experiences seeing chapters struggle with strong Chapter Presidents that chase away Music Directors they see not getting desired results. Chapter Presidents come and go, but a Chapter's chorus lives on the fingers of its director. The right director can make things work, just like a director that doesn't fit what the members want and need can make things fail.

The past couple of Views were written on a deadline, and I was a little concerned that I had been a little harsh and commanding more than I should have. Part of this came from having writing them quickly, my need to find some balance in myself, but also from the loss of a freshman member. To that end, I reread the past four Views and while I was pleased that my musings were not as harsh as thought, still feel the need to clarify and sum everything up in my 'breakfast' ramblings.

I do think that it is highly beneficial when each of us are more committed than involved in our hobby, that we use that commitment to build confidence in ourselves and our product, but still, we need to ensure we maintain a proper balance in all that we do.

It is very easy for me to get a little too deep into barbershop. Many of you hold me in an unwarranted high regard, because I can sing more than one part. I believe that most of you could do the same if you put some effort into, hence I don't think I am that special. But I love to sing and behind God and family, Barbershop is my life – you can find a lot of my background (if you haven't read it already) in the February 2023 Captain's Log. My submarine service molded me in ways that are not always in keeping with the mainstream, and which lead me into disappointment or trouble.

That's a lot of 'preamble' to get to what equilibrium is about. Equilibrium: "a state in which opposing forces or influences are balanced" or "calm state of mind." For me, it is that point where things just work – where work and fun exist equally. Commitment and confidence in balance with laughter and trepidation. Where we all look forward to leaning a little out of our collective comfort zones.

I recently watched a YouTube video discussing the differences between 'stable' and 'steady' in vessels, where a steady vessel is actually preferred over a stable one, as its movements are more predictable. The key is having an equilibrium between the two. That is my goal for us, to be equally steady and stable. Losing a member hurts that in my opinion.

Every one of us is equally important. We all bring differing things to the table, none of which are unimportant. In my first 'breakfast' View, I talked about everyone having an opinion to share, this is part of that. Even the newest member has a valid viewpoint that should be shared, if anything, to help them see why we do what we do or to accept and employ. I fully understand the feeling of being overwhelmed by all the songs and the techniques. While I grew up around the style, felt I had a good handle on what we do, I was afraid to sing in a quartet for such a long time.

I am so proud of some of our new members that are jumping right into a quartet, and I wish them all the best – knowing that the chorus gets better because of it. Sometime ago, I was interested into the makeup of District Champion Chorus' and District Champion Quartets. The number of quartets with gold medals in a chorus was a solid indicator of a champion chorus. Some of this has to do with quartet members having good voices, but it has more (in my opinion) on them having confidence and helping their part-mates singing the right notes in the right way. When we truly sing our songs with committed confidence, the sky is the limit (and no – don't feel the need to focus just on one song to make it perfect).

I feel pained when we lose a member, even those who have been absent for a while. While we all have things to learn and confidence to build, every member of the Portsmen family is important to me and in my mind, our sound.

Still getting back to equilibrium and balance, I want to say that I am both excited about our upcoming trip to France and worried. We have the necessary committed members to go and a sizable chorus, but our balance is off a little. Still, there are many reasons why some of us cannot go on this trip – every one of them is valid and above reproach. While we are raising funds to help offset costs for those that want to go and can't afford it outright, if you can't go – you can't, and there is no shame in that!

As of this writing, Nancy (Our Trip Coordinator) and I are headed to visit the Central California Chapter and their Golden Valley Chorus (GVC) to try and recruit a Bass or two to join us next June – just to balance the parts.

One item I would love to nail down, and one item I feel is currently way out of balance, is the songs we need to learn for these performances. Hoping we can use most for our Spring Annual Show. This means the collective we (Show Chairs, Sue & I, and Bill) are asking a lot of you all. Learning two new Christmas songs, selling Christmas Show tickets, finding money sources for the Fund-raiser Event, learning several new songs for a Spring Show, selling tickets for same, and preparing for an international trip. But I am excited that we can do it, and if we can't find a couple of other basses to join us, will still find a way to make great music in France.

I hope that this closes my mind on the trip through breakfast and the differences between the chicken and the pig, the steady and the stable. Time to really start looking forward to the strategic missions that we have scheduled for us to complete: Fund-raiser Event, Veteran's Day, Festival of Trees, Christmas Show, Christmas-grams, Novice Quartet Contest, Valentine deliveries, and the Spring Show.

Musical Director's Message:

By Bill Litz

As we prepare for the “*On To Normandy*” tour, there’s been more examination of who the Stockton Portsmen are. What are the musical goals of the group? What are the social aspects of the chapter? How do we fit into the community? What does being a member require and what are the benefits of committing to being a member.

Honestly, even though the Portsmen have a history that spans 69 years and that the moniker or BHS is preserving the barbershop style, my view of the chorus has been much simpler in line with our 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.*

My thoughts are more about just getting together to sing every week. But I guess it’s not that simple.

Each of us has different ideas of what commitment to a hobby entails. And we compare other members commitment based on what is important to us.

- Do I need to be at every rehearsal or event or can I show up anytime
- How much outside practice is required or is none necessary
- Am I good enough - Is the group good enough
- Am I being required to learn something new or am I not learning anything new
- Am I important or am I invisible

There is a whole other level of annoyance to me that comes from the doing the business of barbershop, but there are others that do enjoy the feelings that come with getting these things in order.

- Board meetings and committee commitments
- Dues management – spending on music, costumes and events
- Advertising – where can we reach people
- Membership – how do we stay vital
- Performance planning – who should we perform for and what fees are essential

Over the next 9 months, the Portsmen have a lot on our plate regarding different types of performances. Some people will be able to commit to all of them and some people won't be able to do many of the performances. There are many choruses that have a philosophy of, "If you can't be here for everything, don't bother coming". Other groups ask for a signed commitment for a period of time that focus intensely on the next performance.

I love that the Portsmen can be flexible in our approach to commitment. I encourage you to come whenever you can and for those of you that are always here, don't get frustrated when the return of a prodigal member elicits a celebration.

With that flexibility comes a responsibility. We do want to be better performers that are learning and being challenged.

There are many opportunities to be leaders and use skills that don't involve singing. Please jump in and help out in those areas if it brings you joy, but don't be irritated by others that don't. Take time to appreciate and recognize what each of our members brings to the table. Rejoice in that while encouraging them to bring other untapped skills to bear.

As for singing – isn't that why we get together? Use our resources to be ready to join us any time that you are able. The repertoire and learning tracks are available. Weekly schedules are published. Newsletters keep you informed of what is happening.

In the end it really should be simple and fun – don't let your worries and concerns ever keep you from attending - let's just sing.



Celebrations

October Birthdays

Renee Beers – 10/10



Stockton Portsmen Barbershop Chorus

.....ON TO NORMANDY – FUNDRAISER

Join us for an evening of fun, including refreshments from Papapavlos, silent auction, and live entertainment. All proceeds to support the Portsmen performance in Normandy France for the 80th Anniversary Invasion and Liberation, June 2024.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH, 2023

5:30 pm-7:30 pm

VAN RUITEN WINERY

340 W Highway 12, Lodi, CA 95242

Please RSVP by November 1st

209-881-7464 (Sing)

info@StocktonPortsmen.org

Quartet Updates

Three Lads and ALAS!



Arrividerci Alex, Welsome Willys!

Three Lads and Alas! bids a fond farewell to Alex Bernal as he moves to Florida to begin the next chapter of his life. We are pleased to announce we have been joined by our new bass, Willys Nietsche. Although he has extensive choral experience, he is new to barbershop-- and was recruited into the Portsmen by our lead Tom Harmon. Tom passed out Portsmen business cards at our July performance at Hutchins Street Square, and Willys, who was at the event with his family, eagerly accepted. The rest, as they say, is history. The quartet has performances scheduled in October, November, and December, with the possibility of competing again at the FWD competition in the spring. And with the addition of Willys, they are eligible for the Seniors category!

--

Kitty C. Harmon
God Bless America

Tune Struck

While August was essentially a month of 'rest' for Tune Struck, September picked up with a number of Anthem sings and various forms of the quartet.

The first was actually a collaboration of 'Tune Struck' and 'Three Lads & Alas!' of sorts, in lieu of Front Runner, at the Stockton 99 Speedway races.



Next up was start of the Golfing Fundraiser for the Lodi Memorial Hospital Foundation at the Woodbridge Country Club. John Hunt knows a couple of the organizers and it was a great way to observe 9/11, and since Chuck was still out of the country celebrating his birthday, we let John sub for us.



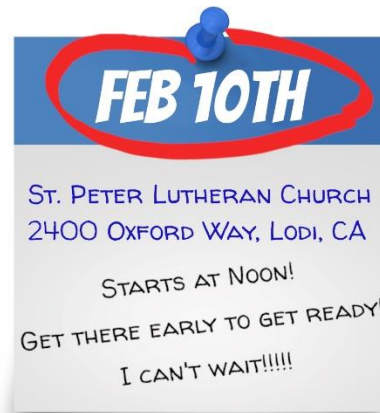
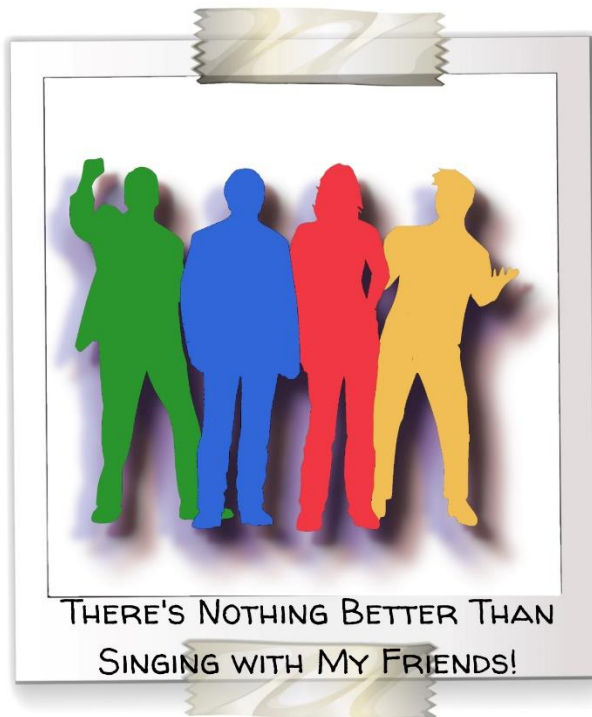
It is great to have a relationship with UOP and their Sports Department. We believe that it is a great way to plant seeds by being able to do the Anthem for their games. We hope that a number of their music students would be doing some too. Still, we were able to sing for the start of the Women's Volleyball game, though Bill had grandfather duties with Abigail and Zachary, so Dave Harmon was able to fill in.



The official foursome was finally together again and able to sing for the UOP Men's water polo game against the Cal Golden Bears. This was our first time at the pool since it was remodeled. We asked the photographer for photos, but alas we have yet to receive any.

The last gig of the month was the 70th anniversary of the Village Barbershop in Lincoln Center. It has been a while since we had a multiple hour gig and we were happy to share the time with folks from Royal Flush. One of things I personally take pride in is our ability to 'roll with punches' so to speak – adjusting to changes and needs. This turned out that way: times changed, personnel changed, desires changed, but we adjusted and it became more of a Chorus performance. With our friend Raphael Pazo were instrumental in the event, singing the Anthem and the Armed Forces Medley, having Chuck give a prayer and benediction. Tune Stuck sang a couple of songs, as did Royal Flush with Brad in for Paul and then the 'chorus' sang a little more. Thanks to our friend Tim Ulmer, there are some nice photos of it all.

2024 NorCal Novice Quartet Contest



FOR REGISTRATION FORMS
AND CONTEST RULES GO TO:
WWW.STOCKTONPORTSMEN.ORG



EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO:
INFO@STOCKTONPORTSMEN.ORG
OR CALL 209-881-7464

THERE WILL BE 2 CATEGORIES:

- 1) REGULAR (ANY 4 BHS MEMBERS)
- 2) HIGHSCHOOL (ANY 4 STUDENTS)

\$10 PER QUARTET MEMBER

\$10 GENERAL ADMISSION

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

JANUARY 30TH

MAXIMUM OF **20** QUARTETS

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:

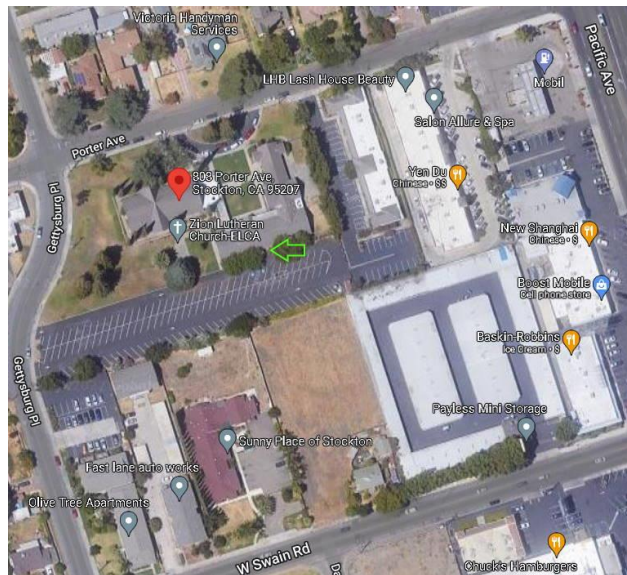
[Click here to access the Stockton Portsmen Calendar](#)

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 Road, 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****

- 10/12-10/15 2023 FWD Fall Convention (Gilbert, AZ)
- 10/20-10/21 Harmony Camp 2023 (Sly Park) Teaching Quartet – Vocalocity
- 11/9 Sponsor Gala - Silent Auction Fundraiser
(4pm – 8pm – Van Ruiten Winery)
- 12/2-12/3 Festival of Trees (Micke Grove - Lodi, CA)
- 12/9 Stockton Portsmen Holiday Show
- 12/10 Bob Hope Theater Friends of the Fox (Stockton, CA)

2024

- 3/14-3/17 2023 FWD Spring Convention, NorCal Divisions (TBD)
- 6/4 – 6/12 **D-Day 80th Commemoration Concert Tour**
- 10/17-10/20 2023 FWD Fall Convention (Bakersfield, CA)

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/>