



The Captain's Log

Newsletter of the Stockton Portsmen
July 2021 - Issue #27

President's Message: By Nancy Hennefer

Let me start by saying I feel like I'm reporting on a Jerry Seinfeld episode..... an article about... well.... nothing.

The year is ½ over and it seems like we're just getting started, as if a new year is beginning! Rehearsals have been hit and miss, lots of folks in and out but a welcome to our new prospective member Allen (hope I spelled your name correctly!) Our biggest concern, as always, is recruiting new members. At the June Board Meeting, discussion centered on beginning ideas to make it happen. Just my opinion, but we need to somehow convince people that singing Barbershop is not about wearing straw hats, suspenders and arm garters.

Our nominating committee will be recruiting names for the upcoming slate of officers. Someone needs to give a good look at the president's position. I will be taking over as the President of the Lodi Grape Festival Board, and will need to hand over the Portsmen gavel.

While we don't have anything to sing at / for in the near future, Director Bill has decided to take some time to actually have us work on our voices, facial expressions, blending, etc., and peeling back layers of songs we have been singing FOREVER that need tweaking. Those of you that know me, this is not my favorite thing. Being the ham bone that I am, I need a reason to rehearse, something to look forward to, someone to entertain! But, carry on.....

Our quartets have been under the radar, although Meta Four did a sing for Dave's church group on America's Birthday. Royal Flush also put on a 30-minute set in Lodi for Revel's Senior Living folks. Not sure what Tune Struck has been up to.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 28. John Eilers has once again offered to host the Annual Portsmen BBQ. Let's make sure we all pitch in and help out with whatever John needs. That's about it.....guess it wasn't quite nothing.....

Sending love notes, Nance
President

Musical Directors Message:

By Bill Litz

What encourages *you* to come to chorus rehearsals week in and week out. A big part could be social – seeing each other and developing friendships. Another reason could be to have a place and time to practice the art of singing – specifically the A Cappella/Barbershop style of singing that **The Portsmen Chorus** strives to preserve.

Our restart after COVID19 lock down has been challenging. We started off strongly because we had a performance scheduled – Memorial Day. It was great to have a reason to be rehearsing and singing. It made planning a rehearsal easy, knowing we needed to rehearse our patriotic set. The performance was fun and inspiring, but since then, it's been difficult to find focus. Without a show or a performance or contest on the horizon, many of our members (even some of our leaders and stronger singers) have lost commitment for our Tuesday ritual.

Chorus (and quartet singing) is a group activity. In past messages I've talked about needing to improve our individual skills – being better singers, better performers, better communicators. At this moment in the life of the Portsmen, it's more about the commitment and coming together to create the harmonic union of voices.

Even though they were amateur singers, the original founders of the Portsmen had singing as a lifestyle. It wasn't necessarily about performing or being even as good as they could be. But their commitment to each other allowed the chorus to be entertaining for its membership and for its audiences. They were committed for their lifetime. They were devoted to singing for their personal enjoyment and to doing their part so others could enjoy the sound that it takes *four parts* to make.

The Portsmen members need to decide what it is that we want, not only as individuals but collectively from our barbershop experience. Then we must use our dedication, influence, and talent to make a reality we can all enjoy.

I'm hearing that *some* want to be performing, but that is almost impossible without enough strength on each part. *Some* want new music and expect others to learn when *they* don't commit to learning or being available. *Some* DON'T want new music because *they* don't want to commit to being available. *Some* want shorter rehearsals (probably because we haven't been working on new things). *Some* want to work longer to be able to work on new things. *Some* want a small repertoire that can be focused on and polished – groups like Fog City manage their commitment in small time increments, only working on five to ten songs at any given time. *Some* would rather sing more songs and not stress over imperfections. Keeping all these things in mind it's important

to determine how we want to proceed as future decisions will create different performance capabilities & opportunities.

I appreciate every one of you – especially those that are there every week. These last few weeks we have been spending time working on confidence and strength of the smaller group of people that have participated. Even though we are doing songs that people should know, there is often a lack of really knowing the parts. So we have been duetting, incorporating things like breathing and phrasing to be able to actually make music while firming up the actual knowledge of the parts. I believe most are actually enjoying the process as they each have to step up and carry more weight. They are having to become their own leaders and it is fun to see the growth. Sometimes people have to help out on other parts, but even that can be a special moment for people as they try new things.

I cherish the people who attend, that mostly just want to sing and share the experience of harmonizing. They want to be there to build each other up and to make the best sound they can each week. We surprise ourselves every week in being able to make it work with the different group of people that show up.

It saddens me when people choose not to be present. Not being there (or not staying focused giving your best) not only cheats you out of being able to improve and have a good evening, it makes your chorus mates feel inferior and doesn't give them a chance to learn and experience the harmony that it takes all of us together to make.

I know we all have many things going on in our lives that can pull us away from the time needed to be a better chorus. I don't think we need to make a lifetime commitment (although some of us have). But we should all pledge to be there as often as possible, knowing our music well enough to help create a performance moment every time we sing, whether it is at a weekly rehearsal or an actual performance.

We will try to balance the wishes of all the members, but I think it is important for us to:

- Rehearse often with focus and an attitude that can see when something good is happening
- Learn some new music to keep our interest high and have continuous improvement
- Learn some tags for the quick gratification we have come to expect in our fast moving world
- Drop some songs so we can polish the others better
- Have performances scheduled to look forward to
 - maybe shorter chorus portions with quartets getting more opportunities
- Quartet more to build individual confidence and trust in each other
 - plan on staying after rehearsal to sing more intimately in pick-up quartet moments
- Smile.....

I honestly believe the Portmen Chorus has the ability to..... 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.

I hope that you are inspired and are willing to challenge yourselves as you walk your own barbershop path, to be more committed to the chorus, the Society, and to the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop singing. As you approach your walk with various expectations, keep your eyes open for the magical things that happen as we sing together. It may be a song or a phrase or maybe even just a single chord on a given night, but you can only experience that if you are present and open to feel its joy.

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

Where do I begin to tell the story...

I hope most of you recognize that little snippet of lyrics is from the Theme from Love Story. Did you get the July/August Harmonizer? I saw a theme throughout the articles – you guessed it Love. Isn't that what we are about? Love of song - songs of love, a brotherhood (gender inclusive) of harmony – a harmony of brotherhood.

Still, as we (the Portmen) start to return to our 'regular routine' there is a decent amount of beginning yet to do. We have had our first Board Meeting in a while and we've had a fairly successful performance at the Cherokee Memorial Day Service, still we are just beginning to begin.

One of the best beginnings is the addition of new faces. **Alan Lee** from Farmington has been a welcome addition to our Lead Section and our June 29th Meeting saw the arrival of **Brad Nieman** who found us on-line and sang a really nice Bass. Hopefully this is the start of that 'Barbershop Love' we all share.

Since we have some new folks and it has been a long since we last talked about ourselves and all the tools we have available to us, I am going to begin with that.

First, as a Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society (S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A., Inc.), there is the Society's website (www.barbershop.org) where one renews membership, joins Singing Communities (yeah it's a new thing), registers quartets, finds music and merchandise, gets access to and information about Conventions, Education Programs and more. The Society also has Social Media accounts that one can join and get access to videos and the other stuff one finds on such things.

As a Chapter in Northern California, geographically we are in the Far Western District and the Northeast Division (www.farwesterndistrict.org) whose responsibilities include ensuring that Chapters don't step on each other's toes with having 'shows' compete for the same potential audiences, providing the mechanisms for adjudicating which quartets and choruses go on to compete for the "Best Competitor of the World" at the International Convention (normally held in July around the 4th).

Of course we have our own website that I trust is not news to you (www.stocktonportsmen.org). Let's take a tour around, even though I am hoping that it will be a bit of 'preaching to the choir'. First stop; ever scroll down below the banner photo? There is a nice little discussion about who we are (might need a little updating as I don't think the Society has 28,000 members anymore and they certainly are NOT all male). More information about us is found on the top link on the left hand side.

In **ABOUT US** you can find [our Mission](#), [our History](#), [our Officers](#) (present and past, with some committee info as well), [our Awardees](#) (those recognized for their service to the Chapter) and [our Director's](#) bio and lastly [our Quartet's](#) provide a look at the groups that are available to perform for you (again – might need a little updating).

Moving down to the bottom of the **LINKS**, you can find connections to the Society's, District's and Mixed Barbershop Harmony Society's webpages as well as a link to the Chapter's Facebook page and Tune Struck Quartet's webpage (also found in Our Quartets). Now some of you may have said "what" when you read Mixed Barbershop Harmony Society – what's that? Before BHS fully embraced women's membership, the MBHS was formed and a number of us joined and the Chorus was registered with them. Most have let that membership expire, but as an affiliated BHS organization, they provide support for mixed ensembles.

The **JOIN US** and **EVENTS** are fairly self-explanatory as places where you can find information about how and why to join and our events and how to contact us. Seems our Calendar needs some attention.

The **YOUTH HARMONY** tab provides information about how young men and women can gain support in singing our Style with various things like music, school visits and camps. Again, some of the posted information updates need to occur. The Boys Harmony Camp is going to occur October 22-24 this year – if you know a young man that likes to sing – encourage them to look into it (but it seems ours is not the only website in need of updating – yes I sent info to the District about that).

The **GALLERY** tab gives not only some photos and a couple of videos. It also holds these Newsletters, Committee minutes, and once we get back to full functioning – Rehearsal Agendas (that was a new one for me too).

I do hope you all know what is behind the **MEMBERS ONLY** tab and how to access it. As a member, what is behind this curtain is something you should access on a semi-regular basis. Lastly is probably my favorite tab: **MORE BARBERSHOP** – a repository for some thoughts that a couple of us have thought would be beneficial to folks. While **Nancy Hennefer's** "*Tips for Contest*" was written for 2018 – there is a lot of great information in there for every performance. It is my hope that everyone finds the time to read through all those pieces kept here and find a nugget or two to help you fall more in love with Barbershop.

Before I go, there are a couple of other things I need to remind everyone about, and that would be what all the ways to contact various Chapter functions/leaders. First and foremost is our telephone number **209.881. SING (7464)**. This is a Google Voice number that can be pointed to different phones as needed (Valentine Coordinator, Show Ticket Sales contact, General Chorus Contact) – remember that the Society has a toll-free line: **1.800.876. SING (7464)**. Info@StocktonPortsmen.org will send an email to the Chorus Contact, PortsmenContact@gmail.com is the source of our phone number; events@StocktonPortsmen.org will send information and ticket requests to whomever is in charge of ticket sales for shows and such; and just like that valentine@StocktonPortsmen.org sends info and purchase requests to the Valentine Coordinator. To me, the next email target is the most important and least used – it is sunshine@StocktonPortsmen.org and is intended to be the quickest and easiest way to inform the Chapter about things happening in your life that reduces the sunshine in your life – you or a close family member is sick or you need some help, this is your tool to get our support (add this to your contacts and use it). The last target is not very public, but it is Treasurer@StocktonPortsmen.org and it goes to the Treasurer. There are a couple of other “gmail” accounts out there, but since most of us don't use or need them I'll leave that for another day.

SAYING GOODBYE

I find it comforting that none of immediate Portsmen family left us to sing in the Chorus in the Sky this past month, yet there are a number of Portsmen that have left our membership. These include Renee Beers, Doug Biggs, Michael Buoniconti, Jimmy Carter (moved to Texas), Carol Clark (moved to SoCal), Diana Goodwin (working on her Masters), Christian Hagan, Laci Parker, and Stephanie Thurman to name a few. We are always hopeful that those whom have left but are still in the area will find their way back to us, for the love of barbershop is a strong bond. The reasons for stepping away for a while are many, just like the ways to come back are.

But like I said at the start, where do I (we) begin to tell the story – contacting those that have left us and telling them they are missed is a great start. That is something we all can and should do. I know this is a lot of info, but I hope you made it through it all and find something in here useful to your love of Barbershop music, the Stockton Chapter, and its Portsmen Chorus.

Quartet Update:

Tune Struck Quartet

Well, after a three month lay-off while Greg and GERAL toured the Country in their RV, Tune Struck finally was able to get together as a foursome – but first we had to help the Chapter save some money by moving the risers out of the Storage Facility and into the Sea-Van at Zion (there will be more work to be done, but that's for another day).



It was a hot day and we needed to cool off and so we headed to BJ Brewhouse for some libations and sustenance. While we waited for a table, we did sing a little, even were solicited for some Fund-raising activities in the future.

On Wednesday we received a request through Sue to sing for the Golden Bear Insurance Company Lunch. It was wonderful to sing for close to a hundred folks, with some very familiar faces in the crowd (Nikki, Victoria, Peggy Nelson from the Pops Choir Coordination to name a few). Our good friend Tim Ulmer was there to take some photos, hope to be able to post some from him soon – check out our Facebook and Instagram pages.

Weekly Chapter Meetings:

We are currently meeting outside in the courtyard without masks.

Location: Zion Lutheran Church – 808 W. Porter Avenue – Stockton – CA

Tuesdays: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

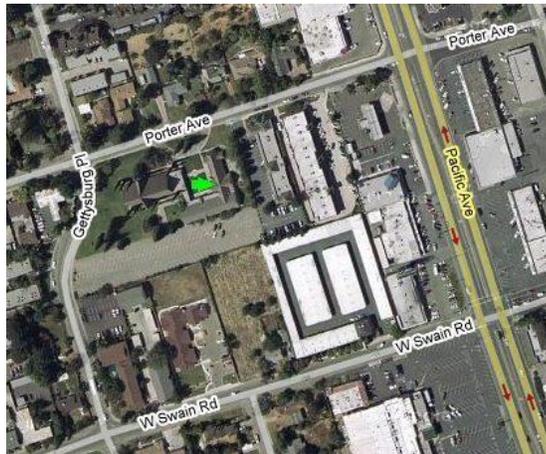
See calendar for up-to-date information:

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

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

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

Map:



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****

2021 Events

- 7/17 – 8/7 BHS Virtual Harmony University (Online)
- 10/7 – 10/10 FWD Fall Convention (Gilbert, AZ)
- 10/22 Harmony Camp 2021
- 3/10 – 3/13 FWD Spring Convention: Prelims, SE/SW Divisions
- 3/20 Stockton Portsmen Ice Cream Social
- 5/13 – 5/14 NE/NW Divisions Convention

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/>