



The Captain's Log

Newsletter of the Stockton Portsman

November 2024 - Issue #63

THE VIEW FROM THE HELM

BY AL WOLTER

EVOLUTION - ISSUE 35



The title of this month's View pushes the Code of Ethics a little, but trust me, this has little to do with science, politics or religion, even though all of these play a part in what I want to share with you.

While the phrase "the more things change, the more they stay the same" has value, the past couple of years have not been true to it for the Stockton Portsman. There has been a fair amount of change for us and around us. The Barbershop Harmony Society, the Far Western District and its Northeast Division have changed inversely proportionally to our changes. We are the little Chapter that has done much, while things seem to fall apart around us.

We changed to survive, adding female voices (but striving for the Barbershop sound), keeping up with PoleCats and tradition (while still pushing ourselves with slightly more challenging charts). Others struggled to maintain their male oriented focus or went to focus on more Sweet Adaline like sound and singing ever more difficult charts and leaving square easy to sing songs behind, and many are now just clinging on to life. To some, that could be described as evolution.

In the long run, I have no clue as to what will become of our hobby. Lawsuits, high costs of participation and diminishing values make keeping on more difficult for many. The seaming focus on that one awesome voice and that unbelievable chart of a song, makes the hobby less attractive to the regular individual.

I started to write this before we headed to Riverside, and as I have expressed before, I personally could live without contests. I understand their purpose, both as a reason to encourage members to attend conversations and as a way to help build a group's sound, with adjudication and evaluation from folks that have more than just a little training and a piece of paper.

Still, as we gear ourselves up to compete, we develop high expectations that rarely get fulfilled. This is especially true when the focus is not on the best singers singing the craziest charts, but just us singing songs we like. But in our evolution, we are changing into better singers and are singing more than square/PoleCat charts, and doing so in more than a "Singing Head" presentation style. I do hope that we made a few heads turn, no matter what the score.

And yet the evolution will continue. One item of concern for me is what happens when our growth and prowess start to gain momentum? How do we keep what we have, that makes us us? We are not a competition chorus; we don't have just five hard charts and two mediocre ones that we spend two hours pounding into perfection. We have to work hard to keep the full repertoire (standard [thematic & Polecat], general, patriotic and holiday [both valentine and Christmas] to under 40 songs... We need all that, as we are busy all year round in the community, this past year having the fewest community performances in a long time.

The last two months of the year will try to fix that, with performances at the Bob Hope / Fox Theater for movies and Veterans Day, Micke Grove for the Festival of Trees and our own Holiday show.

If our focus, as we grow, changes more to contests, what happens to these performances and the exposure they provide to folks that want to hear and hopefully sing our music?

This will be my second to last View from the Helm, and while the seas in front of us appear to me to be calm, and following, the sky on the horizon has some troubling signs that your new Captain will need to keep her eye on.

This is the post Folsom update: I had a long chat with Chuck Kenney, as he was unable to attend the show and wanted to get an update on what I thought of our participation. He was pleased that we would come up and support Folsom, as a good friend to Kent Borrowdale and Roger Perkins.

One item we talked about was the social aspect that we, as Portsmen, embrace. We not only sing, try to sing well, share our music with the community in support of lots of groups, but we gather together as more than just artists that sing. We are a family that enjoys each other as individuals, with picnics, dinners, concerns for health and such. Chuck has expressed his appreciation for the Birthday cards we (Ron Spohn) send each year. There are many Chapters that do not embrace this aspect of the hobby.

It was mostly Stockton members that were outside the building, still singing and socializing after the Post had closed its doors for the night. While we love to sing, having Steve Taylor there, as well as Merlyn (from VoCal and Placerville), there was a certain comradery that made going home right away less desirable than standing outside.

As we continue to evolve, let's work hard not to lose this aspect of our make-up. Keeping everyone who joins us feeling like they're part of the family is as important as encouraging them to sing as well as they possibly can.

Musical Director's Message:

By Bill Litz

We have so much to celebrate this year. In October, I had the privilege of spending time with so many Portsmen in Riverside. Along with presenting a special WWII contest package, we took part in the Harmony College Lite classes, enjoyed incredible performances by various choruses and quartets, and shared many memorable moments singing together during the traditional convention activities.

I hope each of you had a chance to experience some unforgettable moments during the event.

As an introvert, I understand what it feels like to be on the sidelines. It took me stepping outside of my comfort zone to fully appreciate the joy of singing in a quartet and to build lasting barbershop friendships across the globe. I'm not suggesting that everyone needs to be an extrovert, but if you've ever felt left out or disconnected, I encourage you to be a little bolder the next time you attend a convention or barbershop gathering.

Here are a few simple ways to get involved:

- **Approach someone in your favorite quartet** and share your thoughts on their performance.
- **Strike up a conversation with someone next to you**, even if you don't know them.
- **Attend one of the classes or special events.**
- **Always find someone to sing with**—that's what BHS is all about!

Even more important is creating those moments within our chapter. I often hear people

“You know, sometimes all you need is twenty seconds of insane courage. Just literally twenty seconds of just embarrassing bravery. And I promise you, something great will come of it.”

— Benjamin Mee, [We Bought a Zoo](#)

express disappointment because they haven't been invited to participate. They've worked hard on their singing, learned Pole Cat songs, and mastered tags, but still feel overlooked when it comes to singing in a quartet.

How many ways can we say, "seize the day"?

I believe every singer who walks through our door deserves the opportunity to sing in a quartet, even if it's just singing a tag or a Pole Cat. While it's natural for some to lack the confidence to

perform in front of others, once they start singing in a quartet and carry their own part, those fears will give way to the excitement and joy that quartetting brings.

On the flip side, for those who are more comfortable with networking or who've pushed past feelings of self-doubt, I challenge you to be more inclusive in your next group experience.

- **Read the room** and reach out to those who may be hesitant to approach you.
- **Support events** by attending—your presence will enhance the experience for everyone.
- **Invite others to join in and sing with you.** It can be difficult for newcomers to break into an established group, but your invitation can make all the difference.

Let's continue to foster an inclusive, supportive community where everyone has the chance to be part of the music.



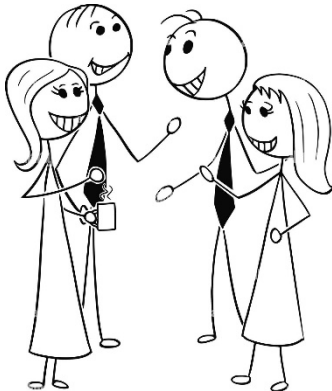
Celebrations

November Birthdays

Al Wolter – 11/7

Bob Yater – 11/23

BS Quartet



One newest quartet BS Quartet is comprised of Bob Yater, Bill Litz, Stephanie Thurman and Sue Atkins....Bob, Bill, Stephanie and Sue....I guess that would really be DOUBLE BS. We could tell you that this dynamic barbershop ensemble features two talented men and two captivating women, united by their passion for ringing barbershop chords with a repertoire that include classic tunes and contemporary favorites, but that would be a lot of..... bunk, drivel, gibberish, hogwash, poppycock, malarkey... you get the drift. But what wouldn't be..... flapdoodle is their desire to entertain and delight you as they celebrate the joy of music, one chord at a time.

Tune Struck

Tune Struck has been on hiatus for a while now, and after some collective reflection, we are again in search of a fourth.

At our visit with the Portsmen to the Folsom Chapter Show, it was great to see the founder and original Baritone, Steve Taylor in the audience. Of course it was an even greater pleasure to sing with him afterwards, starting in the bar area and finishing outside after the Post closed down.



In the beginning of the October
Al, Steve, Bob & Bill weatherproofed the Seavan



Home Is Where the Heart Is

By Tom Harmon

---Come and Visit the Stockton Portsmen---

What is a home? To many people, “home” is a street address, but to others, “home” is the happy reminiscence of togetherness, love, bonding, and sweet memories.

In the course of my musical life, I have been involved in various organizations, some requiring musical expertise, others having specific requirements of attendance, and yet others requiring large expenditures of money. Some insisted upon the goal of excellence and had difficulty accepting anything less, especially on the competition stage.

As I review the files of memory, I find places where there were medals, plaques, and trophies, but beyond the material awards and glitter, my heart does not consider those awards as “home”a place where I would like to return. What is missing among all this? Why do I not see a wall of achievements as “home”?

To me, the true qualities of “home” are many and varied, but among them I would list: friendship, brotherhood, camaraderie, acceptance, support, uplifting and patient counsel, and a positive desire to be a blessing to those who are dear to us. This, to me, is where “home” is.... a place where I matter and am appreciated.

To me, there is a small chorus of good friends that can be found in Stockton, California, a place where guests are welcomed and encouraged. By some it is considered “rinky-dink” because it is small and far outside the circle of greatness, but this particular chorus startled the entire Barbershop region in 2024 by becoming the Far Western District Northeast Division Champions.... with only 20 singers. Its name is forever engraved on that trophy which rotates among the largest and best choruses: “The Stockton Portsmen.” It is but a moment in time, but that moment is precious. This same chorus, all by themselves, was able to make the trip of a lifetime and participate in the D-Day 80th anniversary celebrations in France, something that only a couple of the larger and more renowned choruses could boast.

I am proud to think of the Stockton Portsmen as “home.” I was a part of the greatness that preceded the victory. I was among a small circle of friends who enjoyed a great director, dedicated officers, and a love for one another that surpassed any other chorus I have ever been in. There is a spot on the risers for YOU.

When it comes to the positive values of “family,” the Stockton Portsmen have it in spades. Each member strives to appreciate and uplift. They all know each other and seek to experience life together. They display a wonderful sense of unity, purpose, and achievement.

Indeed, this is a chorus I have been happy to call “home”because, to me, “home” is where the heart is.....and my heart is here among my friends.

Thank you to our sponsors!!!

Angie Rogan, Akalia and Staff
- Van Ruiten Winery, Lodi
Betsy Smith - Velvet Grill Creamery, Lodi
Christal - Corner Scone Bakery, Lodi
Seth - Lodi Beer Co, Lodi
Avenue Grill, Lodi
Jennifer - Airport Café, Acampo
Joe Fiori - Fiori's Butcher Shoppe & Deli,
Lodi
Papapavlo's Stockton/Lodi
Bon Appetite, Lodi
Darlene - The Hollywood Café, Lodi
Dee - De Vinci's, Lodi
Thai Spices, Lodi
Smack Pie Pizza, Lodi
Arroyos Mexican Café, Stockton
Genoa Bakery, Stockton
Buds Seafood, Stockton
Whirlows, Stockton
DeVega Brothers, Stockton
Christine Robles - Red Lobster, Stockton
Michael Gilliland
- La Mesa a Mexican Kitchen. Stockton
Big Belly Deli
Cindy Burke - Burke's Family Restaurant
The Mud Mill, Lodi
Mark Armstrong - Lodi Grape Festival
Nikki Burgess - The Dermal Clinic, Lodi
Yvonne Holland - Dermal Clinic, Lodi
Richard Lund and Patsy Miller
Lori Makabe
Mark Huntley
Gary Floyd - Tokay A's Model A Club
Arecelli - Stockton Civic Theater,
Stockton
Judy - Minerva's Furniture, Lodi
Liana Roman - Now and Zen Yoga, Lodi
Castle Oaks Golf, Lone

Brenda Patterson - A Cut Above, Lodi
Planet Fitness, Stockton
Asia - Arthur Murray Dance Studio,
Stockton
Mr Alex Munro - Hilton Stockton
Bob Weisenberg
- Woodbridge Uncorked, Woodbridge
Mangal Singh - Clements Ridge Produce
and Bakery
Zoom Car Wash, Stockton
Regina Brown - Member: Stockton
Portsmen
Kathy Duran - Voila Gifts and Home
Decor, Lodi
Denise Solari - SDS Designs
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Stockton
Made in Amador, Sutter Creek
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Hotel Sutter Restaurant, Sutter Creek
Monarch, Lone
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Christian Phillips - Phillips Financial,
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Dr Mike Pontius
Roberts Retirement
Anthony Neiddu
- Raymond James Financial Services,
Lodi
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James Van Sickler, Jr. DDS

Robert and Rosemarie Keller
Fritz and Phyllis Grupe
Ron and Kris Katzakian
Ken and Nancy Mullen
Star Heers
Carol Holt Bedell
Daniel Bernick - Sacramento Artist
Daniel Meza - F&M Bank, Lodi
Sandy - House of Clocks, Lodi
Brain Synowicki - Synowicki's Jewel Box,
Lodi
Sandy Padgett - La Fleurette Garden
Décor, Lodi
University of the Pacific
Dave and Sandy Harmon
- Member: Stockton Portsmen
Tom and Diane Hofsommer
Nancy Hennefer - Member: Stockton
Portsmen
Colette Allen
Carol Simms
Susan Atkins- Member: Stockton
Portsmen

William Litz- Member: Stockton
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Portsmen
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Mahesh Ranchod
Jami Howland
Thomas Lauzze

STAY TUNED CHORUS PRESENTS

holiDAZE

A CAPPELLA SHOW AND DESSERT
DASH FUNDRAISER

Saturday, November 16th, 2:00PM
GIBBONS COMMUNITY CENTER
4701 Gibbons Drive
Carmichael, CA 95608

TICKETS
\$20





Merry Christmas

The STOCKTON
PORTSMEN PRESENT

**Barbershoppin'
Around the
Christmas Tree**

DECEMBER 14 SATURDAY
2:30 PM

Donations Welcome

Zion Lutheran Church
808 W. Porter Avenue, Stockton
www.stocktonportsmen.org

209-881-SING(7464)

Weekly Chapter Meetings:

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

Tuesdays: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM (Grace Hall)

VLQ: 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 Portsman Calendar](http://www.stocktonportsmen.org/)

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 or Phone (209) 881-SING (7464)

****SAVE THE DATE****

- 11/10 Friends of the Fox – Movie “PT 109” (Stockton, CA)
(Sing in lobby 12:45pm - 1:30pm [Click here for details](#))
- 11/11 Fox Theatre – Veterans Day (Stockton, CA)
- 11/16 Stay Tuned Chorus Show (Carmichael, CA)
- 12/7 & 12/8 Festival of Trees (Mickey Grove, Lodi, CA) (10:00 am – 12:00 pm)
- 12/14 Stockton Portsmen Holiday Show (2:30 pm – 4:30pm)
- 12/15 Friends of the Fox – Movie “Home Alone” (Stockton, CA)
(Sing in lobby 12:45pm - 1:30pm [Click here for Details](#))
- 12/17 Remote Rehearsal – The Oaks

Barbershop Links:

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