



The Captain's Log

Newsletter of the Stockton Portsman

February 2025 - Issue #66

Sending Love Notes



Those of you that know me, (and still put up with me anyway!) have heard me come up with some pretty “outside the box” ideas and comments. Like, hey, let’s sing Irish Blessing on the top of Mont-Saint-Michel, (never mind the fact that we kind of got in trouble), or doing random drive by Valentine singing at the Rio Vista police station, putting up a Portsman Christmas Tree at the Festival of Trees or getting us on Good Day Sacramento to promote our Little Barbershop of Horrors show a few years ago. Lots of these ideas are met with eye rolls and uh, yeah, right, but nonetheless, I persevere. I’m bringing this up in only my second column of this new year, because I want all of us to start thinking “outside the box”! Whether it be an idea about recruiting new members, a way to share our music with others, a new song to try, ANYTHING! Present your thoughts to your dog, one person, 3 people, a Board member, the whole chorus! We are a safe place, and you should not feel “boxed in” or that your idea might be as “dumb as a box of rocks”. Be a “Jack in the Box” and crank your idea out there!

Here’s MY latest...I saw an article in the Lodi paper about the city of Lodi and the San Joaquin County Health Services partnering to launch a Blue Zone program. Blue Zone is the name and trademark used to distinguish the world’s longest living cultures, and the characteristics that contribute to their longevity. According to the article, Lodi will become the focus of a study that will determine how to make the region a place to live a “healthier and longer life”. While the areas of diet and exercise are the cornerstones of Blue Zone distinctions, we all know that singing contributes to not only physical health, but offers social, emotional and cognitive benefits as well. So.....what if WE got involved in one of the community meetings and/or focus groups that will be a part of the Blue Zone assessment team beginning in March ??? Hmmm.....

Start stuffing the “mailbox”, the “ballot box”, open “Pandoras Box”, light the” fuse box”, get on your “soap box” without fear of ending up in the “penalty box”! To quote that famous Forrest Gump line, Life is like a “box of chocolates”, go ahead and take a bite. Might be full of NUTS, but you may find you “hit it out of the box” with your ingenuity and bravery to put it out into our Portsmen universe.



Sending love notes,



Nance



Celebrations

February Birthdays

John Hunt – 2/16

Sandy Mosley – 2/23

Musical Director's Message:

By Bill Litz

I'm a little late writing this, it being Groundhog Day. It makes me smile at how quickly we repeat things over again. In the Bill Murray rendition of *Groundhog Day*, once he figures out that he is going to get the same day over again (maybe for eternity), there is no risk in using that *extra* day to improve something in his life or get to know someone or something new. So instead of repeating your same mistakes every week in chorus rehearsal, take the aim of making the perfect performance.

Just giving you my thoughts on what you can do to make the chorus better and improve our contest scores and general audience appeal may feel like a *Groundhog Day* repeat. So I'll try not to harp on the same things that I always say. Take a look at this article looking at the [Top 10 A cappella Competition Mistakes](#).

That article, being aimed toward A cappella performance groups, has many concepts that transfer over to our barbershop style. Even though some of the points address performance plan issues that you personally don't have control over, your presence and the way you approach a performance are so important.

Here are my top 5 (with a few bonus) *Groundhog Day* things to repeat as a singer — the things that, if you focus on them every time, will truly help us grow:

[Top 10 A cappella Competition Mistakes.](#)

1. Your Performance Begins the Instant You Step Out on Stage.
2. You are Not Invisible Before and After the Song.
3. Emote with the Lead, Not With Nonsense Syllables.
4. "Simple and Perfect" Crushes "Complicated and Almost".
5. Never Sing Before You Sing.
6. One Talks. One Blows.
7. Man Cannot Live on Mezzo Forte Alone.
8. Tessitura Beats Range.
9. Talking Doesn't Win Singing Competitions.
10. Originality Counts and then Counts Again.

1. **Notes and Words** - It may seem basic, but perfecting the notes and words is foundational. This is the starting point of any performance. If you're not hitting the notes correctly or articulating the words clearly, nothing else will matter. Every rehearsal is an opportunity to master this foundation. The audience needs to hear you, and every note and syllable counts.
2. **Phrasing** - Phrasing brings the music to life. It's not just about singing the notes in order; it's about how you shape the melody, where you breathe, and how you interpret the music. A well-phrased line can transform an average song into a stunning one. Make sure to emphasize important words, take your time in the right spots, and use your phrasing to tell the story.

3. **Dynamics** - A performance without dynamics is like a painting in black and white. Our music needs to have contrast—soft moments, loud moments, and everything in between. Whether it's a delicate diminuendo or a powerful crescendo, dynamics help to convey emotion and draw the audience in. Be mindful of how the volume and intensity of your singing enhances the overall performance.
4. **Visual Stage Presence** - Music is not only heard, it's also seen. Your facial expressions, body language, and movement all communicate something to the audience. Good stage presence creates a connection that can elevate the entire performance. Focus on maintaining eye contact, engaging with your fellow chorus members, and staying aware of your body's alignment. Remember, the audience should feel like you're singing to them.
5. **Start and Finish Strong** - The first and last impression are everything. Your opening should grab attention, and your closing should leave the audience with a sense of fulfillment. Both the beginning and the end are critical moments in every performance, so treat them with the respect they deserve. The start should be confident and energetic, and the finish should be clear, concise, and polished.
6. **Consistency** - Being consistent week to week is key to improving as a group and as individual singers. It's easy to feel like you're "done" once you've nailed a piece, but maintaining that level of consistency across rehearsals, performances, and time is what makes excellence possible. Work on making every performance—rehearsal or show—hold the same quality standard.
7. **Listening and Blending** - In a chorus, you're not singing solo, you're singing as part of a collective voice. It's critical to stay attuned to how your voice fits within the ensemble. Listen to your fellow singers, match vowels, and adjust volume levels so that your sound blends with the group. Blending properly creates a unified, powerful sound that speaks to the audience as a whole.
8. **Emotional Connection** - Singing is about more than just a technique; it's about conveying the emotions in the music. Whether it's joy, sadness, or excitement, your ability to connect emotionally with the song makes all the difference. If you can sing with genuine emotion, the audience will feel that and respond to it. Bring the heart of the song to life with your own passion and expression.

The more you develop these repeatable attributes, the more artistic and rewarding singing can be. Even if it feels like Groundhog Day, each repetition is an opportunity for improvement. Keep honing these skills, and you'll see the difference in your performances. Remember, even when we're repeating the same steps over and over, the goal is progress—becoming better each time. Let's aim to make every performance one that makes us proud.

Let's take each rehearsal and performance as an opportunity to build, grow, and refine our craft. With each step, we become not just better singers, but better performers, and we make every repeat count.

Tune Struck



Well it is official, Tune Stuck Quartet has renewed for another year and in another configuration. Steve Yund is now the third Lead of the quartet, the webpage has been updated – at least a little.

Since the first of the year, regular Monday rehearsals have been the order of the day since the first of the year. It is many ways like starting over – finding songs that Steve knows, that Bill knows as a Baritone and Al knows Tenor on is always a challenge. With 20 plus years, there are songs that we need to teach Steve, but there are songs (well actually one already) that Steve needs us to learn as well. Then there are songs we need to learn for the show, one of which has history with the three of us OG's and one totally new to us all.

We are feeling fairly well on our way, with more then ten songs in the rehearsal rotation and the building blocks of a performance set.

We would like to remind all of those thinking about singing in a foursome – getting started is really the hardest part, for what do you sing? It is always helpful when you are all members of the same chorus – you should have songs that you should all know. Polecats and such are always good solid places to start, but finding songs that fit you as a foursome usually takes a while.

Tune Stuck is feeling fairly pleased that our third decade has started with a lot of promise.

HAPPY MEMORIES

Tom & Kitty Harmon

Dear Portsmen Barbershop Chorus, Stockton, California Chapter D042,

As Kitty and I prepared for our relocation to Phoenix, Arizona, on January 10th, we will truly cherish the many happy memories of sharing the brightness of harmonies with you. Your smiles, your laughter, and your dedication as a family will ring in our hearts.

Our BHS membership in this chorus will remain constant, so that we might keep track of our favorite people and what you are currently up to. No matter where we are, we will always be a part of you. We will also be in sync with your emails, your musical selections, your achievements, and your esprit which has always moved you into the forefront of our admiration.

How blessed you are to have an incoming Board of dedicated officers and leaders, whose goal is to see everyone find joy in the craft they will continue to perfect in 2025. Believe me, you are in good hands, and your efforts will flourish.

At this time, Kitty and I plan to come out and sing with you at the Fresno District Competition.... maybe more, depending on circumstances. Hopefully, your doors will be open to a zany Lead and a very talented Tenor, who will always be with you in spirit.

YOU ARE THE BEST!!!

May God bless you now and in the New Year.

MUSINGS FROM THE END OF THE ROAD

AL WOLTER

Sometimes I just can't help myself, but most times I am okay with that. As I transition to not being the administrative Pilot of the Chapter, there are some things I feel need said. Some of this comes from a conversation I had with a member, who wanted to thank me for my leadership, running the Chapter like a business. That was a very nice thing to hear, yet it was what else he said stuck with me; paraphrased it was like "You really live Barbershop, while I just participate." Now this is neither a falsehood nor slam, there is a lot bundled into that statement. This jumped started my mind and thus this missive.

One of my main goals over the past three years as President and the previous years as Chapter Development VP was to prepare you to replace me. I am sure you are tired of reading about my Navy viewpoints and such, but I feel that there is so much worthwhile there – not only in conduct but in preparation for the future. In the words of the old song, "Who'll take My Place (When I'm Gone)?"

As the Society tightens down the access to the Members Only page (can't say what has led to that), and I am no longer the President, my access to stuff is no longer active. This means that someone else will need to look at Members Only to see what issues have arisen.

There have been discussions about the Barbershop Harmony Society's 'health' for as long as I can remember. There was a time when there were over 50,000 members, now we are nearing less than 10,000. While this is a problem, the fact that the 1% of members are the folks under 40 years of age (no facts – just a guess) is the bigger problem. I would be hard-pressed to believe that those over 70 are only 1% of the membership. These facts have little to do with my living Barbershop, but the lack of youth means that there are fewer members that do/will live it.

Regarding the decline in membership throughout the Society, does it have anything to do with the fact that fewer people feel compelled to give of themselves to the point of dedication? Many want to place the blame on being busy – too many other things in their lives, or the fact that radio and video have made singing only for the few. Most of those viewpoints has value – we have found ourselves too many things to keep us busy – like the infatuation with video games and social media, and modern songs are keyed to one performer's voice (think of our arrangement of "Happy"). Still, those that were called within themselves to perpetuate the progress of four-part barbershop harmony have dwindled with the membership. Those that saw the hobby as more than just an opportunity to sing or fellowship have been surpassed by those that focus only on the sound (if you can't make it, you are unnecessary) – gold medals are all that is needed, or just participants that once satisfied or irritated are gone – never to return.

I may or may-not have had a discussion of this at the Installation Dinner, seriously thinking about a 'State of the Chapter' message. Still, the written word lasts longer than a speech. This is my challenge to you all, both collectively and individually: dedicate yourselves to the perpetuity of Barbershop and the Stockton Chapter. Sounds pretty ominous, doesn't it? But if you don't do it, who will?

I would say that you could find somewhere else to sing, but many groups are experiencing the same issues as us. Many choirs and choruses are finding the number of participants dwindling and/or aging. Demographically, the current youth is becoming more inclined to participate, but will we have something to participate in, or will it have dried up and gone the way of the dodo?

We do need to think of them, support Youth in Harmony activities, but we need to support and encourage those younger than 50 to be dedicated to both the craft and the administration. I am more than disappointed that, at the end of my term, we have suddenly had a number of great family members leave us. What happened? What could we have done to make them not feel comfortable leaving us? We had a number of folks join us to go to France, and they were great additions, so their absence will be felt, maybe understandable – but still painful.

One last thing, there will always be loss. It is the nature of life, it's fleeting. Tom and Kitty will be sorely missed, maybe more than others, but this just exemplifies the theme of this thought. I know that Dave and Willys are looking to find new members for their foursome, but filling their roles of both voice and participation in the Chapter and Chorus will be a challenge.

As I close, I want to remind you of two truths that I hold true: 1) when the director of a successful chorus leaves (replaced for someone better, driven away, has to move or whatever), the chorus usually fails; 2) most Chapters/Choruses have at least one sparkplug that makes things happen and when they are no longer doing their thing, things usually stall. The Portsman lived on the backs of Bill Legg and those in the 'Dispensers of Musical Libation:' Bill, Jim Keating, Larry Schatz, Les Drury, Tom Flynn had a lot of influence on the Chapter during their time, and Wener Teide (as a founding member) did as well. But they are long gone: Since they have passed the baton, purposely or not, things were picked up by the new 'powers that be:' Bill and I and the members of 'Tune Struck.' Both foursomes and the dedicated members listed have kept us through thick and thin.

The question that stands is: "Where are those that will take up the mantle in the future?" Is it you? If so, what can I do to help you do that?

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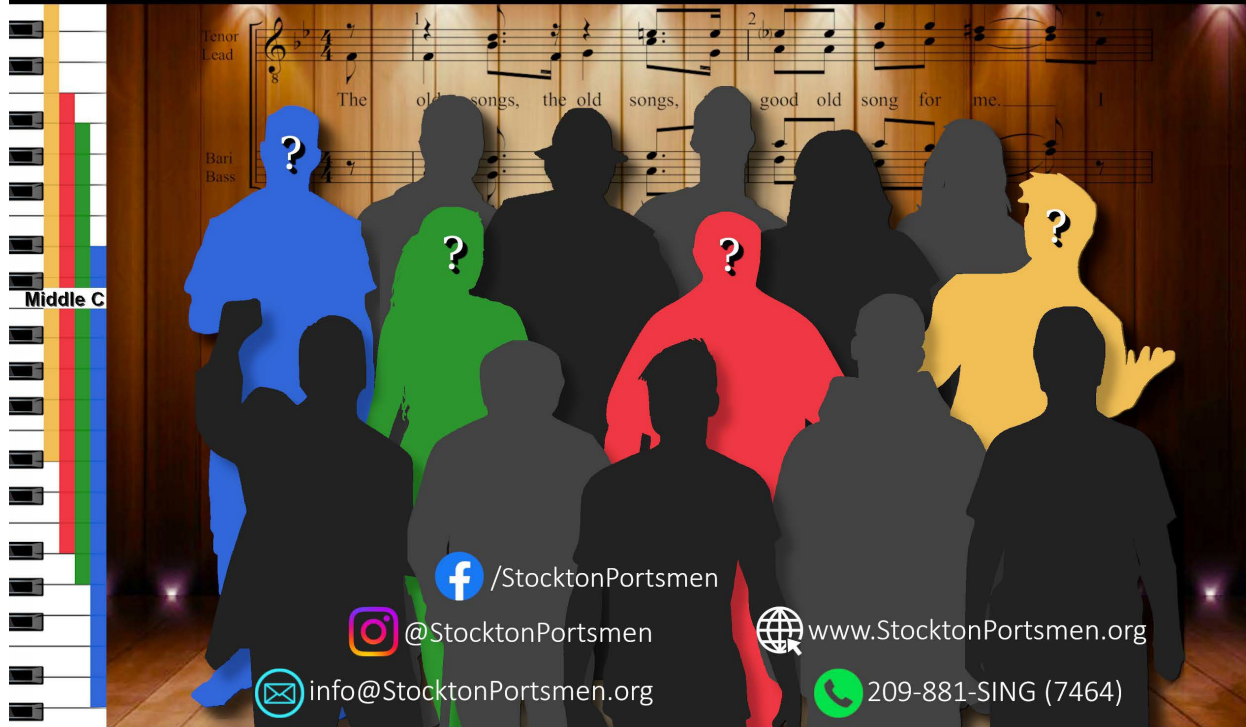
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Great! Come sing 4-Part Harmony with the **Stockton Portsman**!

Are You a **Bass**, **Baritone**, **Lead**, or **Tenor**?



Discover **your** voice part and make some friends!

🎵 Join Our Mixed Chorus – All Voices Welcome! 🎵

Whether you're a seasoned vocalist or just love to sing, we invite you to join our local chorus!
No prior experience required—we welcome singers of all skill levels.

This year, we're learning exciting new songs and preparing for our Disney-themed show in May 2025. Rehearsals take place every Tuesday night from 6 pm to 8 pm at Zion Lutheran Church, 808 W. Porter Ave, Stockton.

Come visit us on a Tuesday night for a free trial—no obligation to commit!
If you enjoy singing but haven't found a place to do so confidently and safely, you're not alone. We'll sing alongside you, supporting each other every step of the way.

We'd love to welcome you to our chorus family!

Singing Valentines

Sung by Barbershop Harmony Quartets
All members of the
Stockton Portsmen Barbershop Chorus

Package includes two great love songs,
a lovely fresh rose and a valentine card
with your personal message.



For details call: (209) 881-7464
Or Email to valentine@stocktonportsmen.org

NorCal Novice QUARTET CONTEST

Feb 22, 2025
Lodi, CA



stocktonportsmen.org/novice2025

(209) 881-7464

Weekly Chapter Meetings:

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

Tuesdays: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (Grace Hall)

VLO: 8:00 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.

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Book us for your next event:

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- 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****

- **2/14** Singing Valentines
- 2/22 NorCal Novice Quartet Contest (Lodi, CA)
- 3/13-3/16 2025 FWD Spring Convention (Riverside, CA)
- **3/28-3/30** **2025 FWD Northern Divisions Convention (Davis, CA)**
- 5/2-5/4 2025 FWD Arizona Division Convention (Phoenix, AZ)
- 6/29-7/6 2025 BHS International Convention (Denver, CO)
- **10/9-10/12** **2025 FWD Fall Convention (Fresno, 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/>
- Voices of California (VoCal) <http://voicesofcalifornia.org/>