

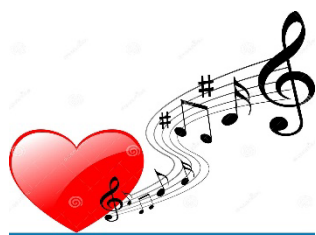


The Captain's Log

Newsletter of the Stockton Portsman

March 2025 - Issue #67

Sending Love Notes



How can it be March already???? Just proves one of the constants of life, that it moves on. That's a beautiful thing about the Stockton Portsman. It has been constant for over 50 years, but continues to move forward regardless. It's fun to look back at my first year of being a Portsman Associate member; wearing the red waiter jackets, sitting next to Lemar and trying to follow John Eilers singing his

version of Baritone. The wonderful people that are no longer here, those that are singing with the angels and those that are just, well, not here. Yes, we have individuals that are the anchors of our Chorus: Bill Litz, with his unwavering confidence in us (mostly) and who shows up every week (mostly) to direct us through new music, music from the archives, songs that we're good at (mostly) and some that....oh well..

Then there is Al Wolter, who has been here longer than the dirt on Bill's music file box. Our own in-house know-it-all. That's a compliment, Al (mostly). Seriously, Al has been a mainstay and continues to monitor the ship.

I can't leave Joan Ray out of the lineup. Joan was the first woman to grace the risers with the guys. She was the one that reached out to me and invited me in. Sorry, Bill! And thanks for leading the way for the rest of us ladies, Joan!

Well, not quite sure where I'm going with the reminiscing, but needless to say, there is a certain comfort in knowing that Tuesday nights are Chorus nights and that our Portsman Family will continue to "be there for each other". The rituals of life can help keep us grounded, no matter how fast time flies and forward motion is just that. Take comfort in the fact that the institution of the Stockton Portsman Barbershop Chorus is OUR institution. When things get rough and you need a comfortable place to get back to, sing your part. As one that has gone through tremendous changes over that last 2 years, and who many times gets lost thinking about the future, the Portsman have been one of MY anchors. Thanks.

Sending Love Notes...

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Celebrations

March Birthdays

Marc Jantzen – 3/1

Sue Atkins – 3/20

Musical Director's Message:

By Bill Litz

Goals Do You Have?

I have so many things going on in my life. That's definitely not me bragging—let me restate that thought. I have **too many** things going on in my life. Between work, family, and other responsibilities, there's a lot to juggle. But amidst the chaos, there's a constant desire to improve and get better at the things I love, including singing.

When you have a packed schedule, making time for practice can feel like a luxury, but it's still something you should strive for. The key is finding **balance**—it's not about squeezing in hours of practice every day (though that would be amazing), but about practicing with intention and purpose in the time that you do have.

How Often Do You Practice?

It's hard for hobbyists to have a rigid, daily practice schedule, but you can still make an effort to practice consistently—**3 to 4 times a week**. Life can be unpredictable, so instead of feeling discouraged when you can't practice every day, try to focus on making the time count when you do. A focused 30-minute session can be far more effective than an hour of unfocused, rushed practice.

When you do have more free time, try to stretch your sessions a bit longer or meet up with other chorus members to make the process more social, but the real goal is quality, not quantity. And some days, even just singing with, or actively listening to the chorus learning tracks can help you move forward in being a confident, contributing member to the artistry of the chorus.

What Do You Focus on When You Practice?

With limited time, you need to focus on what matters most—the areas that will have the most significant impact on improving your voice and performance. Here are a few key aspects you should always include in your practice sessions:

1. **Vocal Warm-Ups**

No matter how much time you have, warming up is crucial. Do a few basic exercises to get your voice ready, like lip trills, scales, and humming. This prepares your vocal cords and helps avoid strain.

2. **Pitch Accuracy and Control**

The main goal should be to improve pitch accuracy. Staying on pitch is sometimes tricky, especially when you don't really know the notes. Practice scales and intervals with a piano or tuning app to make sure you're hitting the right notes. Focusing on pitch accuracy helps build more confidence in your singing, and it's one area that consistently brings results.

3. **Practice What You Don't Know**

It's easy and sometimes even comforting to sing along to the parts you know. But you know, better than anyone else, the parts you are faking. It's usually only a few notes or words in each song. Run those sections until you don't worry about making mistakes in your performance.

4. **Breath Control**

Breath support is one of the most important parts of singing. Without it, even the best voice can feel shaky. Dedicate a portion of your practice to breathing exercises, like diaphragmatic breathing and sustaining notes for extended periods. Consider practicing controlling your breath while doing something physical (like walking or stretching), so you build strength in both your voice and your core.

5. **Expression and Emotion**

Let your right brain take over and create artistry every time you sing. Feel what you're singing and prepare to convey that emotion to your audience. Focus on bringing out the emotions in the lyrics, experimenting with different vocal colors, and playing around with dynamics (loud, soft, in-between). Singing with emotion makes the whole experience more fulfilling, and it's also what connects with an audience the most.

6. **Vocal Range**

Work on expanding your vocal range. Sometimes, this means pushing yourself to hit higher notes or strengthening your lower register. This doesn't mean to force anything—gradual extension and smart practice are key. Stretching your range will make you feel more confident, and it will open up more possibilities when you sing.

What Singing/Performance Goals Do You Have?

There are a lot of things that could use improvement, but focusing on a few realistic goals helps maintain balance without feeling overwhelmed. Here are some possible goals when it comes to singing and performance:

1. **Develop Consistent Control Over Your Voice**

This includes being able to sing with a consistent tone, hitting every note cleanly, and transitioning smoothly between registers. Do **NOT** get frustrated with vocal inconsistencies—remind yourself that consistency comes with patience and practice.

2. **Improve Your Stage Presence**

You may love singing, but performing in front of others will still make you nervous sometimes. Strive to feel more confident on stage—whether you're performing in front of a live audience or just in front of friends and family. Practice standing tall, owning the space, and using body language to convey what you're singing.

3. **Master More Complex Songs**

While you may be comfortable singing barbershop arrangements, be open to learning more technically complex pieces—like a cappella standards, or challenging pop songs with intricate harmonies. Stretch your limits and understanding, so you can have fun performing many different styles.

4. **Enhance Emotional Expression**

Let your singing not only be accurate but also emotionally impactful. Aim to continually improve your ability to convey different emotions through your voice and really connect with listeners, making each performance feel fresh and heartfelt.

Balancing Improvement and Enjoyment

Having too many things going on in your life means you don't always have the luxury of hours of practice, but learning to prioritize enjoyment alongside improvement is key. After all, singing is something you do because you love it. When you practice, try to remind yourself that it's not just about getting better, but also about having fun with the process. Always make time for joyful singing—whether that means belting out a favorite song in the car or experimenting with a new style.

The key takeaway here is that whether you have a lot or a little time, the goal is to balance **improvement** and **enjoyment**. It's not about pushing yourself too hard or letting your passion burn out. It's about consistently improving while keeping the love for singing at the core of everything you do. And no matter how chaotic life gets, carving out time for something you enjoy will always make a positive difference in the long run.

2025 NorCal Novice Quartet Contest

The **2025 NorCal Novice Quartet Competition** that took place on Saturday, **February 22**, featuring **seven quartets hosted by the Stockton Portsmen**:

- **Event Overview:** Seven quartets competed in a lively and entertaining contest, showcasing their vocal talents in the barbershop style.
- **Performance Highlights:** Each quartet performed two songs, demonstrating their musicality, harmonization, and stage presence. The audience enjoyed a mix of classic barbershop arrangements and creative song choices.
- **Judging & Scoring:** Quartets were evaluated based on **Singing, Music, and Performance**, with constructive feedback provided to help them grow. **Official Panel:** PC: Ben Porter, Music: Paul Engel, Performance: Robert Lenoil & Singing: Chris Hebert
- **Winners & Awards:**
 - **1st Place:** Learning Curve with total score 64.0
 - **2nd Place:** S'Melodies with total score of 63.7
 - **3rd Place:** Queens Over Jacks with total score of 63.5
- **Community & Fun:** The competition fostered a supportive environment, with quartets cheering each other on and celebrating the joy of barbershop harmony.

It was a fantastic day, camaraderie, and friendly competition, leaving both participants and the audience inspired! Thank you to all our volunteers!!!

Mic Testers



Learning Curve



S'Melodies



Queens Over Jacks



Accord



Blame It On The Bari



Four Heaven's Sake



BS Quartet



Tune Struck

While progress is being made with the new version of Tune Struck, there really hasn't been anything of major note that has happened or scheduled. While we are a foursome with 20 plus years of existence, each time we change personnel, its just like starting from scratch.

After six rehearsals, we have a repertoire of about 14 songs, with a couple of Portsmen songs, a couple of Tune Struck standards and a new to us all song. We are three minutes short for a full 20-minute performance set, but that is close enough for most folks. Of course, part of our work is getting ready to sing on the Portsmen show in May.

Still, this makes me think about all of you who are starting to sing in your foursomes. I have written a number of pieces talking about starting a new quartet, go look at the Portsmen webpage, More Barbershop. How to get Gigs or past Newsletters, but the one of the hardest parts is finding things to sing. I have encouraged using Chapter's chorus songs, which works if all of you are members of the same group singing the same parts. This helps not only your foursome, but also the chorus with which you sing. Of course, the Polecats are also a great place to start, being a 'PoleCat' has more benefits than singing in the halls a couple of times a year with strangers. They serve as wonderful starting places for any fledging foursome. Now, I know that most foursomes prefer to NOT use PoleCat songs in their performance plan (I know I don't), but they are a wonderful starting point and most audiences have no clue what we are singing are 'those songs.'

The process of developing songs and a performance set is a tricky one, one that requires each foursome to both find songs that fit them (their sound, their sensibilities, their hopes for the future) and can be made into an entertaining presentation. There is no quick and easy way to do this and both requirements are very subjective.

As this is being typed, the Novice Quartet Contest looms in the near distance where two of our newer quartets will try to demonstrate how well they did in meeting those requirements. Tune Struck's first scheduled opportunity will be on the show in May, hoping it will be equally successful.

Thank you to our sponsors!!!

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Jennifer - Airport Café, Acampo
Joe Fiori - Fiori's Butcher Shoppe & Deli,
Lodi
Papapavlo's Stockton/Lodi
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Dee - De Vinci's, Lodi
Thai Spices, Lodi
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Stockton
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Tired of Singing Alone?

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

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

Facebook: /StocktonPortsmen
Instagram: @StocktonPortsmen
Email: info@StocktonPortsmen.org
Website: www.StocktonPortsmen.org
Phone: 209-881-SING (7464)

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!

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 Portsman 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 or Phone (209) 881-SING (7464)

****SAVE THE DATE****

- 3/13-3/16 2025 FWD Spring Convention (Riverside, CA)
- 3/23 Stay Tuned (Open Dress Rehearsal) (Citrus Heights, CA)
- **3/28-3/30 2025 FWD Northern Divisions Convention (Davis, CA)**
- 4/5 Barbary Coast Show (Redwood City, CA)
- 4/9 Barbary Coast Show (San Francisco, CA)
- 4/46 Mighty Oaks Chorus Show (Visalia, CA)
- 5/2-5/4 2025 FWD Arizona Division Convention (Phoenix, AZ)
- 5/10 Stockton Portsmen Spring Show (Stockton, CA)
- 5/17 California Delta Show (Sacramento, CA)
- 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/>