



The Captain's Log

Newsletter of the Stockton Portsman

August 2025 - Issue #72



Greetings Fellow Portsman and Friends of the Stockton Portsman!

Do you have a stack of Harmonizer Magazines somewhere just waiting to be read??? My July/August issue just arrived, and after flipping through the pages, it looks like some very intriguing articles this time. First up, on the inside cover, an ad for the new musical "The Apple Boys" set to be Off-Broadway in 2026. Included in the ad is a quote by Tim Waurick stating "This show will introduce the world to the power of barbershop!" COOL!!!!

Society President Kevin Keller talks about the state of a chorus as three choices: Green and growing, Ripe or Rotting. I think our trip to Europe helped spur a small flurry of growing, although not necessarily green. To put us in the Rotting category is a bit, well, rotten. So, does that mean we are RIPE?? As Keller points out, it takes constant work to just maintain a level of ripe and that a growth mindset is crucial for creating successful choruses (in whichever way you define "success"). These summer months lend a natural lull in action, enthusiasm and attendance. We are allowed this time to regroup and refresh, but we can't get complacent....we need to be ready to hit it big in a few weeks. Keeping up at rehearsals, finally learning those pesky words to Kiss the Girl, getting your survey back to Bill and attending the picnic on August 30th are all ways to keep forward momentum. Suggested good reading page 4 Harmonizer.

The next interesting article is titled “Guest Night every week: 1 year, 21 new members”. The article gives many good ideas about successful guest nights. And, no offense, but we, as a chorus, don’t exactly get a gold star here. Things like upgrading online imaging (thank you Brad), maximizing community visibility (I’d give us a B+), professionalizing the guest/new member process and focusing on non-rehearsal activities are all discussed here. Again, a few good tidbits that we might want to consider as a chorus.

Finally, Matthew Hopper, co-director of Land of Legend Chorus in Newark Ohio, shared some practices of their non-competitive chorus that has helped them double in size (from 15 to 30 members) since the pandemic. The same theme can be seen in this article: it’s about connecting with the community.

Funny....I just wrote that last sentence and originally said connecting TO the community but changed it to how it is stated in the article: connecting WITH the community. The vision that came to mind was us, as the Portsmen, being **additions** to community events rather than essential participants **within** the community. A subtle but important difference in verbiage. Yes, we have a few events that we have consistently been a part of (Memorial Day, Celebrate America, Veterans Day). But let’s strive to be a more recognized, integral part of the fabric of our local culture.

So, no spoiler alerts, you’ll have to actually read your Harmonizer to get to the ROOT of the chords (ideas) shared in this issue. In the meantime, don’t forget to mark your calendars for Saturday, August 30, Annual Picnic at the Hennefer Home. More information coming soon.

Sending Love Notes

nance

Musical Director's Message:

By Bill Litz

Don't Head for the Door — Let's Sing Some More!

Portsmen, let's talk about your post-rehearsal escape routine. Be honest: are you quietly packing up at 7:28 p.m., eyeing the door like it's TSA PreCheck and you've got a flight to catch? Well, I've got news — **you're missing the best part of rehearsal: VLQ Time.**

What's VLQ? It stands for **Very Large Quartet** — also known as “everyone who didn't sneak out early.” It's **that magical time after rehearsal** when the music is casual, the laughter is loud, and **the real growth happens**. It's where we **ring tags, polish our pitch**, and dive into the five fantastic Harmony Platoon songs that are going to make us the envy of barbershoppers everywhere — or at least **Lodi** (but hey, let's dream big).

Yes, **VLQ** has been on my radar for over a year. And sure, I was hoping the magic would just *happen*, like in those hotel lobbies after conventions when tags are flying and sleep is optional. But here's the truth — **the magic needs YOU**. That's why I'm putting together a **weekly VLQ** agenda with structure, momentum, and a solid reason to **stay, sing, and grow together**.

What's Happening at VLQ?

1. Tag Time - Ever wanted **instant musical joy in 60 seconds?** That's a tag. We'll teach 'em, sing 'em, and maybe even invent a few. Side effects: excessive grinning, spontaneous quartets in parking lots, and possibly harmonizing with your electric toothbrush. **Tag enthusiasts — your help picking and teaching tags is welcome!**

2. Polish the Pitch (Without Pain!) - This is **your personal vocal tune-up** — no drills, no stress. Just you **improving tone, breath, and confidence** with support from your chorus friends and your friendly neighborhood director (that's me). Think **voice gym**, but with more laughter and zero sweat.

3. Harmony Platoon Prep (yes, sign up!) - Let's crush these five songs together:

- ***I'm Gonna Live Til I Die*** – Bring caffeinated Sinatra energy.
- ***No More Sorrow*** – Barbershop therapy, four parts strong.
- ***Stand By Me*** – Classic tune, Portsmen power.
- ***Frog Kissin'*** – Yes, it's real. Yes, it's fun. Yes, you may **croak** with laughter.
- ***You've Got a Friend in Me*** – Because here, you really do.

Why EVERYONE Should Stay After

- Because **you'll get better** — and have fun doing it.
- Because **this is your time to sing, experiment, and enjoy music** — no pressure, all joy.
- Because **singing burns calories** and that means you've earned dessert (science-ish fact).

Don't Dash – Stay for the VLQ Bash!

So next week, when the final downbeat rings out, don't vanish into the night like a stealthy bass ninja.

I'm inviting EVERY Portsmen — yes, YOU — to stick around.

Let's sing, learn, laugh, and grow together as performers and as a chorus.

Let's ring chords, polish pitches, and make music **that gets better, louder, and more fun — one tag, one song, one frog at a time.**

Great Music Doesn't End When Rehearsal Is Over — That's When It Begins!



August Birthday Celebrations

Derek Sturke – 8/5



FWD Senior Singers

**If you're 55+ we invite you to join the official "FWD Senior Singers" Chorus
and compete in the Fall Contest!**

Registration is now open for singers 55+ of all genders who are members of a Far Western District chapter and want to sing at the Fall District Convention and Contest in Fresno, California on October 9 - 12, 2025.

[Link to FWD Senior Chorus](#)

Tune Struck

The ebb and flow of any foursome is an interesting and frustrating thing. This is especially true when three of the four have been together for a long time. Every time a new member is added, it takes a while to find that sweet spot of sound, where musicality and confidence just exist effortlessly.



With our newest addition of Steve to the Lead of the quartet in January, that 'gel' is now starting to exist. This gives us greater comfort in accepting gigs, and they are starting to trickle in.

Our first true featured performance came at the request of our previous Lead, Chuck Roots. Chuck, being a Navy Chaplain and active in the Veterans community, was

asked if he could come up with someone to sing the Anthem and the Armed Forces Medley for the reopening and rededication of the Manteca American Legion Post 249 Building. Knowing that members of GVC were not available to form a daytime quartet, asked us. It was a true honor and pleasure to be part of the action. It was also good to be recognized by San Joaquin County Supervisor Paul Canepa and past Supervisor Tom Patty.





Since Chuck was there to provide the opening and closing Blessings, we had to sing a song or two with him, so “A Child’s Prayer” had to be one of them. It will be rejoining our V4 repertoire eventually.



Our next outing was to Sacramento and the Harmony for Lunch Bunch. The Sac HFLB was started November 1991 by Howard Donnally and spent many years on the third Thursday of each month at Sam's Hof Brau at Watt and El Camino, until it had a fire. Many get together had upwards of 30 folks from Sacramento, Folsom, Auburn, Placerville, the up-start Cal-Delta, and the occasional Stockton Chapter members. Since the fire, they have moved up the road to the Round Table Pizza and the attendance has slowly dropped off.



We took the opportunity to drive up and join them and sing a song or two. If you look closely, you'll note that of the five others, two of them are part of the Portsmen family: Renee Beers and Chuck Kenney. The others are Kent Borrowdale, in the blue shirt, Roger Perkins, standing up getting ready to run things, and Gordon Fawkes, against the wall. The pizza is good, the stories full of history and humor, and the singing decent - with a tag or two and old songs.



Where: COS Music Building
Who: High School Students
When: September 13, 2025

\$10 INCLUDES ALL-DAY COACHING BY TSV, SHEET MUSIC,
 DIGITAL LEARNING TRACKS, LUNCH, DINNER,
 T-SHIRT, & PUBLIC PERFORMANCE
 (SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE)

PRESENTED BY:

Dr. Dan Wessler




ALL DAY WORKSHOP LEARNING THREE SONGS, DIRECTED BY DR. DAN WESSLER, THEN PERFORMING IN THE EVENING SHOW. THE SEVENTH VARIETY QUARTET WILL TOP OFF THE EVENING WITH A COMMAND PERFORMANCE

REGISTER NOW



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.

Weekly Chapter Meetings:

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

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

VLQ: 8:00 PM – 8:30 PM (except board meeting nights)

***Rehearsals may be held at an alternate location from time to time
please double-check the details.***

See calendar for up-to-date information:

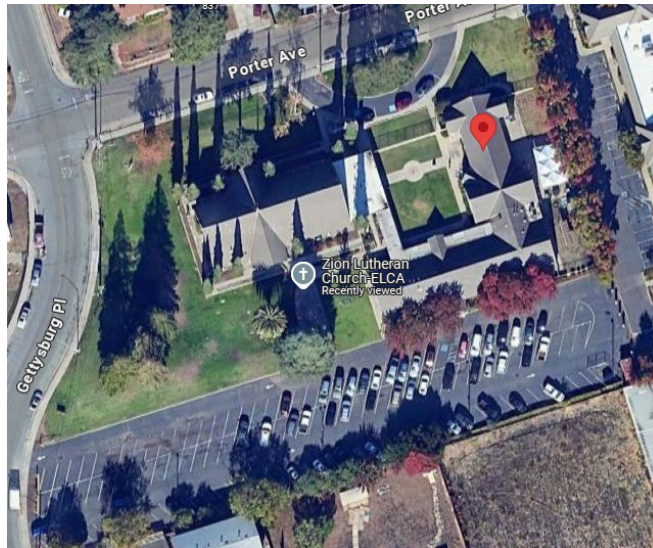
[Click here to access the Stockton Portsmen Calendar](#)

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.

Book the Stockton Portsmen or a Quartet for your Next Event!

Looking to add warmth, charm, and polished vocal harmony to your upcoming event? Whether you're planning a lively celebration or a heartfelt ceremony, the Stockton Portsmen Chorus or one of our talented quartets can provide unforgettable musical entertainment tailored to your occasion. We perform at:

- Community Concerts
- Fairs & Festivals
- Grand Openings
- Holiday Tree Lightings & Caroling
- Memorial Services
- National Anthems
- Singing Valentines
- Summer Concerts

Flexible Performance Lengths:

Our typical sets range from **20 to 40 minutes**, but we're happy to tailor the timing to suit your specific program or audience needs.

Email: Info@StocktonPortsmen.org

Phone: (209) 881-SING (7464)

Let's make your event unforgettable—**reach out today for a personalized proposal!**

****SAVE THE DATE****

2025

- 8/30 Stockton Portsmen Annual Picnic
- 9/13 Youth Harmony Explosion (Visalia, CA) [Link for more details](#)
- 10/9-10/12 2025 FWD Fall Convention (Fresno, CA) [Link to Registration](#)
- 10/24-10/26 A Cappella Harmony Camp (Pollock Pines, CA) (weekend retreat designed for high school and college-aged young men who love to sing) [Link for more details](#)
- 12/13 Stockton Portsmen Holiday Show (Stockton, CA)

2026

- 1/13-1/18 BHS Midwinter Convention (Pasadena, CA)
- 4/25 Stockton Portsmen Spring Show (TBD)

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) <https://www.voicesofcalifornia.org/>