



The Captain's Log

Newsletter of the Stockton Portsman

December 2025 - Issue #76



As I write my final President's message for our Captain's Log, I do so with a mindset of gratitude and a little bit of relief. Gratitude for friendships, for filling a space adding to my sense of purpose in the world and for our shared joy of singing together. Relief in that trying to come up with this monthly article is sometimes (usually) a challenge. Our singing is like my personality that many of you have witnessed first-hand. Times when all four parts are humming along beautifully, times when things get prickly, times when there is a mood of quiet reflection verging on sadness and times when I just feel the joy and the humor in each chord, comment or circumstance. Now is when I blame/credit my maternal, say it out loud, Italian heritage and my paternal German heritage of not suffering fools but are quick witted and blessed with, OK, quirky, sense of humor. Thanks, mom and dad.....

Although the Portsman did not have any MAJOR events this past year (winning Division, packing for Normandy), we did chug along at a good pace with many memorable performances. We gained a new quartet, Four Heavens Sake, saw another iteration of Tune Struck coming together, hearing the enjoyable but brief sounds of BS Quartet and sadly, the fading away of my favorite quartet, Royal Flush. The chorus got smaller with the loss of some members, and we continue to struggle in the search for new members. We DID have continued growth in taking on higher level song choices, adding a bit more choreography and raising the standards for ourselves. We have (finally) reached a point in which we are no longer "that chorus down the road". We have proven ourselves to our local Barbershop mates and have become a staple in many community events.

Looking to the future, our biggest challenge is to boost our membership and encourage ALL current members to contribute their other talents to the overall health of the Portsmen. Because we are small in numbers, I feel we are not able to fulfill many opportunities and dreams for the future. We have come to rely on a handful of people to serve as Board members that keep the ship afloat. Thank you, Steve, Sue, Willys, Dave, Brad, Al W., Al F. and Joan for their continued leadership. Special thanks to our fearless (a few times fearful) Director Bill, who leads us with his positive energy and optimistic expectations.

I encourage ALLOf you to step up, step out and step lively as we start our new year together. Have an idea that sounds crazy as heck??? Let us hear it! Have a concern about a chorus matter? Let's talk it out! Find a nice single guy for your lonely, soon to be Past President? LET ME KNOW!!!! OK, probably should have left out that last part, but, well, you know me! Pushing my thought bubbles to the verge.....

Barbershop harmony has a way of bringing out the best in all of us—our teamwork, our trust in one another, our willingness to lift each other up, and, of course, our joy in singing together. I've watched this chorus grow in confidence, skill, and camaraderie. My time as your President has been an honor—one shaped by harmony, friendship, unexpected challenges, and the shared joy of ringing chords together. Thank you....

Sending Love Notes,
nance



December Birthday Celebrations

Tom Harmon – 12/5
Christian Hagan – 12/15
Von Wallin – 12/17
Steve Yund – 12/23

Musical Director's Message:

By Bill Litz

I'm really excited about our upcoming Christmas show, *Unwrap the Harmony*. Actually, I'm excited about the whole holiday season—the music, the memories, and the songs that return every year like well-meaning relatives who drop by unannounced. Once you've really learned those holiday charts, they become old friends you get to revisit each December. They greet you like, "Hey, remember me?" And when the muscle memory kicks in, it feels good to sing them again.

But let's be honest... every song we sing seems to trigger at least one Portsman to say, "Ugh, I **hate** that song."

And when that happens, two things go wrong:

1. It steals a little joy from the people who genuinely *love* that chart.
2. It almost guarantees the person who said it won't put in the time to sing it well.

Believe me, I understand. I've had plenty of songs in my own "thanks-but-no-thanks" pile over the years. Maybe I didn't feel confident singing them. Maybe I couldn't find a way to connect with them. Maybe they were just plain difficult. Or maybe—just maybe—I found them as exciting as watching paint dry on a cloudy day. I could make a whole list.

But here's the thing:

I have *also* had so many moments where a fan requested one of those "never again, please" songs... and when we sang it, **that** ended up being the highlight of their day. And suddenly *their moment* became **my** highlight too. I was grateful I had learned the chart well enough to actually give someone a meaningful experience.

The truth is: every one of you has the skill to sing almost any arrangement we put in front of you. Very few charts are truly beyond our reach. What *can* be beyond our reach is the willingness to unwrap the beauty inside each song—to give it the time, curiosity, and heart it deserves.

A song doesn't need to be your favorite to matter.

It doesn't even need to *become* your favorite.

But with an open mind, it might become someone else's favorite moment of the show... and maybe even grow on you along the way.

As we head into a season full of performances, I encourage each of you to take a moment to unwrap each song for yourself. What does it mean to *you*? How might it touch someone *else*? How do the harmonies bring it to life?

Let your Christmas gift to yourself this year be an open mind—one that says **YES** to trying everything, **YES** to giving your best, and **YES** to discovering the joy hiding in every tag, every chord, and every song we sing.

Let's unwrap the harmony together.

Tune Struck



The question of the month has been “how many in your quartet?” Some of this stems from a forgotten photo of Curtis Mannah singing the Anthem with us at a Hockey game.

Having been an active Chapter Quartet for twenty-some years, we have had a number of folks step-in to help us make scheduled performances. Even Al needs to have a sub from time to time, Don Wilson did once, as had our friend Austin Spurlock.



With all that being said, we needed a little help for Bob. The semi-good news is that there is a light (or two) at the end of his tunnel, though there are still questions to be answered. Therefore, we added to our list of honorary Tune Struck members with Willys Nitschke to help us sing to our GVC friend Howard Barber for his 90th Birthday Party. It was a surprise for him as a present from his son Alan. It was a great party.

A special treat was singing a tag with Howard and Brad Wilcox (AFWDC member of the '89 Quartet Champs Harmony Spectrum).

This was an excellent start of a busy month of November.



With Veterans Day on a Tuesday, there are lots of options to remember those that served. While the quartet didn't have a spotlight for the VFW/Am Legion Service at the Memorial Civic Auditorium, we were asked to sing the Armed Forces Medley for the Stockton Rotary meeting at the Stockton Golf and Country Club. We threw in the Star-Spangled

Banner too. Our Friend Frank Whitney gave a talk about the Marine Corp (as he is a Marine), as the Corp celebrated its 250th Anniversary on the 11th too.



Next on our itinerary, was a trip up the hill to the Placerville Chapter Cabaret Show. This is our third iteration to sing for the Gold Rush Chorus' show. We are always pleased (and a bit surprised) by what a great audience they have.





While we were all at the Afterglow, due to a number of things, we didn't sing as a foursome, but shared some songs with Nancy Hennefer, Steve Taylor, and Sue Atkins.

The last performance of the month was curtest of Bob and Melinda and their Church, Quail Lakes Baptist and their Senior's Luncheon. We enjoyed an early turkey dinner and shared a few of Bob's favorite songs with them.



December seems to have the same full schedule, with participation at the Festival of Trees and the Holiday Show and a couple of our own performances.

Bring Harmony to Your Next Event

Book the Stockton Portsmen or One of Our Quartets!

A mixed-voice a cappella chorus celebrating 70 years of harmony in the Central Valley.

Looking to add warmth, charm, and polished harmony to your next event? Whether you're planning a lively celebration or a heartfelt ceremony, the Stockton Portsmen Chorus or one of our talented quartets will bring unforgettable music tailored to your occasion.

We perform at:

- Community Concerts & Festivals
- Grand Openings & Ribbon Cuttings
- Memorial Services & Celebrations of Life
- **Holiday Tree Lightings & Caroling Events**
- Weddings, Anniversaries & Private Celebrations
- Corporate Gatherings & Award Ceremonies
- Patriotic & Civic Events (**National Anthems**, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, etc.)
- Senior Living Communities & Community Outreach Programs
- **Singing Valentines & Special Deliveries (Birthdays, Anniversaries, etc.)**

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.

Contact Us:

Email: Info@StocktonPortsmen.org

Phone: (209) 881-SING (7464)

**We'd love to bring harmony to your special event.
Reach out today and let's create something memorable together.**

The Stockton Portsmen
Barbershop Chorus
PROUDLY PRESENTS:

Unwrap the Harmony

December 13, 2025
Saturday @ 2:30PM

Free Admission!

Donations Welcome
Your support helps us share harmony
throughout Stockton and beyond!

**Zion Lutheran Church,
808 W. Porter Ave,
Stockton, CA**

**www.stocktonportsmen.org
(209) 881-SING (7464)**

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:

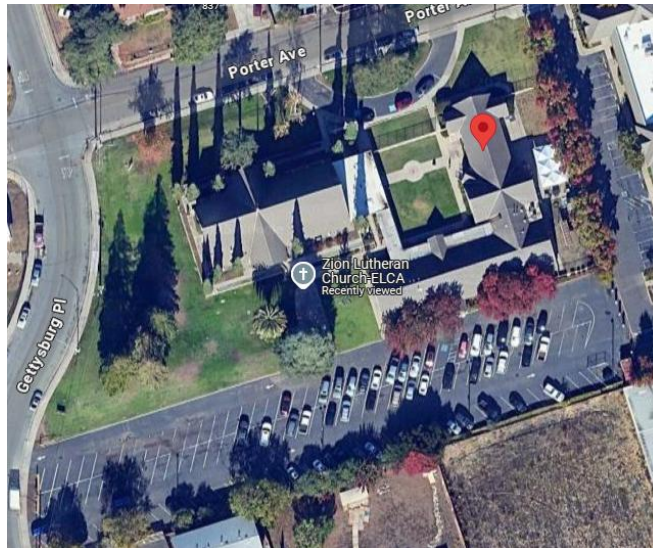
[Click here to access the Stockton Portsmen Calendar](#)

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.

****SAVE THE DATE****

2025

- 12/6 Festival of Trees (10:00 AM–12:00 PM, Micke Grove) – Chorus
- 12/7 Festival of Trees (10:00 AM–12:00 PM, Micke Grove) – VLQ
- 12/7 Friends of the Fox Performance - Movie “Jack Frost” (Stockton, CA)
(Sing in lobby 1:00pm - 1:30pm) [Click link for more details](#)
- 12/13 Stockton Portsmen “Unwrap the Harmony” Holiday Show (2:30 PM, Zion Lutheran Church) [Click link for more details](#)
- 12/16 Remote Rehearsal – The Oaks
- 12/19 Philomathean Christmas - 11:30 AM
- 12/23 Remote Rehearsal – Caroling on Meadow Lane
- 12/30 Rehearsal – Zion Lutheran Church

2026

- 1/13-18 BHS Midwinter Convention (Pasadena, CA)
- 2/14 Singing Valentine’s
- 2/17 Coaching Session w/ Chris Hébert
- 2/21 Novice Contest hosted by the Portsmen (Lodi, CA) [Click link for details](#)
- 4/25 Stockton Portsmen Spring Show (Stockton, CA)
- 5/25 Memorial Day Service at Cherokee Memorial (Lodi, 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) <https://www.voicesofcalifornia.org/>