



The Captain's Log

Newsletter of the Stockton Portsmen

Connecting members, supporters, and friends of the Stockton Portsmen

May 2026 - Issue #81



Here's a quick snapshot of what's happening with the Stockton Portsmen:

Division Chorus Champions - Proud to bring home the 2026 Northeast Division Chorus Championship, along with Most Improved and Plateau AA honors.

Spring Show Success - "Santa's Escape Plan" delivered a creative and entertaining performance with strong audience response and full chorus participation.

Quartets in Action - From community events to the ballpark, our quartets have been actively performing and representing the chorus.

Busy Season Ahead - Memorial Day performances and summer events are just around the corner.

The View from the Helm



by Al Wolter

ESCAPE - ISSUE 26-05

Writing a show is always a lot of things, full of opportunity and effort. It requires using parts of your psyche that you might not normally tap into. I am glad that WE were able to put Steve Yund's idea into a tangible production, and yes, I said we. A number of others contributed to the whole thing. Sue and ChatGPT filled in some dialog, Chuck Thurman provided some of the parody words for "No Place Like Belize" and of course Bill had to finalize the music.

The timetable for putting the show on was shorter than I wanted, but it is what it is and I am sure the final product will be just fine. The key is everyone's buy in and then things will be fine.

There are times when artistry surpasses economics, but I hope that Santa's Escape has a goodly portion of both.

Still, it has taken a lot out of me – especially the struggle to give everyone a solid shot at feeling confident in what they are doing. Being at the helm can be very demanding, so not having enough energy left, don't be surprised when you don't see much of me after it is over. Time for an Escape of my own

Musical Director's Message: by Bill Litz

As we step into May, it's worth *looking back* before we charge ahead.

The first third of 2026 has given us a lot to celebrate. We delivered a complete and truly *vibrant* Singing Valentine program full of energy, connection, and impact. We hosted a *nurturing* Novice Quartet Contest that didn't just showcase talent. It helped create & celebrate our newest Portsmen quartet, **Fourmidable**. We welcomed the Far Western District Northeast Division Convention and delivered a *dominant* performance, bringing home the 2026 Division Chorus Championship once again.

And then there was our spring show.

We took familiar Christmas favorites, reimagined them with new parody lyrics, and wove in new musical material to tell a *speculative* and moving story, imagining what the holidays might look like without Santa. It was an ambitious concept with many moving pieces, brought together quickly and efficiently through staging, lighting, sound, costumes, and acting. More importantly, it worked because of the commitment, flexibility, and creativity of this group.

So, what do we do with all of that?

If we want to build a culture of continuous improvement, it starts with mindset. Not perfection but curiosity. The willingness to ask, "*What's next?*" and "*How can we make this even better?*" Small steps, consistently taken, lead to big results.

But just as important—we have to keep this fun.

The magic of what we do isn't just in the notes. It's in the energy in the room, the trust between singers, and the joy we share with each other and our audience. When we stay forward-looking without losing that sense of fun, we create an environment where people *want* to improve.

So, let's carry both ideas with us:

- Celebrate what we've built.
- Stay curious about what's next.

Because when we do both, we don't just sustain success... we *grow* it.

And we have a pretty great time along the way.

72nd Annual Show “Santa’s Escape Plan”

It truly takes a village to bring a show to life, and “Santa’s Escape Plan” was a wonderful example of what we can accomplish.

Thank you to every chorus member, quartet singer, guest performer, and volunteer who gave their time, energy, and creativity to make this production possible. From music and staging to costumes, lighting, sound, and all the behind-the-scenes efforts, your teamwork made this show something truly special.

A special thank you to Al and Steve, whose vision and creativity brought the script to life and helped shape the story we shared on stage. We also extend our appreciation to Bill for his musical leadership and guidance throughout.

A heartfelt thank you to the quartets who performed including BS Quartet, Four Heaven’s Sake, Fourmidable, Hot Mess Express, Royal Flush, and Fourward Motion. We also extend our appreciation to our guest performers, the Pacific Stocktones, for adding their talent and energy to the show.

We are grateful to our sponsors and donors for their continued support, and to the many contributors who stepped in wherever needed to help everything run smoothly.

To our audience members, thank you for joining us and for sharing photos that helped capture and relive the performance.

We are incredibly proud of what we created and excited for what’s ahead.

Thank you for helping us share the harmony.







Quartet Updates

Four Heaven's Sake

A Barbershop Quartet

John Hunt

Steve Fund

Dave Harmon

Willys Nitschke



UPDATE: 5-3-2026

Four Heaven's Sake had a few opportunities to sing in April. We helped Kohl Elementary School commemorate their "Day in the Dirt" celebration of the groundbreaking of their school several years ago by wandering the campus during their festivities on 4-24-26. Willys was out of town so, thanks to Bob Yater for stepping up and filling in. We sang to groups of students, staff and parents. Notably, we developed a pseudo-fan-club of two young men who somehow turned up in each of the groups we serenaded. They sat down with Steve afterward and had a little Q&A about barbershop harmony. Neither professed any singing talent, but they really enjoyed the singing. They left with our website and the Barbershop Harmony Society website as well as the names of a few of our favorite quartets to look up on YouTube. The hook was nibbled on. Time will tell if they get landed in a quartet.

We sang *Zippah-Dee-Doodah* and *Hello Mary Lou* on the spring show on 4-25-26 as pictured above. The venue provided a great experience, very similar to the contest feeling of the FWD Convention in March.

Then on 4-29-26 *Four Heaven's Sake* did the National Anthem routine at Banner Island Ballpark as the Stockton Ports hosted the Fresno Grizzlies. It's always fun to sing on the concourse prior to the game entertaining folks as they get concessions or just stroll the venue. Then while singing the "Star Spangled Banner," seeing yourself on the Jumbotron in center field as the video is out of synch with the audio of what you sing. Definitely distracting! We learned that even though we stood much closer to the microphone than we typically do, to have the sound make sense in the stadium a small group must stand even closer... probably with faces within a foot of the mic. Also, it was not a given that during the seventh inning stretch, we were to lead the singing of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." We asked? They said, "No," initially. But, they were eventually glad to have us do it. Make sure they know that you don't need an instrumental backing track. This seemed to be a difficult concept for the sound guy. Photo credit to Janet Nitschke



Royal Flush

Royal Flush has been on hiatus, due to schedule conflicts. Recently, we came together again to be a part of the Portsmen show. Even after not singing together for some time, we rang some amazing chords on stage. It was an absolute blast! We are looking forward to being able to rehearse more in the coming months and having opportunities to sing out.

Fourmidable

Fourmidable quartet has had a formidable start! After newly forming in January 2026, we made the decision to enter the Norcal Novice competition. We worked hard on two songs and managed to take third place, after which we received valuable coaching from two of the experienced judges. As the Portsmen show drew near, we were asked to participate as one of the second half quartets, giving us stage and show experience together. It was a blast! We are looking forward to more singing and performance opportunities in the future!





May Birthday Celebrations

Dave Harmon – 5/20

Barbershop Shows & Activities

Join us for the...

Stay Tuned Chorus Show and

DESSERT DASH!

fundraiser and a cappella extravaganza

Sunday, June 7th, 3:00 P.M.
Sierra 2 Center, 2791 24th St.
Sacramento, CA

Tickets \$15, pre-sale only
Contact: 530-350-0247 or
email: StayTunedChorus@gmail.com

www.staytunedchorus.com





*Presents The Annual Bean Feed
A Somewhat Serious Quartet Contest*



Wednesday, June, 10th 6pm

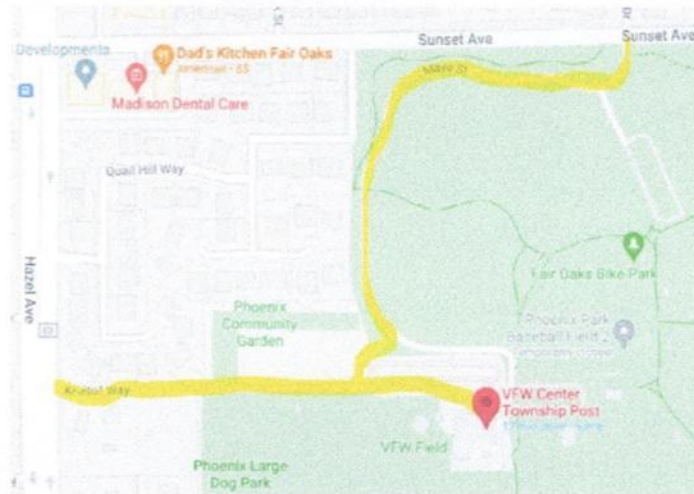
At The VFW in Fair Oaks

8990 Kruitof Way, Fair Oaks, CA 95628

Celebrating Over 30 Years of

Bean Feeds and Barbershop Quartet Contests

Tickets are \$10.00 at the door



Folsom Harmony Express
Non-profit Organization

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

Website: <http://www.stocktonportsmen.org/>

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

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:

Curious what it's like?

Come visit a rehearsal no pressure, just great music and great people. Come experience harmony with us. Visitors are always welcome on Tuesday evenings. No audition is required, just a love of singing and community.

Location: Zion Lutheran Church, Grace Hall - 808 W. Porter Avenue, Stockton, CA

Tuesday Rehearsals:

6:00 PM – 7:30 PM Chorus Rehearsal

7:30 PM – 8:30 PM VLQ, except board meeting nights (3rd Tuesday of each month)

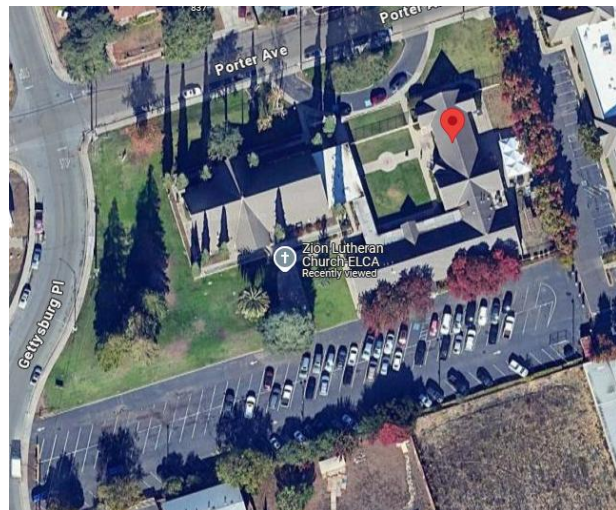
Rehearsals may occasionally be held at an alternate location, so please check the calendar for the most up-to-date information. [Click here to access the Stockton Portsmen Calendar](#)

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****

2026

- 5/9 The Peninsulairs Show – An Evening in Dreamland (Palo Alto, CA)
7pm – 9pm [Click link for details](#)
- 5/21 Sacramento Harmony for Lunch Bunch (11:30 am – 1:00 pm)
- **5/25 Memorial Day Service at Cherokee Memorial (Lodi, CA) (10:30 am)**
[Click link for details](#)
- 6/7 Delta Chapter Show – Stay Tuned Chorus (Sacramento, CA)
- 6/18 Sacramento Harmony for Lunch Bunch (11:30 am – 1:00 pm)
- [6/28-7/5 BHS International Convention \(St. Louis, MO\)](#)
- **7/1 Celebrate America (Lodi, CA) (6pm-8pm)**
- 9/11 Youth Hamony Explosion (Visalia, CA)
- [10/6-11 2026 Pan Pacific and FWD Fall Convention \(Honolulu, Hawaii\)](#)
[Click Link for details & registration](#)
- **TBD Stockton Portsmen Holiday Roadshow**

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/>

Westunes Magazine <https://farwesterndistrict.org/news/westunes>