



The Captain's Log

Newsletter of the Stockton Portsman
Connecting members, supporters, and friends of the Stockton Portsman
March 2026 - Issue #79

The View from the Helm



PERSISTENCE - ISSUE 26-03

The major topic of discussion amongst members of the board is recruitment and the need to find a way to reach the 30 plus to 40-year-old folks as well as the recent graduates from music classes. Recruitment can be challenging because so many factors influence how people discover and join organizations like ours.

On my lanyard that I usually wear on Tuesdays, I have most of my 11 PON (Persons of Note) that I earned by bringing folks into the Society. I bring this up, as with 42 years of membership, I have both success and failure in the encouragement of others to join us. So, I speak from experience that the art of recruitment is persistence.

As I have stated before, the hardest part is finding where you can find those that would make good additions to our 'family.' While we would hope that all those music teachers with Barbershop membership (past and present) would be more adept at sending those graduates our way.

Still, our most fertile ground, those 30 plus to 40-year-old folks, is very hard to find. I am pleased that we continue to perform throughout the community, giving those in the audience the exposure to our craft and hopefully letting them know that we would welcome them.

Let us continue to be persistent in our sharing our love of four-part harmony with our younger family, friends, and neighbors, while still singing as often as we can in our community.

Musical Director's Message: **By Bill Litz**

Division Contest is March 21st. It's time.

This isn't about just getting through the songs. It's about deciding that every run-through matters.

Sometimes I hear, "I'm getting bored singing the same songs." That only happens when we stop looking for what can be better.

After six years and 1,712 performances as Fiyero in *Wicked*, Jordan said his goal was to make every show the perfect show knowing perfection doesn't exist. That's the mindset.

So, raise the bar.

Make that soft entrance supported and confident. A low breath, an energized core, and tall vowels from the first instant. Lock the intervals so the chords ring instead of just landing. Stay animated through the sustain instead of relaxing at the end. Release together. Exactly together. Shape the phrase so it sounds conversational, not careful. Drive the consonants so the story is clear. Lift the final chorus instead of coasting. Watch through the cutoff. Breathe together. Listen harder than you sing.

Find one thing each run to make better.

It takes focus. It takes effort. But when the chord locks, when the release is unified, when the phrase suddenly comes alive, that's the fun. That's why we do this.

Championships aren't won by accident. They're earned in the small details, polished over and over.

Let's commit to that extra effort and enjoy the results every single time we sing.

That's how we give ourselves the best chance to bring home the Northeast Division Championship trophy again.

Let's make every rehearsal count.

2026 NorCal Novice Quartet Contest **Encourages Growth and Harmony**

The spirit of barbershop harmony was on full display at the recent 2026 NorCal Novice Quartet Contest, hosted by the Stockton Portsmen at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Lodi. Singers from across the region gathered for an afternoon of music, learning, and camaraderie as quartets took the stage to share their love of four-part harmony.

Quartets representing several chapters participated, including singers from Barbary Coast, Stockton, Frank Thorne, Placerville, and California Delta. The contest gave newer quartets the opportunity to perform before an audience while receiving valuable feedback from the judging panel.

In addition to the novice competition, several experienced quartets also performed for evaluation. Although not competing in the novice category, they sang for the judges and received scores and feedback, gaining additional stage experience and insights to take back to rehearsal.

Following the performances, judges hosted feedback sessions, sharing helpful comments on vocal production, musical interpretation, and presentation. These sessions are an important part of the learning process for developing quartets.

Audience members enjoyed a variety of performances throughout the afternoon, with each quartet bringing its own personality and musical style to the stage. Events like this highlight one of the strengths of the barbershop community with singers supporting one another, learning together, and celebrating the joy of harmony.

By hosting events like this, the Stockton Portsmen help support the growth and development of quartets across Northern California in the Far Western District, giving singers the opportunity to gain experience and confidence on the contest stage.

The Stockton Portsmen congratulate all the quartets who participated and thank the judges, volunteers, and audience members who helped make the afternoon such a success.

Novice Contest Results

 **First Place – The Idealists**

 **Second Place – Hot Mess Express**

 **Third Place – Fourmidable**

[Click Link for full scoring summary](#)

Pictures of quartets on following pages thanks to Derick Sturke!

The Idealists – 1st Place

Jamie Bedford, Danny Weinberg, Jeremy Marcus, Wenley Tong



Hot Mess Express – 2nd Place

Julie McGhie, Megan Litz-Kjelstrom, Dianne Valenzuela, Pamela Mannah



Fourmidable – 3rd Place

Stephanie Thurman, Chuck Thurman, Brad Nieman, Seth Yund



Royal Flush

Stephanie Thurman, Chuck Thurman, Paul Grant, Nance Hennefer



Claim Jumpers

Dave Ely, Kent Miller, Marleen Whelden, Howard Wolf



Escapade

Steve Taylor, Dwayne Smith, Terrie Carrozzella, Jesi Eckhardt



Four Heaven's Sake

John Hunt, Chuck Thurman, Steve Yund, Willys Nitchske, Dave Harmon



Huzzah!

Kent Miller, Larry Womac, Tim Huntsinger, Luke Lubetkin



Panning for Chords

Jesi Eckhardt, Kirk Eckhardt, Dave Ely, Bill Faulkner



Our Judges!

Josh Landin (SNG), Paul Engel (MUS), Raphael Pazo (PER)



Royal Flush Sings for a Special Anniversary

Royal Flush recently had the rare opportunity to sing together while helping celebrate a couple's 37th wedding anniversary at Market Tavern in Lodi.

The quartet performed two love songs for the happy couple and received many compliments from diners and listeners nearby.

Afterward, the group stepped outside and continued the harmony on a nearby street corner under a lamppost, a classic Barbershop moment and a fun way to reconnect their sound. 🎵



Nance Hennefer, Paul Grant, Stephanie Thurman, Chuck Thurman

Tune Struck

February! The month of love and harmony and in 2026, the month of the never-ending winter cold.

Tune Struck always looks forward to the Annual effort to share 'Valentine Greetings' throughout the greater Stockton area, and this year was no different, until Steve's cold made a terrible reoccurrence. Thankfully, Chuck Thurman was able and willing to become the newest Tune Struck member (it is getting really hard to remember all of the folks that have been unofficial Tune Struck members these days).



The highlight of the day was returning to Van de Pol Trucking with Annaleigh Barker from Stocktonia media in tow.

Now to be totally honest, we were supposed to be the Sue Atkins version, but she too found the cold that had Steve under the weather. This made our visit to Sue's work an interesting time, with a drop into the 'Dispensary' located in the same building.





March Birthday Celebrations

Sue Atkins – 3/20

Volunteers Needed for the 2026 FWD Spring Convention, Northern Divisions

March 19–21 | Stockton, California

The **2026 FWD Spring Convention, Northern Divisions** is coming to Stockton **March 19–21**, and the Stockton Portsmen are proud to help host this exciting event for singers from across Northern California.

Events like this take many helping hands to run smoothly, and we're looking for volunteers to assist with a variety of tasks throughout the weekend. Whether you can help for an hour or a full shift, your support will make a big difference.

Volunteer opportunities may include:

- Providing transportation for judges to and from the airport, hotel, and venue
- Backstage support
- Greeters and hospitality
- Ticketing and audience assistance
- General event coordination

Even helping for a short shift can make a big difference in ensuring a successful convention weekend.

Hosting the convention is a wonderful opportunity for our chapter to showcase the Stockton community and the Central Valley to visiting singers from across the region while supporting the continued growth of barbershop harmony in the Far Western District.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact **Nance Hennefer or Sue Atkins** for more information. Volunteers are encouraged to sign up **before March 15** so we can plan ahead. Your time and energy will help ensure a successful and welcoming event for our visiting quartets, choruses, judges, delegates and guests. Thank you in advance for helping make this convention a memorable experience for everyone attending.

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)

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:

Interested in Singing With Us?

Visitors are always welcome Tuesday evenings.

No audition required just a love of singing and community.

Come experience harmony with us.

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.

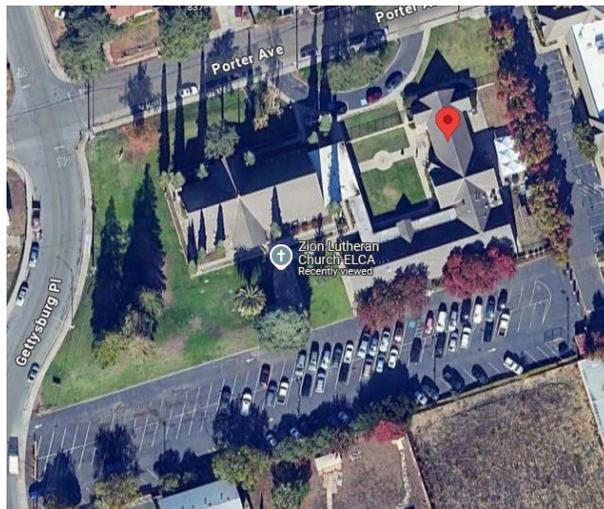
Please double-check the details.

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****

2026

- 3/19 Sacramento Harmony for Lunch Bunch (11:30 – 1:00)
- **3/19-21 2026 FWD Spring Convention, Northern Divisions (Stockton, CA)**
[Click link for details and for registration](#)
- **3/26 VFW Post 52 – Vietnam War Memorial Program – National Anthem**
- 4/12 2026 Spring HOD Meeting – 3pm via Zoom
- 4/16 Sacramento Harmony for Lunch Bunch (11:30 – 1:00)
- 4/18 CA Delta Chapter Show – Voices of California (Sacramento, CA)
[Click link for details & tickets](#)
- 4/24 Fresno Chapter Show – Sierra Gateway Chorus (Fresno, CA)
- **4/25 Stockton Portsmen 72nd Annual Show “Santa’s Escape Plan” (Stockton, CA)**
- 5/21 Sacramento Harmony for Lunch Bunch (11:30 – 1:00)
- 5/25 Memorial Day Service at Cherokee Memorial (Lodi, CA)
- 6/7 Delta Chapter Show – Stay Tuned Chorus (Sacramento, CA)
- 6/18 Sacramento Harmony for Lunch Bunch (11:30 – 1:00)
- 6/28-7/5 BHS International Convention (St. Louis, MO)
- 10/6-11 2026 Pan Pacific and FWD Fall Convention (Honolulu, Hawaii)
[Click Link for details & registration](#)

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/>