



# The Captain's Log

Newsletter of the Stockton Portsman  
*Connecting members, supporters, and friends of the Stockton Portsman*  
April 2026 - Issue #80



## The View from the Helm

**GROWTH - ISSUE 26-04 (AL WOLTER)**

Growth is a good thing, right? Unless you are talking about uncontrolled or undesired growth, most of us know that as cancer.

My viewpoint has always been 'control and moderation', there is no need to expand greatly and quickly. In fact, being too quick and too great can lead to greater issues that slow and steady would curtail.

Still, most growth is good and we are experiencing the good kind both in our membership and singing, which was evidenced March 21<sup>st</sup> with our Division win.

# Musical Director's Message:

By Bill Litz

Spring contest is behind us, and what a moment it was. Bringing home the Northeast Division crown again is something we should all be incredibly proud of. It represents a lot of hard work, growth, and commitment from every person on the risers.

But if you're like me, you may have noticed how quickly that feeling starts to fade.

Almost immediately, our focus shifts. The annual show - *Santa's Escape Plan* - is right in front of us. Then Memorial Day. Then Celebrate America. And just like that, we're on to the next goal, the next performance, the next thing to prepare.

We live in a bit of a "what have you done for me lately" world, especially in our own minds. And while that drive keeps us moving forward, it can also keep us from fully appreciating what we've already accomplished.

The truth is what we do as a chorus isn't defined by a single contest result or one big performance. It's built on hundreds of smaller successes along the way.

It's the chord that locks just right in rehearsal.

It's the entrance that finally comes in clean and confident.

It's the moment you remember the words, connect with the audience, and enjoy the performance.

It's showing up week after week and getting just a little bit better.

In this moment, the focus is putting the final touches on *Santa's Escape Plan* - tightening transitions, shaping moments, and learning those parody lyrics well enough that they come out in the right order... and occasionally even the right song.

Those moments matter. In fact, they *are* the real story.

So, as we move into this next stretch of performances, I want to challenge all of us to do two things at the same time:

- Keep pushing forward—because we have exciting things ahead.

But don't carry the stress of "what's next" so heavily that it takes away from the joy of what's happening right now. We can work to be better without feeling pressured or weighed down by it.

- Take time to recognize and celebrate the wins that are happening every single week.

If we can do that, if we can carry both the pride of what we've done and the excitement of what's next, we'll not only perform better, we'll enjoy the journey a whole lot more.

Because in the end, it's not just about what we've done lately...

It's about what we're building together, one song at a time.



### **April Birthday Celebrations**

**Willys Nitschke – 4/18**

## **2026 FWD Spring Convention Recap**

**By Sue Atkins**

The Stockton Portsmen had an unforgettable weekend hosting and performing at the 2026 Far Western District Spring Convention for the Northeast and Northwest Divisions. With over 300 attendees, the event brought together choruses, quartets, and barbershop enthusiasts from across the district for a weekend full of energy, connection, and outstanding harmony.

We extend our sincere thanks to all the choruses, quartets, and spectators who attended and helped make the weekend so special. Your performances, support, and shared love of barbershop created an atmosphere that was both inspiring and energizing. From the contest stage to the shared spaces filled with tag singing, every moment reflected the strength of our barbershop community.

We would also like to recognize and thank our judges, whose expertise, feedback, and dedication to the craft continue to elevate all of us. Their time, insight, and commitment to excellence play a vital role in helping choruses and quartets grow.

A special thank you to the Far Western District leadership and team for their guidance, support, and partnership throughout the planning and execution of the convention. Their experience and leadership help make events like this possible.

Finally, we are incredibly grateful to all the volunteers who gave their time and energy to ensure the weekend ran smoothly. From logistics and registration to transportation and backstage support, your efforts made a lasting impact and contributed directly to the success of the event.

We also want to congratulate every chorus and quartet who stepped onto the stage. Preparing for competition takes courage, commitment, and hard work. Each performance represented not only musical effort, but a willingness to grow, take risks, and share something meaningful with the audience. The experience of learning, performing, and receiving feedback is what continues to move all of us forward.

In addition to our chorus performance, we were proud to have three quartets representing our chapter in the Quartet Finals: TuneStruck, Hot Mess Express, and Four Heaven's Sake. Their performances showcased the talent, dedication, and musical growth happening within our chorus and added to an already exciting weekend.

Hosting a district convention is no small task, and our chorus was proud to serve in that role. Behind the scenes, many moving parts came together through teamwork, flexibility, and a shared commitment to creating a positive experience for everyone involved.

Beyond the logistics and performances, the convention reminded us what makes barbershop so meaningful. The opportunity to learn in classes, reconnect with friends, meet new singers, and share music together continues to strengthen our entire district.

On stage, the Stockton Portsmen delivered a performance to be proud of, earning:

- Most Improved Chorus
- Northeast Division Chorus Championship
- Plateau AA Chorus Champion

These accomplishments reflect the dedication and growth of our members, and we are honored to be part of a district filled with talented performers who continue to raise the bar.

For those interested in scores view [Quartet and Chorus Finals Scoresheets](#)

One of the most meaningful aspects of the weekend was the spirit of participation. Whether performing, volunteering, learning, or cheering from the audience, everyone played a role in making the convention a success.

We are incredibly grateful to all who attended and contributed to this memorable weekend. Events like this are a reminder that barbershop is about more than competition. It is about community, connection, and the joy of singing together.

As we carry this momentum forward, we look forward to seeing many of you again at future events and continuing to share harmony across the district.

# *Four Heaven's Sake*

## *A Barbershop Quartet*

*John Hunt*

*Steve Furd*

*Dave Harmon*

*Willys Nitschke*

UPDATE: 3-23-2026



Wow! What a whirlwind, bumpy road, thrilling ride, journey full of myriad opportunities.... Oh!!! *Four Heaven's Sake!* It is just "WOW!" We were too busy to even send an update last month with Steve getting sick and Chuck Thurman stepping in for Singing Valentine's and the Novice Contest. Thanks, Chuck for stepping in, and to Stephanie Thurman as well for providing some very salient

coaching!

Then, John got sick, both Steve and John had limited access to voices. All this, and the FWD Contest was upcoming. We made it through. We had a few rehearsals, and were fairly ready to compete with confidence. Since the contest was in Stockton and hosted by the Portsmen we signed up to compete for everything. This meant singing and competing two times with four different songs. So, our first real on-stage contest experience was about to happen.

We walked out into the bright-lights and an enthusiastic round of applause. There truly is nothing as supportive as a group of barber-shoppers as audience members... as we were about to truly appreciate later. I think Dave, said it best, "I was standing soaking in the applause after singing 'Almost Like Being In Love' and, I guess I just wanted to do it again."

Fast forward about 26 hours during the judges' feedback sessions: John Ward, the singing category judge greeted us first. "Well, you guys showed everyone who you really are tonight. You came back beautifully and matched the performance of your first song (Almost Like Being In Love). So, we don't even need to talk about your second song. Don't watch it. Don't listen to it. Maybe keep it and watch it five years from now. But it is not who you are." Another judge in the Performance category, Will Lagos, said,

“All I want to say about that performance is I admire the courage and strength of character you showed in singing it all the way through. Lesser people would have stopped.” The remainder of the judging sessions consisted of immediately applicable recommendations for each one of us that made us smile when we heard the difference in our sound. Sometimes the suggestions seemed down-right stupid like: “sing like Jerry Lewis.” But each judge was caring and clearly knew how to inspire at our level so we could move forward.

Now, back to that support of the barbershop community. We received applause that somehow shared knowing the frustration of a failed performance that first night. But the applause the second night seemed wilder and genuinely appreciative of the strength it takes to get up after being knocked down. The judges were fantastic as described above. What made me most grateful was walking around the venue. I had people I had never met saying how much they appreciated our performances. I am not exactly sure what they liked. But I am certain of their genuineness. That is what I will take to the bank.

The “*Four Heaven’s Sake Survival Manual*” tells us that we are not judged by our skills, stature, status, or things that can be seen (or heard); but, by our hearts (1Samuel 16:7). I am very honored to stand and share my love of song with these guys. It is such a great metaphor for how to approach life... and its fun!! We will do it again, and again. We accept the hardship and frustration, knowing peace and the hope of joy is in the next chord that rings!

Thanks for your support! Keep on singing ... *Four Heaven’s Sake!*

## **Tune Struck**

Tune Struck was honored to represent Stockton at the recent District and Division Convention and Contests. While we may not have started off as well as we had hoped and failed to earn the Divisional Senior Championship, it was good to get some excellent feedback and tools to move forward in music making.

STOCKTON PORTSMEN CHORUS

PRESENTS

# SANTA'S, ESCAPE PLAN



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN  
**SANTA** DECIDES  
HE'S HAD  
**ENOUGH?**



 **SATURDAY, APRIL 25** •  **2:30 PM**

 **BEAR CREEK HIGH SCHOOL THEATER** • STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA

**TICKETS: \$20**  
KIDS 12 & UNDER FREE

 **209-881-SING (7464)**  [StocktonPortsmen.org](http://StocktonPortsmen.org)

## FEATURED GUESTS



**FOURWARD MOTION QUARTET**



**PACIFIC STOCKTONES**

VoCal  
VOICES OF CALIFORNIA

PRESENTS

# TV Through the DECADES!

April 18, 2026 • 1:00 p.m.  
Northminster Presbyterian  
Church

3235 Pope Ave, Sacramento, CA 95821

Adult \$30 • Student/Youth \$10  
Group Pricing available

Purchase tickets at  
[voicesofcalifornia.org](http://voicesofcalifornia.org)  
or scan the QR Code



Voices of California is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

This event is made possible through funding provided  
by Sacramento County and the City of Sacramento



SCAN HERE

SACRAMENTO  
COUNTY



*The Sierra Gateway Chorus*



PRESENTS

*Harmony Blooms!*

Starring Current FWD Quartet Champions



**THE SEVENTH VARIETY**

also featuring performances by:  
Voices United  
Kick it Up Quartet  
The Front Line Quartet  
SOLD! Horn Quartet  
The Rabetsimba Experience  
&  
Brass Hysteria

GO TO  
<https://www.sierragatewaychorus.org>

April 24, 2026 7:00pm  
Northpointe Community Church  
4625 W Palo Alto Ave Fresno

OR SCAN HERE  
FOR TICKETS



\$20 Individual  
\$10 Student  
\$60 Family

## **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](mailto: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.***

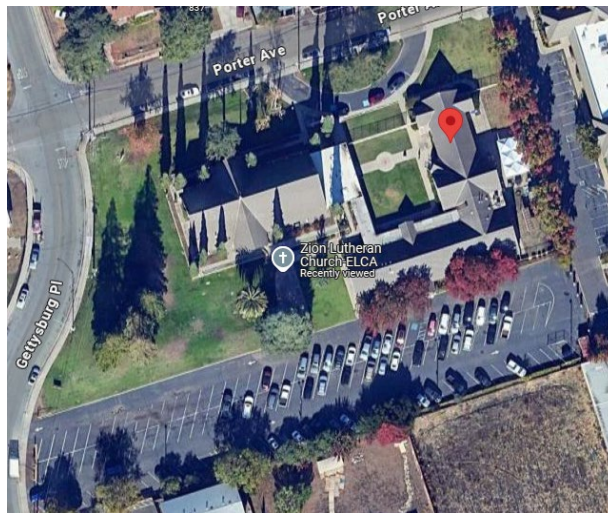
***Please double-check the details.***

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**

- 4/9 Barbary Coast Chapter Show – Fog City Singers (San Francisco, CA)
- 4/11 Barbary Coast Chapter Show – Fog City Singers (Saratoga, CA)
- 4/12 2026 Spring HOD Meeting – 3pm via Zoom
- 4/16 Sacramento Harmony for Lunch Bunch (11:30 am – 1:00 pm)
- 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 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 Harmony Explosion (Visalia, CA)
- **10/6-11 2026 Pan Pacific and FWD Fall Convention (Honolulu, Hawaii)**  
[Click Link for details & registration](#)
- **12/? Stockton Portsmen Christmas Show (Stockton, CA) - 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/>

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