



The Captain's Log

Newsletter of the Stockton Portsmen

Connecting members, supporters, and friends of the Stockton Portsmen

July 2026 - Issue #83

Charting Our Course

Summer is a wonderful time for our chorus. While vacations and busy schedules can sometimes make it harder to gather, it's also one of the best opportunities to introduce others to what makes the Stockton Portsmen special.

Our month begins with Celebrate America on July 1st, where we'll once again have the privilege of representing our chapter in the community. Every public performance reminds people that barbershop harmony is alive, welcoming, and thriving. Whether someone hears us for the first time or has been following us for years, each performance is an opportunity to inspire a future member or supporter.

This month also reminds us that the strength of our chapter isn't measured only by scores or performances, it's measured by people. Every friendly greeting, every invitation to rehearsal, every encouraging conversation, and every new face that walks through our doors helps shape the future of the Stockton Portsmen.

While many of the world's finest barbershoppers will be competing at the International Convention this week, their success began exactly where we are today with regular rehearsals, supportive friendships, and a commitment to continual improvement. Whether you're watching from St. Louis or through the livestream, I encourage you to enjoy the performances and bring that inspiration back to our own chorus.

Thank you for making this chapter such a welcoming place to sing. Together we're building more than great music we're building friendships, preserving a tradition, and ensuring that barbershop harmony continues to flourish for generations to come.

Until next month...

Keep charting our course one song, one rehearsal, and one new friend at a time.

In Harmony,

Sue Atkins, President

Musical Director's Message: by Bill Litz

The last couple of months have reminded me how quickly life can move. Between buying a new home, preparing our old home for sale (a move that seemed to come with a never-ending list of details), taking a trip to Florida, and dancing 42 heats at the *Arthur Murray Beach Ball* event, the schedule has been completely full.

But through all the hectic change, one thing stayed constant: music.

That is the thing I love most about being a **Portsmen**. No matter what is happening outside the rehearsal room, when we come together and make music, we create a space that is different. We leave behind the lists, deadlines, and distractions for a while and focus on something we share - harmony, connection, and friendship.

This week, barbershop fans from around the world will gather for international competition. It is an incredible opportunity to watch some of the highest levels of our craft and be inspired by what is possible when singers commit themselves to growth and excellence. I encourage everyone to take advantage of the online subscription or talk with me about coming by the new place to watch a round or enjoy the AIC show together.

We also have an exciting opportunity closer to home as the **Portsmen**, along with **4 Heaven's Sake** and **Royal Flush**, take the stage at *Celebrate America* in Lodi. It is always an honor to be part of this event and share our music with the community. Rather than thinking of it as another thing to fit into an already busy schedule, remember the thrill of performing and the opportunity to share our voices, our friendships, and our patriotism.

Finally, as we continue through our **26 Weeks of Harmony** Journey, keep your focus on what makes this organization special. It starts with an invitation. When we share what we do - the singing, the friendships, the performances, the laughter, and the memories - we give others the chance to experience the same thing.

Everyone has a story. Everyone has busy times. Everyone needs a place where they can belong.

Let's keep inviting others to find that place with us.

Keep singing!



July Birthday Celebrations

Nance Hennefer – 7/13

Nancy Wilson – 7/14

Quartet Updates

Four Heaven's Sake

A Barbershop Quartet

John Hunt

Steve Fund

Dave Harmon

Willy's Nitschke

UPDATE: 6-30-2026

Our next song is entitled: "Granny, Granny, get off the stove! You're too old to be riding the range!" Oh, *Four Heaven's Sake!* Have we slipped into that barbershopper world of trying to raise the lowest form of humor into an art form? After our over one hour "show" at Oakmont Senior Living of Lodi on 6/25/26 witnesses might say the "bad Dad Jokes," if not "saving our bacon," kept us in the frying pan long enough for us to come out smokin' hot!

John set the plan in motion as a way to honor his father-in-law, Ted Heinrich who resides at Oakmont. He made all the plans. We only rehearsed a couple of times in June *Four Heaven's Sake!* To be fair, John notified the other quartet members that we would be there for an hour over a month ago. But it breezed through my cranium without sticking until at the rehearsal on the 23rd John enthusiastically said something like, "Let's do our whole repertoire! We could show up early and practice in front of the people as they gather. Then we can sing for an hour. I will introduce and talk during the show because it's for Ted." There was an unspoken resistance to actually trying to sing for an hour.

If you know John, then you know his superpower is learning songs... lots of them... quickly... both lead and tenor parts. Almost every practice there is a Leave It to Beaver moment when three of us are kindly urged to sing a song instead of talking about singing. John loves to be singing! He knows all the songs! One of the other three of us needs the music or says, "Let's do that next rehearsal."

We showed up dressed to the nines (anyone know what that means??). One look and anyone knows we are barbershop singers (Hat, vest, bowtie, arm garter). John is excited and restates he is doing the talking. Has anyone ever heard John do any talking at a previous performance? Warm-up is quick and we are in good tune! We have a rep list of 26 songs that if sung with no talking covers just over 48 minutes. We start at the top and sing through most of them, with Dave keeping us on pitch and notifying us of the next song. After about the third song with introductions and why we are there being explained, John pulls out a shrink-wrapped, never opened "Dad Joke Daily Calendar." Willys and I gave each other the look that says, "How could this possibly go wrong?"

I can't explain it. We held an audience of about 50 people for over an hour. We sounded pretty good doing it and God bless John, he made the dad jokes work. There was some spontaneous assistance provided by Willys and myself...but John's vision, that I didn't think could be done, was a success. I hope they ask us back!!

Dad Joke for today: Jimmy got in trouble for chewing on the electrical chord again. His Dad grounded him. He's doing better, currently! Bah-da, Doom! Keep singing *Four Heaven's Sake!*

Steve

Royal Flush

Stephanie Thurman – Tenor, Chuck Thurman - Lead
Nance Hennefer – Baritone Paul Grant – Bass



Royal Flush has been busy singing the national anthem at a few of the Stockton Ports games this last month. We extend a big thank you to Harry Williams! He has been key in keeping close relations with the franchise so we and the Portsmen have such opportunities.

We will also be singing at the Celebrate America event at Hutchins Street Square on July 1st with the Portsmen. We are definitely looking forward to singing with them for our Nation's 250th Birthday party!

Speaking of party, we are also performing at the 4th of July Pancake Breakfast hosted by the Kiwanis at Lodi Lake on the morning of Independence Day. We will be singing for the entire hour there so if you are hungry for some flapjacks and wish to hear some barbershoppers at the break of dawn... Come on down!

All Aboard the Hot Mess Express!

Diane Valenzuela — Lead, Pam Mannah — Tenor

Julie McGhie — Baritone, Megan Litz-Kjelstrom — Bass

Between moving, job hunting, our combined 16 kids and all that entails, we were finally able to come together this past weekend and have a real rehearsal for the first time in months. This past spring, Sue sent us a fantastic article from the March/April Harmonizer entitled “Become the Most-Improved Quartet” to help us in our journey. We loved the suggestions in it for learning how to coach ourselves and how to put together songs in a new way that makes us a more solid group, but the thing that stood out the most on our first read through of the article was “You must decide that your quartet is not simply a social group that occasionally sings.” *Insert shocked Pikachu face*

While we can definitely appreciate that thought and agree that a little less socializing could probably happen, we realized that for all four of us, being a part of this group goes so much deeper than just “we like to sing together”. For those that don’t know our history, let us fill you in on who we are and how we found each other!

Julie and Megan have been BFFs since kindergarten and sung in school choirs together all throughout their youth. Pam and Megan have known each other since Megan joined the Sweet Adelines at 18 years old and sang together in both quartets and a chorus. And last, but not least, Dianne is Megan’s stepdaughter! We have seen each other through relationships, children, school, and everything in between and putting this group together felt like pieces falling into place at just the right time in our lives. We all agree that singing in this group with these particular women is an oasis in the desert of chaos that is the rest of our lives and the music, love, and total acceptance of each other and our flaws helps us cling to that shred of sanity that we each have left (although we might be sharing that sliver between all of us!)

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.

Perfect for:

- 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)

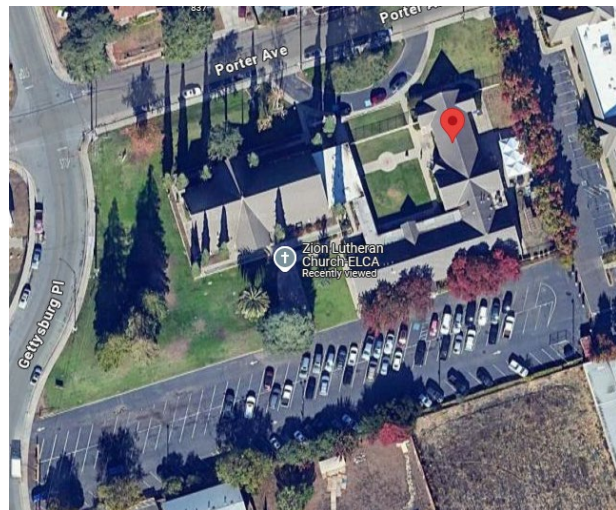
Rehearsals may occasionally be held at an alternate location, so please check the calendar for the most up-to-date information. [Click here to access the Stockton Portsmen Calendar](#)

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****

Upcoming Events

- 6/28-7/5 BHS International Convention (St. Louis, MO)
- 7/1 Celebrate America (Lodi, CA) (6pm-8pm)
- 8/25 National Anthem – Stockton Ports
- 8/30 National Anthem – Stockton Ports
- 8/29 Stockton Portsmen Annual Picnic (3pm-6pm)
- 9/12 Youth Harmony Explosion (Visalia, CA)
- 10/6-11 2026 Pan Pacific and FWD Fall Convention (Honolulu, Hawaii)
[Click Link for details & registration](#)
- 10/18 Stockton Portsmen 72nd Charter Anniversary
- 12/5 Festival of Trees (Chorus)
- 12/6 Festival of Trees (VLQ)
- 12/14 Stockton Portsmen Holiday Show
- 12/18 Philomathean Club Performance
- TBD Stockton Portsmen Holiday Roadshow & Remote Rehearsals

Tuesday Rehearsals – Visitors always welcome!

Barbershop Links:

Barbershop Harmony Society <https://www.barbershop.org/>

Far Western District <https://www.farwesterndistrict.org/>

Mixed Barbershop Harmony Association <https://www.mixedbarbershop.org/>

Stay Tuned a Cappella Chorus Sacramento: <https://www.facebook.com/StayTunedChorus>

Voices of California (VoCal) <https://www.voicesofcalifornia.org/>

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