The Captain's Log

Newsletter of the Stockton Portsmen

Connecting members, supporters, and friends of the Stockton Portsmen

November 2026 - Issue #87

Charting Our Course – The Harmony We Share, The Difference We Make

November has a way of reminding us to slow down for a moment and appreciate the people and experiences that enrich our lives. With Thanksgiving approaching, I've been thinking about how fortunate we are to have something like the Stockton Portsmen in our lives.

We often talk about the joy of singing, the excitement of performing, and the satisfaction of finally getting that challenging chord to ring. But when I think about what makes our chorus special, it isn't just the music. It's the people.

It's the members who show up week after week, even when life gets busy. It's the person who takes a few extra minutes to help someone learn their part, the one who makes a visitor feel welcome, and those who quietly take care of the countless details that keep our chapter moving forward.

And sometimes, we may not realize the difference we're making.

A song performed at a community event might bring back a cherished memory for someone in the audience. A familiar melody might brighten someone's day. An invitation to rehearsal might introduce someone to friendships they never expected to find. What seems like a small gesture to us can mean something much bigger to someone else.

As we move into the holiday season, we'll have plenty of opportunities to share those experiences. Between our December 12th Holiday Show and the many community performances ahead, this is one of our busiest and most rewarding times of the year. It's also a wonderful opportunity to introduce others to the joy of singing together.

Of course, a busy schedule also means preparation, commitment, and teamwork. Every rehearsal matters, and the effort each of us puts in between rehearsals helps us create the kind of performances we're proud to share. But let's remember to enjoy the journey along the way. After all, isn't that one of the reasons we're here?

October gave us an opportunity to celebrate 72 years of the Stockton Chapter. November gives us an opportunity to appreciate the people who are continuing that tradition today.

So, as Thanksgiving approaches, I want to say thank you. Thank you for your time, your talents, your friendship, your willingness to try something new, and your commitment to keeping harmony alive in our community. Whether you've been singing with us for decades or joined more recently, you are an important part of our chapter's story.

And as we look ahead, I hope we'll continue finding ways to share what we have with others. Invite a friend. Welcome a visitor. Encourage a fellow singer. Take a moment to appreciate the people standing beside you.

Because the true measure of our harmony isn't just how beautifully we sing together, but how much richer we make each other's lives through the music we share.

Wishing you and your families a wonderful Thanksgiving and a joyful start to the holiday season!

In Harmony,

Sue Atkins
President, Stockton Portsmen

Musical Director's Message:
by Bill Litz

We've all heard the saying that it takes 10,000 repetitions to become a master at something. Whether that number is accurate or not, there's a truth behind it: getting good at something takes doing it. Not thinking about doing it, not wishing we could do it, but actually putting in the repetitions.

Think about learning a new song. How many times does it take before you really know it? Before you can sing your part without constantly thinking about the notes and words? Before you can look up, watch the director, listen to the other parts, and enjoy performing the music?

It doesn't happen by wishing. It happens through repetition. And those first repetitions aren't always pretty! We miss notes, stumble over words, lose our place, and discover just how much we don't know yet. Sometimes it's frustrating, and we may feel a long way from being ready for prime time. But that's part of the process. With each repetition, we add skills to our toolbox, build familiarity, and gain a little more confidence. Eventually, that new thing becomes something we can do rather than something we just wish we could do.

So how do we get those repetitions? Some of them happen at home, and that's important. Singing through your music, reviewing the words, thinking about the notes, and even imagining how you'll perform a song are all valuable ways to prepare. A little time spent with your music each day can make a tremendous difference.

But rehearsals are another important part of that process. They're where we put those individual efforts together. It's one thing to know your own part; it's another to hear how it fits with the other voices. It's where we discover the harmonies, work through the challenges, learn to listen to each other, and begin to sound like a chorus instead of a collection of individual singers.

And let's remember that rehearsal is a place where we're allowed to make mistakes. That's how we learn. We don't come to rehearsal because we're already perfect; we come because we're working toward being better. Every rehearsal is an opportunity to put in more reps, not just for yourself, but for everyone around you.

Something happened last week that brought this idea home for me.

A few of us had hoped to put together some barbershop singing at a local open-mic event hosted by Sayla Music Academy in Lodi. I was disappointed that we weren't able to get enough yeses to pull together a quartet or group for the performance. A few of us did make it to the event, though, with the intention of inviting some of the singers there to join us for the Christmas season.

When I was asked to make an announcement and extend the invitation, I was also challenged to sing something for the audience. I didn't have a quartet ready, but I asked if I could borrow an ukulele and decided to take a chance. I sang a song I'd been working on for quite a while.

I was hesitant. It was my first ever open-mic performance, first-ever ukulele performance, and it certainly wasn't what I had planned for the evening. But I said yes!

And that's where all those repetitions paid off. I had spent time working on that song, making mistakes, working through difficult spots, and gradually becoming more comfortable with it. When an unexpected opportunity came along, I had enough tools in my toolbox to step up and share it. It turned into a special moment that wouldn't have happened if I had simply wished I were ready.

I think this applies to more than just learning our music. We sometimes get tired of singing the same songs. Even songs we once enjoyed can begin to feel routine. We may find ourselves singing them without the energy or excitement they deserve.

But what are we doing to change that?

I suspect most of us would enjoy having something new and exciting to perform. A new song, a new challenge, a special performance opportunity, or perhaps something that takes us a little outside our comfort zone. We like the idea of those things. But are we willing to put in the effort to make them happen?

New music means learning new notes, new words, new rhythms, and new musical challenges. It means going through those early repetitions when everything feels unfamiliar. But that's also where some of the excitement comes from. We're building something together that we couldn't do before. And as those repetitions add up, what once seemed difficult starts becoming enjoyable. We move from concentrating on simply getting the notes right to making music, creating expressions, and sharing something with an audience.

There's a difference between wishing we could do something special and being prepared when the opportunity comes along.

As a chorus, we have plenty of possibilities ahead of us. But those possibilities depend on what each of us is willing to put into them. Every time we learn our music, attend rehearsal, listen to the other parts, and work toward a better performance, we're adding to our toolbox. We're building the confidence and skills that allow us to say YES when an opportunity comes our way.

And there's a wonderful feeling that comes afterward when we realize we were ready, stepped up, and succeeded at something we might not have thought we could do.

So, here's my challenge: Don't just wish you could do something new or something better. Take a step toward making it happen. Learn those notes. Review those words. Sing that passage one more time. Show up for rehearsal. Bring some energy to a familiar song. Be willing to tackle something new, even if those first few attempts aren't ready for prime time.

The opportunities we want tomorrow are built by the effort we put in today.

Let's keep doing the reps, keep adding tools to our toolbox, keep showing up for each other, and keep building the confidence to say YES when those special moments come along. And let's enjoy the music we make and always be ready!



November Birthday Celebrations

Bob Yater – 11/23


A Stroll Down
HARMONY LANE
with
Saturday
November 14
GOLD RUSH
CHORUS
and multiple quartets!
6:00 p.m.
(doors open at 5:30)
TICKETS
$15 Adults $5 Students
American Legion Hall Post 119
4561 Greenstone Road
Placerville, CA 95667
president@goldrushchorus.org
or (530) 647-6513 to Venmo
Tickets purchased in advance can be
picked up at Will Call.
Barbershahhhhp
Afterglow at
Denny's, Cameron Park
3446 Coach Lane

Come Sing With Us This Holiday Season!

Love Christmas music? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to sing in an a cappella chorus?

The Stockton Portsmen welcome singers who enjoy music, friendship, and community. Come visit one of our Tuesday evening rehearsals, meet our members, and experience the fun of singing four-part harmony.

No audition required—just a love of singing!

Whether you're interested in joining us for the holidays or exploring something new for the coming year, we'd love to meet you.



Have You Ever Thought About Singing in a Quartet?

The 2027 Northern California Novice Quartet Contest is coming to Lodi on February 27!

This friendly competition is a wonderful opportunity to experience the excitement of quartet singing, build confidence, and make new musical friendships.

Find three friends, choose some music, and start singing together. You don't have to be an experienced competitor to participate—everyone starts somewhere!



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.

Now booking Holiday 2026 performances!

Whether you're planning a holiday party, tree lighting, community celebration, or seasonal gathering, reserve your date early while openings are still available.

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

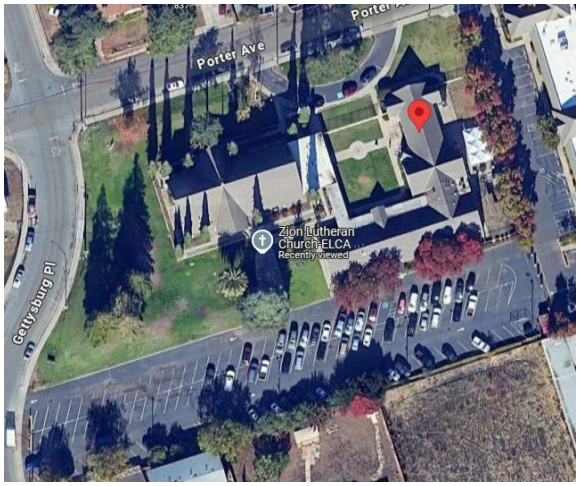
Tuesday Rehearsals:
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM Chorus Rehearsal (occasionally extending to 8:00 pm) Additional opportunities for quartet singing follow rehearsal, except on board meeting nights (3rd Tuesday of each month).

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

- 11/8 Marin Show @ 2:00 pm Click link for details
- **11/11 Stockton Rotary Club Veterans Day Program (Stockton Golf & Country Club)**
- 11/14 Gold Rush Chorus Show – A Stroll Down Harmony Lane @ 6pm
- **11/17 Chris Hébert Coaching Session**
- **12/5 Festival of Trees (Chorus) – 10am - 12pm (Micke Grove)**
- **12/6 Festival of Trees (VLQ) – 10am - 12pm (Micke Grove)**
- **12/12 Stockton Portsmen Holiday Show @ 2:30 pm**
- **12/15 North Stockton Rotary Club @ 12:30 pm**
- **12/18 Philomathean Club Performance**
- **12/20 Friends of the Fox – Movie "White Christmas" (Stockton, CA) (Sing in lobby 1:00pm - 1:30pm)** Click for more details
- **1/12 Stockton Portsmen Installation Dinner**
- *1/19 No Rehearsal (Dark for Zion Pops Rehearsal)**
- *1/26 No Rehearsal (Dark for Zion Pops Rehearsal)**
- **2/14 Singing Valentines (may include 2/13)**
- **2/27 2027 Northen California Novice Quartet Contest** Click for details
- **4/9-10 2027 Northen Divisions Convention (Visalia)**

** 1/19, 1/21, 1/26 & 1/28 – Zion Pops Choir Rehearsals, 6:30–9:00 PM*

** 1/29 – Zion Pops Concert, 7:30 PM (participants arrive at 6:00 PM)*

Zion Pops: The Stockton Portsmen will be dark the last two Tuesdays in January to give our members an opportunity to participate in the annual Zion Pops Choir and concert. It's a wonderful chance to sing alongside other local musicians, experience a different style of choral music and build connections within our musical community.

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/