



Fresh News

Volume 31, No.4

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2017



Our
President,
**Neil
Lantz**



FRESH Thoughts

THANKS to 2017 Convention Co-Chairs Hank and Sue Roysden and their committee for hosting another great FFS event.

KUDOS to the Freshmen (Group #25) - Bob, Stein, Tommy, and newest member Jon Gaines – for that wonderful sound.

APPRECIATION for retiring Chairman of the Board and new Emeritus member Tom Purvis (Perrysburg, OH).

CONGRATULATIONS to new Chairman Mel Meyers (Mulberry, FL) and Vice Chairman Gil Peterson (Winchester, OR).

WELCOME to new Board members Maurice Byrne (Hamilton, ON), Dan de la Torre (Reno, NV), Dave Mehl (Louisville, KY), and Barbara Meyers (Mulberry, FL.).

THANKS to re-elected Board members Dave Bentley (New Canaan, CT), Chaz Cone (Atlanta, GA), and Donna Gallaway Leipsic, OH).

APPRECIATION to all Society members who have made financial contributions to the FFS treasury in support of the Freshmen.

CONGRATULATIONS and THANKS to Larry and Janet Thompson, Co-Chairs for the 31st annual Convention celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Freshmen, to be held October 18-20, 2018 in South Bend, IN.

CONDOLENCES to Convention Jam Session regular Susan Skinner and family on the untimely passing of her husband John.

SPECIAL THOUGHTS for all hurricane and flood victims, volunteers, and emergency personnel in Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina.

SINCEREST GOOD WISHES to all FFS members for good health, happiness, continued support of the Society, and enjoyment of the legendary sound which we celebrate.

The Four Freshmen...On the Road!

Check the Website: fourfreshmensociety.com or fourfreshmen.com for updates

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Please note: Dates subject to change without notice.

December 1, 2017

Terre Haute, IN

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, Hatfield Hall, 5500 Wabash Ave.

Show time: 7:30p

Box Office: 812-877-8544

December 8, 2017

Rockport, MA

Shalin Liu Performance Center, 37 Main St.

Show time: 8:00p

December 10, 2017

Bradenton, FL

Neel Performing Arts Center, 5840 26th St. W

Show time: 2:00p

Box Office: 941-752-5390

December 11, 2017

Sun City Center, FL

Veterans Theater, 1900 Clubhouse Dr.

Show time: 7:30p

Box Office: 813-634-9229

December 15, 2017

Zanesville, OH

Seacrest Auditorium, 334 Shinnick St.

Showtime: 7:30p

Box Office: 740-688-0871

December 16, 2017

Hopkins, MN

Hopkins Center for the Arts, 1111 Main St.

Showtime: TBA

Box Office: 952-979-1111

December 17, 2017

Oakville, ON Canada

Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, 130 Navy St.

Show time: 3:00p

Box Office: 905-815-2021 / 888-4899-7784

2018

January 11, 2018

Clover, SC

Clover School District Auditorium, 1625 Highway 55 East

Show time: 8:00p

Tickets: 803-222-8018

January 28, 2018

Malibu, CA

Lisa Smith Wengler Center for the Arts - Smothers Theatre,

Pepperdine University, 24255 Pacific Coast Highway

Show time: 3:00p

Tickets: 310-506-4522

March 11, 2018

Cerritos, CA

Cerrito Center for the Performing Arts, Tribute to Glenn Miller and Tex Beneke
12700 Center Court Dr.

Show time: 3:00p

Tickets: 1-800-300-4345

March 13, 2018

Green Valley, AZ

Green Valley Recreation, 1070 S Calle De Las Casitas

Show time: 7:30p

Tickets: 520-625-0288

March 18, 2018

Palm Desert, CA

McCallum Theater, Tribute to Glenn Miller and Tex Beneke,
73000 Fred Waring Dr.

Show time: 3:00p

Tickets: 760-340-2787

April 11, 2018

Fort Lauderdale, FL

Broward Center for the Performing Arts, 201 SW 5th Ave.

Show time: TBA

Series Tickets on sale May 2017

April 15, 2018

Sarasota, FL

Glenridge Performing Arts Center, 7333 Scotland Way

Show time: 2:00p

Tickets: 941-552-5325

April 27, 2018

Greenville, TX

Greenville Municipal Auditorium, 2821 Washington St.

Show time: TBA

April 29, 2018

Ponca City, OK

Ponca Theater, 104 East Grand Ave.

Show time: 2:30p

Box Office: 580-304-5261

Series Membership Required

John Skinner

by Yas Ichiura

John Skinner, trumpeter and pilot, passed away in Dayton, OH

Almost 40 years ago, John and I met each other in Tokyo, introduced by our mutual friend from the US. We had a big common interest between us, as we were both jazz players, professional trumpet for him and amateur trombone for me, and coincidentally, we were the same age. We were both Four Freshmen fans, too. He often flew to Tokyo, as he was B747 pilot for Flying Tiger, later FedEx. So, he had two jobs, as professional trumpet player (as well as band leader) and pilot.



Every time he was in Tokyo, he called me to see if the amateur big band I belong to had rehearsals or gigs. He joined us many times and we had no problem playing together, even though he didn't speak Japanese and my fellow band members didn't speak English. You can be good friends and enjoy playing together, as music is an universal language, as you know well.

Early 90s, I started to attend the FFS Conventions and I tried to contact him in Carmichael, CA. I visited him twice, once by myself and another time with Michiko. John and his wife, Susan, treated us very well. We always had great time together. Of course, he was a fan of The Four Freshmen, but, not joined FFS at that time. I encourage him to attend FFS Conventions. About ten years ago John decided to come to FFS Convention by himself.

He very much enjoyed The Four Freshmen performances and talking with attendants from all over the world. That's why he brought his lovely wife, Susan, to next year's reunion and she became a big star, singing Route 66 on Thursday jam session. She became very popular since her first day in FFS Convention. I was so glad and proud that John and Susan kept attending, since then.

(continued on page 5)

Brief History of the Four Freshmen Fan Clubs and Newsletters

by Dot Lydic

As a young, enthusiastic Four Freshmen fan, I began in 1954 keeping scrapbooks of any Freshmen material I could find—photos, articles, newsletters, etc. As of 1965, when Harry and I were married, additional material has gone into a large box and is not very organized! Several people at the recent convention in Dayton (which was great, thanks to Hank and Sue Roysden!) asked me about my scrapbooks and encouraged me to dig into them again to find something of interest to share with *Fresh News* readers. I hope you find the following informative.

First Fan Club

Did you know that the first Four Freshmen Fan Club was called "The Freshies?" I started a chapter in Pittsburgh in 1954. Peggy Flanigan was the national fan club president, and Babs (Pleischl) Frederich was vice-president. Has anyone from the FFS been a member of this fan club? I know only of two: Babs Frederich (FFS board member Emeritus) and Greg Stegeman (loyal FF fan and former Freshman). Evidently, John Bangs was active in the "Freshies," as he signed Greg's membership card.



First Fan Newsletter

In 1957, Bill Wagner became the group's personal manager, and he reorganized the FF fan club. Babs Pleischl was appointed as national president, and Dot Matviya (me!) became the national vice-president. Bill launched the first-ever newsletter to connect the Four Freshmen with their adoring fans. The first issue didn't have a name, but Bill ran a contest to choose a suitable name for this publication. Issue #2 announced the name—

The Fifth Freshman.

Bill had written approximately 50 issues of this newsletter and, with the exception of a few, I still have all of them.

When Bill Wagner "retired" as personal manager in 1964, Ross Barbour took over as editor and continued mailing this valuable newsletter to FF fans. In July of 1977, Ross stepped down as a current Freshman, and Bob Flanigan continued to mail *The Fifth Freshman* to us for a couple more years.

(continued on page 5)



The Four Freshmen at the Dirty Dog Café

By Ellie Nosky
Photo by George Nosky

The Four Freshmen, Group 25, performed eight sellout shows at The Dirty Dog Café in Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan, July 19-22, 2017. This was their eighth consecutive year there. The Dirty Dog is a great venue for them. It's a lovely intimate place that makes connecting with the audience just perfect. It was a wonderful evening.

The Guys opened the concert with a great old song, *Let Me Love You*. Apparently this song has not been sung by the Freshmen for 60 plus years. They decided to revive it. A great decision! It's a beautiful song and they did it justice.

It felt good to hear so many of the old Freshmen songs along with a few newer ones. The Freshmen introduced seven new arrangements. A couple memorable ones were *Ain't Seen Nothing Like You*, *Basin Street Blues* and a Frank Sinatra standard, *Come Fly With Me*. The audience seemed to really love it.

They work hard to ensure their audience is aware of the group's history and their commitment to maintain the sound. There is NO doubt they are maintaining the sound. They paid homage to the original four, Don, Ross, Bob and Hal, by dedicating *It's a Blue World* to them.

We have heard many outstanding groups through the years. In my opinion, this group doesn't take a back seat to any of them. It's hard to believe they have only been together for seven months!



CONFESSION OF A FOUR FRESHMEN FAN

by Dave Mehl, FFS Louisville, KY

Since first hearing *It's a Blue World* on WBRN in Big Rapids, Michigan in 1952, I have been a HUGE Freshmen fan. Their intricate harmonies and styling set them apart from other groups, as all of the readers of "Fresh News" know only too well.

With that as background, here is my confession.

On July 20, 1956, a couple of young musician-buddies and I traveled 70 miles from Big Rapids to Fruitport, MI to hear Stan Kenton and his Orchestra. The Kenton band was, without a doubt, our very favorite big band.

They were playing a dance/concert at the Pavilion on Spring Lake. The Fruitport Pavilion hosted many great bands over the years. It burned in 1963.

We went stag and were envious of the guys who had lovely dance partners, all decked out in their finest. But the good news was that we could stand directly in front of the band with a foot on the riser. We did that for the entire performance.

I'll always remember the thrill I had watching Stan and the band a few feet away, and listening to their fantastic sounds. (Stan was wearing a French-cuff shirt with sleeves too long.)

The last song of the first set featured the trombone section, which included the gifted Bob Fitzpatrick and Carl Fontana. It was beautiful---clean, amazing chord changes and smoothly phrased---similar to the Four, you know who. I was extremely impressed.

As the band was leaving the stand, Stan Kenton and I met for the first and last time. We exchanged a few words and I thought I had praised him enthusiastically about the band. (continued on page 5)



Fan Clubs (continued from page 3)

How did we get to our current “fan club” and newsletter?

There was a lack of communication with the group in the early 80s. Thankfully, a devoted fan, Edd Townsend of Texas, who was interested in keeping the “Sound” alive, founded The Four Freshmen Appreciation Society (FFAS). Does anyone know the date he initiated the FFAS? I believe it was in the late 80s. I heard about the society in 1989 and immediately joined, receiving my first copy of *FRESH NEWS* (Vol 2, No. 1). It was described as “the bi-monthly newsletter-magazine of the Four Freshmen Appreciation Society.”



In May of 1990, John Bangs became the president of the FFAS, and the headquarters were moved to Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Under editor Chick Trafford, *Fresh News* continued. Around 1992, the society name was changed to “The Four Freshmen Society.” Chick continued to send out *Fresh News* until the year of his death, 2009. Chairman of the FFS Board, Tom Purvis, became the editor until the last half of 2012, when Barb Meyers, with the help of Donna Gallaway, took over the job. Barb has continued to this day as Editor of *Fresh News*. Thank you, Barb!

John Skinner (continued on page 5)

Since 1992, I have been to all FFS Conventions, except 2001, soon after 9/11, and this recent 2017 Convention in Dayton due to my slight health issue. John e-mailed me from Dayton asking why I wasn't there, and we promised to see each other at South Bend 2018. Soon after exchanging e-mails, I received a big and sad surprise that I couldn't understand immediately. John Skinner passed away on August 18th in Dayton while he and Susan were attending the convention. The only good thing was he didn't suffer, so I heard. Rest in peace, John.

FN OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2017

An astonishing event in OSLO, NORWAY

by Jørgen Bjørno

As hundreds of Freshmen fans hurried their way to Dayton, OH, in the days around August 15-16, Betty and I flew up to Oslo, Norway to see and hear Group 25 at the Oslo Jazz Festival. They performed in the old legendary and intimate theatre “Chat Noir”. Let's say our expectations were not high, and we did not believe we would experience the Four Freshmen live again – our first time being at the convention in San Antonio, TX two years ago. But frankly, from the very first tune on stage, we learned that Master Bob Ferreira, and his three younger friends had nailed the Four Freshmen sound so strong, so professional and loyal, that it is hard to describe. The new trumpet guy, Jon Gaines, fit so well with his second voice, playing different horns and acting humble, very much as I remember Ken Albers. Guitarist Stein Malvey delivered his speech in correct Norwegian to his more than 20 family members in the audience.

That was funny and delightful. All four of them were in the mood, and the response from the 550 fans in the little theatre was wild. I guess that it became a special evening for the group, too. They were really ready for the Dayton Convention two days after.



After 1½ hour show, we met in the lobby for talking and pictures. I am still glad we took the chance with this concert and got a rare experience. Subsequently, it is hard to state how this experience influenced us so strong and inexplicably on my ego and my feelings.

Now I begin to understand how this “sound” and this whole concept called The Four Freshmen, being around for more than 60 years, has planted deep roots in my brain and my soul. Frightening... More than I will acknowledge. I wonder if there are others in the society who have the same silly emotional obsession!

Fresh regards from Betty and Jørgen Bjørno, Denmark

CONFESSIONS (continued from page 4)

After the break, we were back in front of the bandstand, and every time Stan looked at me it was as if he wanted to kill me. If looks could kill, I would have been a goner. My buddies asked me what I said to him and I said “I don't know. I complimented him about his band.”

Years later, I bought the “Road Show” album with the Kenton band, June Christie and the 4F. And I got the answer to why he glared at me. I am the one who compared his band to the Four Freshmen. My phrasing obviously left something to be desired. To quote Stan, I asked him if he knew about the 4F, when he said he did, I replied “wild, the band sounds just like them.”

At first, I was embarrassed every time I heard him on various recordings introduce the Freshmen with that story. Now I get a kick out of it. I mean, I met the man for less than a minute and he talked about me for many years!

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Fresh News is published quarterly © 2017, all rights reserved, celebrating THE FOUR FRESHMEN, the best vocal/instrumental quartet in the world. Publication does not imply approval of FFS corporate directors or trustees. Each author is responsible for his/her article.

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3. July/Aug/Sept - June 15
4. Oct/Nov/Dec - Sept 15

Submit manuscripts to the Editor:

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The Four Freshmen Society Inc.

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Book is \$120 for orders outside US			

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The Four Freshmen Society, Inc.

In 1979, the Airmen of Note under the direction of Dave Steinmeyer had a concert at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. They had, as their guests, The Four Freshmen (group 6). That concert was preserved from the sound board by Dave Barnes. It was then cleaned up by Paul Halac. The result was a "new" CD of the Four Freshmen Live at Constitution Hall in 1979, backed by the Airmen of Note, the premier jazz ensemble of the U.S. Air Force. The Music Mart has embarked on a plan to find and release these rare recordings, particularly in years when there is no new CD from the Freshmen themselves. While the Society has done this in the past, we will now try to be more aggressive in this endeavor. We hope to have a "new" CD ready for each convention. We hope you enjoy this new material. Barbara Emerson

Subtotal

Shipping - \$1 per CD for US orders

\$4 per LP for US orders

Foreign Country: actual shipping costs for CDs and LPs, \$20 for "Now You Know" book

Total

(*) Available to Members Only

My Murphy's Law Convention

by Maurice Byrne

I flew out from Toronto airport on time with my Duty Free wine in hand. I arrived at LaGuardia on time and had a great flight. My drink of Bourbon was even free because the steward had forgotten me. Unfortunately, things were about to go downhill quickly.

My connecting flight to Dayton was delayed two hours giving me three and a half hours to kill at the LaGuardia airport. I decided to explore. I ordered a slice of pizza and a nine oz glass of wine for an exorbitant price, and when I looked in my wallet to pay I discovered I had lost my VISA. I went back to the terminal from my Toronto flight to double check in the Lost and Found but, alas, no luck. I figured I must have lost it on the flight, as I had pulled it out to pay for the Bourbon I ended up getting for free. I tried to call VISA on the airport pay phones but could not get them to work. Things escalated from here.

I somehow ended up taking a wrong turn and found myself having to go back through security again, where, tragically, my Duty Free was confiscated because Toronto airport had not used a sealed bag (so the bottle could have been tampered with). Then the shuttle was delayed 15 minutes and when I arrived at my boarding terminal I was informed that the flight was moved ahead ten minutes, they had boarded passengers, and the flight was now closed. Having been on the other side of the airport waiting for the late shuttle I had not heard the announcement. Interestingly, the monitor still showed the original boarding time, but they would not let me on. For my troubles, I was given four vouchers for cabs, food, and a hotel in Queens.

I arrived at the hotel at 10:30 pm and called VISA to cancel my card. The next morning I took a cab back to the airport to catch the 8:20 am flight to Dayton. I had a quick breakfast before the flight as I was having a blood sugar low. Boarded at 8:00 am. Unbeknownst to me, my wife, Mary, had called the Dayton hotel to make sure I

arrived safely and was told I never checked in. She and my three daughters were ready to start a search party. Then the LaGuardia Airport called my home to say my luggage had not been picked up. Panic ensued.

The plane took off on time at 8:40 am and I arrived in Dayton at 10:30 am, with my luggage waiting for me. Things were finally looking up. I called the hotel in Dayton to see if I could finally check in and was informed my family had been calling looking for me. It was recommended that I call home immediately.

The hotel also told me that they had no reservation on file for me, even though I had received a welcoming email from them a week earlier. Nonetheless, they had a room available for me on the first floor. Crisis averted.

When I arrived at the hotel for the convention I went to the Welcome Desk to meet the Society Committee and get all my goodies, minus my Four Freshman shirt, which was later remedied. I met all my old friends and some new ones and sang at the Jam Session Thursday night. Everyone asked for Mary and missed her this year.

But my Murphy's law adventure was not over quite yet. I got on the wrong tour on Friday, but I did have a great time at the Aviation Centre, so no harm done. I enjoyed it immensely and thought "things are starting to go right at last." Skipped the Wannabees because I was tired by now.

Friday's dinner was great. I sat with all (new to me members). The Freshmen were fantastic. Saturday was meetings all day, Wannabees, and dinner and show with the Freshmen again. Things were going great until my right hearing aid broke down so I only got half the Fresh sound (Mono), but mono is better than none!

After the dinner I went to the hotel's rooftop bar to relax, but got stuck on the elevator with Bill and Marty for 15 minutes until Kevin came and rescued us.

The next morning, Sunday, I had my first breakfast at the hotel and discovered it had been free the entire stay (Duh!). I said my goodbyes in the lobby and was shuttled to the airport. I was having a drink in the bar when I heard my name called by the airline staff. I was able to get on an earlier flight to Toronto via Philadelphia and arrived home to my loving, and very relieved, family two hours

earlier than planned. So Murphy's work was finally done. Can't wait for South Bend, Indiana next year, but I think I will go by rail.

Epilogue: A week or so later I was sent a Facebook message from a lovely nun from Brooklyn, NY. She had found my VISA card on the plane. She had called VISA to report it and cut it up as instructed. She searched my name on Facebook and found me to put my mind at ease. What a Godsend she is. We are now Facebook friends. I bought her a membership to the Four Freshman Society, as she loves to sing.



Wright State Students Introduced to The Four Freshmen

Vocal jazz students from Wright State University, brought in by the Four Freshmen Music Foundation, regaled the audience at the Dayton convention. Singing two Freshmen favorites, the students reported they love the harmonies and want to learn more of the Freshmen tunes!

Left to right, back row: Wright State Professor of Music Brody McDonald, Bob Ferreira, Stein Malvey, Jonathan Gaines;
Middle row: Rachel Watts, alto; Brandon Riegel, tenor; Connor Nienhaus, tenor; Sydneigh McDonnell, soprano;
Front: Tommy Boynton



Bob Ferreira Finds the Freshmen

by Bob Ferreira

As I sit here in Newport Beach I reflect on 25 years ago today when I moved to Vegas and officially became a member of The Four Freshmen. Good, bad, happy, sad, exciting, and frustrating - I look back on the last quarter century and all its memories with fondness, but cannot help but have those memories overshadowed by my excitement for the future of this great group. We are sounding better than ever and am so proud of these guys and our whole team of caring individuals without whom this group would not be able to continue. You all know who you are. To all the members who preceded me; to all the members with whom I had the privilege of performing I thank you and honor your contributions to The Four Freshmen with my continued commitment to this wonderful sound and tradition. 69 years and I don't see us quitting anytime soon. Cheers!



Wowing 'Em in Waynesboro!

by Trudy Feigum

Have you ever heard someone in the audience holler at a Freshmen gig, "We love you guys!"?

OK, maybe at a convention. It may have been me. But, this time the comment came out of the darkened theater after the opening numbers of the Four Freshmen in concert at Waynesboro, VA, September 16. Yes, I paid attention to the general direction from whence the kind words were shouted and put an FFS membership application in the fan's hands immediately after the show.

Having had the pleasure of working several Virginia gigs with the Freshmen over 17 years of FFS membership, this one struck me as gold. The audience was filled with almost all first timers. One young woman, when introduced to the Freshmen after the concert, commented, "I didn't even know you existed!" She left with a membership application, too.

Concert-goers were treated to a variety of Freshmen harmonies, some newer, but many older, loved favorites. No one left without having heard a tune they were still humming or singing aloud as they headed for the exit--quite a tribute when you think about it.

The Freshmen definitely "wowed" them in Waynesboro!



The Four Freshmen and Trudy Feigum, chairman, Four Freshmen Music Foundation and Virginia FFS State Representative.

2017 DAYTON CONVENTION

by Gil Peterson

Hank and Sue Roysden, along with their entire committee, did an outstanding job of orchestrating a very successful 2017 convention. Everything was extremely well planned and executed perfectly. I think they all deserve a standing ovation. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!!

The Freshmen were simply superb. The two concerts displayed their remarkable talents. The blend, the balance, the new material all contributed to two delightful evenings of music and memories. We all miss Curtis very much, but I have to say, Jon stepped up to the plate and hit one out of the park, both vocally and instrumentally. I think the group made an excellent choice by selecting Jon. Welcome, Jon to the Four Freshmen family. We are delighted to have you.



2018 SOUTH BEND CONVENTION

As most of you know, our 2018 convention will be held in South Bend, IN. Our Co-Chairs, Larry and Janet Thompson, are very excited about hosting the 2018 convention in South Bend, IN, October 18-20. 2018 will represent a significant milestone for the Freshmen: Their 70th anniversary! Can you believe that? That seems virtually impossible to me. Obviously, there will be some very special events to celebrate this memorable anniversary.

I strongly suggest you mark your calendar now for October and make your plans to attend. You do not want to miss this very special convention. I will see you there.

CELEBRATE 70 in South Bend, IN

The 2018 Four Freshmen Society Convention will be held in South Bend, Indiana at the DoubleTree Hotel. The DoubleTree, downtown on the beautiful St. Joseph River, is surrounded by great places to eat and drink. There will be tours of the Notre Dame campus and the Studebaker National Museum. Watch for registration details in the next issue of *FreshNews*.

The convention website will be up and running in late October. The convention rates are already in force at the hotel.



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