

FROSH SIZZLE IN OXNARD CA BARBOUR IS SHEER DELIGHT

by Jim Healey

On Nov. 6 this city tied a 100-year-old record with a 90 reading on the thermometer and The Four Freshmen were sizzling on the stage of the Performing Arts Center in front of 1200 old and new fans.

The boys, all dressed in black, sang 28 songs, seven from their "In Session" CD including the kickoff number "It's All Right With Me." Rumor had it that Bob Ferreira had a sore throat, but you sure couldn't tell. They did nine tunes from the "Required" List: *Day By Day*, *Route 66*, *The Day Isn't Long Enough*, *Day In Day Out*, *In This Whole Wide World*, *"How Can I Tell Her"* (written by the great Ray Evans who many of us met on the Jazz Cruise in 2003), *After You've Gone*, *Poincianna*, and a Five Freshmen rendition of *Day By Day* and *Blue World*. The applause after these two was thunderous...was that because the audience was responding to two of their all time favorite songs? No, it was Ross Barbour. This crowd of extremely mature adults were beguiled by a fellow senior citizen. On that stage Ross was the most popular guy in town. Had he stayed overnight for the elections tomorrow, he'd be the new mayor of Oxnard. Of course he flattered them all by saying they were the ones who had kept this group singing for 58 years. When he said "We need more ears like yours," they clapped loudly for their own ears.

Vince got applause every time he whistled, but it took them a while to recognize Curtis' fine horn playing. He did get nice recognition for his riffs on "Every Time We Say Goodbye" and that tripled after his great work on "There Will Never Be Another You." Curtis got some good laughs for his unorthodox salesmanship. Every so often he'd say something like: "Did I mention we had CD's out there?" or "This next song is on our DVD that's available" (his voice trailed off). Then in an outright plea for sympathy he sadly claimed he'd gotten only 38 cents from the last 5 CD's sold. It worked - judging from the brisk business being done by FFSers Jim and Edith Bennie at the break. Curtis may end up with enough for a large latte at Starbucks. Curtis, I want you to know that 75 of those dollars were mine.

One gentleman told me he'd last seen the group about 20 years ago in Ventura with the Count Basie Band. He joined our society tonight. We're the group that Curtis describes as "That distant family that you actually like."

Three things I hoped for tonight didn't happen. I wanted to hear them sing Acappella. I wanted to hear who wrote the songs, and I was sure that sometime during the show Bob Ferreira would walk up to Vince, put his two hands together, extend both index fingers, point to him and say "Deal or no deal?" Couldn't he pass for Howie Mandel's bigger brother?

My wife Elaine and I drove 621 miles round trip from Aptos where Vince used to live to celebrate my 70th birthday. This concert was my cake and Ross was the frosting.

Freshmen Fans Exchange

The following members are interested in helping others who may need to buy or sell Freshmen LP's, 45's, memorabilia, etc. Send a note or call. If you're looking to buy an album or more enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope to expedite communication.

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