

TAMPA TO SAN ANTONIO

by Gil Peterson

First, I think that all of our society members who attended the Tampa convention should put our hands together for a huge round of applause to Bob and Candi Sehrheinrich. They were faced with some unique and difficult problems that no one has had to deal with before. With their tenacious spirit and sincere dedication they were able to overcome each of the obstacles they faced and from opening to closing the convention rolled along like a well oiled machine.

The Thursday night jam session was very well organized and entertaining. The multi talented Dr. Rod Henley acted as the MC and kept every thing moving along smoothly. Thanks Dr. Henley, you are the best. A number of very talented society members performed for us with there talent and style.

One of the highlights of the evening was the performance of Bill Comstock with the able accompaniment of Dave Bentley. Memories like that will linger with you for a lifetime. Thanks Bill and Dave.

The Dan McMillion Big band added a very special touch to the Friday evening concert. If you close your eyes and let your mind wander back in the past, you might think you were once again hearing the visionary sounds of the fabulous Stan Kenton orchestra. It just doesn't get much better than that. The band also did a great job of backing the Freshmen Friday evening.

Group 23 was right on top of their game both Friday and Saturday evenings. I have thought about it a lot through the years, but have never really come up with an answer to what it is that has drawn us all to that magical sound that only the Freshmen have. Many groups have attempted to emulate them, but none have succeeded. I guess I will never know for sure, but I do know it will always be there. Once again Bob and Candi, thank you and your committee for a wonderful convention.

Now, as most of you know, the 2015 FFS convention will be held in San Antonio. We are very fortunate to have Geoff Comstock and Sarah Notzon to have taken on the responsibility of producing the convention. These are two very creative and bright young individuals who have some real surprises in mind for the convention. I know a few things that they have in mind, but I have been sworn to secrecy. Therefore, you will have to attend to find out.

As many of you know, San Antonio is well known as a tourist destination City. There is so much history surrounding the area. Also, it is a city that is served by most major airlines as well as other forms of transportation. Another plus is the fact that it happens to be the hometown of both Bill Comstock and Curtis Caldaron. When you add all of these things up, you will have to agree that this is one convention you definitely do not want to miss. I strongly suggest that you get your registrations in early to make sure you get the table you would like.

I will look forward to seeing you in San Antonio. It is going to be a blockbuster! Trust me!

Time for a Short Quiz

(continued from page 6.)

The answer to question #1 came from Ross Barbour in a 1971 newsletter called *The Fifth Freshman*. Ross wrote: "We have been issuing this newsletter for a long time, but most of you have joined us along the way and I've never explained the history of this 'Paltry Periodical.' In the beginning it was our way of keeping 'in touch' with relatives and close friends who had become too numerous to send separate letters. That was in 1958. Since then it has grown to 3,000 people who have nothing in common except they are un-common—'Freshman Fans.' We are the four who travel and each reader is the 5th who cares.

Most of the '5ths' are in North America, but we have people in iron curtain countries, Asia, Europe—just about any place you can think of we have a '5th Freshman' there.

We try to tell what's gone on and what's coming up, so if we've just done the first one-niter on the Moon, caught a pie in the face on T.V., planned a new album, or added amplified slide-whistles to the act, our readers know.

We've noticed that some people use our itinerary as a good excuse to leave the kids with a 'sitter' and bring 'mama' on a second honeymoon for a few days—to hold hands while the 'Freshmen' sing, and sleep late the next morning. They say it works wonders.

The answer to question #2 is easy. The four smiling faces are Ross, Ken Albers, Bob Flanigan, and Bill Comstock. In the pre-Four Freshmen Society era, their newsletter was actually called THE FIFTH FRESHMAN and their faces appeared in each mimeographed issue below the banner.

The answer to question #3 may or may not come as a surprise to many of you. Babs Pleischl and Dot Matviya were the prime movers of the first Freshman fan club, called the "Freshies." Babs and Dot have remained active in the nearly thirty years of the Four Freshmen Society and now hold the title of FFS Corporate Board of Directors Emeriti. I'm sure you know them as Babs Frederich and Dot Lydic. Check out their 1961 photo with the Freshmen on page 186 of the beautiful coffee table special edition of Ross Barbour's book "Now You Know the Story of the Four Freshmen," currently available in the Music Mart (pardon my shameless plug!).

Dick Sheldon is the answer to question #4. He was the first agent to represent the original Freshmen and the one to suggest that the guys play and sing at the same time. In a 1964 FIFTH FRESHMAN newsletter, Ross explained, "September 20, 1948, we opened at the '113 Club' in Fort Wayne, Indiana—our first professional job. We lasted a week and then went back into rehearsal. That first week we would play a song, and then we'd sing a song. Our booking agent heard us there, and urged us to play while we sang. 'If you can do that,' he said, 'I'll have you working some of the best night clubs in the middle west.' That was the goal he set for us...so we rehearsed. It's strange about 'goals'...before you reach one, you find you're reaching for a higher one."

How did you score? Did the answers bring back fond memories for many of you? I hope so, and I'm thankful that the 66 years of our favorite musical group has afforded us the opportunity to recall many of those memories, with more to come in the years ahead. Be sure to see the current guys whenever you can...they're holding the banner high.