

# Our President, **Neil Lantz**



## **LOOKING BACK... LOOKING AHEAD**

Happy New Year to the best vocal jazz fan club in the world! 2018 was a great year for the Four Freshmen Society, and 2019 promises to be even greater. Marking the 70<sup>th</sup> year of the Four Freshmen, Group #25 entertained thousands of fans in their 2018 concerts from coast to coast and their December appearances in Tokyo, Japan and Beijing, China. The Freshmen appearances for 2019 begin on January 12<sup>th</sup> at the Metropolis Performing Arts Center in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Be sure to keep up with their tour schedule included in each issue of Fresh News and on the Society website, [fourfreshmensociety.com](http://fourfreshmensociety.com).

A 2018 highlight was the 31<sup>st</sup> annual Society Convention held in South Bend last October. Under the leadership of Co-Chairs Larry and Janet Thompson, the event offered ample musical opportunity for attendees' participation and/or listening pleasure, including the FFS jam session, three days of Wannabee singing under the direction of Freshmen alum Greg Stegeman, and two wonderful concerts by the Freshmen. Tours of the Notre Dame campus and the Studebaker National Museum were included in the Friday schedule. And, of course, the opportunity to meet new Society members and renew friendships with others on this annual occasion is always a joy.

Relative to the chairmanship of our conventions, I'd like to salute the many FFS members who've stepped up over the past 31 years to chair or co-chair this annual event. Nearly four dozen members have volunteered their time and energy since the inaugural gathering was held in Las Vegas, September, 1988.

And this year, planning is well underway by Co-chairs Kathy Bazz and Nancy Driscoll for the 2019 event in Denver, September 5-7 at the DoubleTree by Hilton. Registration details are included in this edition, and I hope you'll plan to join hundreds of your fellow Freshmen fans in beautiful Colorado. Registration will be accepted beginning February 1<sup>st</sup>. Please remember that seating is arranged by postmarked date or online date (ON OR AFTER 2/1/19) of the last member of your party. Online registration opens Feb 1<sup>st</sup> at [ffs2019.com](http://ffs2019.com).

Still another significant FFS accomplishment in 2018 was the establishment of the Four Freshmen Society Facebook Group. Working with Bob, Stein, and Tommy, Jon Gaines proposed this important

undertaking and, upon approval by the FFS Board of Directors, agreed to manage its administration. Jon provides a monthly progress report, and the results have been very impressive. In the first six months, he reported that nearly 800 persons joined the new Facebook Group, "a great place for fans to tell their stories, share their favorite recordings, and talk about the Four Freshmen as well as other great music."

Of special importance is the number of newly interested Facebook members who have become paid members of the Society, averaging nearly ten each month. Given the growing interest in social media, kudos to Jon and the other Freshmen for their ideas, participation, and support in this effort. If you haven't yet joined the (free) FFS Facebook Group, I urge you to do so. I'm hopeful that our Facebook presence will continue to expand the visibility of the Society to fans who've enjoyed Freshmen music over the years as well as to introduce some younger fans to the group and to the FFS. Your participation is most appreciated.

*Best wishes for a great 2019, and I hope to see you in Denver.*

## **FROM SOUTH BEND TO DENVER**

by Gil Peterson

I think everyone who attended would agree that our South Bend 2018 Convention was extremely well-planned, exciting and beautifully executed. We, of course, owe all of that to Larry and Janet Thompson and their entire 2018 committee. We owe them all a huge round of applause! **THANK YOU!**

I believe you will also agree that our Thursday Night Jam Session was certainly one of the very best ever. Our masterful emcee, Dave Blackwell, not only demonstrated his remarkable musical skills, but directed the jam session perfectly. Thanks, Dave. What would we do without you? We also had a new participant by the name of Mark Schlichting who mesmerized us all with his jazz fiddle playing. He was truly one of the stars of the show. I hope we see him again in Denver.

Friday and Saturday evening dinners/concerts in the South Bend Century Center Discovery Ball Room were simply superb. Food, service, and sound were outstanding. The Truth in Jazz big band were about as good as it gets. I thought I might have heard a little Kenton, but perhaps I was wrong. Anyway, they were great. The Freshmen were right at the top of their game, as usual. You know by their sound that they all truly believe in the music and the iconic Freshmen sound. They were simply outstanding! The Saturday evening dedications to some of our members added a very special highlight to the evening. What lovely and thoughtful tributes from the Freshmen. Thanks, Group 25.

The Saturday night 70<sup>th</sup> Year Moment of Celebration was very special, especially to those of us who have followed them through the years. There is no other group that I am aware of that has continuously performed for seven decades. Lets go for seven more!

Clifton Boyd, one of the first recipients of a Four Freshmen Music Foundation grant, gave a very interesting and technical presentation. He is a distinguished music scholar at Yale University. We are very proud of him and wish him only the very best.

What a great convention. Now it is time to look forward to our 2019 Convention in Denver. Denver is a wonderful destination city with endless opportunities for visitors. Kathy Bazz and Nancy Driscoll, our Co-Chairs, have assembled an enthusiastic committee dedicated to delivering another blockbuster convention. You will be reading a lot about this in the Fresh News. Airlines from all over the world fly into Denver. Transportation from the airport to the hotel is very simple and inexpensive. I strongly suggest that you get your registrations in early, beginning February 1, 2019. I am certainly looking forward to seeing each of you and sharing another wonderful musical adventure together.

**SEE YOU THERE!**