

Our
President,
**Donna
Gallaway**



GREETINGS FFS MEMBERS & FRESHMEN FANS

A new year is unfolding as you read this issue of Fresh News, and we always tend to reflect on the past in some way as we turn the calendar. I can look back in my mind to the wonderful experience at Ft. Wayne as we celebrated seventy five years of the fabulous Four Freshmen in September. This group of four guys performed so well, we could have welcomed even more of their unique sound!

We are dedicating this issue of *Fresh News* to the current Freshmen who have faced some really tough times as musicians through the pandemic and yet continue to love what they do together. As I look back over the 33 years I have been a part of FFS, a few special memories pop up that I can share with you.

The first time I met Bob Ferreira was at a Senior Expo in Columbus, OH in 1992 where The Freshmen were performing. He seemed so young and cute, and he had lots of long hair! It was the beginning of his historic contribution to the group. Even then his enthusiasm was contagious.

FFS held a convention in Pennsylvania in 1997 where Bob approached me to see if I could find a convention shirt for his then girlfriend. I did, and Bob asked what he could do for me in return. I replied that if it would be possible to dedicate a song to my husband, Tom, in their show to celebrate our 30th wedding anniversary, that would be very nice. Bob caught us by surprise when he asked us to stand as the Freshmen sang *It Could Happen To You* in a large venue full of folks that night. That was special.

Over the past several years, it has been a pleasure to get to know Tommy, Jake and Ryan. Each one of these men have a very distinct personality and awesome talent. I look forward to many more opportunities to make memories with these four gifted guys as they continue to add to the legacy of the Four Freshmen we so love, respect and support.

**WISHING YOU ALL
A FRESH AND HAPPY 2024**

Through the Years

by Gil Peterson

The first time I ever heard the iconic sound of the Four Freshmen, I was thirteen years old living in Mississippi. I was a rare teenager who did not care for country or rock music at all. Country and rock were flooding the airwaves during those years and if you didn't like those sounds, you were simply out of luck. I was even then a huge fan of Kenton, Basie, Ellington and the big band sounds that were fading into history. I just happened to have my little radio on late one evening, tuned to some station in Chicago and I heard musical sounds that I had never heard before. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. After that experience, I would search each night to find that sound again. Several years passed before I actually found out about the Freshmen. They were becoming very popular during those years after my discovery. I obviously became a huge fan and followed their success through the years.

I moved to California after college and life threw me some very difficult curve balls and my life went into a tailspin for a number of years. During that time, music was changing and I lost contact with the Freshmen for quite a while and I even thought that the group was no longer performing. After getting my life back together again, I made a very wise decision to leave California and move to Oregon. It was one of the best decisions I ever made.

A friend in Oregon, who was also a Freshmen fan, advised me that there was an organization called the Four Freshmen Society that held annual conventions. I was delighted to know that the group was still together and performing. My first convention was in Bowling Green and if I am correct, that was in 2001. I have only missed one convention since then.

Knowing they were still performing, I decided to figure out a way to bring them to my community. Over the last twenty plus years, they have performed here at least a dozen times.

I have had a very close personal relationship with all the various members through the years and especially Group 27. Perhaps my most favorite memory of their many performances here was a couple of years ago when they performed on the lower deck at my residence overlooking the North Umpqua River. I could not help but think about that thirteen year-old lad back in Mississippi who was fascinated by that unbelievable sound, could never ever have imagined that one day, that very same sound, would be drifting out over the North Umpqua River from the lower deck of his own home. That is simply remarkable!

Group 27 performed flawlessly at our 2023 convention in Fort Wayne. Frankly, I have never heard them sound better. I know realistically, Fort Wayne could very well be our last convention. There are ideas floating around that could possibly provide an opportunity where we could once again, share the sounds we love and see each other again. I am very hopeful that will happen. In the meantime, keep good positive thoughts and remember all the wonderful times we have shared through the years.

Editor's Note:

I hope you all enjoy this issue. These Four Freshmen are wonderful and deserve our accolades. For all of our members who have not been able to attend the last two Conventions, this will be your chance to get to know them.

Mel and I have been members for about 30 years. The first Convention we attended was the 50th celebration. Over the years we've gotten to know most all of them. We love these guys and what they bring to the Four Freshmen sound. — Barb Meyers