

Choosing Battles

Or How to Kill Time While Ordering Coffee

by Stein Malvey

We all know that in life, one must choose one's battles. For me, this comes into sharp focus when a barista asks for a name to go with my coffee order. My name isn't English, and as a result, I am often forced to repeat my name several times, often to a person who responds with English names that begin with "St," in the form of a question-- "Stan?" "Steve?," "Sting?" etc. This is usually followed by me spelling my name, pronouncing it yet again, and possibly giving an oral history of its origin. Nine times out of ten, my name ends up misspelled on the cup, and absolutely mispronounced by the barista. When all I want is coffee, this whole rigmarole is, shall we say, less than appealing. (For the record, it's pronounced "stain," but it isn't spelled that way. Feel free to call a friend right now and let them know. I'll wait.)

Anywho, back to coffee. To be honest, if it's likely I'll be in a particular coffee shop only one time in my life, I really don't want to put in much effort. This waning of my enthusiasm was the genesis of a game I used to play with Brian Eichenberger. When ordering coffee and prompted for a name, I would make up any English name I could think of on the spot. Larry, Daryl, Tony, Duke, Ralph, Zeke-- anything. All fair game.

When my drink arrived, Brian would take a picture of me holding the cup up to my face. After a while,

I had a somewhat large collection of these photos. The photos have gone missing, but their ridiculous legacy lives on, in my brain place.

One curious, and possibly telling, trait I have noticed is that a lot of people can not spell common names correctly. So many times, the seemingly common name I provided was mangled on the side of the cup. Perhaps there are many variants of English names with which I'm unfamiliar. I've never met someone named "Pet," but maybe that person is out there, somewhere. Maybe one day I'll meet him, and ask what became of the "e." Alas, that poor vowel is probably lost to the ages. Perhaps the more likely reality is that many people can't spell well, don't listen, are in a hurry, are tuned out, or some combination of all of those things. This is more than enough justification for me to continue my game. Who does it hurt? Not me, I feel great.

Wishing you all the best this holiday season (just covering bases in case you don't hear from me for a while.)



Social Media Efforts

By Jon Gaines

Hello Four Freshmen superfans! This is the new guy talking, and if we haven't yet, I hope we'll meet soon down the road! We've been working over the last few months to increase our presence on social media to reach new fans and younger audiences. People my age are always glued to their phones, so they might as well be looking at us! To that end, I wanted to share some ways that you can help us do just that.

Facebook, and other social media sites, have an algorithm that determines what you see in your news feed, as well as how many people see any given post of ours. Posts that get a lot of engagement (likes, comments, and shares) get shown to more people, and vice versa. So with that in mind, here are three simple ways that you can help us make a bigger impact online and make sure that you see all the fun things we're sharing:



1. Click "See First" on our Facebook profile

Under the current algorithm, less than 10% of our followers have a chance to see when we post. Which means the other 90% won't even know it happened. To avoid this, go to our profile page, click on the "Following" button under the cover photo at the top of the page, and then click "see first" from the drop down menu that shows up. This will put our posts at the top of your timeline, and ensure that you'll see more of them.

2. Share posts that you enjoy!

If we post a photo or video or show announcement that's relevant to you and your friends, share it! Not only will your online friends and family get to enjoy it, but Facebook will see that people find the post interesting, and will show it to more of our fans. Liking and commenting on the post helps too!

3. Share your photos from our shows!

A lot of our fans enjoy taking pictures to remember a fun show, or getting a photo with the guys in the lobby after. We love seeing those photos, so share them online, and tag us @thefourfreshmen. We'll see that you tagged us, and maybe your friends will click through to our page to see what this "Four Freshmen" thing is all about. After all, you looked like you were having a great time!

I'll be the first to admit that social media can be complicated and kind of strange, but it's also a crucial part of continuing the Four Freshmen legacy in 2018 and beyond. And if you're not on social media, that's great too, there are plenty of other ways to help the group! But also, where else will you see photos like this?

Thanks for reading, I hope to see you all soon, in person or online!