

Our
President,
**Donna
Gallaway**



GREETINGS FFS MEMBERS

I hope you all have had the opportunity to seek out, schedule and receive the COVID 19 vaccine as we continue to navigate this pandemic. Who knew we would still be dealing with this thing more than a year after the initial shock hit us! We can find it easy to complain about how it has changed our lives, but have we really stopped to think about how deeply it has so affected musicians and all of those whose lives are tied to the performing arts? These folks have had their livelihood snatched from them with little indication when they may return to the stages of the venues across this country. Yes, this includes our very own beloved Four Freshmen! We can only hope and pray that they will be able to "hit the road" once again very soon and return to the life of live performances we all are craving to see and hear.

On another note, the survey that was recently sent to all members, either by email or by postcard, was an attempt to determine the viability of a 2021 convention in September in the state of Washington. It takes a great deal of planning and a financial commitment to make one of these events happen, and we did not want to put the FFS treasury in jeopardy by moving forward not knowing if we would have enough members coming. Gil Peterson, Chairman of Convention Planning Committee, Neil Lantz, past president and member of Gil's committee and myself decided to invest in a survey to assist in our decision regarding a convention for 2021. Unfortunately, we did not receive the number of positive responses we needed to proceed with planning for September this year. Therefore, there will be no convention in 2021 which is the second consecutive year without one; very sad indeed! We regret having to do that as these conventions/reunions are such an important part of FFS as we gather to share our love for and with the Four Freshmen and their music.

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CONVENTION vs. COVID

by Gil Peterson

Greetings to everyone.

I would like to give you a brief history of recent events related to our annual FFS Conventions. As most of you recall, our original plan for the 2021 FFS convention was planned for June of 2021 in Bay City, Michigan. The registration forms and other information were in the January issue of the Fresh News. Many of you returned your registration forms and were making plans to attend. Due to the COVID-19 virus, the FFS Board of Directors, after much discussion, made the decision to postpone the 2021 convention in hopes of acquiring a desirable future date. Jim Williams, our Bay City Chairman, approached the hotel in hopes of finding a viable future date. Unfortunately, there were no suitable dates available until late October. Michigan weather that time of year is very unpredictable and could cause serious travel problem for our members. So, once again, a decision was made to postpone the Bay City Convention.

During the Bay City planning, we were in contact with Mark Schlichting in Bellingham, Washington as a possible site for a 2022 convention. Mark was very enthusiastic and agreed to seek out a hotel in his area that would meet our needs. The Four Points Sheraton was selected and a Letter of Intent was signed. Mark did a masterful job of not only locating a hotel, but booking several very exciting tours and other interesting events for the convention.

When the decision was made to once again postpone the Bay City Convention, we approached Mark with the possibility of having the Bellingham Convention in 2021 instead of 2022. The Sheraton agreed and the dates of September 16, 17 and 18, 2021 were selected. The weather in Washington that time of year is generally incredibly beautiful. Everything seemed to be moving forward for a 2021 FFS convention. However, we still faced numerous unknowns related to the vaccines, the virus, and travel restrictions. The only way to find out was to poll our membership with a survey which you all received by e-mail or postcard.

I truly regret to inform you that the results of the survey were very discouraging. We did not get the positive responses envisioned. Under those circumstances, to move forward with plans for a Bellingham Convention could spell financial disaster for the FFS. Therefore, a decision was made to postpone/cancel the Bellingham convention. We still have hopes to hold a future convention in Bellingham. Mark has done a remarkable job and I feel sure we can have a very successful convention there in the future.

After all that, believe it or not, I do have some very good news. I am delighted to tell you that Jim Williams has informed us that everything is still in place for a Bay City Convention in June of 2022. Obviously, all the information concerning the Bay City Convention will be forthcoming at the appropriate time in the future.

I am hopeful that you are all safe and healthy and I look forward to seeing you once again in Bay City, Michigan in June of 2022.

Best fresh wishes to all.