



APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2024

The End of an Era



HMEN SOCIETY

























Our President, **Donna Gallaway**



GREETINGS FFS MEMBERS & FRESHMEN FANS

I am writing this column as we are under a tornado warning in northwest Ohio. Oh the many twists and turns of the weather here when Spring is approaching! The promise of Spring always is hope and new life as we enjoy the flowers popping up and blooming trees.

Our Four Freshmen Society is embarking on a new season of experiencing togetherness around performances by The Freshmen. We are calling them Gatherings, and you can find more details about them in this issue and the next one, so do check it out.

The *Fresh News* has always been the glue that keeps FFS members connected and up to speed on what is happening with The Freshmen. This issue we are going back to look at former events we call conventions or reunions. I have some special memories of so many of these over the 33 years I have been part of them starting in 1991 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. John Bangs was celebrating a wedding anniversary with The Freshmen as entertainment and a chicken dinner at the American Legion - the first of many such events that Tom and I enjoyed and learned to know as reunions/ conventions for Freshmen fans. We were hooked after meeting so many like-minded fans of this great music and spending time getting to know The Freshmen.



A Sentimental Journey Thru the Years

by Marlene Lobsiger

"Gonna take a sentimental journey. Gonna set my heart at ease. Gonna take a sentimental journey to renew old memories" and that is the reason why over 200 Four Freshmen Society members journeyed to the 34th annual Four Freshmen Society's Convention in Fort Wayne, Indiana, September, 2023.

How did these conventions come about? It was 1988 when Edd Townsend founded what was originally known as the Four Freshmen Appreciation Society. At a meeting with Bob Flanigan, Autie Goodman, Mike Beisner and Kirk Marcy in Fort Worth, Texas where the Freshmen were performing, Edd presented his idea to the Four. Bob Flanigan liked the idea and said "Okay Townsend...Let's do it." Thus the Society as well as the *Fresh News* newsletter was born and officially launched January 1, 1988. Many fans were anxious and excited to become members of the group. In later years the name Four Freshmen Appreciation Society was changed to The Four Freshmen Society.

Conventions have been held annually in various cities throughout the United States bringing members together from more than 40 states throughout the USA as well as from other countries outside the US. i.e. Denmark, Japan, Norway, Canada, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and others totaling 462 FFS members from outside the USA.

By attending FFS conventions hundreds of folks have helped support The Four Freshmen and made lasting friendships with one another and with the Freshmen themselves; now in their 76th year. Had it not been for the love of the Freshmen, their unique sound as well as those who have dedicated themselves in leadership roles as president, secretary, treasurer and the many volunteers who have spent hours keeping records and producing conventions, we may never have had the opportunity to hold the FFS convention in its final 34th year, as we have known conventions to be, or to have celebrated the 75th anniversary with a toast to The Four Freshmen.

The first line in Ecclesiates 3:1, "For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven, a time to weep and a time to love." FFS annual conventions will not be held as we have known them to be for the past 34 years. However, we have developed a plan in order to continue meeting with friends and fans before and after Four Freshmen concerts in your area, referred to as "The Gatherings." Now, isn't that *fresh news*, and isn't that great news?

PLEASE VISIT <u>TheFourFreshmenSociety.com</u> web site, click on "The Gatherings" to learn how we can continue to meet by keeping lasting friendships and love of The Freshmen alive.

My husband, Tom, was an obsessed collector of all things on vinyl related to The Four Freshmen. I still have that huge collection after he passed away unexpectedly in 2007. The Portland, Oregon convention that year was my first without him, but FFS folks were so kind and like family. They have been supportive ever since as I continued to serve as secretary of FFS for many years.

I have always looked forward to renewing those cherished friendships each year at conventions or FF shows on the road, and I hope we have found a way to continue to make that happen. I will be checking it out at the Tiffin, Ohio show in April.

Remember, Spring brings new, FRESH life!

Conventions Through the Years

by Christian Rank, FFS Historian

One day in late 1990 or early 1991, I was in the store browsing through CDs looking to build my library of music on the then still new format, when I stumbled upon The Four Freshmen Capitol Collectors Series. Wow, here are the Freshmen's greatest hits in CD form! Naturally I bought it and couldn't wait to get home and listen to it. After reading the very informative liner

notes, which filled in a few historical gaps for me, I saw an address for the Four Freshmen Appreciation Society. Wow, the Freshmen actually have a fan club! Of course I inquired and eventually joined. To my absolute delight, I found out they actually have an annual convention! Well that lead me to attending my first convention in Oshkosh, Wisconsin in the summer of 1991.

Over the next 30 plus years, these conventions have spanned Groups 17 through 27 while celebrating all the groups before them. They

have taken me to 13 states through the midwest, south, east and western United States. Through these conventions I have gotten to know some wonderful people and make many friends, including most of the Freshmen!



A Memory From My First Convention in Oshkosh, WI, July, 1991:

After getting settled in I wandered into the hotel lobby not knowing or having met any FFAS members yet. I notice a tall gentleman had just checked in, maybe he's a member so I approach him and ask if he's a member of the FFAS, he replies: "Yes, I'm Palle Christensen from Denmark." And I thought I traveled far for this! Wow! Anyway Palle continues: "I think there's a few members in the bar, I'll join you shortly. Nice meeting you. See you shortly." So I wander over to the bar, grab a seat and order a beer. I notice a couple gentlemen conversing at the other end of

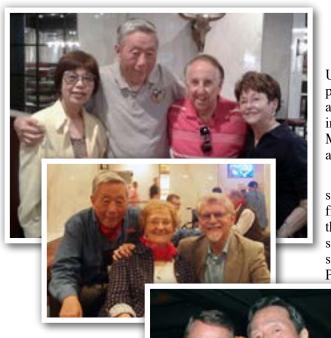
the bar, maybe these are the members Palle was referring to, so I walk over and ask if they belong to the Four Freshmen Appreciation Society and one

of them turns around and replies: "Yes, I'm Ross Barbour, please to meet you." And the other says "And I'm John Bangs. Pleased to meet you." Then I went numb!

They invited me to join them for a drink. I'm sitting at a bar next to Ross Barbour! Pinch me! So the first three Four Freshmen Society members I met in person were Palle Christensen, Ross Barbour and John Bangs in that order. Three people who played a vital role in the history of the Freshmen and the Society. And that was the start of 30 plus years of attending conventions!







So Many Conventions - So Many Friends!

by Yas Ichiura, FFS Japan rep

I was born in 1945 and first heard The Four Freshmen in 1963 through US Millitary radio station FEN in Japan. I went to my first Freshmen live performance in 1964 in Tokyo. Bob Flanigan gave me FFAS (at that time) application form in 1989 and my first attendance to a FFS Convention was in 1992. I have been to most of the Conventions since then, mostly with Michiko. It was my 27th Convention in Fort Wayne in September last year and 23rd for Michiko, and hope it won't be the last one.

It has always made me very happy and honorable to listen to their great sound and talk to them in person at each Convention. However, making friends and keeping long-time friendships with many fans just like me among the fans from all over the world, is something special to me. It may be the same for everybody. Michiko and I have been so lucky to be invited into some of our friend's homes on the way to the Conventions. We stayed with Paul and Kris Halac seven times, however, they visited us only once in Tokyo - so far.

Michiko and I wouldn't have attended so many Conventions without having such nice friends from all over the world. Therefore, I would like to thank all the Freshmen throughout history, not only for the great harmonies that made our lives happier, but also providing us the opportunity to get know each other in the FF Society.

Footnote from the editor: Yas inherited Bob Flanigan's trombone. Yas has also taken many photos throughout the years. He says he has 130,000 photos in his library.







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1. Jan/Feb/March - Dec 01 2. Apr/May/June - March 15 3. July/Aug/Sept - June 15 4. Oct/Nov/Dec - Sept 15

Submit manuscripts to the Editor:

Barb Meyers, bam241136@gmail.com, Cell 419-309-7855









The Four Freshmen **Excel on March 9**

by Dave Mehl

The Four Freshmen excelled at a concert on March 9 in New Albany, Indiana. They entertained an extremely receptive audience of over 450, most of whom had not heard the guys before. The audience was truly impressed and were buzzing afterward.

Of the 20 or so times I have heard the guys live, I enjoyed them more than ever this time.

Everything clicked....the incredible and exacting vocal harmony and balance, the meticulous phrasing, the solos, the energy of the group and the fun!

Ryan's lead singing was extremely impressive -smooth, sure and accurate. He nailed it.

Tommy's guitar playing was sensitive, impeccable and an integral part of the overall effect. He is an unusually gifted musician.

Jake's mastery of the trumpet was displayed on his first solo on Day In, Day Out and throughout the evening. He blended his virtuosic and energetic jazz trumpet chops with several slower, beautiful, melodic interpretations. The impact was powerful.

Bob was Bob. Excellent presence, drummer, MC, and full of humor. The audience loved him!

The guys sang a variety of Freshmen oldies and a mixture of several of their newer tunes, 23 in all, ending with a beautiful encore of What a Wonderful World.

Diane and I took four others including two of our grandchildren, boys aged 21 and 16. Both are musicians. They were very impressed with the guys and really enjoyed the show. The younger said his favorite player was Bob because of his mastery of the drums.

All in all it was a wonderful concert. Although we will sorely miss our Conventions, we still can enjoy The Four Freshmen and each other in regional events.

Til We Meet Again.



FN APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2024

The Four Freshmen...On the Road!

Check the Website: fourfreshmensociety.com or fourfreshmen.com for updates

For bookings: International Ventures Incorporated

Dina Sheets-Roth

P.O. Box 2749, Wenatchee, WA 98807

Phone: 661-259-4500 Email: ivimanagement@me.com

Please note: Dates subject to change without notice.

Please be sure to keep up with the status of concerts at fourfreshmensociety.com

2024

April 12 Tiffin, OH

The Ritz Theatre, 30 S Washington St

Show time: 7:30p Tickets: 419-448-8544

Hastings, MI

TAC Jazz Festival - Hastings Performing Arts Center, 520 W South St Tickets: TBA Show time: 7:30p

July 16 San Diego, CA

Saville Theatre, 14th St & C Street

Show time: 7:30p Tickets: 619-388-3301

October 11-12 Lvnden. WA

Lynden Music Festival

Tickets: TBA Show times: TBA







TOLEDO 2011 by Barb Meyers

The problem is we're getting older no one wants to run a convention anymore. When I had mine in Toledo I started two years ahead of time. Mel and I lived that for two years. We were 13 years younger. I will say though,

we loved it. It was in 2011 and I didn't take the job of Fresh News editor until after that. The accolades we received were wonderful. Great hotel, great food and wonderful music. If I were 10 years younger, I would try it again. I'm sad because 30 years ago I thought this would never end.

Our first convention was the one that celebrated the 50th anniversary. When Mel and I walked out to the patio we encountered these two Mel snapped this photo and said, "Seeing these two tells me this is where I want to be."





Item	Cost	QTY Total	ī	
5 Trombones/5Trumpets	\$15.00		1	
50 Years Fresh	\$15.00		Please use "Return Address" label	when available - Thanks
Culmination - Greg Stegeman (*)	\$15.00		Charles and the second	
Faux Freshmen - Scratchin' the Surface	\$10.00		1	
Faux Freshmen - Seasons of the Heart	\$10,00		Name:	
Faux Freshmen - Unsung	\$15.00		155,7841.3	
Four Freshmen (Jazz Factory)	\$15.00		Street:	
Four Freshmen and Friends	\$15.00			
Four Freshmen and June Christy on the BBC	\$15.00		City, State:	
Four Freshmen Live in Stockholm (*)(CD & DVD)	\$15.00		Only, State.	
Four Freshmen in Japan (CD)(*)	\$15.00		Zip Code:	
Four Freshmen in Japan (DVD)(*)	\$15.00		Lip code.	
Four Freshmen with the Emmet Cohen Trio group 27	\$18.00	_	Phone Number: ()	
Fresh	\$15.00	_	Priorie Number: (
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Freshmen Year/Voices in Latin	- CONTRACTOR CONTRACTO	_	Email:	
Market Ma	\$15.00	_	t	
Golden Anniversary	\$15.00	- 1	Name on Card:	
Graduation Day	\$15.00	_	-	
In Session	\$15.00		Credit Card Number:	
Live at Butler	\$15.00	- 1	4	
Live at Clearwater	\$15.00	_	·	
Live at Constitution Hall 1979 (*)	\$15.00			
Live at Penn State (*)	\$15.00		CONTRACTOR OF	
Live at the Franklin	\$15.00		Expiration Date:/	
Live from Vegas CD	\$15.00		1,	
Live from Vegas DVD	\$15.00			
Live from Vegas (DVD & CD)	\$25.00		Pre-owned CDs (\$4 each includes s	hipping)
Live in Holland	\$15.00		Through the Years	
Live in the New Millenium	\$15.00		Live in the New Millemium	
Live Trombones	\$15.00		Live at Constitution Hall (2)	
Lost Soul - Curtis Calderon	\$15.00		Graduation Day (3)	
Love Songs	\$15.00		Fresh (2)	Faux Freshmen
More 5 Trombones/In Person Vol. 2	\$15.00		Return to Romance	Unsung
Remembering Ken (*)	\$15.00		Remebering Ken	Scratchin' the Surface (2
Return to Romance/Live in Manchester (*)	\$15.00		Voice in Love (2)	Season of the Heart
Road Shows	\$15.00		The Liberty Years	
Road to Portsmouth (*)	\$15.00		Voices in Latin	Ray Brown
Snowfall	\$15.00		Still Fresh	Southern Comfort
Stars in Our Eyes/The Swingers	\$15.00		Greatest Hits	Thank You Very Large
Star Spangled Banner (up to 10 per order)	Free	- 1	Live at Butler	
Still Fresh	\$15.00		1	
The Liberty Years	\$15.00		New LP's - Friends \$20, others \$15	
The Swingers/ 4 Freshmen-5 Trumpets	\$15.00		Four Freshmen and Friends	
Through the Years (*)	\$15.00		Fresh Freshmen and Friends	
Voices in Brass/In Person Vol. 1	\$15.00		The Freshmen Year	
Rod Henley's Jazzmin Vocal Band	\$10.00		I ne Presimen Year	
			+	
"Now You Know" (Leather Bound Book)(\$120 non US) Subtotal Shipping - \$1 per CD for US orders (CD/DVD Combo is \$ \$4 per LP for US orders Foreign Country: actual shipping costs for CDs	\$100.00		1	
Total		_	(*) Available to Members Only	

What are FFS Gatherings?

by Chaz Cone

Since the inevitable decline in our FFS membership has made annual conventions financially nonviable, we've come up with a plan where FreshFans (whether or not members of the FFS) can still gather to enjoy the music of The Four Freshmen and see their friends.

As The Freshmen perform around the country, we want to help increase ticket sales to make venues even more eager to book the guys. So we're helping to arrange what we call "Gatherings" coincident with Freshmen concerts. How it all works can be reviewed on the Four Freshmen Society website (fourfreshmensociety.com).

Here it is in a nutshell:

- Book tickets to a nearby Freshmen concert.
- Sign up for a Gathering held at a nearby hotel/ restaurant/other venue.
- Get together there for a meet-and-greet with other FreshFans and perhaps sometimes with the Freshmen themselves.

That's all there is to it. We get to visit with one another and hear the guys, keeping our community and our support for The Four Freshmen going.

When you sign up for a Gathering on the FFS website (there's no cost), we'll keep you informed of other attendees. You contact each other to set up the Gathering and then just show up.

When you click the "FFS Gatherings" button on the FFS website, you'll get the chance to choose which concert(s) you plan to attend. As you "talk/text/email" among yourselves in the weeks before the Gathering, you'll work out the plan for when/where it will be, whether there will be refreshments and so forth.

Even if you just think you'll be able to attend one or more, sign up and we'll keep you in the loop.

Would you like to know who has already signed up for a Gathering? The <u>Gatherings page</u> on the FFS website will tell you!

To see if there is a concert nearby (check often): Go to the "<u>Tour Schedule</u>" on the FFS website.

Enjoy The Four Freshmen and your FreshFan friends!

Sammy Sightings in the Old Wild West

by Kathy Feese as recounted by Sue Barbour

The Four Freshmen had taken the leap to move to California. It was the wild west in the 1950s. The Four Freshmen had a night off and decided to see the show at a swanky club called "Ciro's" in Hollywood, starring the incomparable Sammy Davis Jr. Someone must have tipped off the star that The Four Freshmen were in the crowd, because he came around to their table after the show to meet the guys. He invited them to come to his home in the Hollywood Hills where he was throwing a little party.

As they arrived at Sammy's house, they found a typical Hollywood party. People had been pouring into the place at an alarming rate. The crowd was growing and beginning to get a bit out of hand. As the crowd grew, Sammy went to a room upstairs with the voices from downstairs wafting up to his loft. Sammy stepped out onto the landing of the loft with a holster with two guns on his hips. He looked down on the sea



of noisy people in his living room. He drew the guns, held them in the air and yelled; "All right... Everybody who wasn't invited, GET OUTTA HERE!"

Things quieted down as the crowd thinned out. The invited guests enjoyed the more intimate evening getting to know each other and Sammy showed off his gun twirling skills and 'quick draw' techniques.

Ross was captivated by Sammy's western hardware and gun skills. He had an affinity for all things "old west," He was crazy about western movies and TV shows; the hats, the boots, the guns... Inspired, at least in part, by Sammy Davis Jr., Ross collected his own replica western style gun and holster and even bought himself a suede shirt with fringe along the chest, like the shirts John Wayne used to wear in his movies. Of course, he got cowboy boots and a white hat, too. He even learned to twirl and draw the gun. While there were few occasions for him to wear his garb in his daily 'southern California' life, it all made for swell Halloween wear through the years.

Later, in the summer of 1963, the Freshmen and their wives were in Las Vegas for a wedding. Bob and Mary Flanigan had just gotten married at a popular Vegas wedding chapel. After the ceremony, the whole gang was up in their hotel room at The Sands Hotel, celebrating. Their room was just one floor above Sammy Davis Junior's room. He was booked there in the "big room." Sammy happened to be out on his balcony with his kids as Sue stepped out onto the balcony above. He yelled up; "Hey! Who is celebrating what up there?" Sue looked down, "Hey, guys, look who's out here!" The Freshmen came out to say hello and Sammy invited them all to come to his show that night. Of course, they were delighted and quickly accepted.

When they arrived at the showroom, they saw there was a long table set up for eight just at the foot of the stage. Sammy did not disappoint anyone! He put on an amazing show. He even announced that The Four Freshmen were in the audience and had them all stand for applause. They all stood up at their seats. That is, all except for Bob Flanigan. Somehow, he and his new bride, Mary, never made it to the showroom. Sammy realized there were only three Freshmen standing.

"Hmm," he said, "I guess the newlyweds must have found something better to do tonight!"







The 76th Anniversary is "à la carte" in Lynden, Washington

by Mark Schlichting

A new, unique, "Gathering Event" for 2024 is set for October 9-13 in Lynden, Washington, and it will be in conjunction with The Lynden Music Festival, which is celebrating its 15th Anniversary! The festival will "headline" our boys with two banquet concerts on Friday and Saturday nights, a student jazz vocal workshop on Thursday afternoon, and many other music events. Google: Four Freshmen "This October," listen, and get inspired to come!

Lynden, Washington is in the "Fourth Corner" of both the State of Washington and of the contiguous United States! It is famous for its spell-binding beauty, with the historic Blaine Peace Arch and the Canadian Cascades to the North, majestic Mt. Baker to the East, the breathtaking San Juan Islands to the West, and many dairies and luscious berry fields to the South. Lynden is 15 miles north of Bellingham (you can fly directly into BLI and shuttle north), and 5 miles south of the Canadian border; a particularly welcoming venue for our many West Coast Freshmen Fans!

A correction to the article entitled "WARM" in the previous FRESH NEWS of January, 2024:

The Four Freshmen sang *The Star Spangled Banner* at the Veteran's National Memorial Shrine in Fort Wayne, not at a dedication at Purdue University. At that event, Curtis did indeed "fill-in" for the ailing Tommy, who had been diagnosed with COVID two days earlier. But Curtis' attendance at the convention had been planned in advance and sponsored by Linda and Greg Harrison, who covered his expenses.

Mark Schlichting

"Gatherings" Start in Bonita Springs, FLA

by Linda Harrison

For The Four Freshmen, the day of March 15 started with a 5:40 a.m. flight to the west coast of Florida and ended with a stellar performance at 2:00 p.m. and again at 7:30 p.m. The venue was the extraordinary First Presbyterian Church in Bonita Springs (1500 seat auditorium), the Florida church of George and Ellie Nosky and formerly of Jack and Mary Morrison.

As always, the guys were on top of their game and had an exceptional bassist from the Florida Gulf Coast University accompany them. Those of us who have followed the Freshmen over the years are familiar with most of the tunes they performed, but it is always

a pleasure to be reminded of their unique harmonies and rhythms. Jake was given opportunities to exhibit his particular talents with the trumpet and flugelhorn.

The audience (mostly in the 70-80 age group) was particularly appreciative of the songs made famous by early Freshmen groups, and they expressed their delight with extended applause.

From Florida, the guys move on to Tiffin, Ohio, where a small "*Gathering*" of fans is expected to enjoy a meal and conversation with them prior to the performance at the Ritz Theater.



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