

Fresh News

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Our
President,
**Donna
Gallaway**



GREETINGS FFS MEMBERS & FRESHMEN FANS

As I write this column just a few days after a wonderful weekend in Nashville, I am still hearing those unique Freshmen harmonies in my head. It was so great to reconnect with our society members and with the Freshmen again after what seemed like a really long time. The hotel was absolutely lovely from the well-appointed rooms to the many open spaces. The rooftop area was especially well designed for gathering or just relaxing in the open air seating.

Linda Harrison and Mark Schlichting deserve high praise for organizing this event which I know takes a great deal of time, work and energy. They did a great job in every aspect of this scaled back convention-like gathering by keeping the favorite Fresh Talk and Jam Session along with two fabulous concerts by the Freshmen. The two buffet lunches were indeed robust as advertised, and the food was excellent.

I was excited to meet the newest member of the Freshmen, Chris Peters again having met him in Bay City, Michigan as a member of the Bean Tones. He is such an energetic and exuberant addition to the group, and he can really sing and play that bass! Amazing how many charts he has learned in such a short time! He has definitely found his place in the group and seems comfortable performing with the seasoned Freshmen.

It was a treat to have Ryan Howe back with us again and to hear him sing in the Jam Session and with the Freshmen on a few songs. We still love you Ryan, and thank you for coming to Nashville! The one hundred or so Fresh Fans who were fortunate to be part of this gathering were happy to see and hear you again.

The FFS Board of Directors had an opportunity to meet on Saturday morning, and we had a

TOGETHER AGAIN in Nashville

By Gil Peterson

The Nashville reunion was nothing less than a smashing success! Linda Harrison, Mark Schlichting and crew deserve a standing ovation. We were all totally impressed with the entire event from start to finish. Every phase of the event went flawlessly. I know first hand that events like this are very involved and difficult to organize and orchestrate. Without question, they did a masterful job from start to finish. This reunion served as a perfect vehicle to renew friendships and make new memories that will linger on through the years. We are all hopeful that another reunion like this will happen in the very near future.

Many of us had not had the opportunity to hear Group 28 with Chris Peters singing the lead. I personally was very impressed with the cohesiveness of the group and overall iconic "Freshmen" sound that has entertained audiences since 1948. No other group in the history of the music industry can come even close to challenging that record. Both performances, Friday and Saturday, were superb. Welcome to our family, Chris. We all love you!

Speaking of lead singers, I was delighted to see Ryan Howe looking so well and singing so great. It was such a pleasure and we extend our very best wishes to you always. You will always be a part of our "Freshmen" family.

I am hopeful that you all had a safe trip home and I truly hope that "We'll be together again".

Best fresh wishes.

productive meeting. We are looking for ways to cut costs or increase our revenue or both, as our big conventions were our largest sources of income, and it is no longer feasible to undertake something of that nature anymore. However, it would be nice to have another scaled back event like Nashville!

To do even that, we would need some funding, so FFS is open to receiving donations. We have no paid staff; we all serve as volunteers. So if you are looking for something good to do with part of your tax refund, send a check to FFS!! We are not tax deductible, but we love to be out there being the best fans of the best vocal group anywhere on the planet!



Until Next Time...

By Linda Harrison

They came to Nashville from 22 states to gather with other fans and enjoy The Four Freshmen. Ohio, Nevada, Texas, Wisconsin, California, Indiana, Missouri, Tennessee, Connecticut, Florida, Oregon, Maryland, South Carolina, Delaware, Washington, Colorado, Minnesota, Georgia, Kentucky, Arizona, Virginia, and Illinois were all represented at the Hilton BNA Nashville Airport Terminal over the weekend of March 6-7, 2026. And what a gathering it was – more like a “love fest” with folks who hadn’t seen each other for 2½ years and topped off with two incredible Four Freshmen concerts!

- Everyone got a goodie bag created by Mark Schlichting including a:
 - o Four Freshmen real paper fan
 - o Plastic Four Freshmen cup that sparkled with the addition of liquid.
 - o FourFreshmen.com pen with stylus.
 - o Customized mini notebook.
 - o Chocolates wrapped with photos of the guys.
 - o Updated playbill including the new member, Chris Peters.

• Ryan Howe, lead singer for Group 27, joined the group on Saturday night for *When You’re Smiling, Poinciana*, and *The Day Isn’t Long Enough* as well as performing during the Friday Jam Session. He also happily sang *Freshmen Fans* to the tune of *Young at Heart*, with lyrics that had been composed by Kathy Feese, daughter of Ross and Sue Barbour.

• The Barbour family was well represented by Kathy, Gary Barbour, Kent Barbour, Suzanne Bongiorno, and Nancy and Greg Lewis.

• A welcome letter received at hotel check-in provided links to videos from Sue Barbour, Marlene Lobsiger, Dave Blackwell and Yas Ichiura, who were unable to attend.

• One 92-year-old fan, Richard Myer from Cincinnati, who had not flown for over 10 years, was so happy to be there that he brought some collages he had made to donate to the Four Freshmen Society.

• The Jam Session was truly a “jam” -- the performers had not played with the backup trio or each other before the event. Mark provided printed lyrics so everyone could participate in the Singalong, as well full sheet music for the more complicated *Route 66*.

• A limited number of auction items was available for bidding, including Gil Peterson’s album, *Our Last Goodbye*, won by Dina Roth

(FF Manager) and the Don Barbour Album, *Here’s the Solo Voice of Don Barbour* won by Chris Peters.

• Overheard from an audience member following the Fresh Talk: “That was one of the better ones!” And several attendees said how much they liked the smaller, more intimate gathering. The hotel front desk personnel said many people talked about how much they enjoyed the weekend when they checked out. The hotel evening staff even hung around the ballroom entrances to enjoy the music.

• Chaz Cone was the unsung hero of the event – keeping track of the attendees list, creating the name badges and offering advice. And Christian Rank was always



ready to serve wherever he was needed.

• The crowning touch came Saturday night when the guys performed two Encore tunes: first was *Route 66*, which everyone loves, and the audience, which was already a bit emotional, was waiting for *Blue World* as the final number. Instead, they performed *What a Wonderful World*, and there were only a few dry eyes!



Apparently, we all got what we came for: pleasant environment, good food, good people and great music. You can’t get any better than that!

The Four Freshmen and the Gillespie's

By Elaine & Gary Gillespie, M.D.

I was introduced to the Freshmen, Group #3, circa 1960 by a high school friend who later was selected by the University of Michigan Men's Glee Club, and honored to sing with the Friars, a select group from the Glee Club which added some humor to their a capella vocals. My background was in instrumental music, and I was a member of the University of Michigan Marching Band. We had the good fortune to hear Don and Ross Barbour; their cousin, Bob Flanigan; and Ken Albers who I felt, as a relatively less-talented trumpet player myself, was underrated in his abilities. The group performed in Hill Auditorium on campus. Built in 1923, it still maintains ideal acoustics, and was a perfect venue for #3. I later acquired a composite of their Capitol label recordings.

My wife and I, over the years, have seen one group of the Four Freshmen in Elkhart, IN at that city's Jazz Festival, as well as more recent iterations in various places in Michigan, and have never been disappointed in the quality of the well-preserved 'Freshmen Sound', which helps explain its 78 years of success. However, #3 is my sentimental favorite, and Ross Barbour's chronicle, *And Now You Know*, preserves the joys and challenges of the early years of a group which has successfully transcended Rock and Roll, a British Invasion, Rap and Hip-Hop....

We have a number of memories associated with the 1960 Four Freshmen concert, as well as the present realization of how quickly time passes: something I was advised of by one of my patients shortly after beginning medical practice in 1976 while in my 30s.

It was a wonderful and rewarding 25 years and, after retirement, I pulled my trumpet out of 'mothballs' and played with a number of local groups for 15 years, including a brass quintet. However, we could only lay claim to playing an occasional chart of the Canadian Brass, while not quite matching their level of finesse and musicianship!

Making music may be even more satisfying than listening.

A New Generation of Freshmen Fan

By Andrew Rivera ("GoDreamerGoVideos" on YouTube)

Hello everyone — my name is Andrew, and at 34 going on 35, I may be one of the younger members of the Four Freshmen Society.

I first discovered the Freshmen years ago through the Beach Boys. In my twenties, I learned that songs like *Graduation Day* and *Their Hearts Were Full of Spring* were originally by The Four Freshmen — not the Beach Boys — and I immediately bought their Capitol Collector Series album. I listened to it casually for years, always struck by how timeless the music felt. But it wasn't until recently, after hearing the Bean Tones perform their wonderful Freshmen covers, that I revisited that collection — and that's when everything truly clicked. What had once been casual appreciation turned into a deep interest in their sound, history, and artistry.

Music has always been a big part of my life. I grew up in a musical family — my father had a deep love of vocal harmonies, which definitely rubbed off on me. I sang in church choirs as a kid and again in college, where I also took voice lessons and studied a bit of opera and musical theatre. Later on, I sang in a few pop-rock bands, but no matter what kind of music I performed, I always gravitated toward harmonies. They've always felt like the heart of the song to me.

After years of singing simpler music, I found myself craving something richer and more challenging. That's when The Four Freshmen came back into the picture. I was drawn not only to their sound, but to the idea of The Four Freshmen as an institution — a group that has kept evolving for decades while still maintaining the same musical identity.

Soon I was researching all of the different lineups, studying who sang which parts, and listening for what made each group unique. I've spent more hours than I'd like to admit scouring YouTube for old concert footage (maybe we've even crossed paths in the comments — I go by "GoDreamerGoVideos" there). I've also started recording myself singing all four parts to a few songs just for fun — mostly to better understand how those harmonies fit together. Coming from a church and pop background, it's been a whole new learning experience to tackle jazz chords, but an incredibly rewarding one.

On top of the Bean Tones, I was also inspired by the International Four Freshmen led by Angelo Giambra. Angelo was kind enough to share his transcription of *Lil' Darlin'* with me — and I've been hooked ever since. Finding accurate charts for some of the lesser-known songs can be tricky, but that's part of the adventure.

Because I'm on the younger side, I don't have many people around me who know the Freshmen's music, so when I discovered the Four Freshmen Society, I joined right away. I posted on the forums soon after joining and was blown away by the warm welcome — so thank you to everyone who reached out with kind words and stories. It's clear that this community carries just as much harmony as the music itself.

I'm eager to keep learning more — about the music, the history, and the incredible people who have kept The Freshmen legacy alive all these years. If anyone has interesting stories, trivia, or memories to share, please don't hesitate to reach out. I was out of the country during the Tennessee event this year, but I hope to meet many of you at the next one.

Until then, I'll keep listening, learning, and singing along — one chord at a time.

“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

--Eleanor Roosevelt

Article by Armand Demille

What’s it like to attend a Four Freshmen convention for the first time? I attended the convention the weekend of March 7th in Nashville, Tennessee and found out.

I don’t know if the conventions are always held at such “high end” locations as the Nashville Airport Hilton, but the accommodations were first class - beautiful rooms, plus a delicious variety of food at the daily luncheon buffets.

The first event was a “Fresh Talk” Q&A with the members of the band, and a few offspring of previous members. A lot of the questions were focused on the newest member of the band, Chris Peters, including questions about how he came to be hired, and how he prepared for his complex new role as lead singer and bass player, and questions about his musical background. Another interesting question had to do with what the members do when they’re not touring and performing. Bob Ferreira, the drummer, who’s been with the band the longest, lent an air of gravitas to the conversation, and was able to provide some historical perspective to answering some of the questions. An interesting question was posed about other bands who have acknowledged being influenced by The Four Freshmen, and whether the band had considered including songs by some of those groups, like The Beach Boys and The Four Seasons, in their repertoire. The answer was that the Freshmen are dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of the band, and that singing songs by other “copiers” would lead to them being perceived as a “variety band” or a “tribute band”, and they prefer to be true to the tradition of their historical predecessors.

The weekend included two performances by the group, one Friday night and one Saturday, both totally different. As a new listener, many of the songs were unfamiliar

to me, but I recognized such classics as *Graduation Day*, *Stardust* and *Candy*. There is no backing band - the four singers each play an instrument; Chris Peters on bass, Tommy Boynton on guitar, Bob Ferreira on drums, and Jake Baldwin on trumpet and flugelhorn. The vocal harmonies were rich and complex, and the instrumental performances were masterful. Each song was a mini-masterpiece. About half way through the show, Bob came out from behind his drums, and the four of them gathered around a couple of mics and sang together. An interesting aspect of that part of the show was that Bob used brushes to play rhythms on a metal music stand. It was a great sound, and perfectly suited to the ballads they sang in that part of the show.

I mentioned earlier that as a new listener, I was unfamiliar with many of the tunes that make up The Four Freshmen repertoire, but that certainly wasn’t the case with the group that gathered Saturday afternoon for a “jam session” and singalong. It was reminiscent of a church congregation singing familiar songs from a traditional hymnal. They sang enthusiastically and confidently, as if the songs were as familiar to them as *Happy Birthday*. The guest musicians performed some instrumental numbers, and there were several guest singers, including a “surprise” appearance by former member Ryan Howe.

What struck me most during the whole weekend was the “family vibe” of everyone there, with both the band members and the attendees. Everyone I spoke to was friendly and pleasant, everyone was polite, and most had interesting stories to tell of previous conventions and performances, and greeted each other with warm embraces like old friends. To sum up, you won’t find a more welcoming, fun-loving group of music lovers than Four Freshmen fans!



Behind the Scenes with Chaz Cone

By Linda Harrison

Everyone knows his name, but few know how much and how long he has supported The Four Freshmen behind the scenes. Chaz Cone has been managing the Four Freshmen Society (FFS) website since 2000. He is also the Membership Chairman, which means he manages the member database and encourages new members and renewals (as well as attendee lists and badges for conventions).

He first encountered Group #3 (Bob Flanigan, Don Barbour, Ross Barbour and Ken Albers) at Georgia Tech, where he was a college freshman in the spring of 1958 and was smitten from the beginning. As part of an all-school celebration with invited bands, the Freshmen were playing on the back of a flat-bed truck in a basketball arena parking lot, and he walked up to them and was fascinated by what he heard. He hung around during the concert and went out right away to buy the *Voices in Modern* LP. His passion for their music continues to this day.

Chaz grew up in Arkansas, where his father had a wholesale liquor business. One day when Chaz was 14, his father installed a new IBM system and Chaz was enthralled. From that day on, Chaz was determined to work only for IBM when he graduated from college. For a brief moment after graduation, his plans were sidetracked as his application was rejected. He had only interviewed for one company – IBM – and he says, “Here I am – 21 years old – dedicated and committed to working for IBM and they don’t want me. So I wrote a letter to the branch manager and told them they were making a big mistake. This official had never had someone challenge the results before, so he offered me an aptitude test -- which I knocked the top off -- and I worked for IBM for 22 years!”



After Chaz left IBM, he started his own software company for 13 years. After he sold it in 1998, he was free to perform pro bono work. In addition to The Four Freshmen Society, he handles the membership and database for The Four Freshmen Music Foundation, his Corvette club with 300 members, and a ham radio group with 300 members. He supports them with databases, dues reminders, follow-ups and all the behind-the-scenes activities that he does for the FFS. He goes on, “Occasionally, I will do a website for young businesses just getting started and I don’t charge them.”

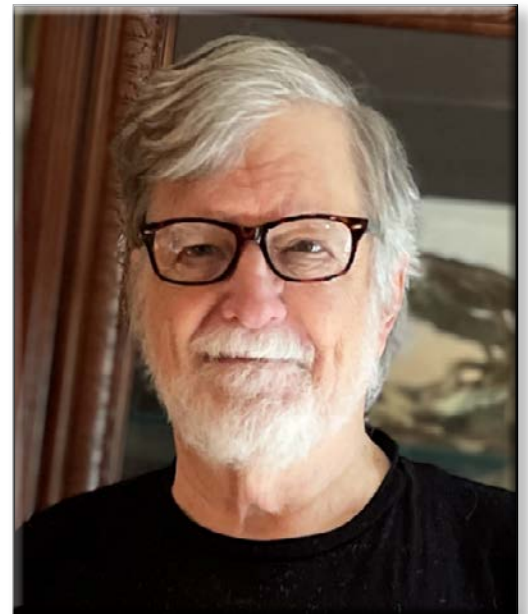
While working for IBM, he was moved around a bit (Greenville, SC, Tampa, Boca Raton) but always wanted to come back to Atlanta. At one point he was sent to Manhattan to help IBM compete with RCA. What started out as a 6-week position ended with 14 months in a Holiday Inn. But he feels he didn’t take advantage of what New York had to offer while he was there.

During this stay, he was invited to participate in a friend’s wedding in Baltimore. He was at the Newark airport looking for the shuttle to Baltimore, when he asked a “cute girl” for directions. Chaz and the cute girl (Gael) have now been married 59½ years (60 in November). Chaz says, “With 90 seconds in either direction, we might not have met.”

The couple has one daughter and two grandsons; both grandsons were present at the Nashville gathering.

Chaz and Gael produced the 2009 Four Freshmen Convention in Atlanta. Prior to the event, they invited the Freshmen for a home-cooked meal. While they were sitting around, Brian (Eichenberger) started singing and the rest joined in, resulting in an hour’s impromptu concert at the dinner table.

Chaz says, “I think having a commitment to support the Freshmen is a result of getting to know the players. Once you are friends with them, it’s not just entertainment.”



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The Four Freshmen...On the Road!

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Please note: Dates subject to change without notice.

2026

October 9

Amelia Island, FL

Les DeMerle Amelia Island Jazz Festival Courtyard Springhill Suites
Lighthouse Ballroom
Show time: 7:00p Tickets: TBA

October 22

Fort Myers, FL

Tribby Arts Center, 17281 On Par Blvd
Show time: 7:00p Tickets: Go to this website
<https://ci.ovationtix.com/35796/production/1264163?performanceId=11757134>

December 1

Minneapolis, MN

Crooners Supper Club, 6161 Highway 65 NE
Show time: 7:00pm Tickets: 763-760-0062

December 6

Oakley, KS

Venue TBA
Show time: 3:00pm Tickets: TBA

December 13

Newport Beach, CA

Campus Ja, 3950 Campus Dr
Show time: TBA Tickets: TBA

2027

February 3

Green Valley, AZ

Community Performance & Art Center, 1250 W. Continental Rd
Show times: 3:00p and 7:00pm Tickets: TBA

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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:

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