

NOTES FROM OUR PRESIDENT

FFS began to accept credit card payments in early April and this added service seems to be serving us very well. Initial use was with our MUSIC MART adding a convenience for our members purchases, followed by a considerable number of convention registrations. As of this writing we had not yet received a dues payment by credit card. We accept VISA, MASTERCARD and AMERICAN EXPRESS.

We recently passed the 200 mark for 2003 convention registrations. I hope that you had yours submitted before the fee increase which was effective June 10th. The registration fee is now \$175.00, still a pretty good bargain for three days of great fun and food and friendships. Send yours in soon, if you have been tentative...get the registration form included in this issue!

FFS member Bob Solheim has provided to FFS, by way of Ross Barbour, another recorded treasure. Bob purchased an aged reel-to-reel tape of a Freshmen concert from November 16, 1974. FFS member Paul Halac worked some electronic magic and we now have an excellent recording of Group Five, live in concert. This double content CD is being made available through our Music Mart for the exclusive enjoyment of our membership. In the event you cannot immediately identify Group 5, it included Bob Flanigan, Ross Barbour, Kenny Albers and a very young, and somewhat new member, Ray Brown. Ray's rendition of "Rainy Day" is excellent, better than the Mount Freshmore version, at least in my view. There are 22 cuts and a complete listing is included on the front page of this issue. BUY IT....YOU'LL LIKE IT or so says Ross!

Did you happen to see recently the newest trend in music sales? It seems that the sales of CD's has been in a three year slide, so some artists are entering into arrangements with wireless carriers for the use of their music on phones in place of ringers or for use on musical screen savers. Check out NokiaRingtone.org. Number 4 in popularity is the theme from Jackass, the movie. Just how badly out of touch can we be?

We have no expressed interest in the 2004 convention beyond the very good proposal from Grand Rapids, Michigan, chaired by Jack Morrison. Details are still being finalized, but it seems assured that we will be reveling in Grand Rapids in July 2004. Complete details will be provided in a future issue of Fresh News.

Work has been completed on a short promo video for the Freshmen and copies have been provided to their management group. FFS has acquired a few copies which we can send to prospective venues or provide to members for such use. This effort was solely by our Chairman, Dave Bentley, and he should be commended for his efforts. This is the first good, professional promo item that the Freshmen management has had available for some time.

Have you checked out our very much improved web site - www.fourfreshmen.com? Chaz Cone and Curtis Calderon worked together to change the appearance and the character of the site to more properly reflect the purpose as a tool to promote the Freshmen. The new-look site has been up since April and I have received many good comments about the changes. Everything is still there, just a bit different and very much improved in initial appearance.

I personally have received only two negative comments on the change in the number of issues of Fresh News. Both seemed to just miss the contact and itinerary information. The change was made, essentially eliminating one issue to reduce costs, but content was also often an issue. It was just very difficult for our Fresh News staff to come up with enough worthwhile material to fill 20 pages. We didn't want to go to comics or advertising just to fill space. The result of the savings has provided us with the ability to rush out limited special editions, when important, such as we did in June to alert members to a major appearance venue that was very important to the performing Four Freshmen! We do realize that about 75% of our membership relies upon the print version of Fresh News for their "fix" on things Freshmen and we take this need seriously. And I do appreciate your input on all matters pertaining to FFS. Let me hear from you...

I have had several suggestions that we again establish a "Concert Line" where members can phone to keep up to date on appearances. The Freshmen did have such a service some years ago, probably in someone's home, and I have no idea just how valuable it may have been. Introducing this type of service would require the installation of a separate telephone line, with an answering device and the dedication of someone to regularly record the current information, typically only about one month of schedule and no details of specifics such as phone numbers, costs, etc. It seems to me that this type of information is generally available now, however there does often develop an appearance that falls between issues of Fresh News. We will try to include this subject in our agenda at our annual meetings in Orlando. Please plan to attend.