

FF Conventions

An Historical Summary

by Dave Barnes

Our FFS conventions began informally. There was a big party in Las Vegas, Sept. 1988, to celebrate the FF 40th anniversary. Many FFAS members attended. I believe the first planned FFS meeting took place in Toledo, OH, in Sept. 1989. John Bangs rounded up 16 members for a dinner and discussion weekend at the Hillcrest Hotel - the first "Mid-American convention." Also, in Aug. 1989 Palle Christensen hosted a dozen Eurofans in Copenhagen. They all went to a Manhattan Transfer show! Phil Hogan hosted a New York state party for over 100 fans on Labor Day in Camillus, NY. Any tapes left, Phil?

In June 1990 about 50 fans attended convention #2 in Springfield OH. The FF appeared in concert at a nearby venue. Convention #3 can be called the first serious event built around an FF show. John Bangs organized a 3-day meeting for 200 fans in Oshkosh WI in July 1991. Number 4 was held in Columbus OH in July 1992. Some 130 fans saw the debut of Kevin Stout & Bob Ferreira as Flanigan & Autie Goodman retired. A band from Columbus played behind the new lineup as they sang a few numbers. In July 1993 a big group of 300 filled The Holiday Inn in Columbus IN as we went back to our musical roots. Ross led two or more SRO bus tours of the area, including the A&W root beer stand.

In July 1994 about 260 of us returned to Oshkosh. In a rare moment of audience participation, Mike Beisner asked Rein de Graaf to come on stage. Rein played the piano interlude in Bob Ferreira's solo, "Green Dolphin Street." Also from the stage, Ross took pictures of the audience!

In July 1995 convention #7 found us in Huron OH on Lake Erie. 300 fans enjoyed the Sawmill Creek resort, hosted by future FFS Presidents Ted Driscoll & Tom Purvis. Ray & Flan performed their fairly highly rated piano nose duet on "La Cumparsita." There was some trouble with phrasing & intonation.

In June 1996 a large group of 360 met in Lincolnshire, IL, north of Chicago. We enjoyed The Arbors in concert as a prelude. Brian Eichenberger made his debut on "Angel Eyes" in the hot & humid outdoor tent. We were told to make no noise after 10 PM! Chicago? Convention #9 in July 1997 took us to Sharon, PA, home of The Vocal Group Hall of Fame. About 425 fans were treated to serious warmups by a pair of shows by The Lettermen.

Convention #10 was a smash hit in Las Vegas in Sept. as we celebrated the 50th anniversary of The FF. Over 800 fans enjoyed an exceptional hotel and varied entertainment. Our heroic hosts were Ted Sitterley & Doug Caister, who organized a complex affair. There were 15 guests from Norway!

In July 1999 John Bangs asked us back to Oshkosh. 300 fans saw the debut of The Faux Freshmen and Bob Ferreira became addicted to Wisconsin cheese curds. In Sept. 2000 we went to Colorado Springs, CO. About 400 guests savored The FF, Sue

Raney, a great big band, and Pike's Peak. Host Dan Gornell and his crew offered a bonus as a post-convention jazz festival was held Sunday in a town near Pike's Peak. The FF wished some of their ballads could go a little faster as oxygen was in demand at an altitude of 7 or 8,000 feet.

In Oct. 2001 Doug & Jeanne Robertson brought about 400 fans to Bowling Green KY at convention #13. One of the events was held in the Chevrolet Corvette Museum. Alas, plans to give each FF a new "Vette" were never finalized. A welcome innovation appeared to meet our attendees' growing needs. An excellent hotel staff put up two huge projection screens in the hall. The FF appeared bigger than life...as always. In Aug. 2002 Dave Barnes & Lorraine Dellinger invited FFS fans to Reston VA. About 400 people were surprised to meet mystery guests, Jane Withers Errair, Ken Errair II, and Ken III, young Cody. One night the Uptown Vocal Jazz Quartet opened for The FF, who then gave us a world class show.

We went to Orlando FL in Sept. 2003 where Ray & Lisa Brown presented the best musical entertainment in our long series: two fine FF shows, Dan McMillion's big band, Ray & Lisa in person, a great piano trio, and a number of exceptional FFS performers. Don't forget Greg's new CD "Culmination." Music was in the air.

We will meet again in Grand Rapids MI July 29, 2004. Jack Morrison and team offer "More Love" for our FFS family.

WISCONSIN LIBRARY SYSTEM HAS NEW "HOLLAND" CD

by Michael McCoy, FFS Wisconsin Rep

The new Freshmen CD "The Four Freshmen Live in Holland" is now available for loan through the multi-county South Central Wisconsin Library system, which includes Madison, home of the state capital.

The library system also has the Freshmen's two previous CD's, "Live in the New Millennium" and "Still Fresh," available for borrowing through any library in the network. All three CD's were donated by a fan, and often are checked out.

The only other Freshmen CD available through the system is the 1991 "Capitol Collectors Series" CD. It's owned by the Columbus, Wis., public library. Columbus is located about 25 miles northeast of Madison.

Most libraries will acknowledge in writing to donors any gift CD's they receive, allowing donors to claim a tax deduction for their purchase price.