

MUNCIE - FIRST LEG OF FRESH INDIANA TOUR

Donna Gallaway, FFS Sec., Ohio

The Hoosier state of Indiana provided us with nice weather for a drive to Muncie for the April 28th Freshmen concert on the campus of Ball State University. Hearing David Letterman comment on his days as a student at Ball State on late night TV, we were curious to see what the campus was like. We found it to be quite beautiful with outstanding landscaping and an impressive bell tower.

The Emmons Auditorium had a large sign out front announcing "The Four Freshmen April 28th." As we were entering the building, Tom Purvis joined us and showed us the tickets his wife Delee had saved from their very first live performance of the Freshmen in April 1959. Delee told us that she is an alumnus of Ball State! During the performance, later in the evening, Bob Ferriera held up those 1959 tickets for all to see and told of their origin - amazing to me that Tom & Delee still had them after all these years. Just shows how important those guys were to them way back then. Speaking of tickets, my Tom (Gallaway) pointed out that our current tickets were printed Four FreshMAN - a mistake we see all too frequently.

This venue was really large (seating about 3,000, I believe) so it was sad to hear that only 300 to 400 tickets had been sold to this performance, but it happened to be the last day of classes at Ball State. The students were anxious to go home, as you might expect, so that left a crowd filled with the graying heads we so often see.

The Freshmen looked dapper in their suits but had to be disappointed as they came on stage looking out upon so many empty seats. Perhaps that is what kept the spark from igniting their performance early on, and the audience was rather tentative with their applause until "Laura" came up near the end of the first set. Now the crowd seemed to respond to the great Fresh harmony. Vince did his "whistling thing" which Brian said they decided to let him try on stage, thinking it might get him to stop whistling all the time.

The second half of the concert was much better appreciated by the crowd with Brian's arrangements of "Something's Gotta Give," "Skylark," and "It's All Right With Me." Then the four guys moved to the front of the stage and sang several tunes with just one microphone and guitar and bass only. The audience seemed to love this approach and were rewarded with "Always Chasing Rainbows" for the encore.

Art Graham (Indiana rep.) and his wife Dina were busy at the CD table and many Indiana FFS members, including the Lantz's, were there to support the Freshmen. It's always reFRESHing to see our FFS members on the road. Hope the Freshmen "had a ball" at Ball State. We certainly enjoyed seeing and hearing them, once again.

Convention Winners

We are very pleased to announce the WINNERS of our early registration drawing. If you recall, your convention registration and hotel reservation had to be made by May 1, 2006, to qualify. We had 300 eligible members! Thank you!

Chuck Fleming, IL
Joy Suhtheinrich, NC
Donna Breckenridge, OH
Tim Juergens, OH
Sandy Callaghan, FL
Gael Cone, GA
Lynette Poulton, NJ
Tom Feigum, VA
Bob Lanman, KS
Andrew Martin, NC
Bill Huber, NC
Stew Davis, FL
Jim Bennie, CA
Fred Dirska, MD
Tony Cira, IL
Trish Hatley, WA
Mike LeBlanc, CO
Ginny Pollard, PA
Phyllis Martin, KY
Doris Langsdorf, OH

CONGRATULATIONS! Stop by at the Registration Desk to pick up your prize.

"Cherry Pie," "Alley Oop," "Monster Mash" and The Four Freshmen by Bob Rulong, Michigan

As a teenager in the late 50's and early 60's, in addition to Four Freshmen records, I had the usual teenage fare of popular tunes. Top 40 hits like "It Was I," "Cherry Pie" (Skip & Flip) and "Alley Oop" (The Hollywood Argyles) featured a singer by the name of Gary S. Paxton. He also was a record executive, producing the seasonal Halloween favorite "Monster Mash" by Bobby "Boris" Pickett on his Garpax label in 1962.

Paxton has had a colorful career and an interesting life. His music and production work has recently been made available on the Ace label located in London, England. A nice surprise on the compact disc titled "The Gary S. Paxton Story - Hollywood Maverick" is cut #31. It is "Nowhere to Go" by the Four Freshmen and produced by Gary Paxton on Decca Records in 1966. In the accompanying booklet, Paxton talks about working with "the number one jazz vocal group in the world" and helping them learn their parts. I can't wait to ask Ross, Bob, Bill and Ken if Paxton really sang on the records he produced with them as he states in the booklet. The Paxton CD can be ordered through Collectors' Choice Music. Oh yes, Gary S. Paxton was Flip or Skip & Flip!