

Our New President, **Neil Lantz**

FRESHMEN GREATNESS



Aren't those of us in the Four Freshmen Society indeed fortunate! Fortunate to have enjoyed the great sounds of the Freshmen over the years and equally fortunate to experience the wonderful performances of the current guys. Whether at a concert or by way of a tasteful CD, today's Freshmen bring back fond memories for most of us, for some as long ago as 65 years. My how time flies when you're having fun!

And more fun is in store for those of us who will be attending the Society's 26th annual convention in Fort Wayne September 5 -7. Co-chairs Marlene Lobsiger and Dave Blackwell tell me there are just a few spaces remaining, so if you're late in registering, I suggest you do it right away. The 2013 Convention will celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Freshmen and will be highlighted by two dinner concerts by the guys, one a self-contained memory of the original 1948 gig at the 113 Club in Fort Wayne. Saturday night's concert will include the lush Freshmen sounds from the *Love Songs* CD, backed by a full string section from the Fort Wayne Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of FF Alumnus, Rod Henley. Along with two great concerts, plan not to miss the opening night jam session, three days of your singing Freshmen arrangements with fellow Wannabees, and a fun-filled Fresh Memories session featuring former Freshmen and two ladies who were there when it all began, Sue Barbour and Betty Kratzsch.

Yes, we're indeed fortunate to continue to enjoy the wonderful heritage and sounds of the Four Freshmen. Their music has touched so many lives over the years, and those of us in the Society are thankful that it continues. For us, it's not trendy. I was recently reminded of the timelessness of the Freshmen sound when I read a quote about Quincy Jones' 2013 induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. NCIS: Los Angeles actor and rapper (sorry jazz fans) LL Cool J offered this about the versatile Jones: "Greatness is not trendy." Never would I have thought to quote LL Cool J, but I think his remark about the versatile Quincy Jones applies appropriately to how we feel about the music of the Four Freshmen. For us, it's not trendy - it's greatness! See you in Fort Wayne!

My Wonderful Musical Life with Flan

by Autie Goodman

I met Bob, Ross, Kenny and Bill in 1964. I was with the Modernaires at the time. Both groups performed the same circuit, so we became friends. We were at Al Hirt's Club in New Orleans, the "Frosh" were at another club there, when Bob and Ross came to our late show. Paula Kelly was our great lead singer and, like Flan, had no vibrato, but could not sing above alto high "C," so I sang all the high endings. Bob asked me who sang them and in typical Flan' humor said, "Well, don't even do it around me."

I left the Mods in 1972 and joined Ron Andrews Show Band at the Hacienda Hotel, playing alto sax and singing production shows. When the Freshmen were in town, Flan and Kenny would come to see me. Dennis Grillo was with the band then. Flan said that Ross and Ray Brown were leaving and discovered that I also played drums, so Dennis and I joined the group.

In 1982 Kenny and Dennis left the group, and Mike Beisner and Rod Henley joined us. We then became "powerful," as we were all good horn players with Mike and Rod writing the new "Freshhorn" ensemble parts. Along the way through the 80s we had a few replacements, great guys like Greg Stegeman, Gary Rosenberg and Kirk Marcy.

Bob had a heart attack in Syracuse, NY in 1990. He had said that he didn't feel well during the show. About an hour after the show he called my room, and in typical Flan fashion said, "Austin, I think I'm having a heart attack." I got him to the hospital just in time and found that it was also a famous heart care center.

I called Mary, who called Mike, who had just finished conducting for a Joan Lunden TV show. Mike flew in and sang Greg's third part, while Greg took the lead and did a fantastic job to finish the tour. No one had ever sung Bob's part that well.

Most of all, I loved Flanigan. He wasn't a leader, he was an icon. He never raised his voice to me in the 15 plus years of our careers together. He was truly the greatest lead singer of all time, as well as playing great trombone and bass.

The best memories come from his great sense of humor, which added to my wonderful and humorous life. The song says it all: *There will never be anyone, After You.*

Wayne's Music World: Big Band on campus... and off

By Wayne Corey FFS- Wisconsin

(This material was originally published in the Wayne's Music World blog at www.madisonjazz.com/wordpress.com where Wayne writes a regular column. Wayne is a retired Madison broadcast news executive and government relations director. He has written about music for JazzTimes.com, the UW Union Theater Green Room blog and other publications. He studied Afro-Cuban jazz in Havana in 2012 and studies music & history at the University of Wisconsin. He is on the board of directors of the Four Freshmen Society and is two-time former chairman of the board of Easter Seals Wisconsin where he again is serving on the board

The University of Wisconsin Jazz Orchestra is important. It provides a vital training ground for talented students who will take jazz into the future. It gives those students a foundation in one of the genre's root forms while exposing them to the masters of yesterday and, in some cases, the masters of today. 45 years after its founding the UWJO concluded its season playing increasingly complex music under UW director of jazz studies Johannes Wallmann.

Two songs related to Count Basie highlighted the band's Mills Hall concert but calling them "highlights" may just reflect my Basie bias. Basie - Straight Ahead a Sammy Nestico blues (is "blues" redundant when talking about Basie?)