

THOUGHTS from the Bay City Convention

By Linda Harrison, Member, Board of Directors, Four Freshmen Society

Hello, All,

What a pleasure to meet in Bay City to experience the awesome sound of the new Four Freshmen! Even if there were a few logistical “hiccups,” it was great to get back in the groove of meeting together to enjoy and support the guys. Thanks to Jim and Linda! Also, the hotel staff was great, and the food was good.

The Music Foundation is in good shape financially and has been successful with the awarding of grants. How fun to have two grant recipients (Josh Evert and The Bean Tones) perform, along with the extra guest, Kiefer Quendal.

The Four Freshmen themselves are upbeat, enthusiastic about some new tunes and positive about their future. They are extremely happy with the four current members, and it was obvious they have special personal friendships among themselves and alignment based on cooperation vs. egos. Plus, as Tommy mentioned, they are using creative tools on the internet to enlarge their fan base. They are participating in the Patreon for Musicians (patreon.com), which offers a monthly membership (\$5 minimum) to build community and establish a reliable revenue stream, keeping people up to date on what’s happening with the group.

Members of The Four Freshmen Society spoke of some challenges in recruiting more members and increasing their funds. Several attendees in Bay City shared some ideas that we might want to consider for the future. Here are some of the ideas I heard:

MEMBERSHIP

• Increase membership fee.

Surely an additional \$5 or \$10 per year would not make membership in the FFS prohibitive for most people. It wouldn’t have to be a big announcement – just change the amount on the membership application.

Update a new membership card to have available at all venues.

• Follow-up

Develop a program whereby hand-written notes can be sent out to expired members to encourage them to rejoin (or donate). The hand-written part was Dave Bentley’s idea on how they got so much support for the Foundation.

• Publicize the online Membership Directory.

• Publicize more about how to buy and stream the new CD.

• Has it become easier for people at the CD tables to quickly process credit card payments?

CONVENTION

• Registration fee

Charge a bit more for the registration – surely \$125 before the deadline and \$140 after the deadline would not be excessive.

• Conference bags

Perhaps we could consider a soft bag made from recycled water bottles to show our commitment to the environment. Each can fold up into its own little pouch to carry in a purse or pocket to be available for use after the convention. I think they are around \$3 each.

• Shirts

How about a contest advertised through *Fresh News* to create a design for a regular, good quality T-shirt rather than the traditional golf shirt for a change?

We should offer a long-sleeved women’s version – possibly with a flattering V-neck or boat neck.

Good idea to have baseball caps.

• Jam Session

No question, this is the BEST opening to the convention week, and the Jam Session was the very best this year.

Dave Blackwell is the perfect MC.

• Fresh Memories

This is a wonderful way for the conference attendees to get to know the Freshmen on a more personal basis. The one in Bay City was the best one I have ever attended.

• Wannabees

Tommy has offered to lead the Wannabees in 2023 if he doesn’t have a sound check at the same time.

Not much audience participation in Bay City, but the accompanist was great.

Is getting a digital copy of the music for iPads possible?

• Silent Auction and CD sales

Nice to have water and punch in the 113 Club.

What about auctioning off a chance to buy lunch for one of the Freshmen (I think this was done in the past)?

• Field trips

Perhaps just offer a single tour option to get people acquainted with the area.

Maybe just have a bag lunch available rather than a sit-down meal.

(continued on page 9)