

# The Man Who Came to Dinner

by Fr. Peter Gillquist

Jack Huber is the kind of teacher you hope your kids will have, and three of our six did. He is the recently retired choral teacher from a Santa Barbara area high school.

Some years ago Marilyn and I went to his Christmas concert to hear our daughter sing, and couldn't believe how well he coached high school kids into singing the very difficult Alfred Burt carols (the Singers Unlimited have done a whole album of them). After the program I said to Jack "With arrangements like that, I'll bet you're also a Four Freshmen fan." "They're outta sight!" he answered.

Fast forward several years. Ross Barbour and I are sitting at our kitchen table working on the writing of his book, Now You Know. "The high school music teacher here is a giant Freshmen fan" I told Ross. "Next time you're up here, would you be open to speaking to his class?" Ross said "You line it up and I'll do it."

I called Jack and we set a date. By the time we got there a few weeks later, Jack had played a number of Freshmen songs for the kids. They were primed for their classroom guest. Ross did a super job of relating to the kids. One of the girls in the class, who is in our parish, remarked to me how Ross' talk made her take her music much more seriously.

Now it's Spring, 2004. Huber called me after his annual reunion with his choral students. "You know, Father, those kids are still talking about Ross speaking to their class." It's been over a decade! That day I decided we should get Jack and Leslie Huber together with Ross and Sue for dinner at our place. When I called to invite Jack, he was blown away.

On Tuesday evening, May 18, the six of us sat down to steak and bake. The rest of us said little as the two musicians walked and talked down memory lane.

For dessert we went into the living room and, with Marilyn on the piano, we sang Freshmen charts - "Blue World," "The Day Isn't Long Enough," and an arrangement Ross is working on for "America the Beautiful." Sue and Leslie sang the lead, Jack (who by now is in hog heaven) took the second part, Ross sang his part and I took the low voice. We sounded pretty good, but what really mattered was that as the Hubers left that evening, Jack turned to me and said "I can't believe I got to sing with one of the Four Freshmen!"

Two days ago, this letter came to my mailbox, and I knew I had to share it with Fresh News for all the fans:

Dear Gillquists,

Yet *another* note of thanks for your kindness.

Enclosed are two of the pics we took on "The Musical Evening." (I also sent the same two to Ross & Sue.) In addition, I also sent them a copy of the e-mail I got from a friend after I "gushed" about the great time we had with the four of you at your place. Check it out:

Dear Jack,

In 1978 I flew into Vegas just to hear the Four Freshmen sing at the Sands. I had my parents drive down from St. George for the deal.

I spoke with the Four after the program, and found that only the one with curly hair had been original from the early

times when I used to listen to them while in Sweden. I had a small crystal set and I could get Radio Luxembourg quite well. "The Day Isn't Long Enough" is my favorite.

No other group has ever equaled their harmony in my eyes. The only other piece that can compare is the first melody on the CD made by Karen Carpenter's brother after she passed away. I think it's "It Came Upon a Mid-night Clear." WOW!

When I die I want to go wherever the Four Freshmen go. Or if that's full, maybe where Karen C. is...

As I told Ross, "Some of the joys of a career come long after the career is *apparently* over." This is sure true for me and I'm guessing it's true for Ross as well.

Anyhow, before I "over-gush," thanks again for it all!

Sincerely,  
Jack Huber

