

The Portland Convention

Dot and Harry Lydic

Harry and I enjoyed our visit to Portland. It is beautiful city, with a great transit system. We didn't get to see all the mountains in the area, but we took a drive halfway up Mt. Hood to Timberline Lodge. The scenery was absolutely gorgeous!

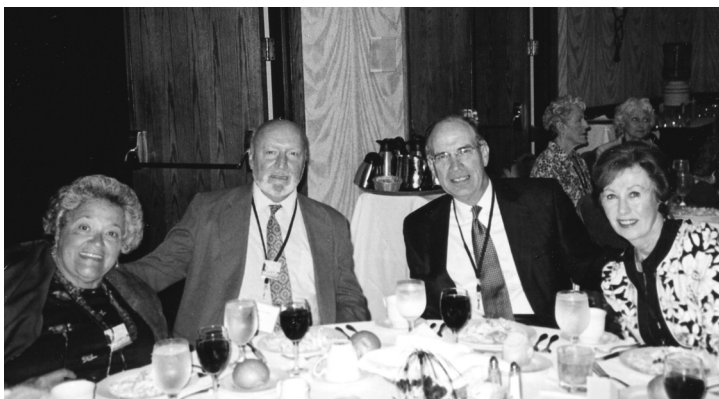
The Portland convention committee did a fine job in assuring a great time for all FFS members. The DoubleTree was a beautiful, accommodating hotel, providing ample opportunities to meet old friends and fellow Freshmen enthusiasts. The music was great, including all the groups of Trish Hatley. In addition to her musical talent, Trish is a lovely, outgoing person.

It was a treat to have Ross Barbour and Bob Flanigan as our MCs. Seeing Ross and Sue, Bob and Mary, Ray Brown, Greg Stegeman and Rod Henley is always a highlight at these conventions. The Comstocks were sorely missed - as were you, Chick!

Last, but not least, our Four Freshmen were absolutely FANTASTIC! Everyone agrees they are better than ever. We hope they enjoy entertaining us as much as we enjoy listening to them. (Keep the sound going, Bob, Brian, Vince and Curtis - we love you!)



What a group!



**Ann Marie & Sergio Serifina
Larry & Brenda Thren (PA Representative)**

Thursday Night Jam Session in Portland

by Ann Smith, Texas Coord.

Three of our former Freshmen delighted us with their singing and playing at the convention this year, notably:

Ray Brown (FF group #5 1973-1977)

Rod Henley (FF group #8: 1982-1986) also (FF group #11: July & Aug. 1987) and

Greg Stegeman (groups #14-21: 1989-2001)

We have Ray Brown to thank for the Thursday night jam sessions at our convention. It started out as a small informal performance and has grown into a major event at our gatherings. His singing and piano playing are always such fun. His CD's "Southern Comfort" and "Thank You Very Large" can be obtained from our FFS Music Mart.

Rod Henley was amazing. I had only heard him perform with the "Faux Freshmen" group, which sang for us several years ago at one of our conventions. Also, their CD's are just wonderful and are available through our Music Mart. They are entitled: "Seasons of the Heart (a tribute to Bill Comstock)" and "Scratchin' the Surface (a tribute to the shining vocal arrangements of John Kenneth Albers)". Never having heard Rod perform solo, I had no idea that he was so talented. He played the living heck out of the piano and also sang for us. He's working on a PH.D. in music currently. I don't know how he could sound any better, even with that illustrious degree. Plus, he really entertains. Unfortunately, he doesn't have a CD. We asked him to put one together for us fans and he said he'd put it on the list (of things to do).

Greg Stegeman is the most recent "Freshmen graduate" and was with the group for 12 years (groups #14-21). We owe him thanks for many of the beautiful arrangements sung by the Freshmen. It's just delightful to have him perform for us again. Greg's CD "Culmination" was produced by the FFS and is available through the Music Mart.

Some of our FFS members also performed for us at the jam session. Suzanne Dumaw, of Hillsdale, Michigan, sang for us at last year's jam session. She has a beautiful voice and yet was challenged with technical difficulties with the tape that accompanied her. This year things were smoothed out and she gave a delightful performance. Way to go, Suzanne.

Yas Ichiura comes from Japan, with an entourage, to our convention every year. He's the FFS representative for the Pacific rim. He plays the trombone and performed for us at the jam session. He also sings with us around the piano at the "wannabees" gatherings and plays the trombone interludes for us. As always, it was such fun. We enjoyed all the other performers and want to thank all of them for their contribution to our Thursday night jam session.