

# Four Freshmen Society: 27 YEARS

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by Dick Baldwin (2005 – 2009) and Mel Meyers (2009 – 2012).

The first FFS Convention was held in Las Vegas in September of 1988 and has been followed since at various locations around the country and one year in Amsterdam, Netherlands. The 27-year uninterrupted roadmap has taken our membership as far west as Portland, OR (2007); as far east as Annapolis, MD (2010); north to Oshkosh, WI (1991, 1994, 1999); and south this year to Tampa, Florida. The fiftieth anniversary of the Freshmen was celebrated in 1998 at a record-setting Society gathering back in Las Vegas. Another attendance record was set as we celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of the group in 2008 in Indianapolis. That year also marked the awarding of Honorary Doctor of Arts Degrees by Butler University to Ross Barbour and Bob Flanigan, then surviving members of the original Freshmen.

Over the years, Society members have enjoyed their close personal relationships with the past and present Freshmen groups and especially have appreciated the guys' wonderful performances at our annual gatherings. In return, the FFS has provided active support of the Freshmen in the production and sale of their CDs, and in the underwriting of miscellaneous expenses, whenever appropriate. Such support is made possible by prudent management of the FFS treasury, under the current direction of FFS Treasurer John Emerson. Our financial resources are accumulated by membership dues, donations, CD sales, and positive balances from convention registrations.

From within our worldwide membership, countless stories about the FFS could be told. Hopefully, however, the above history will serve to enlighten our newest members and to refresh the memories of our long standing members as to what the Four Freshmen Society is all about. And just maybe you have a favorite FFS experience you'd like to share. If so, I encourage you to think about submitting your story for a future issue of Fresh News. It would be especially interesting to hear from anyone who has attended all 27 conventions! In the meanwhile, I hope you'll continue to support the FFS and the Freshmen whenever they appear in your area. And, of course, it's not too early to plan on attending the 2015 Convention, September 17-19, in San Antonio, Texas. I hope to see you there.

# Fun Memories with Fellow Freshmen

by Curtis

Over the years I've enjoyed meeting and hanging out, when we had the time, with current and previous members of the Four Freshmen. I wanted to just share some brief memories or things I admire about the wonderful gentlemen I've met over the years.

Starting with the beginning, for me, was Bill Comstock. His calm demeanor and presence was felt immediately. I was probably 16 when I met him. Bill is certainly one of those guys who's forgotten more than I will ever know. I've always admired his vision for tunes and music. He not only has the idea, but has this detailed vision and when carried through, always turns out remarkably beautiful. I've enjoyed his friendship and company over the years and consider him and his family, my family. He has a wonderful family and that's a testament to the love and guidance from him and Susan.

Oh, I remember Bob Flanigan alright! That guy seemed taller than he was and larger than life. Everyone thought of him that way, including himself (said lovingly). I remember him loving to tell stories and had such a great memory of people and the events around when he met them or simply saw them last. The biggest thing that sticks out in my mind was his voice. The last time we got to sing with him, he still had that wall of sound that rushed out of him. I can imagine singing with him in his prime and not being able to keep up. He was old school. Simply tough and a giant voice that only the toughest could keep up with. He is very much missed.

Kenny Albers, the best trumpeter the Freshmen have ever had in my opinion. I only was able to meet with him a few times, but his lovely solos and his soft, quiet demeanor always made me smile. What a great musician and guy. We talked about music and life briefly on the phone several times and he was always generous with his compliments and his love for the group and our well-being. Kenny, I wish I could have gotten to know you better!!

Ross, what a fun guy. I'll always remember traveling up to his house with Vince and hanging out for a day. His mind was always going. He did all the books he kept by hand, no computers, just pencil and paper. He had a room that seemed like his office/creative space and it was full of designs, paper airplanes, all sorts of fun stuff. I loved his exciting drumming and the way he and Don would sing their inner parts! Ross also would send notes occasionally with recommendations for the group and I appreciated his love and caring for the group to take his time and do that. Everyone misses you Ross!!

Autie Goodman I only met briefly, but it was fun putting a face with the name and stories I hear about him. He seemed like a sweet guy. Dennis Grillo is the same story. He came backstage after our show and had very kind words to say about our performance and in general was very nice and what a talented guy!

Kirk Marcy has been great to us over the years, bringing us in to do clinics and concerts. Kirk certainly impresses me with his teaching and love for the kids. Again, always treating us so nice and being so excited for the group and proud of his guy Bob for being a staple in the Freshmen these last couple of decades. Thank you Kirk!!

Rod Henley, that guy does everything! He always impresses me with some other talent I didn't know about. He plays, he sings, he conducts, he produces, etc... Again, such a nice guy and such a love for the group. He goes out of his way to help and did everything imaginable to help at Bob's memorial. Another big thank you!!

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