

Fan Clubs (continued from page 3)

How did we get to our current “fan club” and newsletter?

There was a lack of communication with the group in the early 80s. Thankfully, a devoted fan, Edd Townsend of Texas, who was interested in keeping the “Sound” alive, founded The Four Freshmen Appreciation Society (FFAS). Does anyone know the date he initiated the FFAS? I believe it was in the late 80s. I heard about the society in 1989 and immediately joined, receiving my first copy of **FRESH NEWS** (Vol 2, No. 1). It was described as “the bi-monthly newsletter-magazine of the Four Freshmen Appreciation Society.”

An astonishing event in OSLO, NORWAY

by Jørgen Bjørno

As hundreds of Freshmen fans hurried their way to Dayton, OH, in the days around August 15-16, Betty and I flew up to Oslo, Norway to see and hear Group 25 at the Oslo Jazz Festival. They performed in the old legendary and intimate theatre “Chat Noir”. Let’s say our expectations were not high, and we did not believe we would experience the Four Freshmen live again – our first time being at the convention in San Antonio, TX two years ago. But frankly, from the very first tune on stage, we learned that Master Bob Ferreira, and his three younger friends had nailed the Four Freshmen sound so strong, so professional and loyal, that it is hard to describe. The new trumpet guy, Jon Gaines, fit so well with his second voice, playing different horns and acting humble, very much as I remember Ken Albers. Guitarist Stein Malvey delivered his speech in correct Norwegian to his more than 20 family members in the audience.

That was funny and delightful. All four of them were in the mood, and the response from the 550 fans in the little theatre was wild. I guess that it became a special evening for the group, too. They were really ready for the Dayton Convention two days after.

After 1½ hour show, we met in the lobby for talking and pictures. I am still glad we took the chance with this concert and got a rare experience. Subsequently, it is hard to state how this experience influenced us so strong and inexplicably on my ego and my feelings.

Now I begin to understand how this “sound” and this whole concept called The Four Freshmen, being around for more than 60 years, has planted deep roots in my brain and my soul. Frightening... More than I will acknowledge. I wonder if there are others in the society who have the same silly emotional obsession!

Fresh regards from Betty and Jørgen Bjørno, Denmark



In May of 1990, John Bangs became the president of the FFAS, and the headquarters were moved to Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Under editor Chick Trafford, *Fresh News* continued. Around 1992, the society name was changed to “The Four Freshmen Society.” Chick continued to send out *Fresh News* until the year of his death, 2009. Chairman of the FFS Board, Tom Purvis, became the editor until the last half of 2012, when Barb Meyers, with the help of Donna Gallaway, took over the job. Barb has continued to this day as Editor of *Fresh News*. Thank you, Barb!

John Skinner (continued on page 5)

Since 1992, I have been to all FFS Conventions, except 2001, soon after 9/11, and this recent 2017 Convention in Dayton due to my slight health issue. John e-mailed me from Dayton asking why I wasn’t there, and we promised to see each other at South Bend 2018. Soon after exchanging e-mails, I received a big and sad surprise that I couldn’t understand immediately. John Skinner passed away on August 18th in Dayton while he and Susan were attending the convention. The only good thing was he didn’t suffer, so I heard. Rest in peace, John.

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CONFESSIONS (continued from page 4)

After the break, we were back in front of the bandstand, and every time Stan looked at me it was as if he wanted to kill me. If looks could kill, I would have been a goner. My buddies asked me what I said to him and I said “I don’t know. I complimented him about his band.”

Years later, I bought the “Road Show” album with the Kenton band, June Christie and the 4F. And I got the answer to why he glared at me. I am the one who compared his band to the Four Freshmen. My phrasing obviously left something to be desired. To quote Stan, I asked him if he knew about the 4F, when he said he did, I replied “wild, the band sounds just like them.”

At first, I was embarrassed every time I heard him on various recordings introduce the Freshmen with that story. Now I get a kick out of it. I mean, I met the man for less than a minute and he talked about me for many years!