

Thanks Pittsburgh!

by Roy Meyer

Once again, Evie and I attended the convention this year in Pittsburgh and we had a marvelous time as usual. I've been a big fan of the boys since they started in '48 when I was a senior in HS. I was also a big fan of the Pastels, Pied Pipers, Modernaires, Satisfiers, Hi-Los, Hi Lo Jack & a Dame, Mills Bros., Sentimentalists, The Group, The Graduates, PM Singers (I've talked with Phil Matson a few times over the yrs.), Gene Puerling's Singers Unlimited, etc. etc. I have always had my own vocal groups since I formed the Harmonaires mixed quartet as sophomore in HS to perform on the schools' varsity shows. (I still have some of the recordings we did at a NYC studio). I told Greg in Orlando that in my opinion the current Freshmen group is the best ever, and I was pleased when Flanigan said the same thing during his introduction in Pittsburgh.

I purchased the new "Live From Las Vegas" DVD Sat. morning and got to listen to it when we returned to Jersey. It sure is a very fine production and most enjoyable. I plan to share it with my musical friends who may wish to borrow it, and perhaps they'll be turned-on enough to ultimately buy one.

I just loved Harold Betters and his quartet...he's so emotionally into his performance and a really talented musician! And Sue Raney was simply fabulous. I loved her when I purchased several of her LPs early in her singing career. I think it was prior to her recordings with the LA Voices, which I also have. Being a professional jazz pianist myself, I was very impressed with Donn Trenner's accompaniment and solos. He sure is marvelous.

I founded and have been directing the "Roy Meyer Swingers" 17 voice mixed jazz vocal group since 1967, and we hired the Freshies to perform with us for our 30th Anniversary Concert in 1997, with Greg still singing lead, at the John Harms Center For The Arts in Englewood, NJ. We're non-profit, so their appearance helped us to raise money for our Pop Music Scholarship Fund, for which we have performed throughout the US and Europe. We have been giving as much as \$3,000 each year to a talented instrumental or vocal high school soloist or group in No. Jersey, for advanced music tuition payments at the college/univ. of their choice. Over 80 students have received awards, some of whom have gone on to professional music careers. I can't begin to tell you what a thrill it was for all of us in the Swingers, as well as the Tony Corbiscello 17 pc. jazz band, to perform on stage with the Four Freshmen group #20.

I have requested that a convention planning kit be sent to me to consider the forming of a committee to explore the possibility of having a future convention in the North Jersey area close to New York City, which should draw lots of fans hopefully. But, without question, the Pittsburgh event was the **finest** Convention to date, and we look forward to hopefully attending an even greater FFS get-together in Portland, OR next year.

CHORD-ially,
Roy Meyer, Oakland, NJ

Credit Where Due!

Bob Baker, Convention Chairman

I don't need to state this more than once, as you well understand; without many, many helping hands, an F.F.S. Convention does not happen. The quality, I believe, is determined by the degree of caring. As I was out-in-front, many comments reached my ears. Isn't it amazing how easy it is to receive favorable words? I became "defensive" only a few times, and that was when the praise was not up to earlier standards (joking to make the point).

Our Task-Force was incredible. From the on-set, I realized what we had. The "real" preparation work was handled by Dot & Harry Lydic, Dolly Persun, Bob Lininger, Stew Sander, Bill Hillgrove, and a bit later on by the Camlins (Bruce and Helen). I am mentioning my wife Karen, last, to be diplomatic. In truth the lady is a whirlwind. When advice was needed, my ol'e partner, "the Chickster," was available...often, as was the F.F.S. First Team.

When involved in a labor-of-love, one dismisses the cost in time and treasure. Everyone here is richer for the experience, but a bit poorer in the wallet, and we don't care!

I was able to muster some wonderful help from our B.E.A.R. of Pennsylvania personnel. Many of you have become familiar with them due to the great number of phone calls and e-mails that were generated from their respective quarters. Adam Curry is our computer genius, and then took on the "Security Chief" role at the Hilton. Diane Buzon and Lori Montgomery fielded everything I could throw at them and were essential at the "show." Add to the above, a dozen or so family and friends who wore "Staff Badges," which means I left out only ten or so names.

Erich Bucholtz, our Sound Guru, was incredible, especially considering the massive Hilton Ballroom...the hotel staff attentive and accommodating - were your steaks tender? Finally, but certainly not last, was Bill Fontane, who for three evenings was an Event Announcer and my right arm. William had worked previously with other local Freshmen events and not only volunteered his services, but also sold a number of tickets.

Thanks to you all! Thank you to the Society for entrusting this important task to us! It is now time to sit back, reflect and prepare for the next assignment. Have I told you about...(shhhh!).

To the F.F.S., Alumni, guests, and certainly our Favorite Four, let's do it again sometime!