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Blast from the past

Date: June 27, 2013

by: Nick Friedman | Community Editor

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Sitting behind his drum kit, peering out over the crowd at his 40th high school reunion, Gary Roy felt the memories come rushing back. The night was more than just a high school reunion for him — it was also the first time he'd played with his high school bandmates since the four men went their separate ways shortly after graduation.

Here, on the familiar Sarasota Municipal Auditorium stage, Roy and his band, The Missing Links, reached deep into their songbooks and revived the tunes that were popular at the time they attended Riverview High School. Despite the cheering crowd, all Roy could focus on was the surreal joy he felt being reunited with his old band.

"I was just thinking, 'Whoa — this is like a trip back in time,'" says Roy. "We'd played this venue so many times before. I could look out into the crowd and find the spot where I met my wife or the spot where we sat and talked to B.B. King, when we opened for him. It was just an overload; I wanted to stay and play all night."

Formed in 1967, The Missing Links was founded in part by Roy and John Purcell, who met at Riverview High School.

"It was a small community of musicians," says Purcell from behind a thick, Charlie Daniels-esque beard. "There were only so many of us running around Sarasota with long hair. We all knew each other."

The group changed its lineup several times during its four-year career, but Roy (drums) and Purcell (guitar) remained the band's constants, and, together, they toured the surrounding area, playing songs in the style of Jimi Hendrix and Cream. They even recorded an album on the Florida-based Paris Tower Records label. But, after graduation, the men went off to different colleges and started families, and the band broke up.

It wasn't until 2007, when Roy was assigned to the entertainment committee for Riverview's 40th reunion party, that he began to contemplate a band reunion, as well.

"I thought there was no way this could happen," says Roy. "I knew John was still in town playing music, so I looked into it. The committee thought it was a great idea, and I got all the guys to commit. Luckily, nobody backed out."

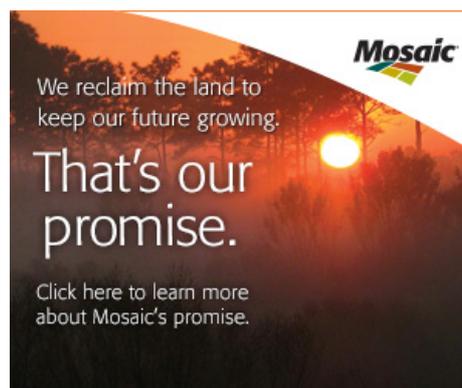
After recruiting Sarasota High School alumni and old friend David Anson to play acoustic guitar and keyboards and Jon Hausburg to play bass, the group spent most of the year preparing for the show.

"We practiced nonstop," says Purcell. "It was like the old days." Although the reunion was only supposed to be a one-time performance, the crowd's reaction at the high school reunion was so overwhelming that the members decided to reunite permanently.

Today, The Missing Links continue to perform several times per month, and they still play songs from the 1960s, although now their main focus is on vocal harmonies. The group meets weekly in their practice space, called "The Palace," where they rehearse old material, learn new songs and enjoy each other's company.



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"The best part is being able to jam with guys I've been friends with since I was a teenager," says Anson. "It's brought us all back into music, which is the thing we love the most."

BAND ON THE RUN: Upon arriving at a Tallahassee gig in high school, the band members realized they'd been booked under the name of a bigger, more successful band. Needless to say, the crowd was less than pleased to learn they'd been tricked, and the Missing Links finished their set and high-tailed it back to Sarasota.

NEXT GIG

The Missing Links will play during the Sarasota Farmers Market third annual Shrimp and Lobster Festival from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, June 29, at the Downtown Sarasota Farmers Market. Festivalgoers can munch on Maine lobster rolls, shrimp, steamed clams, lobster and shrimp crêpes and Maine lobster dinners underneath a 60-foot tent. American cuisine will also be available.

The Sarasota Downtown Merchants Association, sponsor of the festival, will hand out treasure-hunt maps with clues. Festivalgoers can decipher the clues and visit various downtown merchants, located on First Street, State Street and Main Street, to get stamps or initials indicating they were there. Festivalgoers should return to the SDMA booth by noon with their stamped maps for a chance to win gift certificates from downtown businesses.

In addition, people can purchase a \$10 raffle ticket at the Sarasota Farmers Market for a chance to win a three-night weekend cruise; a Tommy Bahama electric bike; or three baskets loaded with gifts from the Farmers Market vendors. Raffle proceeds will support the Sarasota Farmers Market.

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Dec 24 Winter Camp
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Dec 26 Winter Camp
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Dec 27 Winter Camp
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Slice of the City



Family reunion
12/19/13
Sarasota Observer news editor and native Sarasotan Nolan Peterson was reunited with his brother Air Force Capt. Drew Peterson Dec. 1, at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan.



Lights in Bloom
12/19/13
Selby Gardens' Lights in Bloom will officially open to the public Friday.



Submissions
12/19/13

Dec 28 **The Nutrition Path Weight Loss**
7:00 am - 1:00 pm

Dec 30 **Winter Camp**
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Dec 31 **Winter Camp**
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Jan 2 **Winter Camp**
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Jan 3 **Winter Camp**
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

[all events »](#)



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