

Back in Play

Mid-Life Crisis Band can be called regional super-group

By John Wooley ~ World Entertainment Writer

If you were out and about and listening to live bands in the '60's, you probably saw at least one of the members of the Mid-life crisis band. In fact you could just about call this six-member aggregation a bona fide regional super-group. "We all fronted our own bands back in the 1960's: said Carl Raynes, the group's lead singer, recently. "My band was Boss Tweed, out of Stillwater. John Dougherty, our lead guitarist, had another Stillwater band called the Breakaways. The first really big time Jim Stunkard, our bass player, was E.A. Poe and the Ravens, a Tulsa band. It was one of Bill Davis' first bands. Steve Parkhurst, our keyboard man, had a great band out of Tulsa called the Varmints, and Steve Lee, who plays rhythm guitar, was in a band called "Contraband," he added.

Everybody in the group, noted Raynes, graduated from Tulsa high school between 1962 and 1968. And after college, everyone in Mid-Life Crisis but drummer Mark Boyce, a Hale graduate, quit pursuing music "for various reasons." Raynes meanwhile, took a job as a salesman for Sysco Food Service, leaving both the music scene and Stillwater behind.

Until about five years ago, that is. "I was just sitting around the house one night when Stunkard called," remembered Raynes. "A bunch of them had started jamming together, and they didn't have a front man. "He just called me out of a clear blue sky. We didn't know each other. I knew all those bands, of course, but I didn't know the guys in 'em. I remember Stunkard asked, 'Is this the Carl Raynes who used to be the lead singer of Boss Tweed?'" Raynes added with a chuckle. "I was kind of afraid to answer. You know, my last gig had been New Year's Eve 1970 going into '71, so I'd laid off a little bit." Raynes joined the rest of the gang, and soon they'd work up a number of the old songs.

Before long, they were playing them at a party; and then, another one. "People seemed to like it, so we kept doing it," he said. These days, the Mid-Life Crisis band averages some 80 dates a year, most of them "either private stuff or events like Wild Brew," said Raynes. "We play classic Rock 'n' Roll, but it's more rockin' tunes," he explained. "We don't play a lot of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons; it's more Rolling Stones, Beatles, Van Morrison and soul music. The No. 1 thing we think about when we work up a song is whether or not people are going to like it and are going to be able to dance to it." "We're a party band. None of us has been famous or anything like that. We all have day jobs. This is just really fun and really satisfying - it's like going to 80 parties a year."

Steve Lee claims to be born in a little shack down by the river and is an estimator for American Heat and Air. A 1972 OU grad, Steve plays guitar and sings as he did for "Band at Random" and the "Sigma Chi House Band". Dr. Charley Stewart graduated from OSU in 1982 and the OU medical school in 1986. Charley practices Anesthesiology at St. Francis Hospital. The jazz group "Smooth & Saxy" has fed his drum habit. Carl Raynes, Oklahoma State University graduate and lead singer for "Boss Tweed" in the 60's. The hardest working granddad in showbiz is the General Sales Manager for Fadler Company. Jim Stunkard, bassist, graduated in 1968 from the University of Tulsa. The bands "E. A. Poe & The Ravens" and "Easy Street" paid his tuition. Jim owns the Purple Glaze Studio in Tulsa and can't sing a note! John Dougherty, after 25 years as a pharmaceutical representative, opened "All About Music" in Owasso. Also an OSU grad, John led the "Four Kings" band and "The Breakaways in college. Steve Parkhurst led his high school and college group "The Varmints" in the late 60's and early 70's. A designer for

the Ideal Crane Corp, Steve graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1972. He plays keyboards, sings and arranges our music.

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