

They may be white-collared professionals, but they're...

Still Outrageous

After 50 years, Ogden band members haven't quit their day jobs, but they continue to rock and roll

By TIM GURRISTER
Standard-Examiner staff

OGDEN — Local rock group Outrageous turns 50 this year. Those early years started out innocently enough. Now it's all lawyers and insurance types in the band.

But in 1964 The Beatles had invaded, male hair was growing, cultural shocks coming, and Steve Kaufman, Ron Nichols and some of their 12- and 13-year-old Mount Ogden Middle School buddies started a rock band.

Lots of teens formed garage bands back then. So The Livin' End, as they first called themselves, tried something to set the band apart — a request line.

They put up a poster at school with a phone number and their song list. When a call came in, they'd just set the phone down and play.

"It worked," says Kaufman 50 years later.

"We got a lot of gigs that way, met a lot of girls."

Remarkably, irrepressibly, the band is still intact since those 1964 beginnings, membership subject to change while going through a slew of different names over the years.

The Livin' End became The Rogues, The Young Lads, then The Lads, Flesh, Ginger Blue, Rain, then Still Rain, and, finally, Outrageous.

During the tenure as Flesh, their Jim Morrison and the Doors incarnation, they got kicked out of Ben Lomond High school. More on that later.

When the band was Rain, they experimented by adding horns to the ensemble. Fans wondered if the name had changed, asking "Is it still Rain? Yes, they said."

But since 1985 the name "Outrageous" has stuck, and today describes a bunch of mostly 60-year-olds still playing their rock and roll.



"We played it then, we play it now," Kaufman says proudly, just short of pumping his fist in the air.

"We've been playing the same songs for 50 years, but never play them the same way twice," Nichols adds. "It's called improvisation."

Back in the day, while still in school at Ogden High, the band was earning \$600 per performance by the end of the 60s. "That was when minimum wage was \$1 an hour and gas was 25 cents a gallon," Nichols remembers. A regular job would have meant a pay cut.

Kaufman et al went on to play in a number of Western states, as far away as Washington, spent a summer at Lagoon as the opening act for some of the biggest names in the business, the Mamas and the Papas for one. That's when Lagoon was a major concert venue.

The list of names they opened for are well known to anyone over the age of 30.

The rest of you, if curious, can ask your parents: Jan and Dean, The Grass Roots, The Buckinghams, The Monkees, Don McLean, Firefall, plus Tommy James and the Shondells. Still no



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ABOVE: Members of the rock band Outrageous have been playing together for 50 years.

LEFT: Steve Kaufman, founder of the Ogden band Outrageous, is pictured in 1969.

supergroup. But they knew the band liked to visit a certain club, the Winery, after hours following their Salt Lake concerts.

So Still Rain landed a show date there. And waited.

"They locked the doors at The Winery," Kaufman recalled. "It was after hours and they told the patrons a special guest was coming and they could stay if they wanted. But the doors would be locked."

"We had equipment lined up for them and asked them to jam," Nichols said. "The crowd went wild. We got an hour and 20 minutes with them."

Three Dog Night was very supportive, even remembered them when Kaufman and Nichols

word on what a Shondell is, say Kaufman and Nichols.

Memorable are the encounters with rock icons Johnny Rivers and Three Dog Night, the latter one of their favorite collections of stories.

"Steve has never hit the high notes he did with Chuck Negron that night," said Nichols of their session with Three Dog Night. "Their bass player's belt buckle scratched Steve's bass, which he still has."

They never did open for the

and a few other members said hello in the 1990s at the Wendover casino that books reunited 1960s and 1970s groups.

But the band found contemporary icon Johnny Rivers a bit distant. "He never talked to us," Kaufman said. "We're not used to that."

They were set to open for Rivers at Lagoon, and Rivers' contract apparently required he be paid before he performed.

Lagoon found they couldn't do that, planning to cover his full fee out of the gate. So Rivers was not going to play. "I couldn't believe it," Kaufman said. "All our friends were there, ready to watch us play, and watch him play." So Kaufman et al somehow came up with the up-front \$7,500, later reimbursed by Lagoon.

The year the band spent as Flesh had its moments. "We just did Doors songs," Kaufman said.

Their lead singer at the time was a devotee of lead singer Jim Morrison, possibly more than he needed to be.

Shortly after Morrison's arrest at a Miami concert in 1969 on lewdness charges (charges posthumously pardoned a few years ago by the Florida governor), Kaufman's singer made the mistake of talking about the Miami incident, even mimicking it on stage at Ben Lomond High School.

"We were asked not to come back," said Kaufman. "I think we were banned from the entire Ogden School District for a while."

They never toyed in the drug scene, they say, but there was alcohol. "Early on when we played in clubs, sometimes we were paid in beer," Kaufman said.

By 1974 the group actually had a record company contract offer, in the Still Rain days. But the contract gave most of the money to the record company, Three Dog Night's label, Kaufman and Nichols recall.

Plus band members at the time were entertaining better offers: falling in love, marriage and families.

Nichols and another near-50-year member, Scott Jensen, both percussionists, eventually joined Kaufman's now 35-year-old Ogden law firm. Kaufman is a former Utah State Bar president as well as bass player and vocalist.

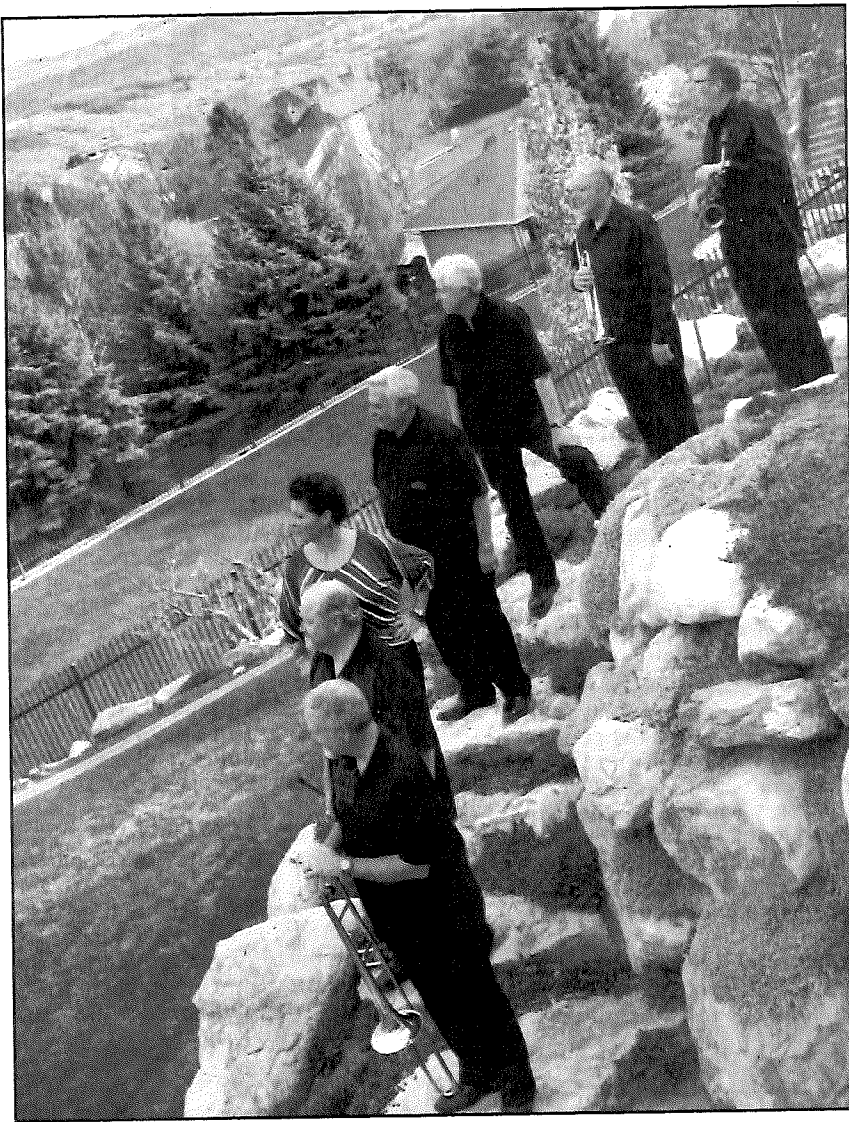
The 8-member band today is a combination of working professionals and music diehards.

Stu Young, an Ogden insurance

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From 1C

executive on trombone, guitar and vocals, has been a member 45 years. Ray Barrios, a Salt Lake lawyer, has played trumpet with the group since 1970, often joined by his father, the late Ray Sr., also on trumpet.

Guitarist Mike Schoenfeld, a professional photographer from Salt Lake, has been a member since 1980.

Lead singer Rachelle Valdez, Centerville, is a regional insurance administrator, joining the band 15 years ago, shortly after they played at her wedding.

Insurance broker and saxophone player Cy Schmidt, Salt Lake, is the newest member, with a year in. But his ties go back decades as his high school band teacher was the late Clint Frohm, who

spent 40 years with the band.

They say sometimes it's hard to sort which, the band or the day job, is what they do "on the side."

The music is there when the day job doesn't satisfy, Schmidt said, or vice versa.

"It's a total distraction when you play," Barrios said. "You can't think of anything else."

"But we were smart enough not to give up our day jobs," said Jensen, while admitting he likes to claim the band paid for his house.

Mortgages do get paid off early, Young added during the general discussion on dual careers.

"The band was money to go to college," Barrios summed up.

They remain unconcerned they never hit the so-called big time.

"The thrill of playing before 10,000 people is enough," Nichols concluded. "And we did that."

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