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Moraga Band Wins Contest, Kicks Off Festival

By Cathy Tyson



Band members from left: Dorothy Watson, Dean Myatt, Erick Eckstein, Jane Daniel and Ric Hattabaugh are happy to "represent" Moraga, even with a lack of listeners. Photo Andy Scheck

Ultimately they were thrilled to come out on top. "We just had a great time." Initially fellow members were less than enthusiastic about the competition, but they reluctantly practiced a couple of times. "Song choice played a big part of the win," said vocalist and bass player Myatt. "We played to our strength - three part harmony." He thinks the one song that clinched the competition was their dynamite rendition of the Tubes classic song, "Talk to Ya Later" featuring a synthesizer.

Their unlikely journey to the stage is a testament to persistence, harmony and a bit of luck. From humble beginnings, specifically a Los Perales Father-Daughter Dance, current and former Moraga parents and part-time rockers met through their respective third graders when they were students at Los Perales Elementary School. Who knew this small town suburban facility was really a school of rock - for parents? Squeezing in practice time and performing is always a challenge, but these grown-ups with serious full-time jobs truly enjoy making music together and have played throughout the Bay Area including the Moraga and Orinda Concert Series, as well as at corporate events and fundraisers.

Lighthearted band members Myatt, Erick Eckstein, Jane Daniel, Dorothy Watson and Ric Hattabaugh formed the group with a goal of conquering the musical world one bedroom community at a time. They describe themselves as an adult alternative party band, and they were quite good at the Bank of the West stage until, literally, the plug was pulled. It's a shame more attendees couldn't enjoy their familiar upbeat music.

Although the Classic Covers Cup has been around since 2008, this year the competition was all about raising money for Lafayette Partners in Education or LPIE. In a generous move, Red House Studios used revenue from the Classic Covers Cup and donated it to LPIE. Supporting Lafayette's public schools and enriching science, music, art, technology, foreign language, electives and humanities is what the community based foundation run by parents is all about.

Perhaps Lafayette's next guitar hero will be a beneficiary.

Moments before Moraga band little dog 2 was about to take the stage at the Art and Wine festival, the ominous sky served up an appetizer of sprinkles, building to a hearty entree of downpour. The band was able to perform an energetic rendition of "Pink Cadillac" despite the precipitation, appropriately followed by "The Rain King." After completing only a handful of songs from their playlist, singer Dean Myatt announced, "We're going to pause momentarily so we don't blow up" - folks in charge of the amplification were concerned that the quintet could get an electrical shock and the equipment could short out. Despite the dreary weather and the rain out, band member Ric Hattabaugh made the best of it, noting the group are all friends and share a common passion for music.

The popular festival has historically had fantastic weather, but this year, rain kept crowds at home on Saturday to the dismay of vendors who set up shop along Mt. Diablo Boulevard. This was little dog 2's debut performance in Lafayette, the band recently won the "Classic Covers Cup" competition hosted by Red House Studios in Walnut Creek, winning this gig at the Art and Wine Festival, along with bragging rights.

"Our goal was not to fall on our faces," recalled band member by night, lawyer by day Myatt of the contest.



Erick Eckstein Drums and Vocals

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