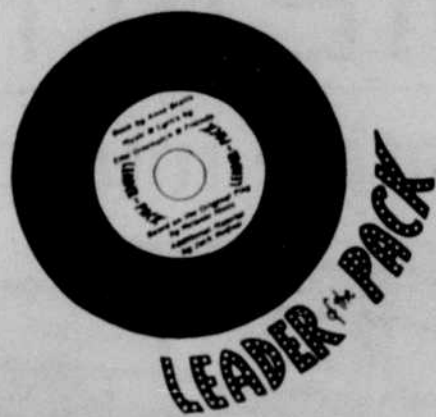


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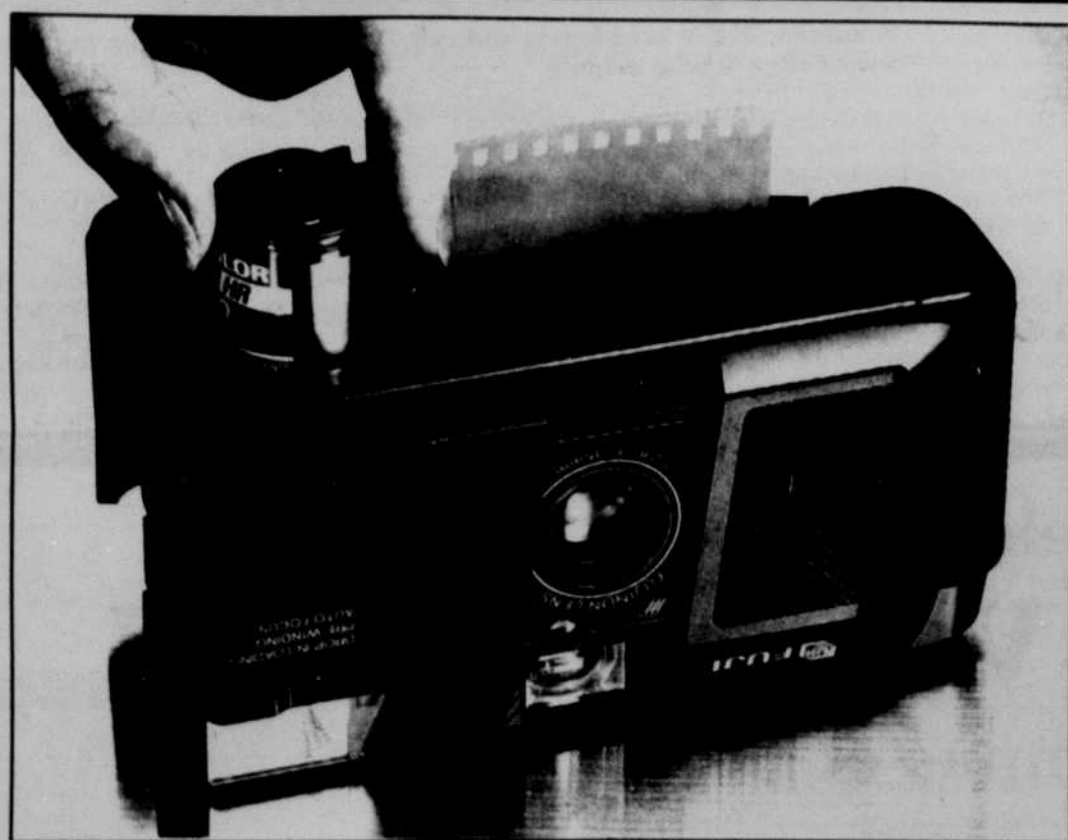
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SPOTLIGHT

Positive thinking and consistent style keeps REO Speedwagon on track

By Nathan Deer
Emerald Contributor

REO Speedwagon believes in the power of positive thinking.

"Most of our songs have a positive message," said Neal Doughty, one of the original band members, in a telephone interview from California. "The lyrics encourage people to have faith in themselves and to believe in themselves, and things will work out all right. We've never been into predicting the end of the world or anything like that. We believe in the power of positive thinking."

And no wonder. REO Speedwagon, who plays the Hult Center 8 p.m. Wednesday, has endured as a band for almost 20 years in the highly competitive world of rock music. It takes a positive attitude to survive that long.

"We've had some rough times," said Doughty, who plays keyboards. "We've also had a lot of success. But back in the beginning when things weren't so good, we persevered. That kind of attitude is reflected in our music."

REO Speedwagon was born in the late '60s at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. Doughty and drummer Alan Gratzner were dormitory roommates and decided to form a band to play at fraternity parties. Doughty and Gratzner recruited the other band members and soon branched out into area clubs. Their ambition to be the "hottest band in Illinois" quickly materialized. Then their success spread across the Midwest, and they finally headed for Los Angeles.

After two promising albums, the band hit the doldrums and its next four albums were only modest successes. Then, in 1977, REO Speedwagon finally attained national prominence as a rock 'n' roll band with the release of the group's live album, "You Get What You Play For."

Since 1977, REO Speedwagon has continued to attract popular and critical acclaim. In 1981 when the group released its biggest selling album, the multi-platinum smash, "Hi Infidelity." In 1982 the band recorded "Good Trouble," which also attained platinum status (over 1 million sales), and Speedwagon followed in 1984 with "Wheels Are Turnin'," which sold to nearly double platinum levels.

REO Speedwagon's latest release, "Life as We Know It," released last February, is selling briskly.

After 20 years in the music business, the group would be expected to change its musical style. But the music, although more versatile and polished, still focuses on what Doughty called, "good times."

"We do play more ballads," Doughty said. "But we still have a lot of rockers too. I think we've become more versatile as a band these last five to 10 years. People generally think of us as a 'good times' band, and that's certainly true, but our biggest hit songs have been ballads."

Perhaps the group's biggest hit is "Can't Fight This Feeling," which was the number one single for three weeks in 1984. Other hits include "Keep On Loving You," "Take It On The Run," and "Live Every Moment."

The fact that REO Speedwagon has not only survived but prospered as a band is testament to the group's remarkable longevity in a business known for its ephemerality. Doughty thinks the reason for the group's longevity has to do with the its chemistry.

"The main reason for our continued success and longevity is because we have five compatible people working together," he said. "A lot of bands break up due to ego conflicts. When they get famous people start treating them differently and they think they're special. It took us so long to really become well-known that we'd worked out all that ego stuff long before. We know what to expect from one another and we know and



Courtesy Photo

Twenty years and counting, REO Speedwagon's "wheels are turnin'." The band will perform at the Hult Center next Wednesday at 8 p.m.

respect one another."

Doughty also thinks that the band's democratic style of organization helps.

"When it comes to making records, Kevin (Cronin, lead vocalist and guitarist) has more influence," Doughty said. "But on the whole, we're pretty democratic as a group. Three of us co-produce our records, and four of us write songs. And in everyday life we cooperate with one another very well."

Another interesting fact about REO Speedwagon is that in spite of the band's longevity, the average age of the concertgoers is between 18 and 25.

"We recently had a demographic study conducted, and it showed that in addition to the 18 to 25 age group, our music

appeals almost equally to males and females," Doughty said. "But at concerts I see all kinds of people. Most are younger, but the older generation is represented too. It's gratifying to see two generations of fans attending our concerts."

And the reason for that, he said, is once again the band's image and musical style.

"Music with honest emotions and a positive outlook appeals to all kinds of people," he said. "We like to have fun with our music. We play loud, aggressive, but basically fun and affirmative music. It's a style of music that refuses to fade away."

Tickets for the REO Speedwagon concert are available at the Hult Center ticket office.

Falcolns, Flies, Guardians highlight Saturday's 'Beyond the Fringe'



Courtesy photo

The Lost Falcons are, from left: John Barley, Boyd Small, Andy Strange and Henry Cooper.

By Cyndee Haines
Emerald Contributor

Beyond The Fringe is an entertainment spectacular featuring many of Eugene's finest local musicians and performers. The show is one night only, at 8:30 p.m. Saturday, upstairs at the Vet's Club.

Beyond The Fringe stars three great bands, The Lost Falcons, The Electric Flies and The Guardians of American Morality. If that isn't enough, the legendary Radar Angeles and The Leftside Dancers also will appear. There will be something for everyone: go-go dancing, square dancing, fantastic rock 'n' roll and a few surprises.

Headlining the show will be The Lost Falcons, a red-hot four-piece rock group. The band was formed in 1984 and specializes in fast rockers as well as smooth rhythm and blues. The group's song list ranges from a blistering version

of Johnny Burnette's "Lonesome Train" to standards like "Shakin' All Over" and "Sea Cruise."

The Lost Falcons are based in Eugene and always play to large crowds at Taylor's and Max's Taverns when in town. The band recently returned from a very successful tour of Europe where they rocked crowds in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Switzerland, West Germany and the Netherlands, backing rhythm and blues great Screamin' Jay Hawkins. Screamin' Jay is best known for his 1950's hit "I Put A Spell On You."

The Lost Falcons are: Henry Cooper, slide guitar, harmonica and vocals; John Barley, guitar and vocals; Boyd Small, drums and vocals and Andy Strange, bass guitar.

Cooper's searing slide guitar solos and tasty harp playing make him one of the Northwest's most versatile and revered musicians. John Barley's guitar work is solid and he also is an outstanding

songwriter. The Lost Falcons recently recorded several Barley masterpieces, including "Hello Baby" and "Bring It Back."

Boyd Small is simply the best rock drummer in Eugene and possibly the Northwest. Small attended the University Music School and is an accomplished songwriter and singer.

Andy Strange, the youngest Falcon, plays fender bass and is currently a student at the University. Strange received his professional start with The Imposters and, combined with Small, the Falcons have a tremendous rhythm section.

The Electric Flies are an exciting rock 'n' roll trio specializing in 60s dance music. Their repertoire includes well-known standards and some great obscure tunes.

The Flies are led by whirlwind guitarist/singer/songwriter Randy Haines, formerly of the Milkmen. His very capable rhythm section includes ex-Soulsations bassist Jake Thompson and

drummer Jeff Strawbridge, both University students.

The Guardians of American Morality describe their music as country and "calypso-billy." The members are John Barley, guitar and vocals; Jerome Berryhill, guitar; Dennis Fitzgerald, drums; Molly Dahn, vocals; Stacey Sorenson, bass; and Mark Howerton, vocals.

The Guardians' songlist includes old standards such as "I'm An Old Cowhand" and "Ballad Of The Green Berets."

The Leftside Dancers have performed together in the Eugene area for several years and are choreographer/director Anne Cooper, Donna Biggs, Diana Taylor and Sandy Alperin.

Serving as mistress of ceremonies will be Rene Margolin, who has performed with Live Matinee and On The Edge, two Eugene theatrical groups.

Tickets for Beyond the Fringe are \$4 and all guests must be 21 years of age.

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