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**LIFESTYLE**

**BANDS**

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than many of the other University-based bands, so he doesn't understand why it always seems to result in violence at the group's shows.

Babbs, the Gang's bass guitarist, says the group used to regularly play at Taylor's College Side Inn during the summer, and one of the shows erupted into a fight between patrons that brought numerous police to the scene.

"Frat guys come and hippie guys come, and they just start to fight," Babbs says.

At one of the group's more recent shows — a campus-area party — another fight broke out and spilled into the street. Police arrived soon and ended the band's set early.

Numerous disturbances at Babbs' previous house also attracted police and made him a habitual offender. The cost has Babbs saying he would like to leave Eugene someday with the Gang — which also includes Lane student Juan Vargus on vocals, junior Casey Faust on guitars, and former Little Women drummer Brad Rosen.

"In Eugene, there's no money," Babbs says. "That'd help. Those noise disturbances cost me a bundle."

A performance outside of Eugene garnered the Gang's biggest crowd yet — 5,000 people, the group says — even though it wasn't entirely for the band. Harrisburg's "Life After Dead" show, which was put on after the Grateful Dead canceled August shows near Eugene, provided the Gang an opportunity to play its stuff — or at least the Dead's.

The band's garage, soundproofed with old carpet and black rubber, gives the group a place to play its own songs.

Babbs says he'd rather be playing "funky" music than what he describes as "hippie-type" music, so it seems appropriate that after making that decision, he saddles up with his bass — along with Faust and Rosen, but minus absent Vargus' voice — and plays "Bustin' Loose."

Supernova's explosion on the Eugene scene was somewhat less noticeable than the bright astronomical event the band takes its name from.

A year later, Supernova is consistently playing as an opening group in local venues, but they are still one of the self-proclaimed "who?" bands in Eugene.

"We don't have any fans," says bass guitarist Ken Johnson, a University freshman. "We have like zero fans."

University sophomore Phil Andrade, who plays guitar in the band, says he accepts that the band has little following because they just started playing Eugene shows during the summer. He said Supernova has probably played as many shows in their home state of Washington as they have in Eugene.

"We're a young band," Andrade says. "We played Eugene over the summer, but we barely got our feet wet." Andrade, Johnson and drummer John Abel, a senior

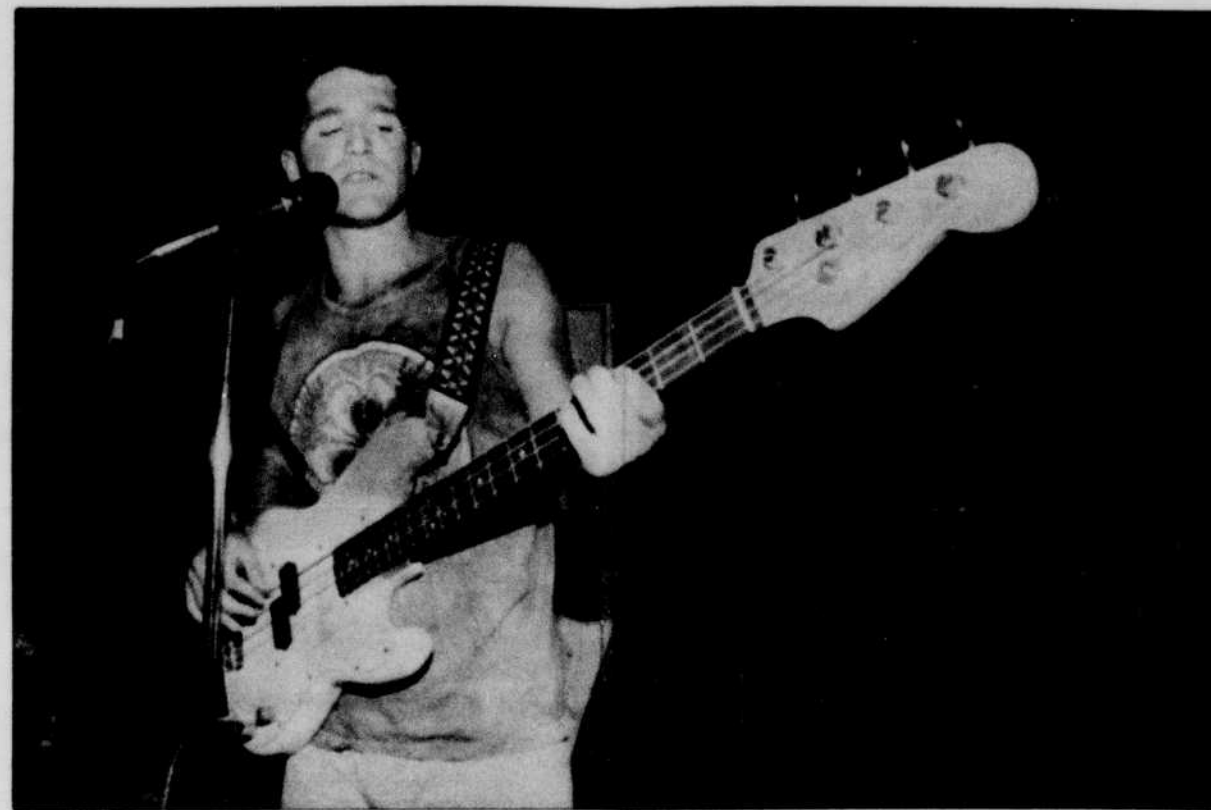


Photo by Michael Shindler

Bass guitarist Eli Babbs of The Lost Creek Gang says he would like his group to get more "funky."

at Oregon State University, grew up in the Tacoma area and went to high school together before traveling south with their instruments.

The musical torch in Supernova's hand is what Andrade describes as "progressive."

"We're just trying new things," Johnson says. "It's music with a human element, but remains true to the cosmic reality."

Supernova serenades its audience — however small — with a set almost entirely of originals, such as "Waltz of the Underworld" and "Not Human at All" from their demo tape.

"I think we're the grooviest," Andrade says. "Eugene's got kind of a groove problem," Johnson adds.

Although the band may not be well known, that doesn't mean they aren't recognized. Andrade says he ran into a fan once who was more than extremely appreciative of his guitar-playing.

"He thought I had a magic wand," Andrade says.

Drummer Luke Strahota has to pause a minute before saying the "unofficial version" of Marshal Plan's music.

"A platonically passionate shame-train of sonic chedelia," he spells out slowly. "That's basically what we

gotten out of it."

What the group's members have gotten out of it is their first headline shows at local bars during the month of what goes on and University senior Clint Sargent calls "Rock-tops."

For a band that didn't gel in its current form — which also includes University senior Steve Cebula on bass — until July, Marshal Plan has come a long way.

After playing constantly throughout last month, Marshal Plan is now taking a break until December in hopes of creating enough new material to play a two-hour set. Sargent says the group now has about 10 originals and would like to record a demo tape within the next few months.

The two headliner shows have been good to the group for many reasons, says Strahota, a student at LCC. He says the shows brought good-sized crowds to New Max's and John Henry's, and they dispelled the image that Marshal Plan is only an opening band for Jolly Mon.

Unfortunately, though, many crowds aren't there to just see Marshal Plan and the other groups, Strahota says.

"A lot of people don't go to the show for the right reasons," he says. "They're just making the scene." "The scene" has been kind to Marshal Plan, though, for the most part. Strahota, who went to Pleasant Hill High

School with Babbs and Faust, says it helps when the other bands in Eugene are friendly and try to help out.

"The great thing about it is, if you're on the same level, it's really good," Strahota says. "When you can get together with those kind of people, it makes you feel good."

The future plan for Marshal Plan? "It's always trippy to think that way," Sargent says. "As long as we're grooving ... that would be just fine."

...

Don't bother knocking. Big Macca keeps rocking. When police came to break up a party at the group's house earlier this year, they ignored the band's show in the living room and went straight for the kitchen.

While the police arrested several of the partygoers, Big Macca kept playing a Styx tune.

"We were right in the middle of ... Tonight's the night we'll make history," Macca says.

Finally the police confronted the band, but did not arrest the members.

"They asked, 'What are you going to do now?'" Macca says. "I said, 'I'm going to Disneyland!'"

Though the band may claim to have formed "an hour and a half ago," Big Macca — reportedly just "Macca" until Joey took his pants off at a party gig once — has been together since the start of the summer and have recently played at New Max's and John Henry's.

In all seriousness, the group of University seniors (though Montero claims to have no major and says he's going to drop out) are introducing a kind of music unique to Eugene — "Italian-American metal."

"If you go back that far, we're all from Italy," says Macca, who will graduate this term with a degree in telecommunication and film.

But just because it's new, doesn't mean the band's crowds have necessarily enjoyed the music. Among barbed comments and suggestions from their audiences, the angered attendees have ignited several fights, the band members say.

"Meow, meow," Montero says. "If I ever went to a show and heard that, I'd just get pissed."

"We call it a success when we have to run from our fans," Macca says.

Where the band has to worry little about fan disappointment is in the corner of the house's basement, which is not much larger than a walk-in closet. There, the band has only to play to its other roommates, who applaud the group with laughs at Montero's drooling and lines like, "He drinks beer and smokes pot ... Whoah, oh. Whoah, yeah!"

Following the group's opening song during an impromptu practice session, a moment of silence passes. Amato sits behind his new \$800 drum set, Montero has a wild hint to his grin, and Macca looks around, a Los Angeles Kings hat sitting backward on his head.

"Is that the first time we've played that song together?" he asks.

—Jake Berg

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