

FEATURES

# Sunset Valley inspires with wide variety of music

■ The band promotes its new CD in the casual atmosphere of John Henry's

By Mason West  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Many bands might be insulted if a venue told them, "You have to be done playing at 10 p.m. because we have to play '80s records." But Sunset Valley took the news in stride when they played their show Sept. 20 at John Henry's, 136 E. 11th Ave., before '80s night. The stop was one of many on a tour promoting their new CD, "icepond."

The band knew the conditions of the gig before they arrived that night. They even mocked the situation as guitarist/lead singer Herman Jolly mentioned multiple times during their set how they needed to make way for '80s night.

"It used to be '80s night every night," he said into the microphone. "You're lucky that it's only once a week."

Bass player Eric Furlong said that running the end of their set into the start of '80s night gives them exposure to many Eugene listeners who wouldn't normally come out to see their show.

The band played less than an hour because the two-hour slot for music was split among three bands. The Stores and Man of the Year both opened in kind of a venue fluke. Rory Carroll of The Stores (previously of Gabriel Blue) said when they heard Sunset Valley was playing John Henry's, they called the booking agent and said, "We're opening." In the meantime, Sunset Valley invited their friends Man of the Year to come play with them.

The Stores have an intimate connection to Sunset Valley. Carroll said when he first met Jolly, they started talking about band names that Carroll and his drummer had in mind for a yet nonexistent band.

"When we came to The Stores, Jolly

said, 'That's it. You're The Stores,'" Carroll said.

On Thursday, other aspiring bands could have taken inspiration from Sunset Valley in a similar fashion by just going up and saying, "Hi." The band looked just like any other group of patrons until they opened a large suitcase containing CDs and T-shirts.

It's apparent how down-to-earth a band is when it comes to selling merchandise. After the show, Jolly stood haggling with The Stores drummer.

Drummer: "How much for a T-shirt?" Jolly: (thinking) "\$7." Drummer: "But we gave you The Stores CD for free!"

John Henry's is the perfect place to find any band in a casual, disarming setting. The stage has steps leading right down to the checkerboard floor where the audience stands. Other people linger in the weary chairs or benches toward the back, at the bar or playing pool under the Budweiser lights.

The venue puts off a muted red glow, the kind of tone likely found in the calmer regions of hell — not that it's a bad thing. There are no pretenses of propriety: The place is dirty. There are stickers on the walls, furniture and even what used to be the bathroom mirror.

But it's a great spot to go to hear some good music, have some drinks and (if it's '80s night) dance.

Sunset Valley's third release is a pleasant kind of pop-rock that is a middle-of-the-road effort with a range of songs that don't get too hard or too wussy. For a three-piece band, they create a surprisingly full sound. For their second album, "boy scout superhero," the band expanded their numbers with a new drummer (current drummer Jonathan Drews moved to second guitar). When a fan inquired about a song he had heard at a prior concert that



Thomas Patterson Emerald

Rising indie band Sunset Valley stares into the harsh light of burgeoning fame during a concert at John Henry's.

was distinguished by a cowbell, Furlong said the song, "touch you," is on the new record, but there is no cowbell because Drews' drum set doesn't have one.

"Touch you" is good rock 'n' roll. It rocks a lot harder live, and that is a general rule for all of their songs. Something about not being able to understand all the vocals makes a song rock harder. The band does a lot with vocals using both Jolly as lead and Drews as back-up. On songs such as "blackberry bushes" and "nautilus sun" they do a cooing vocal chorus that reminds one of something Philip Glass wrote for the film "Koyaanisqatsi." It's hypnotic.

"Janey O" is a pleasant folk song, almost country; it's something that should be lis-

tened to barefoot. The third song, "fall fly," sounds like gospel music — it's got soul.

By diversifying their songs, the band avoids becoming tiresome. If they stuck to the style of any one of their songs, it would get boring pretty fast. The CD is well worth the \$10 they're asking for it on the record label's Web site ([www.barsuk.com](http://www.barsuk.com)). (Death Cab for Cutie is also on this label.) There are three Sunset Valley songs you can download for free, but be warned: The songs available do offer variety, but they aren't the best on the album.

Mason West is a Pulse reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. He can be reached at [masonwest@dailyemerald.com](mailto:masonwest@dailyemerald.com).



From national franchises and brands to local vegetarian and vegan enterprises. From authentic ethnic cuisine to the all-American hot dog.

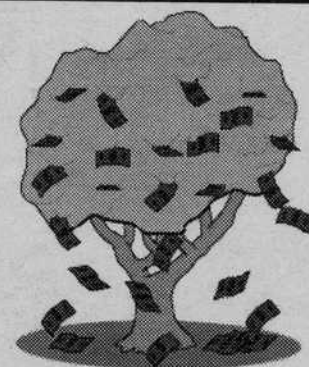
The EMU has something for everyone.

[www.emu.uoregon.edu](http://www.emu.uoregon.edu)



## food in the emu

- Buzz Coffeehouse • Erb Essentials Store
- Greatful Bread Bakery & Café • Holy Cow Café
- Jamba Juice • Pizza Planet • Subway
- Marketplace Foods [a different local food vendor every day]



**Money doesn't grow on trees.**

Look for **Duck Bucks** coming soon from your Oregon Daily Emerald

### Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. Box 3159, Eugene OR 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices in Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

#### NEWSROOM — (541) 346-5511

**Editor in chief:** Jessica Blanchard  
**Managing editor:** Michael J. Kleckner  
**Student Activities:** Beata Mostafavi, editor. Kara Cogswell, Diane Huber, Anna Seeley, reporters.  
**Community:** Lindsay Buchele, editor. Sue Ryan, reporter.  
**Higher Education:** John Liebhardt, editor. Eric Martin, Leon Tovey, reporters.  
**Commentary:** Julie Lauderbaugh, editor. Jacquelyn Lewis, assistant editor. Tara Debenham, Rebecca Newell, Jeff Oliver, Pat Payne, Aaron Rorick, columnists.  
**Features/Pulse:** Lisa Toth, editor. Dave Depper, Mason West, Pulse reporters. Marcus Hathcock, Anne

LeChevallier, features reporters.

**Sports:** Adam Jude, editor. Jeff Smith, assistant editor. Chris Cabot, Hank Hager, Peter Hockaday, reporters.

**Freelance:** Katie Mayer, editor.

**Copy:** Jessica Richelderfer, Chris Ryan, copy chiefs. Clayton Cone, Jessica Davison, Kathleen Ehli, Missy Healy, copy editors.

**Online:** Marilyn Rice, editor.

**Design:** Russ Weller, editor. Sarah Cohen, Morgan Dethman, Heather Gee Pape, designers. Steve Baggs, Peter Utsey, illustrators.

**Photo:** Tom Patterson, editor. Adam Amato, Jon House, Adam Jones, photographers.

#### ADVERTISING — (541) 346-3712

Becky Merchant, director.  
 Lisa Wood, sales manager.  
 Jill Hazelbaker, Michael Kirk, Trevor Kuhn, Lindsay McNamara, Mickey Miles, Hillary Shultz, Chad Verly, Jeremy Williams, sales representatives.  
 Van Nguyen, Valisa Nelson, Erin O'Connell, assistants.

#### CLASSIFIEDS — (541) 346-4343

Trina Shanaman, manager.  
 Erin Cooney, Katy Hagert, Laura Staples, assistants.

#### BUSINESS — (541) 346-5512

Judy Riedl, general manager.  
 Kathy Carbone, business supervisor.  
 Sarah Goracke, receptionist  
 John Long, Mike Chen, Teal Fleming, Jeff Neely, distribution.

#### PRODUCTION — (541) 346-4381

Michele Ross, manager.  
 Tara Sloan, coordinator.  
 Laura Chamberlin, Matt Graff, Heather Jenkins, Birch Lu, Laura Paz, Amy Richman, designers.