

Gary Cutter took a winding road to two decades of rock

By ERIC FOSTER
Post Staff

If you were to trace guitarist and singer Gary Cutter's childhood music influences, you might expect him either to be into gospel or hard rock.

He sang in church every week, and was a member of the Gate of Heaven Folk Group. But in high school he says he also hung out with the tough crowd after school.

For the past two decades, the guitarist and singer has made an avocation of playing rock in a broad sense, embracing elements of folk, blues, country, and pop music.

"The Eagles 'Peaceful Easy Feeling,' I've been doing that since 9th grade," says Cutter, 34, a Dallas native who now lives at Harveys Lake.

If there is a song that seems to sum up the way Cutter plays and sings music, that Eagles tune may be it. Cutter has a rich, mellow voice, but it's also raspy, like a smoky campfire.

And a campfire on a beach is where Cutter would appear to be most at home, with his flip flops and t-shirts. He's got a collection of hundreds of t-shirts. It's all he wears. And the flip flops are a must, so he can shake them off during the show.

"My mother calls me the neatest slob in the world. I have them all folded in groups," says Cutter.

"That's what I get for presents, t-shirts. I have some pretty rude ones, not too many - some that people gave me."

For all of his two decades of playing in public, Cutter was unwilling performer at first.

"I didn't want to go out for chorus," he says. "I was forced into it. They came after me because of my older brother (who also sang)."

Three years he sang in the high school chorus without reading a note of music.

"I still can't read music," says Cutter.

For the past two years, Cutter has been playing in Strangebrew, sometimes called Cutter Strangebrew, with his two compatriots, playing under the names of Dexter Strange and Dr. Monzingo.

"I was in the folk group at Gate of Heaven and at Dallas Junior High and I would sing every Sunday at Church," says Cutter, recalling his musical start. "I got interested in guitar by watching the guitar player."

In eighth or ninth grade, Cutter picked a guitar and started to play.

"I started on the bass at about the same time," says Cutter. "I got in with a band, The Pit Boogie Band, in ninth grade."

Jim Sapper of Dallas played guitar in the band and Cutter played bass. After about a year, Cutter left the band, but his musical career continued.

"I always had a partner," says Cutter. Those partners have included Victor Williams, Carl Dymond, and Jim Schappert.

It was with Schappert that Cutter opened for the Outlaws at the Station (now called Market Street Square).

When the Outlaws first played the Station, the opening act was Cutter and, "When they came again to play at the station, they asked for us," says Cutter. The Outlaws asked Cutter and Schappert to open for them a third time as well.

Nowadays, when he's not driving truck for Herr's Potato Chips, a couple of nights a week you'll find Cutter and Strangebrew playing area clubs like Alligators in Plains Township or The Marina at Harveys Lake. The three bandmates all play guitar, taking turns on bass.

"Dex, BB King is his hero," says Cutter. "We all play the blues, but he plays them so well."

In contrast to Dexter's free-wheeling jamming, Monzingo likes tight controlled playing.

As for Cutter, he's a music addict if there is such a thing.

"I have to have music all the time," he says. "I get up in the morning, the radio goes on. I go out in the living room, the stereo goes on."

And he went crazy when the stereo in his truck broke down recently.



A STRANGEBREW - Shown from left are members of the rock group Strangebrew, Dexter Strange, Dr. Monzingo, and Gary Cutter, playing at Alligators in Plains Township. (Post Photo/Eric Foster)

To celebrate the start of summer, Cutter holds an annual bash at Sgarlat Lake in Harveys Lake

Borough. The annual event is called the Klomfest, a word made up by his brother and an old roommate.

The entertainment? Strawberry Jam. And that will be another story.

Golf club gets OK from Lehman zoners

The Lehman Township Zoning Hearing Board approved a request by the Huntsville Golf Club to use build a private golf club in an area zoned residential at its meeting November 25.

According to the board's solicitor, Jack Haley, the township's zoning codes permit private recreation facilities in areas zoned residential, and the proposed golf club qualifies because it would not be open to the "indefinite public," but rather only members.

The zoning board also granted

permission for Mindy Cease, of Lake Avenue, Lake Silkworth, to run a family child care facility in her home. Cease will be permitted to care for up to six children in her home, including her own.

After the zoning board meeting, the planning commission approved a request from the Rondinella family to subdivide a 4 1/2 acre lot along Church Road into two lots so one lot could be given to a daughter and son-in-law.

The planning commission gave a 90-day extension to a request

from Chestnut Ridge Associates to subdivide a 9.59 acre lot containing a trailer park along route 29 in Lake Silkworth into four lots - one containing the 55-unit trailer park and three others for homes.

Commission member Rob Lewis noted that the trailer park does not conform to township codes now, which require a minimum 10 acre size for trailer parks with 12,500 square feet for each unit. The density at the present park is 7,595 square feet per unit.

Chief

(continued from page 1)

Savage noted.

In other objections, Savage said that there is no evidence of an increase in criminal activity in Jackson Township and that the supervisors had not discussed suggested changes in the police department with Jones in advance. Savage also noted that supervisor Andrew Kasko is a former Jackson Township police officer who frequently expressed his dissatisfaction with the assignments given him by Chief Jones.

Monday night, Jones said he was interested in the job, but not at the terms offered. "I am very interested in negotiating for the position," he said. "But the salary of \$19,200 for a 9-1/2 hour day is only \$300 more than the assistant chief's salary, and he works 8-1/2 hours a day. I would like pay and hours comparable to what the police chiefs in the four adjoining municipalities of Kingston, Dallas and Plymouth Townships and Dallas Borough, earn, which is approximately \$28,000. And I would like fringe benefits similar to theirs."

The 1991 budgets of Dallas Borough and Dallas Township indicate that \$28,000 and \$28,100 respectively were appropriated for the police chief's salaries. These figures do not include overtime pay.

Jackson Township Solicitor the Evans, Jr., said the matter was discussed in private as a courtesy to Jones. "The changes in the position of police chief were handled as a personnel matter and kept private as a courtesy to Chief Jones. The supervisors want a full-time police chief due to the increase in population in the township and the fact that they have a

new municipal building."

Supervisor Joe Stager was unsure of Jackson Township's population or how much it has increased over the past 10 years. "I think that it's about 4,500," he said. "There are many new subdivisions and developments. I don't have a percentage of growth. But we want to provide more police protection to the residents."

Preliminary estimates from the 1990 Census put the township's population at 5,336. But that figure includes prisoners at the Chase Prison. The township's 1990 population without the prisoners is estimated at about 3,600, an increase of about 23 percent from the 1980 Census count of 2,941.

The supervisors voted unanimously to advertise for applications for the position of full-time police chief, since Jones rejected the offer. Residence in Jackson Township is not required.

Proposed budget holds tax line

In other business, the supervisors approved a proposed 1992 budget that holds the line on property taxes at 3.5 mills.

They also removed the ban on open burning in the township because of the recent heavy rainfall.

The supervisors accepted \$8,682.16 from Pat Bangor of Cable TV in Hazleton as payment of cable television franchise fees from 1988 through 1990. A breakdown of the figure shows \$2,541.34 owed from 1988, \$2,956.30 from 1989 and \$3,184.52 owed from 1990. Bangor estimated the 1991 franchise fee at approximately \$3,200. This figure includes cable fees collected from Chase Prison inmates.

Cable TV services approximately 1,000 customers in Jackson Township, Bangor said, providing 36 cable channels to every area of the township with a population density of 20 or more homes per mile. The franchise fee is calculated at 3% of the gross revenues from basic cable service.

After consideration of a traffic study report of Weavertown and Jesse Roads, the supervisors approved advertisement of an ordinance limiting gross vehicle weight on Weavertown Road to 10 tons. Speed limits of 30 mph on Weavertown Road to the intersection with Oak Tree Road and 35 mph on Weavertown Road to the Plymouth Township line were also imposed, due to the road's numerous curves, narrow width and overall condition.

In closing, Supervisor Joe Stager commended Thomas Adams, whose term as supervisor ends this month, for six years' service in the township. Adams' position will be filled by newly-elected Walter Glogowski.



Marguerite Brace celebrates 100th birthday

Mrs. Marguerite Brace of Dallas celebrated her 100th birthday on November 26th at the Meadows Nursing Home. More than two dozen friends and family members attended the party held in her honor. Brace was also presented with a certificate from the John Heinz Institute inducting her into the institutes Century Club. Born in Plymouth on Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 1891, she later lived in Kingston with her husband, the late Edgar Brace, a teacher at Wyoming Seminary, before moving to Dallas in 1942, where she has lived ever since. Mrs. Brace has been active in the Back Mountain Library Book Club and library auction as well as the Dallas Methodist Church. Shown from left are, standing: her daughter, Peggy Brace Garris, of Dallas, her great-grandson, Joel Withers, of Dallas; her granddaughter, Jennifer Withers, of Dallas; her grandson Charles Garris with his wife Dolores, of Florida. Seated is Mrs. Marguerite Brace with her great-granddaughters, Jaclyn Garris at left, and Amy Withers. Mrs. Brace also has a son, Edgar S. Brace Jr., and a total of six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



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