

Cool Ride band to cruise Atlantic Ocean aboard ship

By SARAH HITE
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Lloyd Smith, of Nanticoke, strikes the first few soulfully funky notes of The Commodores' "Brick House" and throughout the rest of the beat-busting tune, it never dawns on the listener that Smith could ever be a 43-year-old truck driver by trade.

The Cool Ride Band member was born to sing and play the sax (and the sax) like local Olympian Jim Thorpe was, as Bruce Springsteen would say, "Born to Run."

The local cover band frequents car shows and bike weeks throughout the Back Mountain and Wilkes-Barre areas, and now the rockin' quartet will cruise the Atlantic Ocean.

Guitarist and saxophonist Smith, lead guitarist and vocalist Billy Pitt, drummer Darren Hall and his twin brother and bass player Doug Hall, will perform on a five-night Royal Caribbean cruise to Bermuda from June 18

MORE INFO

Contact Sea the World Travel in Fort Worth at 714-5566 for more information about the "Cruizin' with Cool Ride" Royal Caribbean cruise to Bermuda. Missed the boat? Contact Darren Hall at 333-1075 for more information about the Cool Ride Summer Party and other planned performances.

through June 23.

Darren Hall, of Orange, said the trip is a milestone for the band that recently celebrated its 5-year anniversary.

"It's definitely an accomplishment," he said. "It's a feather in our cap."

The band, which members call "NEPA's Ultimate Party Band," is comprised of musicians who have all played instruments for 30 years or longer.

It's no surprise the band could perform for a 3,300-guest cruise ship and not be nervous. The Cool Ride Band takes listeners on a musical journey through several different genres when it performs — anything from classic disco chart-toppers like the 1975

K.C. & the Sunshine Band hit "Get Down Tonight" to current tracks of today such as Finger Eleven's "Paralyzer."

And that's just one beat of the almost symphonic performance the band provides for its fans. Visual plays play a big part of the band's ability to get the crowd roaring with enthusiasm, and band members take that job seriously.

But ZZ Top-style beards, afro wigs and flashy sunglasses are just the beginning — band members even hold up signs with phrases like "make some noise" during shows, which Darren says throws parties for a loop.

"You hold a sign behind someone who's playing the tambou-



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Members of the Cool Ride band are, from left, Lloyd Smith, Doug Hall, Darren Hall and Bill Fitt.

rine and everyone's cheering and (the person) onstage gets a kick out of it," said Darren.

The interactive band even invites its fans on stage to help in performances, providing instruments like tambourines to willing participants. Band members also use wireless technology so they can play with the crowd while playing their instruments.

"We like to get people involved," said Darren.

The band plays mostly private events and club gigs, and also

hosts an annual event in the Back Mountain at Konefal's Grove in Jackson Township at the end of the summer. The Cool Ride Summer Party combines two aspects of what has made the band click for five years — classic cars and classic rock.

"The first time we did it, we set up a price, just to see if it would work," said Darren. "No (newspaper) articles announced it. We had more than 500 people show up."

And that loyal fanbase keeps coming back. For the cruise, Darren said band members had the option of staying on the ship for free in exchange for their performance or working out a discounted rate for a group of fans to come onboard. They chose the latter, opting to open the transatlantic trip to all Cool Ride lovers.

It will be a family affair, too, as Darren's recently-married son will celebrate his honeymoon on the five-day cruise.



BILL TARUTIS PHOTOS/ FOR THE TIMES LEADER

Victoria Grzyboski, of Lehman Township, left, Sharon Duddy, of Dallas, and Ron Grzyboski, of Lehman Township, chat during the cocktail hour of the Back Mountain Library Auction Kickoff Dinner.



Auction Kickoff Dinner Public Relations Director Carol Sweeney reads the silent auction table at Newberry Estates in Dallas.

Kicking off the Auction

Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction 2011 officially kicked off June 6 with the annual Auction Kick-Off Dinner at Newberry Estates. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres were followed by a buffet-style dinner including a grilling station, a pasta station and a dessert station. A mini auction offered those in attendance a chance to bid on a sampling of Nearly Olde and New Goods items, antique collectibles and plants.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP

Comprehensive plan will determine area's future

By SARAH HITE
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VIEW THE PLAN

The drafted plan is available for public viewing at the township municipal building. Contact Rick Melvin, Franklin Township secretary/treasurer, at 333-5131 to make an appointment for viewing.

Officials are putting the final touches on the township's first-ever comprehensive plan, which will help officials determine what the future will hold for the smallest township in Luzerne County.

The drafted comprehensive plan, which includes input from residents, reflects how officials can identify opportunities for growth and how to control community development within the township.

This is just the start of some major changes within the township — after the approval of the comprehensive plan, officials will begin to make significant updates to the township's zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO), which have been in place since around 1995.

Franklin Township Secretary/Treasurer Rick Melvin said the township received a \$100,000 grant in 2009 from the Luzerne County Office of Community Development, which will fund the comprehensive plan and the ordinance updates.

Initially, officials didn't have the intention to develop a comprehensive plan — Melvin said the supervisors were unable to utilize the funds to fix and maintain roads within the township because the areas that needed work did not meet the grant's guidelines.

"At first it was really unfamiliar to me, a comprehensive plan," said Chairman Ted Dymond. "It's to see which direc-

tion is good for the township in the future."

A farmer by trade, Dymond said he would like to see the township remain a rural community. Two major farming operations, Dymond's Farm and Brace's Orchard, are currently located within the township, as is a honey bee farm owned by William and Priscilla Perry.

The plan states agriculture is still an important aspect of the township's local economy, and keeping open spaces is key to maintaining the activity.

While neighboring Back Mountain municipalities have experienced growth due to migration from more urban communities such as Wilkes-Barre and Kingston, Dymond said Franklin Township has yet to see significant population increases.

But officials estimate that time will come.

"Kingston Township is pushing toward us, Dallas Township is pushing toward us," said Supervisor Michael Prokopchak, also a farmer.

Melvin added the idea is to control that expected growth coming from neighboring municipalities, including controlling how much land residents would need to build on a property.

Prokopchak said while Dallas and Kingston townships have public water and sewage systems, Franklin Township re-

quires all residents to have their own septic and well water systems.

To address the spacing issue for new homes, a precedent needs to be set as to how much land a builder would need to maintain these independent systems.

"Instead of two acres, a resident would need 2 1/2 acres to accommodate a failed (septic or water) system," said Prokopchak.

According to the plan, residential properties make up about 12 percent of the township's land use, most of which is scattered along the township's main roads. Open space and woodlands account for about 46 percent, and agriculture utilizes about 36 percent of the township's land space.

Dymond said the plan reflects what residents feel are the most important aspects of the community — road maintenance and police and emergency services. Melvin said road work makes up about two-thirds of the township's priorities, which is why the supervisors initially wanted to utilize the grant money for road maintenance.

The township is patrolled by state police from its barracks in Wyoming and satellite operations in Laporte, Shickshinny, Towanda and Tunkhannock. Franklin Township has two vol-

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JACKSON TOWNSHIP

Supers looking into possible regional police participation

By EILEEN GODIN
Dallas Post Correspondent

Back Mountain regional police force.

The Governors Center for Local Government Services is a resource local municipalities can use for help in planning and developing services to better aid residents.

Fox said the study will look at each municipality separately to determine if combining police staff and resources could be beneficial. He said once the study is complete, each participating municipality will receive the results of their police department study.

Supervisor Al Fox said the

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study will be funded through a grant from the Governors Center for Local Government Services.

Although the study will determine if a regional police force could provide better service to the communities, it does not mean a regional police force is on the horizon, Supervisor chairman John J. Wilkes Jr. said.

"We are looking to see if there is a better way," Fox said.

In other news, residents came armed with a petition to stop a neighbor on Cigarski Road from developing a motocross course.

Over the weekend, the constant buzz of dirt bikes and clouds of dust struck a nerve with residents in the Meadowcrest, Chase Manor, Chase

Road and Cigarski Road. Resident John Pieczynski presented a petition with about 30 to 40 names of nearby residents against the budding motocross course.

Another resident said there was a cloud of dust rising from the property and resident Rich Mulhern said there were eight bikes going at one time.

The property owner was not in attendance and his or her name was not released. Wilkes said supervisors are aware of the situation and have had attorney Jeffery Malak and code enforcement officer Andy Shol-

tis working towards a solution for the past several weeks.

Wilkes said the landowner was served with a zoning violation on Monday morning, requiring the activity to be stopped. He added the property is zoned for agricultural and a dirt bike track is not covered for acceptable use under the current zoning laws.

Also, supervisors approved Malak to advertise the 2011 paving projects which include either partial work or larger portions of work to Pinecone

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