

Wright stuff

A new documentary about Frank Lloyd Wright is more than a biography. *Television, B-12*

Ready to rock you

The Invictas headline Labor Daze — and make Sunday 'Hump Day.' *Genescene, A-7*

THE DAILY NEWS



Tomorrow
73°/57°

Thursday,
August 31, 2006

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Serving Genesee, Wyoming and Orleans Counties

50 cents

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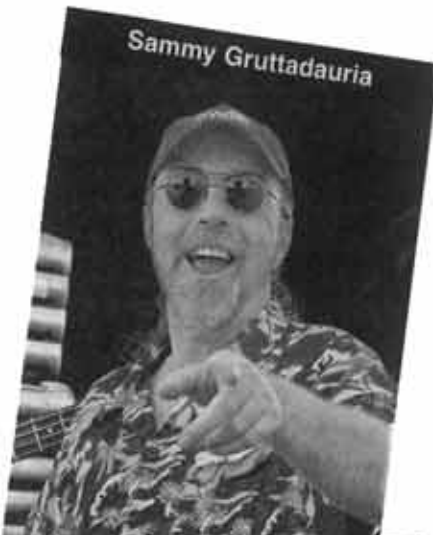
Dave Profeta



Bruce Hickey



Jim Kohler



Sammy Gruttadauria



Dave Hickey



Herb Gross

Rockin' out of retirement

The Invictas are enjoying a second round of fame

By Scott DeSmit
Daily News Staff Writer

I've got a story for you 'bout the hottest spot in town. They do the newest dance of any place around. Do The Hump. Do The Hump. Do The Hump.
— From The Invictas' hit, "The Hump."

Herb Gross never imagined it would happen.

Nearly 40 years after Gross and his bandmates recorded "The Hump," and 25 years since he had even touched an instrument, there he was, on stage, belting out a song.

And the crowd remembered. "There were people out there calling for 'The Hump,'" said Gross, lead singer for The Invictas. "I told Dave (Hickey, drummer) that this was a Blues Brothers moment. We have to put the band together again."

Two years later The Invictas are back and, according to Gross, better than ever.

The band headlines Sunday's entertainment at Oakfield Labor Daze, playing from 6 to 10 p.m.

That the band is playing Oakfield can be attributed to former Batavian, Mary Haitz, a blues singer who recently moved to South Carolina. She was scheduled to play, couldn't, and suggested organizers call Gross.

Coincidentally, it was Haitz who got the band back together.

"She's responsible," Gross said from his home in North Carolina. "I was up (to Rochester) visiting Dave Hickey and his wife suggested we got out for a few drinks. We went to The Dinosaur and Mary was playing. She heard we were in the crowd and asked us to sit in."

Hickey refused, figuring he had a few too many beers and wasn't up to par. Gross didn't. He got on stage and



THE FIRST TIME AROUND: Members of The Invictas as they appeared sometime in the 1960s. The photos above show members of the band's current lineup. Herb Gross is at bottom right.

sang "Long Tall Shorty," which was the flip side of "The Hump."

The crowd remembered when The Invictas were the hottest party band in Western New York, with a Rochester bar, Tiny's Bengel Inn, their home base.

The feeling of being on stage in front of a rowdy crowd stirred something inside Gross. He called former bandmates and a year later, The Invictas were playing gigs in Rochester again and, again, gaining national attention.

The Invictas formed in 1961 at Rochester Institute of Technology. Soon they were packing the house at Tiny's and other local joints and in 1963 cut "The Hump" in a small studio.

The single outsold The Beatles locally, Gross said, and was "number one in Miami, banned in Boston and in the top 100 in the country."

Two years later the group cut their

first and only album. Today, the album fetches as much as \$300 on eBay.

Friday, tentatively, the band is to be featured on NBC's *The Today Show*, and Gross is hopeful that the band's second album, on compact disc, will be ready to sell by then.

"I never believed this would happen," Gross said. "I'm surprisingly relaxed about it. Last summer I was nervous. I hadn't played in 25 years, I wondered if anyone would show up to our gigs. But the first couple gigs were packed. People were dancing and telling us that we sounded better than we did in the '60s. I think the band does sound better, especially technically. I know our shows are better."

The band recently opened for The Beach Boys at the Constellation Brands Marvin Sands Performing Arts Center in Canandaigua.

Most of the band is in Rochester, including Dave Hickey and his brother, Bruce. The other member, Jim

Kohler, lives in Erie, Pa.

Kohler is the oldest member at 63. Gross is 62, Dave Hickey is 59 and Bruce, 57. They are joined by newcomers Dave Profeta and Sammy Gruttadauria.

That the band is gaining attention again perhaps has a little to do with their age and "it's a human interest story," Gross said. But there's more.

"I wouldn't doubt there are other guys in their 60s out there but we're not just a bunch of old guys standing on stage playing our instruments," he said. "We're out there rockin' them. Our shows are loaded with energy, there's the sexual connotation of the hump and we get all the ladies up there dancing."

The band also raises money for leukemia research through sales of shirts and hats and other items. "If you can do something good while you're having fun, that's the way it should be," he said.

And they are having fun and so are people who come to see the band. "People have come from all over to some of the gigs we're playing," Gross said. "We played an important role in people's lives. We all grew up on rock and roll and this is a chance to relive our youth. That's what we're doing. It's more than just music. I think that's what's catching everyone's eye."

Gross said concertgoers can expect "excitement and fun" and he hopes for a "mob that comes ready to party" Sunday.

The band has new material, which will be on the upcoming CD. It includes a song Gross penned: "One More Time."

"The way I figure it, we only have one more shot at this so let's make it fun. That's what we're doing."

Labor Daze lineup

OAKFIELD — This weekend's Labor Daze could just as well be called "Music Daze." The three-day event features gospel and country, hard rock and blues, oldies rock and blue grass.

And, of course, plenty of food, crafts, cars, a bed race, jugglers and fireworks.

Some of the acts scheduled to perform:

THE TROLLS, local favorites who have been performing for about 25 years take the stage from 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday.

CROSSBEARERS, a local gospel group from noon to 12:30 p.m. Sunday.

ROGER HELTON and **JEFF TAYLOR**, bluegrass and gospel from Nashville. Taylor is formerly of Pembroke and has played with Ricky Skaggs, The Chieftains and Buddy Greene. The duo plays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Sunday.

NIGHTOWL plays from 3:45 to 5:45 p.m. Sunday, followed by **THE INVICTAS** from 6 to 10 p.m.

OAKFIELD-ALABAMA SCHOOL JAZZ BAND, plays from 12:15 to 1 p.m. Monday.



Engler

KATE ENGLER BAND, award-winning blues artist from Buffalo plays from 4:15 to 5 p.m. Monday.

TOBY LIVE, a Toby Keith impersonator is from 5:15 to 6:15 p.m. Monday.

BAREBACK JACK, Buffalo Music Awards "Top Country Band" plays from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Monday.