



NOTE ON THE PHOTO: The person to the far left behind the Fender amp may be Skitch our set up guy. Mark is on the left with Spank right behind him, kind of down. You can see my older Epiphone bass sticking out. Dave is on the drums then Herb. Not sure whom the guy is on the far right. He could have been an announcer.

These articles along with the above photo appeared in the weekend edition of The Daily News paper of Batavia, NY. (they showed our photo - none of the "big" acts!

Perry's Sandsabarn was *the* teen hangout in the 1960s

By Matt Surtel msurtel@batavianews.com

PERRY — “It was a crazy idea but it worked.”

The advertisements read like a who’s who of ’60s rock royalty: the Hollies, Standells, Blues Magoos, Peter & Gordon. But in Perry, N.Y.?

As unlikely as it sounds, it was happening weekly at an out-of-the-way venue — fondly remembered by many, yet unknown to people who weren’t lucky enough to be there.

“It tells you there that I’m mentally deranged and that helps,” laughs former owner Roger Paddock, looking through a 1964 newspaper feature on the club he called the Sandsabarn. Jokes aside, he knew exactly what he was doing. Paddock, then 30 years old, had already owned and sold the Perry racetrack, when he was talked into buying the village’s theater.

He showed the teen classic “Beach Party” shortly after its release. The film starred Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello, and he noted the audience’s reaction. “It didn’t have much plot or anything, but all the kids just loved it,” he said. “I was watching it one night when the theater was pretty full of kids and I said, ‘Why don’t I build an indoor beach?’”

Paddock chose a spot on Route 20A between Perry and Warsaw. He hired local contractor Bill Hulme to build exactly what he had in mind. The building, dubbed the Sandsabarn, featured room for 600 people, with imported sand floors, picnic table decor and fishing nets hanging from the ceiling. A menu offered non-alcoholic drinks, hamburgers, and similar fare.

As for the music?

Paddock accepted only the top entertainment. He wanted the best area bands, along with current hitmakers. There’d be no playing records at this place. A steering committee of local high schoolers was set up to make suggestions and give ideas.

“I went to each school, and got the most popular boy and more popular girl to be on the board of directors,” Paddock said. “They were from Perry, Warsaw, Wyoming and Letchworth.” No parents were allowed inside while shows were under way. No alcohol was allowed and drugs simply weren’t an issue. Paddock’s wife Brenda took money at the entrance, with a no-nonsense reinforcement standing beside her. “We had a great big guy and we called him ‘The Smeller’” Paddock said laughing. “If he smelled any booze, he said ‘Out!’ “He was a big guy,” he continued. “The entrance was so narrow they couldn’t squeeze by him. And he was a big enough guy that they didn’t argue.” Very few people tried to sneak alcohol regardless. The teens knew the rules and wouldn’t risk missing out.

Security often meant another thing entirely. “We had a lot of bouncers,” Mrs. Paddock said. “They were a lot of really nice men we knew in the neighborhood and they were always there. Especially with the big popular groups, because they had to keep the kids from swarming up into them.” She impersonated a screaming teenage girl from the era: “Aaahhahhaaaah!” “I remember the night we had the Hollies there,” Paddock added, laughing. “The bandstand was elevated of course, and I had a row of four guys standing up front. They were bent backwards, with the girls trying to get over them.” “The kids were really respectful,” Mrs. Paddock said. “Hardly any weren’t.”

Local acts included Rochester legends the Invictas. The Rogues, Caesar and the Romans, and the Buffalo Beatles hailed from Buffalo. The Hollies appeared at the Sandsabarn more than once, and Paddock remembers them as nice to work with. They

stayed a few miles away at the Warsaw motel. He remembered Peter & Gordon, another British Invasion act, as “real quiet guys and low-key ... super, super guys.” Mrs. Paddock said the McCoys — of “Hang on Sloopy” fame — were a good band and enjoyable to deal with. The only exception was Frankie Valli, who appeared with the Four Seasons. “He was really the only one that wasn’t,” she laughed. “He didn’t like our dressing room. It wasn’t up to his standard.”

The Byrds were the only act to slip through the Paddocks’ fingers. They were slated to appear in Buffalo before playing the Sandsabarn, but a snowstorm canceled their flight. Radio station WKBW-AM was a rock’n’roll powerhouse at the time and helped get the word out. “That was the only night we closed,” Paddock said. “We put it on the radio and had very good cooperation with WKBW. They treated us right. They blasted on there that the Byrds couldn’t get in. We just shut the doors that night, and somebody threw a rock through the window. Somebody apparently drove out from Rochester and it made them mad.”

So what became of the Sandsabarn? The Paddocks decided to close in 1969 after five years. It was a sideline to Mr. Paddock’s dairy breeding business and times were changing. “It just seemed as if more of the kids were drinking,” Mrs. Paddock said. “Also, drugs were entering into Perry — just the beginning of it.” “It was the right time,” Mr. Paddock added. “There seemed to be a switch, just like with the long hair. It’s the same thing today. Kids today aren’t like they were back then, and it was a different crowd.”

They sold the Sandsabarn to a cookie business. It was later remodeled and is now home to Wyoming County Community Action Inc. But the Paddocks still have lots of memories — and a few souvenirs — from hosting area kids who were seeking a good time. “It’s surprising over the years how many people we’ve run into who said, ‘That’s where we met,’” Paddock said. “Couples come up to us time after time, and that’s where they met and they later got married.” The couple has an amazing life, Mrs. Paddock added. They have five children, 21 grandchildren. They’ve also operated a travel agency, hosted 12 exchange students and traveled the world in the years since the Sandsabarn.

“God has been just pouring his blessings out on us,” she said. “We just remember it was a very positive thing in our lives. It was the right timing.” But for a five-year period the Sandsabarn made waves — with thanks to some initial inspiration from Frankie and Annette. “I said, ‘We’ll just build a beach for the kids and I’ll bet you they all come,’” Paddock said. “And they all came. From all over the place.”

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Rochester band The Invictas were a Sandsabarn favorite

By Matt Surtel msurtel@batavianews.com

PERRY — Hard to say which band was “best” at the Sandsabarn. But asked if he had a favorite, Roger Paddock named ***The Invictas out of Rochester*** — noting singer-guitarist Herb Gross’ energy. “He’s a tremendous showman,” Paddock said. “They had this song that was pretty popular: ‘Do the Hump.’ That group would jam the place.” The Invictas, who have themselves experienced a major renaissance, remember the crowds and the sand floors fondly.

“We played there often,” Gross said in a telephone interview. “I couldn’t tell you how many times but we did play there often. “We always loved going there. The crowd was always big and enthusiastic, the girls were screaming and all that, and we loved it.” Drummer Dave Hickey remembers opening for Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels at the club 1965 or ’66. He said the drummer broke his foot pedal during the first set and turned to the Invictas for help. “He borrowed mine and finished the show,” Hickey said. “He was a drummer that I really admired at the time, and it was a great opportunity to get to know him.”

Cool stuff for college guys playing a supercharged brand of garage rock party music. “That was a really happening place,” Gross said. “I don’t remember us ever playing where the crowd wasn’t really big and enthusiastic.”

Check the Web at www.theinvictas.com for more on the Invictas.