

# Passion for music burns bright for Humboldt alumni

## Lazy River Band reunites for July 3 concert in Dakota City

By DAWN THOMPSON  
Entertainment editor

HUMBOLDT — A passion sparked as a free wheelin' teen can burn out quickly in the face of adult responsibilities.

But, for a group of Humboldt high school alumni, the passion to play music burns as brightly now as it did when they first performed more than 30 years ago. Billed as the Lazy River Band, the guys have made it a tradition to return to their hometown each year for a reunion concert.

"That first year was kind of spur of the moment," said Randy Berka. "A few of the guys had gotten together while they were back visiting for the Fourth and they thought wouldn't it be great to play music again. That sort of reignited the whole thing."

Berka, a scientist for a biotechnology company in California, wasn't at that first

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-Randy Berka

performance, but he was called shortly after and recruited for the next year.

"We just had such a good time playing," said fellow band member John Callahan, "we thought we'd do it again."

Berka and Callahan are joined for the reunion shows by Ardie Strutzenberg, a professional drummer from Huntsville, Ala.; Jon Porter, a U.S. Congressman for the state

of Arizona; and Mark Flanagan who lives in Adel.

Also, John Brandsgard, who normally plays with the popular Kansas City blues band The Nortons, joins line-up each year. While not an original member of Lazy River, he did play in other bands with Callahan, Strutzenberg and Flanagan.

Lazy River started in 1969 when a group of high school friends wanted to be a part of the rock 'n' roll atmosphere.

"It was the height of the '60s music generation," Berka said, "and everyone who had a guitar wanted to be in a band. We played high school dances, festivals and bars all over Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota and South Dakota."

The group split in 1972, but they all remained friends and kept in touch over the years.

However, Callahan said, careers and family demands make it increasingly difficult to make the logistics for a concert work. Even when schedules coincide, they band members are spread across the country and have to learn the songs for the play list by listening to cassettes and MP3 files they send one another. Then they try to pull everything together in less than an hour before showtime.

"This will probably be the last one," Callahan said. "That's why we're calling it The Last Stand."

But, Berka said, the guys are all open to the occasional performance together.

"You never know where we'll show up,"

# LAZY RIVER



Above is a promotional poster for the Lazy River band from 1969.

he said. "It's just been a blast, and the amazing thing was the magic was still there between us."

### "The Last Stand"

Featuring Lazy River with special guests Steve Curry and Static.

**When:** 8 p.m., July 3.

**Where:** VFW club in Dakota City.

**Admission:** \$10 at the door.



-Submitted photo

Members of the Lazy River Band during a recent performance in Iowa.