



## Geezer credo: Never too old to do some good

Thursday, August 10, 2006

**Joanna Connors**  
**Plain Dealer Cultural Critic**

You still have a stereo system -- and you actually call it a system -- with speakers the size of a Sub-Zero.

You set the volume to 11.

You know where the previous line originated. (And, say it with us: "It's a thin line . . .") You were too young for Woodstock. Now you're too old for Bonnaroo. In fact, you aren't entirely sure what Bonnaroo is. But your kids are.

Sound vaguely familiar? Like it or not, that makes you a Geezer.

It also puts you firmly in the demographic for "Geezeroo," coming to Cain Park in Cleveland Heights this Sunday.

The multiband concert features Pure Prairie League, Poco, New Riders of the Purple Sage and Chris Hillman and benefits the Human Fund, the 18-month-old charity that supports arts education programs for under-served children in Cleveland.

It also poses a question for Clevelanders of a certain age: Are you ready to Geeze?

Andy Rayburn is. Rayburn, who made a lot of money by improving, expanding and then selling the family fastener-distribution business, Flexalloy, is 51. Normally, that's midlife crisis age. Yet Rayburn gives every appearance of being the happiest man in Cleveland.

He heads up Big Game Capital, a private investment firm whose holdings include a minority interest in the Cleveland Cavaliers, the minor-league Daytona Cubs in Florida and the jam-band summer music fest, 10,000 Lakes Festival, in Minnesota.

If the holdings don't make Rayburn's business philosophy clear, Big Game's motto does: "Make money, have fun, don't miss the big plays."

The motto could also apply to the Human Fund, a charity Rayburn started last year, with a few old friends, and named after a joke from "Seinfeld." Its benefits - last year's pARTy at the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame and Museum and a wine-and-art auction last April - have made both money and fun. They have raised enough to donate \$150,000 to the fund's primary beneficiary, the Cleveland school district's All-City Arts Program, with enough left to spread among 18 other arts organizations.

When we met up with Rayburn at Cain Park this week, the first thing we asked him was: "Hey! Who you calling a geezer?"

"Me," he said with a big grin. "And my friends."

Rayburn claimed he achieved geezerhood years ago. "It's all in the mind," he said. "You just have to accept the fact that you're no longer 21 and that you're becoming more and more pathetic." (On the second point, having three children in or near their teens helps.)

Executive Director Andrea Wedren runs the Human Fund, but Rayburn said he puts more of his time and energy into it than into Big Game Capital. He even drew up the wish list for Geezeroo performers, who included (Geezer alert! Songs about to lodge themselves in your mind for the rest of the day): Maria Muldaur, Jesse Colin Young and Roger Mc-

Guinn, who were all unavailable.

Michael Belkin of LiveNation scored Rayburn's top two choices, though, New Riders of the Purple Sage and Pure Prairie League.

Pure Prairie League had heavy-duty sentimental value. Rayburn fondly remembered a jaunt he and his friends in the Hawken Class of '73 took to Kent State University to see the band.

"They were playing in this little cafeteria room at Kent State, with folding chairs and a 1-foot riser like high-school choirs sing on, and there were, max, 300 or 400 people crammed into this cafeteria," Rayburn said.

"We got tickets and we were there 2½ hours before the show. We were delirious with excitement. One of the guys in our class got in a wheelchair, with a blanket over his legs, and took a keg in under the blanket."

One of Rayburn's favorite PPL albums was "Bustin' Out," which he did - after Hawken, he went to Dartmouth College and then headed to northern California, where he worked in advertising.

But like many of his friends, he eventually returned to his hometown, and when he made good, he decided to do some good.

"The idea was to present an alternative approach to philanthropy in the Cleveland area and draw in more people like us," he said.

"Less formal, more personal, less structured, with a focus on the arts and on the kids."

The main beneficiary, the Cleveland schools' All-City Arts Program, offers 12 student music, dance and visual-art ensembles; private music lessons; an annual arts festival; and student exhibitions and performances.

Next on the agenda for the Human Fund is an art gallery in University Circle. "The concept is to not only show student art and hold artistic events," Rayburn said, "but to have it designed, constructed and managed by the kids as well, so they get the hands-on business experience as well as the artistic experience."

After the gallery is up and running, they hope by the second half of 2007, Rayburn wants to start building an endowment for the Human Fund. The plan, he said, was to start off with fund-raising events and, for the first three years, to distribute all of the proceeds. "After we establish ourselves as a legitimate and effective organization, then we'll use that record to start building an endowment."

He's hoping Geezeroo will raise \$40,000, and he already has his wardrobe planned for the event. "I'm going to have to wear tie-dye," he said. "It IS Geezeroo."

To reach this Plain Dealer reporter:

jconnors@plaind.com, 216-999-4307

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