

HALTON'S PEOPLE

Brownies keep her young

David Rea entertains at the Mug in Acton



By SUE LEHN
When blues guitarist David Rea took the stage at the Acton's Mug coffee house on Saturday night and promptly threw his crutches into the audience, he had an idea of what to expect.

Mr. Rea, performing for the first time in over a month, dedicated the show to Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones, because he feels Mr. Richards is being persecuted in Canada.

"Keith Richards is a heroin addict, he is sick. They told him to do a concert for the blind, and he said he would. Now some political dentist who wants to become solicitor-general has said that if he shows his face here, to do a concert or not, he will be put away. Roy McMurtry has never watched anyone go through heroin withdrawal, he has no idea of what it is like. Every show I do is for Keith Richards until he is exonerated," said Mr. Rea.

BROKE HIP
He passed around his crutches, which he has needed since a recent accident where he broke his hip when he fell while turning around to look at a pretty girl, for everyone to sign for Mr. Richards. When

they are filled with signatures, and he no longer needs them, Mr. Rea will send them to the Rolling Stones guitarist.

From the start of his set, David Rea never once let the audience, made up of mainly teenagers, drift away. He rocked, always inviting the audience to join him by clapping their hands or singing.

For many, it was the first time they had heard his own songs as well as others he covered, such as Red Rooster (during which he invited people to get up and dance for Keith Richards), and his second set, entitled "Hellhound" a tribute to Robert Johnson.

During Mr. Rea's introduction to "Hellhound", he explained to the crowd that Robert Johnson was one of the greatest Blues guitar players around, and that he died by the time he was 21, poisoned by a woman.

David Rea, who has played professionally for 24 years, has made it a point in his life to seek out and learn from the people who are legends in the music business. He has played often with people who worked with Robert Johnson. For "Hellhound" he collected all the original Robert Johnson recordings.

"One of the things that I try to impart to people is that I have had the opportunity to deal with people who are legends, and deal with them on a one-to-one basis," Mr. Rea told The Herald. "They have given me freely and unselfishly the knowledge that they had, usually a few years before they died. It was almost like I'm going to die, you take what I have. I am a vessel."

"Hellhound" was a powerful set which described in a few songs the type of life that Robert Johnson led, by using his own songs. Although David Rea modestly describes himself as "a fairly competent guitar player", he showed the audience on Saturday night why he has been playing music professionally for so long. He was burning. For anyone who enjoys not only Robert Johnson, but blues guitar, David Rea is not to be missed.

POWERFUL SET

Mr. Rea is sufficiently knowledgeable that he could play in much larger places than the Mug, but he feels he has an obligation to these smaller clubs.

"We have an opportunity to make such beautiful music, maybe I'll explode trying to make that music, and I'd rather do it at a little club like the Mug than at Carnegie Hall. I started out in small clubs, where would I be now if those clubs hadn't been there 15 or 20 years ago? I could make more money by playing at the large halls, but I've made a commitment to people like Chris Sankey at the Mug."

Mr. Rea, who was born in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, but now lives in Guelph, says that his music is an affirmation of life and love, and that is all he has ever made his living doing. "My music is supposed to upset people," he said. "I don't want people to just sit there at their tables and say 'Oh, how wonderful'. I want them to be moved, to feel that they have experienced something." Definitely, the people at the Mug on Saturday night did.

By MAGGIE HANNAH
Herald staff writer
"Any adult leading a bunch of Brownies has to be part kid herself to work with them," says Pat Van der Eyken, district girl guide commissioner for Acton.

"You have to be able to really relate to them because if you're talking down to them they'll know it, and they'll resent it. Working with the girls is what it's all about to me."

Mrs. Van der Eyken lives on Highway 25 just above Speyside with her husband Jerry who owns his own welding business, and four of their seven children. After 10 years in the Brownie-Guide movement she speaks with authority and affection about her girls.

"I started out 10 years ago helping out for a couple of weeks while Brown Owl (the adult leader of a Brownie pack) was away. I'm still there," she chuckles, "and I don't think I'll give it up for a while yet!"

She has 29 girls between the ages of seven and 10 in her Brownie pack which meets at the Acton Scout Hall each week. She says she only agreed to become commissioner on the condition that she be able to keep her own pack.

TESTWORK
"I try to stretch out the test work Brownies have to do so that it covers the whole three years and they don't get bored," she says. "It's hard putting them off so that they only do a little bit each week, especially if they're really keen. But if they get through it too quickly they get bored with nothing to do and then they drop out."

During the past year she only had one child drop out although she says there is a considerable turnover between Brownies and Guides and in the first year or two of Guides.

"I keep my Brownies until they're almost 11," she says, "because of the big gap in interests and attitudes between 10-year-olds and 14-year-olds. They just don't have the same thoughts at all and a lot of the young ones find the change to Guides very hard to make."

A new level is to be introduced to break up the wide age spread now existing for Girl Guides but as yet it has no name and no uniform. Under the present system Brownies wear brown uniforms with orange ties and compass girls from seven to nine. Guides will wear the familiar blue uniform with a red printed tie and cover girls aged nine to twelve. The new group will be for girls 12 to 15, and Rangers will go on in their navy skirts and white blouses for girls ages 15 to 17. Cadets is the group for girls 15 to 21 years of age and concentrates mainly on training girls to be leaders in the movement when they are old enough to take their own group.

CHALLENGE BACK
"I hope reorganizing it will put the challenge back into it for the girls," she says. "They've made changes lately that make it so easy for the girls to get their Canada Cord (the top award in Guiding) that anyone can earn it. It didn't used to be that easy. It used to represent a lot of hard work."

Mrs. Van der Eyken has one more year to complete her three year term as commissioner and feels that it is a post everyone in the movement should have a chance at trying. She doesn't believe the commissioner should be on any pedestal. She's just another Guide and should be treated as such even though she gets drafted to attend all the special events, fly-ups, enrollments, cord presentations, banquets, and church parades in which any of the seven Acton groups is involved.

She has taken one year's leave of absence during the past ten and wound up as the District Guide for the area during that year. She chuckles when she explains how that role saw her filling in for any Brown Owl or Guide Captain who had to be absent from her group during a meeting night.

"I was busier as the District Guide than I was when I had my own pack so the next year I asked for my pack back," she says.

GOOD DEAL
She has done a good deal of camping with both Brownies and Guides over the years and is officially known as Gopher at camp. That's because she is usually the quartermaster in charge of the kitchen when she camps with Guides.



Pat Van der Eyken

"I'm the one who had to go for this and go for that so they called me Gopher," she laughs.

In spite of all her camping experience both at the official Guide Camp, Wyoka, and elsewhere she recalls camping in the rain only once. Her very first camp it rained the first day and she had 36 pork chops, 10 pounds of potatoes and all the rest of the meat to cook on a Coleman stove in the rain. "It's never happened since," she says. "In fact, some of the Scouters around here think I've got some sort of special direct line upstairs to order good weather."

"If you remember the Scouts went on a hike along the Bruce Trail and camped out one weekend last spring and it was simply washed out. Well, we went up to Wyoka the same weekend and never had a drop of rain the whole time. I was talking to some of them after we got back and they were commiserating with me about what a rotten time of it I must have had with all those little ones. When I told them we hadn't got any of the rain they just looked at me very suspiciously of me ever since," she jokes.

Snakes are the sources of two of her funnier memories with her little girls. While she tries to present a calm face when she discusses them with

her girls her, instinctive reaction is far different. "I remember taking the girls for a hike along the Bruce Trail once," she says. "We stopped to eat and one of the girls found a snake. I told them they could watch it if they wished but leave it alone so it won't bother you."

THEY SQUEALED
"They squealed over the way it moved and turned up their noses at it the way little girls do and all the time I stayed on my sit-up and tried to keep calm. I kept thinking 'if it comes near me I'll die'. If it had started to come my way I'd have been home before the girls even knew what the cloud of dust was," she chuckles.

Another time at Wyoka, she almost had a girl fall in the lake trying to see a water snake. "It was telling them about the water snake who lived in the lake and seemed to like girls because he always came out to swim among them when they went swimming. We called him Sammie. The one little girl lay down on the dock and hung over the edge so far I almost lost her. She was just fascinated at the thought of seeing a water snake."

A Toronto native, Mrs. Van der Eyken says she wasn't a Brownie or Guide as a child, although her husband was in Scouts. All seven of their children have belonged to one bran-

ch or another of the organization. Their third daughter, Karen, is in the Air Force and says that she found her guide training helped her to adjust to the forces since she had learned something of discipline and was also accustomed to being neat in a uniform.

Her husband coaches a boys' hockey team and she accompanies him to tournaments. She also has to work around her sons activities and the things her daughter is doing with her Guide company.

REAL CHUCKLE
Mrs. Van der Eyken says she gets a real chuckle out of the commissioner who tell mothers that it will only take a couple of hours a week to run a Brownie Pack when they are trying to recruit helpers. The meetings require a lot of pre-planning and there are also district meetings to attend every six weeks or so, she explains, but adds that this portion of the work isn't what she finds to be the worst.

For the leaders who are constantly complaining they never get any help she advises that they try asking their parents to participate. It has been her experience that they rarely refuse. If they did, however, she would have no qualms about cancelling plans.

"If they don't want to give us the support we need to carry out an event like a trip or a skating party, for example, I'd just cancel it and I wouldn't feel the least bit guilty."

Mrs. Van der Eyken has also coached a girls baseball team because it was easier to stay and coach when she took her own girls than it was to make all the extra trips back and forth. She also worked on youth bowling and was a parent helper at St. Joseph's school until her part time job interfered. She picked apples at Chudleigh's Apple Farm last fall.

Mrs. Van der Eyken warns leaders not to be too strict on their own youngsters if they happen to have them in their group.

"You expect more of them and it isn't fair," she says. "They have to attend every function and set an example and the tendency is to be far harder on your own children than you are on others in the group. That isn't right but it's still there!"

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