

HEALTHY LIVING

Hobby band to headline Cancer Society fundraiser April 30

Playing rock 'n roll is a great stress reliever

One hot summer night when Jack Pignatell began playing a guitar around the campfire, it re-ignited a dormant talent that changed his life forever.

Bass guitarist Pignatell is now one of five local musicians who make up the popular local rock band, The Boomerangs, which is headlining the annual Mary Lou Douglas Memorial Dance for the Cure, an Acton Cancer Society fundraiser at the Acton Legion on Saturday, April 30.

The Georgetown native first picked up the guitar as a pre-teen, emulating his dad who played the instrument. Then as a teenager roving the halls of Georgetown District High School, he joined I.R. Smith and the Cymbal, a rock band led by Ian Smith (lead singer), George Stigger (guitar), Jim Diselle (bass player) and Reg Laws (drummer). Pignatell played rhythm guitar, but when Diselle moved out of town, he switched to bass.

After graduating, he got caught up in the day-to-day living of working as a financial advisor and raising a family, and the old guitar was put away in the closet to collect dust. Twenty years later, excited by his campfire sing-along with his buddy, Pignatell returned to music as a new hobby.

"Music is so relaxing. It's a great stress relief because you become so focused on it and forget everything else," he said. "It's just a fabulous hobby at any level— pure enjoyment."

A friend invited him to join Classic Folk, a popular group on the Halton Hills entertainment scene about six or seven years ago and that got him playing more seriously.

"I really enjoyed that time. It was a great experience with that band but good old rock 'n roll is my true love when it



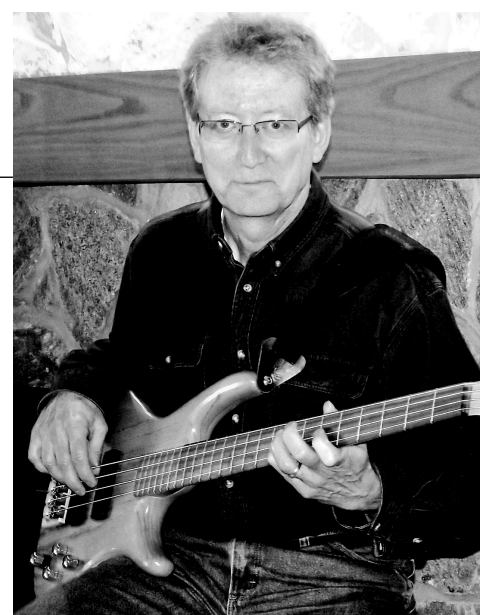
The Boomerangs are a group with Halton Hills roots. From left, drummer Doug Hastings, bass player Jack Pignatell, lead singer Norm Douglas, keyboard player Stephen Hurley, and lead guitarist George Stigger.

comes to music," said Pignatell, who four years ago went looking for Georgetown-based players to form a band.

The first was professional drummer Doug Hastings, followed by his former high school bandmate and lead guitarist George Stigger. Then they met up with Elvis impersonator Norm Douglas, who became the lead singer and his buddy, Stephen Hurley, who came on to play 'keys' and of course, Pignatell on bass.

"And there was The Boomerangs, playing '50s, '60s and '70s rock 'n roll," said Pignatell, pointing out the name came about from the baby boomer music they played. It's the music the band members and their audiences grew up with and loved.

"We've picked the top songs everybody recognizes and loves to dance to," he said. "We really are a Saturday night oldies dance band. The dance floor is crowded everywhere



Jack Pignatell strums his bass guitar.

we play. "It's really a great feeling (watching the crowds), to know that you're making people happy because they're out there having a great time," he said. "They've all got smiles

on their faces. It's just a great sense of accomplishment when you're up there performing. ... We get so many positive comments."

Pignatell says in this era of deejayed events, The Boomerangs are set apart because live entertainment brings back that old excitement.

"It's just a fabulous experience," he said.

The band plays about one or two gigs a month, mostly private and corporate functions locally and throughout Ontario, including the famous Elvis festival. Most of the bookings are done by word of mouth, but people can also make enquiries through their website, www.theboomerangs.ca

This is the fourth year the group has headlined the Acton Cancer Society's Mary Lou Douglas Memorial Dance for the Cure, named for lead singer Norm Douglas's late wife, who died from the disease. Doors open at 8 p.m. There will be a cash bar, silent auction, light lunch and desserts. Tickets are \$20; contact Shelley, 289-839-5594.

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