

# RiverCity

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# QUAZY

## Legendary Area Rockers Set To Light Up Ribfest Saturday Night

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**W**hat began as just a fun time jamming together for the members of legendary Hartington-based rock band Quazy has — for the second time — evolved into stepping on stage to share their love of rock music and performing with each other.

"It started out as us just wanting to get together every couple of months to jam and have fun," said Ken Noecker, bass player for the band. "We always enjoy getting together. We are always excited when we know it is rehearsal weekend."

Quazy, which began jamming in garages and vacant houses in the 1970s, grew into one of the most popular and enduring bands ever produced in Nebraska, being enshrined in the state Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2007.

The band, which performs only occasionally these days, is ready to rock at Rockin' Ribfest this Saturday in Yankton. They are slated to take the stage at 9 p.m.

"This is about the third incarnation of Quazy; really, the first was just a practice band," said Chris Kathol, who handles vocal and guitar duties. "It has only been about three different groups over the years."

The band got its start in 1974 with Craig Jensen, Harley Zumbrum, Kathol and Noecker. It evolved soon after when Rick Pearson joined the band, giving it a unique two-drummer approach to their music.

During its heyday, Quazy sometimes performed 20 or more shows a month, traveling across South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, Wyoming and North Dakota.

"There is a lot of history in these books," Pearson said as he paged through photo albums, day planners and memorabilia that the group shared with the *Press and Dakotan* recently. "We actually have a captain's log that we have from when we were traveling that everyone wrote in each day."



ABOVE: The Hartington-based rock band Quazy — from left: Rick Pearson, Ken Noecker, Harley Zumbrum, Chris Kathol and Jay Gilbertson — is the featured performer at Saturday's Rockin' Ribfest in Yankton. The band gained immense popularity in the 1970s and 1980s, and was inducted into the Nebraska Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2007. After disbanding for several years, the members have gravitated back together to jam and play occasional live gigs. (Kelly Hertz/P&D) RIGHT: A publicity shot of Quazy during its heyday in the late 1970s. Pictured below left is original band member Craig Jensen, who currently lives in California and is battling cancer. Gilbertson was invited aboard in early 2009 to help fill out the band's guitar sound. (Courtesy photo)



The books, filled with images and scribbles in the calendars, attest to the following that the band developed and the demands that came with it.

"We were all over South Dakota. Considering we came from Nebraska, we probably played in about every town in South Dakota," Pearson said. "We played a lot at The Main Gate, a bar in downtown Sioux Falls. We would play all week back then. We played a lot in Yankton in the Lava Room and at the old Armory. We played a lot at the scramblers at the fundraising concerts they had.

At the 'D' (Lazy D), we were privileged to be the first rock band to play there and the last when they closed last spring."

That history and the longevity of men who were able to stay friends even as the band separated and went their own directions, is something uncommon in music.

Zumbrum, for instance, headed out to Hollywood.

"Did you ever see Harley on 'Young and the Restless'?" Pearson asked.

After he left Quazy, Zumbrum traveled with

other bands before finally, in his mid-30s, he hit the West Coast to try his hand in acting.

"I was beat up and killed a lot in Hollywood," he joked. "I had a good run out there."

Some of the movies on his IMDB filmography include "Con Air" and "Jack Frost." His TV work included "According to Jim," "Charmed," "Malcolm in the Middle" and "The George Lopez Show."

As for the other members of the band, their so-called "real lives" include being a physical therapist.

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