

* Life in the Big City *

High School is the starting point for most of us. I started out by "Sawing on the Violin" when I was 11 for one year only. At age 15, I "Banged on the Piano" for one year only. When I was 16 my brother Barry (15) got a Guitar for Christmas and so did my friend Ted Seifert. Ted got me started playing and my poor brother Barry never had a chance to hardly touch his new Guitar. I mean I PILFERED IT! Six months later I purchased my own Guitar.

I only had two minor problems in School. My home life was such that I could not do homework. I was a C+ student. Girls. Any guy worth his salt while growing up has a girl problem or two. When I was a Sophomore I asked a beautiful girl (dancer, cheer leader, with a "Pony Tail" to die for) out for a date to the upcoming Christmas dance. Without hesitation, NO! I somehow knew that I didn't possess a silver tongue. So that's, * Life in the Big City *.

My good friend Bill Foss was held back one year, so his girl friend was a junior and she always fixed me up with one of her junior lovelies, whenever we double dated. That worked. Then in my junior year I asked another drop dead gorgeous beauty with a killer "Pony Tail" out for a date...NO!

A few months after Christmas, Me, Elvis and Ricky were pluckin away on our Guitars righteously. I never met Elvis but I crashed somebody's Birthday Party at the Nelson's beach house in Laguna Beach in 1960 by accident. Harriet gave me some cake and ice cream. There were some cute Pony Tails there also. Ricky had good taste.

Meanwhile the unexpected happened. A lovely little thing from Glendora invited me to a party and she said, "Bring your Guitar". That works. I have never asked for a date (unless the ice was clearly already broken) since. * Life in the Big City *.

Because I ditched PE class for a year and a half I did not have enough units to graduate. I was a lost soul. Just before School was out I worked a couple of odd jobs so that I could purchase a new Fender Jazz Master Guitar just for fun, and wrestled with it (and the babes) for the rest of the summer. I'm no bum and I love challenges. Guitars are very hard to play. Much harder than Violin or Piano but what a challenge for someone like me who had no direction. Then my practice buddy Floyd Thies suggested, "Let's get a playing job in a Night Club for the upcoming New Years Eve" (1961/1962).

We learned all of the Ventures songs. No singing, because we both have great voices for eating & drinking, but not for singing. We were both under age. I was 18 and Floyd was 20. However, in those days you could modify a temporary driver's license. We practiced with a drummer every night for a month. Then the big night. The drummer stood us up for a higher paying job (the RAT) but the people in the small club (The Alibi Room, Baldwin Park) loved us anyway. Now I wanted to work with a real band and singers. I auditioned for the Bonnavills and got it.



By summer we had 4 records out. One instrumental and we backed three singers. We also played all of the Teen Age Night Clubs in the Hollywood area, and did a flock of TV shows. Back in 1960 we were all listening to Dick & Deedee's "The Mountains High" #1 for 8 weeks. Now in 1963 I'm part of the house band that backs them up plus many others. I also had the chance to play with the Ventures (YYAAAA). By the time I turned 21 in June, I had been playing Guitar for about two and a half years. I then realized that the only way that I knew to make a living was music.

The Bonnavills – Cover for 1st 45 record "Dirty Herb"
John Bauman with his white Fender Jazz Master



First Concert Tour – Summer 1962



Las Vegas – June 1964 with Betty Reagan
John with his new Red Fender 6-string Bass
"I'm 21 at last!"

How time slips away. Playing had become my profession. The whole musical thing was an accident simply because Ted taught me 4 chords and the Lovely Pony Tails said NO! Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that I would be a Pro-Musician. I then added Bass playing, so that I could be more versatile. I spent the next 9 years mainly working the Nevada circuit (Vegas, Reno, and Lake Tahoe) with Show Groups, plus a few recording sessions here and there whenever I was in Hollywood.



Russ Starman & group - 1966 – Las Vegas
John with his new red 12-string Mossrite

I also got married in 1966 to Nancy Jane Gates. She was a blind date (remember my little problem) and I did not tell her that I played Guitar and Bass. She was different than my groupie friends. She found out that I was a Musician in a surprising way on our second date on Valentine's Day. I took her out to dinner and then to Shaps, a dance club in Pasadena, to hear some live music. She was only 18 at that time, but I knew everyone at Shaps, because I had played there before. After she returned from the ladies room to our table she couldn't help but notice that I was missing. Then the waitress pointed at the stage and she saw me sitting in with the band and playing the Bass. * Life in the Big City *.

I had quit music for two months because a crooked manager was getting the money for a couple of songs that I wrote and I was mad at the Music Industry. Nancy said that I should do what I really love for a living, Music. I got the right woman. So I jumped back in.

After 20 years of playing it was time to get a new career with a medical plan and a retirement program. Back in 1977 I managed to finally get an AA (music), AS (electronics) and a High School diploma while playing full time. It's really funny that my HS diploma reads 1977.

At age 37 in 1980 I started work as a Test Tech. with So. California Edison. I was also still playing weekends for a few more years. My whole outlook on everything was so different than everyone else at Edison that I was a fish out of water. I forced myself to stick with it. It was a lot easier than show biz. Then they offered me early retirement in 1996 and added 10 years to my seniority. THANK YOU GOD! I'm also deathly afraid of electricity.

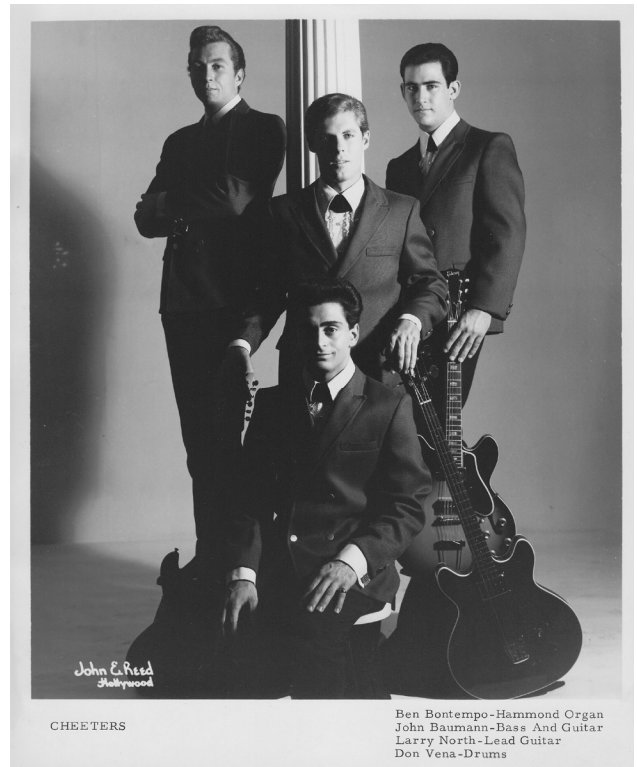
My super sharp Nancy now had a thriving CPA practice and hired me as the Comptroller. Now I'm retired twice over and still working. * Life in the Big City *.

In my old age I collect Model Trains "0" gauge Lionel & MTH and run them at the San Diego Model RR Museum in Balboa Park for the public about once a month. I'm still a big KID inside and this proves it. I'm also in the New England Journal of Medicine as the worst case of Hyperactive Thyroid in the history of US medicine. I now entertain the lovely "Pony Tails" with my Trains.

In closing, a funny thing happened to me way back in BB (Before the Beatles). When I was 19 we were playing a small concert of about 3,000 happy teenagers, only a few with lovely "Pony Tails" (It's probably the memory of Alexandra's Luscious, Rich, Pony Tail that keeps turning my head). We jumped about 15 ft. off of the 3 ft. stage at the beginning of the song as part of the act. Very dynamic. I forgot to use my 30 ft cord for my Guitar. It was that 12 ft. cord that pulled over my new \$1,000.00 Standell Super Imperial amplifier with two JBL D-130F speakers, onto its face! This was the Cats Ass of amplifiers and I had to make payments on it for a year. All the Girls screamed and the music stopped. Some of the guys laughed. I cried and the amp. died! * Life in the Big City *.



1970 – Swingin Society – Las Vegas
with Miss California runner up Melody Keemer
"My favorite show group"



1968 - Cheeters – Vegas Blues & Jazz
John with his new Guild 4-string bass

Music was always a profession, never a hobby, so I only practice when there is a job coming up.

My last concert was backing up the "Drifters" just a few years ago. You never know where life will lead you. I have had the privilege of playing with at least 100 different groups and singers. If I had it all to do over again, the only thing I would change is the length of my Guitar cord. I never use less than a 20 footer now.

(Jack) John Robert David Baumann
They wanted triplets