

CY★FAIR

October 2011

Lifestyles & Homes



**Cypress
Republic Band**
Talks *Gigs* and Going *Big*

Cancer Quilt Project
Happy Birthday Houston!

Real People, Real Homes, Real Style...Real Cy-Fair Living

www.cy-fairlifestylesandhomes.com

PSRT, STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ST. JOSEPH, MI
PERMIT NO. 335



The band (l-r):
Eric Schoennagel,
Darrell Wehlmann,
Steve Thomson,
Paul Bailey, and
Brock Miller.

Cypress Republic Band Talks Gigs and Going Big

Amid the juggling of families and careers, CRB manages to totally rock the house

By Melanie Saxton

For those who haven't yet heard of the CRB, chances are they will. CRB is in demand for gigs in and around Cy-Fair and the greater Houston metroplex. Formed in 2009, the group deliberated over names and landed on one that seemed to hit all the high notes, especially since the members are conservative in nature and live in the Copperfield, Cypress and Hockley area

"Cypress Republic Band — the name conveys the independent Texas spirit," says Darrell "D-Man" Wehlmann, who is a guitar player and backup vocalist. The band has five members, all family men. "We're just conservative Christian guys who love to play live music and keep it positive."

They all work real jobs to pay the bills. Darrell, a marketing consultant by day, is joined by lead vocalist Paul "The Front Man" Bailey, who works as a financial advisor. Steve "Steve-O" Thomson handles drums and sticks

and is a project manager in the insurance/IT industry. Brock "B-Rock" Miller (guitar and vocals) is an engineer. The second engineer of the group is bass player and backup vocalist, Erich "Mr. Fender" — "Fast Fingers" — "E-rock" Schoennagel. For shout outs it's easier for the band to use first names and nicknames, and it's obvious that these guys have a sense of humor. But they are also dads and met one another mainly through family connections. In fact, it is faith and family that bind them.

A CLOSE-KNIT GROUP

Brock met Erich about 23 years prior when he was dating Erich's sister Martha (now married 23-plus years). Paul met Brock about 12 years ago during a bridging ceremony for their daughters in Girl Scouts. Erich and Brock met Darrell about 8 years ago when their families joined St. John's Lutheran Church. Darrell met Steve about five years ago at a gym, and encouraged

him to visit St. John. Darrell, Erich, Steve, and Brock have been playing in the Praise Band at St. John's for about four years. Paul and his family attend Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church, also in Cypress. "In recognition of our faith and church affiliations, we considered changing the band name to 'FLAC' — Four Lutherans and A Catholic," jokes Darrell. "Did we mention we like to have fun?"

The members have played on and off since their teenage years. "I'm not sure we ever realized that we were band-quality... it just came together and we started having a really good time doing it," says Darrell. Before the band officially formed, Paul and Brock were playing backyard acoustic sets. When their girls asked for a "Dad Band" to play at their graduation party, Erich was asked to fill in on bass and they coaxed Steve to add his drumming skills. The fledgling band ended up playing a set of 12 songs for the graduation party and knew they were on to something. From church they recruited Darrell to add a dual guitar horsepower kick to the mix. That rounded out the band and their signature sound.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY AND LOTS OF FUN

Their mix of rock, country and contemporary Christian music is family-friendly. "It really varies, but rest assured, if there are questionable or bad lyrics in a song we change them or choose not to play the song," says Darrell. Their favorites include an eclectic mix by the Doobie Brothers, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Eagles, Van Morrison, Ray Orbison, Styx, Tom Petty, Maroon 5, Cheap Trick, John Cougar, ZZ Top and Green Day, to name a few.

"We close every show with 'Until the Whole World Hears' by Casting Crowns," says Darrell. "We just love that song. It might seem strange to be at a place at midnight where people are partying and drinking and then



The boys in the band with special guest guitarist Mike Huckabee (left).

perform a Christian song, but that is what we do. What better place and time to sing about salvation through Jesus Christ?"

They've found the hardest part about the whole band endeavor is finding mutual time on the calendar. "Our families come first, so that takes precedence. It's really a balancing act. We have turned down opportunities to play venues simply because someone has had family plans." However, including the family helps offset scheduling difficulties. Brock's daughter Kristina is a frequent guest keyboard player for the band and joins them when her Texas A & M classes permit. And their complicated personal calendars haven't kept them from performing with some notable and high profile people.

Paul is the Harris County Republican Party Precinct Chairman in his neighborhood. He and his wife volunteered to help Dan Patrick with his very first campaign for the Texas Senate and have since become friends. The Senator has asked the band to play at several events and fundraisers, which is how the connection was initially made with former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee.

A RECORD LABEL IN THEIR FUTURE?

"Senator Patrick has guest appeared with CRB several times and enjoys playing a song or two with us," says Darrell. "We've played two events with Governor

Continued on page 61

"We're just conservative Christian guys who love to play live music and keep it positive."

- Darrell Wehlmann

Continued from page 31

Huckabee and have spent some time with him — a very personable and friendly guy, not to mention a fantastic speaker. Too bad he is not running for President again, otherwise we might be playing at an inauguration. Wouldn't that be nice?"

The band is writing their own music which hasn't yet debuted... but stay tuned. When asked if they've thought about signing with a label, Darrell answers, "Not really... Or should I say not yet?" Their upcoming gigs include the October 1 opening for Earl Thomas Conley at the Waller County Fairgrounds. A "Battle of the Dad Bands" October 9 event at Goode Co. BBQ — "Hope Help Heal" — was organized by Copperfield resident Jenny Tyler to support treatment research for children afflicted with neurological diseases.

Interspersed throughout their gigs, Paul will continue to coach baseball for his son's team. Brock is very

involved with his daughter's dance club. Because it is fall, Steve has a break from his neighborhood swim coach duties. Darrell will continue to teach weekly Bible study on Sunday mornings at St. John.

Asked if they'd like to share anything else with *Lifestyles & Homes* readers, Darrell laughs. "Now, I have a legitimate excuse to grow long hair, except it's too late! There's not enough of it left and what is there is a bit gray. If you can't make fun of yourself, then who can you make fun of? Actually, for four 40-something's and one unidentified 50-something, our hair is in mighty fine shape and no hair color is used (or admitted to)."

God, family, country and conservative values. All-in-all, pretty simple. Check out their website, song list and upcoming events at crbband.com/the_band.htm. From there, fans can sign up for the band's Plugged-In Newsletter. ●



**2010 & 2011
BBB AWARD
WINNER**

**Fully Insured
Lifetime Warranty
2011 BBB Award of
Excellence Winner
25 Years Experience**

*Frameless and Framed
Shower Doors & Enclosures
Many Glass and Hardware
Options Available*

**FREE
ShowerGuard
Upgrade*** After mail
in rebate
Good thru 10/31/11

**Showers
DOORS**
OF HOUSTON

281.220.6886
www.houstonshowerdoors.com



After



Before



1660 Townhurst, Suite A • Houston, TX 77043 • Showroom Hours: Mon-Fri 8am to 4pm, Sat. 9am to 3pm