

"The Endless Story"

It all starts with two brothers, Jack and Pat McAtee from Springfield, Ohio.

One Christmas our parents decided to buy our older sister, Joyce, a guitar, and Jack a ukulele along with a couple of Mel Bay instruction books. Although Jack really wanted the guitar, he learned to play a couple of songs on the ukulele. A year or so later, Joyce, not being too interested in the guitar, well Jack, kind of, took it over. After all it was the 60's and rock and roll was all about guitars not ukuleles, so Jack was on a quest to learn the guitar. After plunking around on that old Sears acoustic guitar, he was ready for something a little noisier. One day he was walking around town, and in the window of Rich's Jewelry and Pawn shop he spotted an electric guitar. It was a single pickup, hollow body, Kay guitar with a small amplifier to go with it for \$25 dollars. His dad put a \$10 down payment on it for Jack's birthday and the balance came from Jack's TV Guide route and cutting neighbor's lawns. He took guitar lessons and learned to read music. After a couple of years he became bored, only learning one song per week from sheet music. Jack actually learned to play more songs from listening to rock and roll on the radio.

During this time Pat became interested in the base guitar. This time he received a present of a Sears, (you guessed it my dad was Sears all the way), Silvertone base guitar and amplifier combo. Pat and Jack would learn to play rock and roll songs from radio programs from Springfield and Dayton and would practice every day in the basement of their house.

In Jack's junior year he entered a high school talent school. The auditorium was full of kids and parents. When announced, he walked out on the stage, plugged his guitar into his amp and played an instrumental called "Walk Don't Run" by "The Ventures." When he finished the kids and parents cheered and clapped. It was so awesome and inspiring to hear the applause from the crowd, that he knew guitar playing was definitely in his future. A couple of days after the talent show Jack met Mike Lyons in their high school mechanical drawing class. Mike had a similar story. He had received an acoustic guitar for Christmas and soon after an electric guitar and amp. Mike was also a great guitar player. Jack, Pat and Mike decided to get together. After a few sessions they decided to start a band. Through high school they met a drummer named Don Weber. Our first band's name was "The Malibus." Wasn't really a good name, but the first. Our first place playing at was a VA hospital in Dayton, Ohio. We played instrumentals for some injured and ailing soldiers. Sometime after, we met two other guys from a different high school. A drummer named Bill Dale and a singer named Jan Weinbreight. Together they formed a band called "The Mods". After numerous rehearsals, they played a few parties, and at the Clark County Fair. At some point, another drummer named Mike O'Brien sat in for Bill Dale at a party we played at. He was great. Because of a dispute between the band and Bill Dale, (you know drummers) Mike became our new drummer, which worked out great for us. He was a great drummer. Around this same time Jan also started his own band called "The Children of Stone". Our band learned a lot of popular 60's songs and started playing at different parties and venues.

The more songs the band learned the more popular we became. We started playing different high school dances, parties, halls and teen hangouts.

One day the band signed up for a battle of the bands contest sponsored by WIZE radio in Springfield. The winning prize was a couple of hours of recording time in a studio called Mega Sound in Dayton, Ohio. Paul Carmen was the disc jockey from WIZE who conducted the battle of the bands. Jack and Pat had written some original songs, "World of Sin" and "Endless

Wandering", and, at the time the band was starting to play them. We thought it would be great to record them. We really wanted to win so we came up with a plan that would surely help us. Jack built a wooden coffin and when it was our turn to play, we came out carrying a friend of ours, Ralph Boblett, inside the coffin. He was wrapped up in gauze to look like a mummy. The band eventually nick named him "Mummy". The band members carried out the coffin, with Ralph in it, through the crowd and onto the stage. When we started playing Ralph jumped out of the coffin and began dancing across the stage. It was an instant hit, and we won the competition. A week or so later we headed to Dayton with Paul Carmen. We recorded a couple of original songs and a couple of covers on a tape.

Paul thought we were really good, and we agreed to let him be our manager. It worked out well at first. He booked some jobs for us, and he seemed to know the record business. Paul thought it would be a good idea to change the bands' name to "The Endless", and we did. For some reason Paul didn't set up any other recording sessions for us. Paul tried to convince us to try and sell the original songs to a record company. He took our original tape, and in a couple of weeks he called and told us we had five record companies interested. We started playing different venues that Paul set up for us, at a lower rate than we usually charged, to get publicity. It wasn't long until we found out that this was all a bunch of lies. Paul was lying to us about all the record companies being interested in order to get us to play his venues for less money and get his own publicity. He had done nothing with the tape that we made. After we figured this out, we retrieved our tape and went in search of another recording company.

Around this time, we were at a club named Benevolent Hall looking for another place to book. We met Chuck Moorman, an electric piano player there. He was playing with another group at the time. We were reluctant to add another person to the band, but it was one of the best decisions we made. He was very talented and was just as passionate at playing as the rest of the band. He soon added a Farfisa compact organ/keyboard which not only made us more versatile but added a lot to our original songs, and he was also a great singer.

The band was now complete. The Endless 1966: Jack (Bat Jack) and Pat (Sugar Bear) McAtee, Mike (Screen) Lyons, Mike (Miguel or Wolfman) O'Brien and Chuck (Pick It) Moorman.

Everyone in the band sang led on at least one song and we had great harmonies.

One Saturday, on our quest to find another recording company, Jack, Chuck and Mike went to Columbus to see if we could find someone else that might be interested in hearing our tape. We stopped at a phone booth and called a few, but being Saturday, they were not opened. We did find one company that was interested called Cardinal Records. We made an appointment with Frank Keefer, the owner, and took our tape to him, but guess what, the tape was not readable. In those days you couldn't just pop the tape into any player, it was a large reel and took a special recording device to read it. After spending a couple of hours with Frank, trying to convince him our music was good, he asked if we were willing to pay for the first hour of a recording session. Then, if he liked our music we could continue recording and he would cover the additional cost. So, we set up a time to come back. A week or so later we met Frank at his house and headed to Hull Records in Columbus. We met John Hull there and he set us up for our recording. After the first hour Frank liked us a lot and told us to continue with the session a few more hours. Frank and John decided to make an acetate, a small album with 5 originals that we could distribute to radio stations to see if they liked our music. The original songs were

called: "World of Sin", "Endless Wondering", "Tomorrow's Song", "A Cry for Yesterday" and "Prevailing Darkness". At that time Frank became our manager/producer with Cardinal Records and started booking places for us to play. At the same time another disc jockey at WIZE in Springfield, Ron Brown, took our album, played the songs on Friday and Saturday nights and asked the listeners to call in and vote for the ones they like the most. The listeners decided on "Tomorrow's Song" and the band picked "Prevailing Darkness" for the flip side. We went back to the studio and re-recorded the two songs again. We had to shorten them because the radio stations in those days would only play songs that were two and a half minutes long. Then we released the two songs on a 45 single. Frank had 1000 records made up and distributed them to various radio stations and record stores. It was awesome, we could turn the radio on and hear our music being played. They would also play our music in the background while they advertised different venues that we were scheduled to play. We had reports that our songs were also played on WING in Dayton and WLS in Chicago. We became very busy. We appeared on a TV show in Dayton, Ohio called "Disco Two". It was Dayton's version of "American Bandstand". The show was recorded on Tuesday nights, and aired on TV on Saturday afternoons. Mike O'Brien's, step-father's friend, Joe Parisi, owned a lot of the jukeboxes in Clark county, and surrounding counties, and he added our record in all of them too.

We played at a lot of places, such as; The Benevolent Hall, Saint John's Hall, VFW Hall, American Legion Hall, National Guard Armory, Ohio State Fair, Clark County Fair, Gompers Ball Arena, various schools and fraternity parties and dances, and a few clubs.

Sometime during our performances we added a sound man. His name was Rick Skinner. We nicknamed him "Momma Skinner" or just "Skinny". He kept up on our electronics and sound equipment while we played. We were very grateful for his help also. Great job Rick!

One of the most popular places we played was The Alibi Club. At the time, as long as one or more of us were 18, we were allowed to play in bars. One weekend the Musicians Union came while we were playing and threatened to close the club unless we joined the union. So, we went to one meeting and were voted in as members. I think it was because we were popular, and they just wanted their cut. We used to pack the crowd at the Alibi and one Saturday night when it was extremely crowded a fight broke out. The owner Joe Maccorra, ran up on stage in the middle of a song, pulled out a gun and fired off a round into the air. He grabbed a microphone and shouted, "The fighting will now stop." And it did. Speaking of Joe, he took the band to a Greek restaurant one evening for dinner. They had a show that consisted of belly dancers. It was a first for the band, and a surprise.

Another time we headed to a dance hall in Celina, Ohio to play a huge party. It was a cold Saturday night and it started to snow hard. When we arrived, the only people there were the ones sponsoring the party. They had canceled the dance at the last minute because the weather was so bad. They paid us enough to eat, get a couple of rooms for the night and a little spending money. We had two cars with us and while heading to the motel we got Rick's car, with a trailer full of band equipment, stuck in the snow. After getting it towed, we had just enough money for pizza and beer, so it wasn't a total loss. We had fun anyway.

Another place we performed at was Enon Twin Lakes. It was a battle of the bands contest. The place was packed, and we sounded really good. That night Pat (Sugar Bear) jumped up and hung by the rafters while he sang, "We Gotta Get Outta This Place". Next thing we all knew

someone threw a punch at Mike Lyons. Fortunately, they missed. Seems that Mike was dating the guys' ex-girlfriend and he didn't like it. He was also a member in the other band that lost. That band didn't like the fact that we won and started a fight. Of course, by the time the police got there, they had all left and the fight was blamed on us. Later, on the way home Chuck was arrested and thrown in jail for speeding. Joe Maccora, from the Alibi club bailed him out in the early morning hours. Thanks Joe.

Once we played at a huge Battle of the Bands at a National Guard Armory. It was put on by WIZE radio station in Springfield. There were at least a thousand kids there. It came down to us and a group call "The Children of Stone", Jan Weinbreights' band. Guess what, at the end of the show they called it a tie. It was a lot of work for nothing. We should have put the party on ourselves, with The Children of Stone, and split the profits.

One other time we were hired to play a high school prom in a small farming town in Indiana. You see, we weren't the type of band to just stand there and play, we liked to move back and forth, side by side. You know ,get into the music. We jumped up and down on top of our amplifiers and danced around. I even played a lead guitar part for one of the songs behind my head. Later we played an after the prom party which was held at the local bowling alley. We had a great time.

We were hired to be a start-up band for a young kids' band from Dayton called "Gary and the Hornets". They were trying to promote a record too. Their manager was in charge of the stage set-up and had a drummers' stage on top of the regular stage. We played first and halfway through our set the drummers' stage broke, and our drummer, Mike Obrien, came crashing down, drums and all, on top of the regular stage. Their manager tried to get our manager to pay for it, but Frank showed them the crappie workmanship and that was that. Our drummer didn't just set there and play a snare drum and tap a symbol once in a while, he was there to play the drums like they should be. Their stage just couldn't handle a real drummer.

We even played on top of a roof at the Cart and Golfland in Springfield and on top of a concession stand at a Drive-in theater. We performed at intermission to a crowd of cars filled with kids until it started to rain. It was still a lot of fun.

Occasionally we practiced at Snyder Park in Springfield, Ohio, on Sunday afternoons and always drew a crowd especially when the weather was nice. Other times it was in someone's basement and sometimes during the week if we were playing at The Alibi Club.

Along with our original songs we played covers from: The Rolling Stones, Rascals, Animals, Doors, Kinks, Yardbirds, Beatles, Buffalo Springfield, Steppin Wolfe, Zombies, Hendrix, Turtles, Kingsman, Sam and Dave, Temptations, Wilson Picket and more. We made it a point to play songs that our audience wanted to hear and dance to.

What happened to The Endless? A couple of the guys went off to college, and Uncle Sam came to visit some of us. During this time, Chuck Moorman was replaced by Jeff Dunmire on keyboards, and a singer named Bobby Saint, along with a sax player named Art Moppit, were brought in.

Jack, Mike Lyons and Mike O'brien were drafted in late 1968. Jack went to the Air Force, Mike Lyons into the Army and Mike O'brien into the Marine Corps. After Jack left for the military, Pat continued with another band, Chuck and Mike Lyons formed a band called "The Blue Light"

which were a very good. Later in life, Pat, Chuck, Jeff and Mike Lyons played in several bands, "The Legacy Band" and "The Pleasant Street Blues Band". Jack started another band in the late 80's, while living in Phoenix, called "The Steppin Back Band" and played a lot of clubs and parties for about 10 years. They played classic and new rock.

The band decided to get together again in 1996 and 1998 for 30th and 32nd reunion parties. We rented a hall, and thanks to all of our old fans, it was standing room only. It was so much fun being able to perform together again and play the songs that everyone liked.

We will always cherish the times we played together. It was a great pleasure performing with such talented musicians, thank you. We have always thought that we should have continued to write and record more music, but life and Uncle Sam got in the way. We had way too much fun.

This is dedicated to my daughter "Kayce".

Thanks to all who read this.

Jack McAtee