

Bar band Blammo finds loyal following

Group covers songs from 1960s to today

By **MARCIA FULMER**
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ELKHART — Rob Peters of Middlebury always wanted to play trumpet.

Unfortunately, there were already too many in the Cassopolis Elementary School Band so, in fifth grade, "I was put on drums."

He remains there today as the drummer for Blammo, "the most popular band in the area" according to Mike Serafino, the "door guy" at Gubi's, where Blammo plays frequently. The overflowing parking lot and wall-to-wall Saturday night crowd upheld his statement.

"It's only like this when Blammo plays," Serafino said.

The band took its name from the exclamations that exploded on the TV screen whenever Batman and Robin (of the old TV series) fought the villains. "We kicked around the name as a joke at first," said guitarist Jason Saper. "But we always came back to Blammo."

It was a unanimous decision, as are most of those made by the band, which has been together five years and, off the bandstand, displays a solidly easy camaraderie.

Jason's younger brother, Aaron Saper, plays bass guitar, and Scott Ryan of South Bend, the last to join, is also a guitarist.

All except Peters share the vocals, and all have "day jobs" except Ryan, who said he works 24/7 at his home recording studio. Peters works for Sprint, Aaron is a commercial painter, and Jason, who frequently plays solo "unplugged" (acoustic guitar) at Gubi's, teaches at the Sec-



TRUTH PHOTO BY JENNIFER SHEPARD

Rock on: Photos for BNI from Blammo performing at Gubi's. (marcia will supply ID for lines)

ond Hand School of Music.

Unlike Peters, Ryan began on drums and switched to guitar at age 12. "I wanted to be in a band with my brother and he played drums," explained Ryan, who was with several other bands before Blammo and was the last to join the quartet.

For a group that has become widely known throughout the state, playing gigs from Evans-

ville to Michigan City, the Blammo guys are incredibly laid back.

With about 100 songs in their current repertoire ("We try to rotate (songs) in and out and find a couple of new ones each month"), the band rehearses together for only 45 minutes — and only before they play at one particular Mishawaka club where no food is served. This

makes the room available — and fairly private — before the music officially begins.

"We've all done a lot of rehearsing with other bands," Jason said, explaining the lack of required rehearsals.

That will change, however, as Blammo puts together a CD of original music by its members. "We will definitely have a new rehearsal schedule," Ryan de-

clared.

The cover band plays "everything from the '60s to now," said Peters, whom the others describe as "pretty much the boss" because he does all the bookings. "High-energy dance music to rock."

They play 65 and 70 to per year, and where they play depends on what they play.

"What people want to hear is

BLAMMO BIOS

Jason Saper — 28, guitar and vocals, lives in Elkhart, married, two daughters, teaches private lessons at the Second Hand School of Music.

Aaron Saper — 26, bass guitar and vocals, lives in Elkhart, single, a "color-coordinating technician," i.e. painter.

Scott Ryan — 32, guitar and vocals, lives in South Bend, engaged, full-time musician.

Rob Peters — 34, drums, lives in Middlebury, married, four children, employed by Sprint.

different from Elkhart to Evansville," said Jason. "We listen to the radio a lot and to what's being played in the area."

"Every place has its own character," added Ryan. "Breaking new ground is always different."

They are surprised, however, at how many people they know at different venues. "We are fortunate to have a built-in crowd," Ryan said. "And our fans are the best. They treat us well."

About the inevitable groupies, there is a lot of laughter. "We just funnel them along to Aaron," Jason Saper declared. "He's single."

The fifth Blammo member, whom the players definitely consider one of the group, is sound technician Mark Coleman. "I own the PA system and the truck," he laughed.

How long with Blammo remain together?

"I think we'll retire together," said Ryan.

Jason's answer was a bit more realistic. "The band's following will decide how long we stay together," he said. "We'll play as long as people want to hear us."

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