

Waupaca traveler took long journey out West **B1**

Comets gain confidence **C3**



Student from Ukraine studies in Waupaca **A3**

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Ask Your Mother Band opening at the Harbor

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It's opening weekend at Clear Water Harbor, and taking the stage at 9 p.m. Saturday will be the Ask Your Mother Band.

The band features Aaron Anderson, John Knoke, Tim Morey, Joe Nemeth and Kevin Schabo. They began rehearsing earlier this year after previously playing with various local bands.

"We play cover songs that everyone has heard, but we try to be entertaining so everyone loves it," Morey said.

Knoke and Morey started Mr. Vargus in 1997 and have played opening weekend at the Harbor every year since 1998.

Anderson joined Mr. Vargus in early 2003. He was a member of Boogie and the Yo-Yo'z for seven years and was that band's first lead singer before he joined Mr. Vargus.

Nemeth and Schabo were both former members of Frenzy.

"Vargus was on the verge of folding," Morey said.

Initially the band had a solid lineup, but through the years many joined and left.

They struck up a friendship with Schabo, who joined the band, but they began thinking about letting the band go when Schabo told them about a drummer he knew.

That drummer was Nemeth.

"We went and met him," Morey said. "From the first rehearsal, we went through a whole set list one time, and he could do it. We picked 10 songs. By the next rehearsal, he nailed all of them."

Anderson said, "It sounds cheesy, but it's like these five guys were meant to be together. We had been struggling. When Joe came in, we could start popping off new songs. We got excited again."

And while Mr. Vargus had name recognition, they agreed it was time for a new identity.

They struggled with the idea but knew they needed to start fresh.

"We started thinking about names," Anderson said. "One of the biggest problems with bands in this area is that people pick names and want to be creative, but people misspell them or don't remember them."

It was Nemeth who came up with the name "Ask Your Mother" for the band.

All five members of the band are married, and with the exception of Anderson, all are fathers.

Ask Your Mother is an easy name to remember and will likely cause many fathers, who have mumbled those words to their children, to chuckle.

Their backdrop features a mother who is covering her ears, with an angelic child on one side and a devilish child



ASK YOUR MOTHER BAND

Ask Your Mother plays everything from the Rolling Stones and AC/DC to Sublime, Barenaked Ladies and Moe.

They play classic songs such as "Brown Eyed Girl" and "Mustang Sally" and even a few country songs, including "Save A Horse."

Morey's son Eddie is named after Eddie Van Halen, and so Van Halen is also part of their set list.

Anderson said the reactions from their crowds are always changing. One moment they will play something by Sublime, and the next they will play something from the '80s, like Duran Duran's "Hungry Like A Wolf" or Twisted Sister's "We're Not Going to Take It."

Morey said, "Anyone who liked Mr. Vargus will like this show. There are some new songs but the same format."

The main difference, Anderson said, is that they "took all their knowledge from their past bands - they took all the things that worked. There is a higher

level of professionalism."

They are and will continue learning new material. They played a gig in New London around St. Patrick's Day and recently for more than 450 at the Rodeo in Neenah.

Morey says they have state-of-the-art sound. "We are a cover band," he said. "But, at times, you feel like you're going to a concert because of the lights and sound."

They are having fun and plan to do three to four shows per month. They will be back at the Harbor on Saturday, July 12, and will be headlining the Portage County Fair on Saturday, July 19.

Visit askyourmotherband.com to learn more.

Anderson said that during their four hours on stage, they feel like they are kids again.

"We all have our day jobs. It's not about the money," he said. "We want to make sure everything is fantastic."