

March 28, 2023

Dear Ivy,

Grandma and I wish you a Happy Birthday, and hope that you have a wonderful day today on your 11<sup>th</sup> birthday. We wish we could celebrate your birthday with you in person and watch you open your presents and have some party cake with you and your family. If you haven't already opened our birthday gift to you, please do so now before reading this letter any further.

We are so proud of you and your interest in acting and singing at school. We support you in your participation in the school events. We have been told you love music and have a great singing voice, that you are taking singing lessons, and that your teacher thinks you have a fantastic singing voice with a quality that is way beyond your age. We hope our gift to you today on your birthday will enhance your interest in music and singing and encourage you to listen to all kinds of music from different people of all ages, playing a variety of musical instruments.

Last year, you and your family gave me a gift, called Storyworth, which asks me each week to tell you stories about my life and the things I have done so you can better understand your grandpa and his background. I'm sorry I haven't done a good job doing that so far. But, today I would like to tell you my story about how much I love music and how music and singing have been part of my life since I was your age. If there is such a thing, maybe you inherited some of my 'music' genes, like your cousin Eli inherited some of my 'car' genes.

I started loving music when I was just around the same age as you. I started listening to the Beatles, and the Beach Boys, Jefferson Starship, Crosby Stills Nash and Young, and many other new bands in 1963-65 when I was 10-11 years old. I had a record player and played records and developed quite a collection. I got my first electric guitar in this time frame. The amp and speaker were in the guitar case in one package deal. I played that for a couple years and got a new Fender Jaguar guitar that was candy apple red, and a small Fender amplifier. By the time I was 11 and in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I started playing music with some friends, and we got together to play in a garage and called ourselves a 'band'. The first band I was in we named "Algae and the Fun Guys" which was a play on the word "Fungi" the plural of fungus. We had a good laugh with that name. Somewhere along the way the band members changed and the next band was named "Sons of Liberty". I think it was in this band that we got outfits of white pants, black boots, and a triangular hat that looked like Paul Revere's hat. We were trying to mimic the outfits of a real British band called "Paul Revere and the Raiders". This was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. I think we did play a 'gig' or two at parties but it was no big deal.

By 1966 when I was 14 our band became more real and our name changed to "The Lesser of Two Evils". We dropped the hat but kept the white pants and black shirt outfits. By 1967, we started to play at clubs, grade school and high school auditoriums, the Sears Center, a Navy club, and other places where Jr. High kids came to dance at our 'concerts'. We played as the startup band for a Big Time local band called the "One Eyed Jacks" once in 1967, and again in 1968 at a huge concert center in Hoopston Illinois when I was in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. It was the first time we played on a stage that was so big we couldn't hear each other sing or play because we were so far apart from each other. We probably sang off key and a little out of time with each other, and didn't do so well that night and the crowd weren't fans of our music. I don't know how much longer we played together but by the latter part of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade our band had broken up.

During this time I was in the bands, I also taught guitar lessons at a downtown Danville music store. They had small rooms in the basement where a student and a teacher could have lessons. I remember teaching a young boy who was about 6-7 years old how to play the guitar. I would play a record with a good song that was easy to follow and show him which chords to play as the song went on. Glen Campbell, the popular country music singer, had a good album which we often used. I didn't know how to read music but I had the ear to figure out the chords that were being played on a record, and I taught him how to play by ear along with the music as I had learned to do. The boy lived in Indiana, and loved it so much his parents drove him from Indiana to Illinois for my music lesson each week. He took the record home with him and practiced, and then played it for me the next week. This went on for nearly a year. I loved that kid and we were friends. I will always remember how much fun we had together.

After high school I left for Arizona State for college. I didn't do well my first semester. I had joined a fraternity and dropped out of school and worked in various odd jobs in the Tempe and Scottsdale areas around the college campus. I worked at various jobs but continued to live on campus at the fraternity from Aug. 1971 until March 1973. During that time, the Vietnam War broke out and rock and roll music was the rage. I drove to California and bought a Sony stereo system which cost \$600 and was state of the art. I listened to music on the radio and my record collection whenever I had time. I gave that stereo to your dad years later.


I went back to college in 1974 at Purdue. I bought a high end Sansui 9090 stereo system in 1976 and played it in my last college years. After your grandma and I got married, we moved to Virginia in 1977 and I asked my dad to keep the Sansui stereo system for me while I was away. In 1983 your dad was born, in 1986 your uncle Josh was born. We moved to Springfield in 1987. My dad passed away in 2020. In the winter of 2021 I was clearing out my dad's things from the basement in his house and found my old Sansui stereo. He had kept it for almost 45 years! I had forgot I left it with him. I had the system repaired and tuned up in St. Louis and I bought a streaming amp for it. Now I can stream TIDAL and Pandora music to my 1976 vintage stereo, and I dance with my granddaughter Charlotte to music whenever she is here. I recorded three cassette tapes of the music she likes most and your grandma and I gave her the cassettes and a boom box for Christmas and she dances to the music at home.

So as you can see, music is in my soul, and it has been a part of my life since I was in grade school. Music is in our family at your house with you and your sister and in Springfield with your cousin Charlotte. Truly music is in our family!

We hope you liked your birthday present and hope that you keep enjoying music and acting and singing as you get older.

Love you,

This article was published in a newspaper but I'm not sure if it was in the local Danville High School paper or the local Danville newspaper.



**"Society's Children" group includes, from left, Bill Waggoner, Mark Mahan, Bob Pierce, Glen Brown and Jim Talbot, organist for local combo.**

## 'Society's Children' On the Scene To Create Realm of 'Go, Go, Go'

By CHERYL MOCKBEE  
Sophomore, DHS

What's happenin'?

There's a place called psychedelic - ville. In this realm of "go, go, go," there are five "rockers." To make you bend your mind, they emerge to create an "alive" sound with magnetism of a "new" beat.

Swinging right in there are Bob Pierce, Bill Waggoner, Jim Talbot, Glen Brown and Mark Mahan — the five "rockers" known as "Society's Children."

And to fashion this unforgettable sound, the electric transmission is born in the "ville" of "psycho" where man's mind and soul runs free and where you break your mind.

Pierce, 15, is the drummer.

Waggoner, 15, is lead guitarist. Talbot, 14, is organist (although the group says he plays the radio!). Brown, 15, is lead guitarist and lead singer and Mahan, 15, is bass guitarist.

**Won 'Battle'**

This group is a real "groove" and everyone feels mutually the same because "Society's Children" won the last battle of the bands.

All members are 9th graders at East Park Junior High but Brown who is a freshman at Oakwood High.

Pierce has played the drums for one year and five months. Waggoner has played the guitar for four and a half years. Mahan has played the guitar for one year and Brown for a year and six months. And Talbot has played the organ and tambourine

for a year.

Pierce, Mahan and Waggoner were together as originators of the band. Then they "adopted" (their word) Brown and Talbot. "Society's Children" have been together for six months.

They won with the song, "Love." They sing it in a real psychedelic way, different from the way in which it was originally recorded.

Some places where this group has performed include Hoopston Civic center (with the "One-Eyed Jacks"), Westville Club Flowers, Oakwood High School, several junior highs, Illinois State Armory, twice at the Navy Club in Danville and once for a gathering at Central Christian Church.

### Different Sound

"Society's Children" have a different sound with a somewhat wild exterior but based on the calm assuredness that develops when one is sure of his abilities.

The group's pet peeves are each other, school and short hair.

They have no leader but their manager is Tom Keith. If someone would like to make a booking, contact Bill Waggoner, telephone 443-0467.

The comparison of this generation's music and yesterday's brought many quick responses from the group. One said, "It's better!" and another echoed "more movement" while another put in "it's groovy!" Then someone described it by stating, "It's hangin' in there!"

And, like all other groups, "Society's Children" hope to become professionals and "make it good" in the entertainment world.













My mother Betty, your great grandmother, took all the band pictures shown on the following pages on a Polaroid camera and kept them in a small album and recorded dates and places where they were taken in the album. I am so thankful she thought of doing that for me.

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1967 Hoopston One Eyed Jacks 1.jpg	1967 Hoopston One Eyed Jacks 2.jpg	1967 Hoopston One Eyed Jacks 3.jpg
		
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1967 Oakwood GS 5.JPG




1967 Sears Center 1.JPG




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