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Long Tail Monkeys Are Gaining A Following

By Chelsea Conaboy
Concord Monitor staff

Originally published on June 21

They've almost got the rock star swagger. Straight-faced, the band members signed autographs for gaggles of giddy girls.

Don't show your nerves. Or the giddiness of success. Be cool.

"They're cute," said one girl, and ran off to show the autographs to friends.

This was no typical groupie. She was a tiny grade-schooler, face covered in red Popsicle juice, who bounced along to the music on the playground of Sutton Central School during the end-of-the-year celebration. And this was no typical band.

It was the Long Tail Monkeys [of Andover], made up of three fourth-graders – drummer Max Barrett, keyboardist Tyler Holman, and guitarist Logan Marcus – and sixth grader Sam Barrett, the bassist.

While some kids in fourth grade are just learning to play *Hot Cross Buns* on a recorder, the Long Tail Monkeys are touring local schools, rocking out to the likes of The Police and Tom Petty and playing a couple of bluesy originals. Their young talent is getting them noticed.

Yesterday was their fourth gig in two weeks. They've got three more scheduled through July 4, when they'll play after the Andover parade.

"People don't anticipate what's going to be heard," said Keith Barrett, dad to Max and Sam, who could be called the band manager.

The Long Tail Monkeys are still working on their presentation. They're so busy concentrating on the music, that they forget to smile on stage. But the talent is there, complete with feisty solos and Jimi Hendrix-style strumming

behind the head.

This band was born on a school bus. That's where friends Max and Logan decided last year that they wanted to get a group together. Max's dad is in a band of Proctor Academy faculty and staff called Nick's Other Band. He raised his kids playing music.

Max played the drums, Logan the guitar. Another friend briefly played bass before leaving the band. The senior Barrett stepped in to fill the void for a while until he could convince his older son, Sam, then a trombone player, to pick up the bass guitar. By then, Tyler, who had been playing the piano by ear since age three, had joined in.

They practiced about once a week at the Barretts' house. Soon, they were playing at school. They opened for Nick's Other Band at Proctor once. Other schools invited them to play. And, then, to come back.

"Our first few times, we were nervous," said Logan, the guitarist. "But not anymore."

The band recently played for about 460 students at New London Elementary School and were mobbed by the crowd after. Some kids wanted their t-shirts or their arms signed.

"We signed three shoes and a (Nintendo) DS," Tyler, the keyboardist, said.

"It was, like, a rush," said Sam, the bassist.

Yesterday, Keith Barrett egged on the boys, keeping time with drumsticks and giving them cues at the start of a new verse or a solo.

At first, the Sutton students seemed distracted by hot dogs and punch, as they lunched on the grassy hill just across the blacktop from where the band was set up. Slowly, a semicircle of

See LTM on page 39

Programs For Kids At The Fells

The Fells in Newbury is running four programs for kids this summer.

Nature Detectives Adventure Learning is for ages three through five, accompanied by caregivers. It runs on Tuesdays, July 15, 22, and 29, from 10 to 11:30 AM. Watershed Investigators Adventure Learning is for ages six through nine and runs Wednesdays, July 16, 23, and 30, from 10 to noon.

Co-sponsored by the Lake Sunapee Protective Association (LSPA) and The Fells, these exciting and hand-on programs explore the ecological wonders of The Fells. Education Director Kathleen Stowell combines stories, song, crafts, hiking, and scavenger hunts to teach about our natural world. Sign up for one or all three classes. Fells and LSPA members and their children can participate free. For non-members, there is a fee.

Nature's Designs for ages six through eight runs Monday, July 14, through Fri-

day, July 18, from 9 AM to 12:30 PM. Nature's Designs for ages nine through 12 runs Monday, July 21 through Friday, July 25 from 9 AM to 12:30 PM.

Young artists look for designs in nature to use as inspiration to create their own artwork. Personal nature journals form the base for experimenting with printmaking, drawing, bookmaking, and collage.

The programs culminate with a student art show and reception on Friday. Student artists bring their completed artwork and all supplies home. The programs are directed by Rhode Island School of Design trained art teacher Lawre Goodnow. Campers are responsible for providing their own snacks, water, sunscreen, or other personal necessities. Cost for LSPA or Fells members is \$150, for non-members \$160.

To register for any of these programs, call 763-4789.