

“As I watch these guys while I’m teaching them, you can see that the music is just filling their soul. They get so much enjoyment from it. They’re not in a wheelchair anymore. They’re not in that bed anymore. They’re doing something that they enjoy.” —**JOHN ROLA**

ANDERSON

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program started?

A: It only started a month ago, but it’s been going gangbusters. I have Yamaha Musical Instruments, luthiers — the people who build and repair guitars — and several music stores behind me. I get guitars from Yamaha through Guitar Showcase in San Jose, and Gryphon Stringed Instruments in Palo Alto has given me guitars and music books. The luthiers have given and sold me guitars, and they do inexpensive repairs for free. I’ve had veterans donate guitars, and we will be doing some concerts and fundraising. Everyone is jumping on board — they love the idea, and want to be involved with it as much as they can.

Q: How is the program structured?
A: We provide acoustic and electric guitars, and I do one-on-one lessons once a week on the wards. I give five lessons, and if they want to continue learning how to play, they can keep the guitar, case, strings and stand. I’ve got about seven guys right now, and they are probably all Vietnam vets. I don’t have the young guys yet, but their injuries are still pretty raw to them — especially, if they’re in the trauma unit or the spinal-cord injury unit. They’ve got a lot of anger issues to deal with, but they know what I’m doing. When they’re ready to take that step, I’m there for them.

Q: How do you relate to what the injured veterans are going through?
A: I’m a disabled vet myself from Vietnam, where I served in 1969-’70. I know what it was like when I had to go through the transplant, and post-traumatic stress disorder counseling. Your mind is on that stuff all the time. I’m sure that people get sick of hearing about my kidney. I have to make sure that I take my pills at the proper time, do all the liquids, and if you get a weird feeling where the kidney is, you think “I’m in rejection.” And it’s the same with these guys — they’re losing their legs, and they’re just sitting there. If I can take their mind off of

what they’re going through — for a few minutes — I’ve accomplished my purpose.

Q: What has been the feedback from the veterans?
A: I was a corpsman (treating soldiers) in Vietnam, and as I watch these guys while I’m teaching them, you can see that the music is just filling their soul. They get so much enjoyment from it. They’re not in a wheelchair anymore. They’re not in that bed anymore. They’re doing something that they enjoy, and that keeps their focus completely away from (their problems). To watch the smiles on these guys’ faces when they say “thank you,” they really mean it.

Q: How has music helped you in your own life?
A: At 10, I started playing in my cousin’s polka band, and from there, in a couple of junior high and high-school bands. I was 14 when I started working with Bob Seger, who was 17. In Detroit there were a lot of teen clubs, and I went along setting up the stage for them. And, I went to school with Glenn Frey of the Eagles. When I got out of the service, I started doing radio and some engineering. I have one of the oldest DJ companies in the Bay Area, and began that in 1974. I’ve always enjoyed playing guitar, but I’m not good enough to make a living at it. I can make a living at the engineering and DJ work, and have been, really, since I was 14.

For me, music takes me wherever I want to go. When I get bummed out, I’ll grab a guitar. When I think of a time in my life, I relate to it in music. That’s what people do. With the vets, music can take them back to another time when they weren’t disabled. To be stuck with (medical problems) like these guys have been — probably since the late ’60s — that’s a long time. If I can get them away from that and give them a sense of stability — and another life — that’s the most rewarding thing I can do.

LJ Anderson writes about health matters on Wednesdays. She can be reached at lj.anderson@yahoo.com or www.ljanderson.com.

HALL & OATES

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gether — like bifocals. You can see it two ways.” Their shared vision has enabled Hall & Oates to enjoy rare longevity. “I have a lot of respect for people who have managed to stay vital and grow over a long period of time,” Hall said. “It’s hard to do. You can fall by the wayside. As an artist, you can lose your vibe, your impetus. You can crash and burn. If you rise above that, go beyond it, then you deserve respect.

“There’s a lot of keys to that. Some of it is in the genes, in the blood. You have to have the kind of personality that’s focused and strong-willed. The other thing is to live your life the right way and not let things distract you. Try to find balance and not to be influenced by negative things. Keep your eyes on the prize.”

Hall & Oates have received many awards, but have yet to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

“The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is an award. It’s nice to get an award. But it doesn’t motivate me, one way or the other. Most of these award things are pretty political. So I don’t pay any attention to it. It’s got nothing to do with me, really,” Hall said.

His music has had an impact on countless artists. “All art is a continuum. Nobody creates anything in a vacuum. It all comes from what happened before. And I’m proud to be part of that continuum. I got my influences from people and now people are getting their influences from me.”

Hall and Oates have pursued solo projects along the way. “I don’t think we would have stayed together, if we had been restrictive with each other. We’re two different people. We have our shared songs and this show we put on together. But we are very much individuals and think individually. John has his own world and I certainly have mine. It works both ways.”

One of Hall’s most ambitious projects is



Photo by Mark Maglio
 Daryl Hall, left, and John Oates will be at Mountain Winery in Saratoga on Friday and Saturday nights.

“Live From Daryl’s House,” a new monthly Internet webcast. It gives him the opportunity, in an intimate setting, to jam with other gifted artists, like Smokey Robinson.

“After touring the world all these years, the idea came to turn everything upside down and bring the world to me and my inner sanctum. We break down the fourth wall between the audience and the artist.

“There’s a lot of refreshing aspects to it that make it super exciting. Most of these artists, I don’t know. It’s almost a blind date. So when great surprises happen, it’s a special feeling.”

E-mail Paul Freeman at romper333@comcast.net.

EYE CARE NEWS

Presented by
Mark Schmidt
 Licensed Optician

IN A BIND

Soft contact lenses that fit too tightly leave no room for tears to flow beneath the lenses to refresh the cornea. Instead, tears tend to pool under the lens and breed bacteria, which produce toxins that create cloudy patches in the cornea and cause infections. Moreover, a tight-fitting soft lens starves the cornea of oxygen, making it more susceptible to swelling and the growth of new blood vessels within the cornea. Warning signs of tight-fitting lenses include foggy vision, fluctuating vision (better or worse vision after blinking), dryness, irritation, and redness. This problem doesn’t necessarily mean the lens fitter is at fault since contact lenses can tighten on their own with a few hours’ wear, especially if eyes are dry. But this is why follow-up care is necessary to help your lens fitter determine the best fitting lens for a full day of wear.

Because contacts are worn directly on the eye, it is important to follow specific handling, cleaning, and disinfecting instructions. At MENLO OPTICAL, we feature soft, hard, and bi-focal contacts as well as cleaning supplies. To ensure you enjoy healthy eyes and clear vision, we provide instructions on how to care for your lenses. If you would like to have an eye health examination, we know of and work with many fine physicians in this area and would be happy to recommend one for you. Call us at 322-3900, or visit us at 1166 University Drive.

P.S. It is important to have new contact lenses in for a few hours prior to a follow-up visit so that the fit of the lenses can be accurately assessed.

Mark Schmidt is an American Board of Opticianry and National Contact Lens Examiners Certified Optician licensed by the Medical Board of California. He can be reached at Menlo Optical 1166 University Drive, Menlo Park, 650.322.3900.

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