


 FRANK & ERNEST
BY BOB THAVIS

TIMEout! Neighbor

 Fun things to do this week
in the Fox Valley

Long and winding road

Role of Harrison's sister in Beatles lore runs from Fab Four backer to tribute band manager

 BY JAMIE GRECO
Daily Herald Correspondent

In 1963, while the alarm clock was still ticking on the arrival of Beatlemania in the U.S.A., George Harrison, lead guitarist for the band, arrived in downstate Benton, Ill., for a visit with his sister, Louise.

The family celebrated a child's birthday, went camping in the Shawnee Forest and enjoyed each other's company in the relaxed atmosphere of a small town.

The next time he would arrive in the United States, it would be at the newly christened John F. Kennedy Airport in New York City in the company of three young men with the eyes of the world upon them.

On Feb. 9, 1964, the Beatles appeared on TV's "The Ed Sullivan Show" with Louise Harrison in attendance.

Manager Brian Epstein had orchestrated the band's triumphant entry into American pop culture, but behind the scenes in small-town Illinois, Louise Harrison was doing more than her share for her little brother.

"In 1963, my mum had sent me some of the first singles and then their first album," Harrison recalls. "Being a loving big sister, I went out to all of the radio stations in the area within a 100-mile radius."

She was met with less than an enthusiastic response.

"They were looking at me as that poor, silly woman that was trying to get her kid brother's band somewhere, and they're really no good and never going to get anywhere. My feeling was, 'this poor lot, they're going to miss the boat if they're not careful.'"

Undeterred, Harrison began to research the music business. Every week she purchased show business magazines — Cashbox and Variety — a costly venture in those days.

"I was writing long letters to



COURTESY OF LIVERPOOL LEGENDS

Brian (Epstein). In every letter I said to him, 'You've got to get them on "The Ed Sullivan Show,"' Harrison said.

When it finally happened, her brother's fame wasn't a large adjustment to Harrison.

"It felt very natural. It always seemed like that's the way it should be," Harrison remembered.

Rumors followed fame and Harrison found herself cast in new roles: as liaison between the Beatles and their fans — and in that capacity, radio personality.

It began with a trip to the British ambassador's home in Washington, D.C., where the Beatles were invited to a party with Louise in attendance.

"While they were there, some teenager came up behind Ringo and

cut his hair," Harrison recalled. The story became muddled in the telling, and soon it was reported that the British ambas-

sador's wife had wrestled Ringo to the ground to snip off a lock of his hair.

Harrison was appalled at the story.

"I was incensed at the dishonor it was doing to the ambassador's wife. So I called the big radio station in St. Louis and said, 'This is not what happened.'"

As a result, the story was corrected and Harrison was offered a job at the station doing a Beatles report.

"It turned out I had quite a flair for writing, and also for (broadcasting.)"

She ended up being broad-


 CHRISTOPHER HANKINS/
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cast on 19 stations, each becoming the No. 1 station in its market.

More importantly, her interaction with the fans became a part of her life that she treasures to this day.

"It's a very, very great responsibility and it's also a very, very great privilege, to have been born into the position I'm in. Because of the love and because of all those wrong stories that were getting out," she said.

"Stories which were discrediting the Beatles and making them look like a bunch of jerks — I had to put that right."

"I was trying to protect the

If you go

What: Liverpool Legends, a Beatles tribute band managed by Louise Harrison, sister of the late George

When: Friday. Doors open at 7 p.m.; band will begin playing at 9:30 p.m.

Where: Clearwater Theater, 96 W. Main St., West Dundee

Tickets: \$10

Call: (847) 836-8820



George Harrison

Peace: Senior Harrisons began 'Beatle People'

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Years later, soon after her brother had died, Harrison was at a nostalgia-based gathering in Chicago. Another phase in her life was about to begin.

She was standing in the back of the hall, next to a man videotaping American English, a popular Beatles tribute band. The camera transmitted Marty Scott in his role as George Harrison to where she stood.

"Quite unbidden, the tears just rolled down my face. I'm not a wimpy kind of a person. I hadn't really cried about my brother being gone, because my feeling is he wanted to be with his sweet Lord.

"But seeing Marty, it reminded

me so much of how George sounded and how he stood and how he looked on stage, it just brought those tears to my eyes."

Harrison was so moved, she began a brother-sister relationship with Scott. She admired his musical talent, but there was something more.

"He had within him many of the kind, loving and funny traits that my brother had. It was as though my brother kind of pointed him out to me."

Harrison said she and Scott became as close as she had felt to her "original brother."

"We can talk to each other just the same way George and I did, on every subject," she said.

And so, when Scott's band disintegrated, Harrison was one

of the first people he called. Harrison offered her assistance in any form it might take.

It came into her mind that she might be able to use her contacts in the world of Beatle People to manage a new band with Scott and long-time friend Kevin Mantegna, who portrays John Lennon.

"I thought I might be able to help, even though I know nothing about it, other than the advice I had given to Brian (Epstein) all those years ago."

She began by incorporating and calling on a former associate, Michelle Dwoskin, to join her in her new path as band manager for Passed Masters, Scott and Mantegna's acoustic Beatles tribute.

Liverpool Legends was then formed, and includes Davey Justice as Paul; Joe Bologna as Ringo; and Bob Dobro filling out the keyboards and percussion in a full-blown Beatles experience.

The band will perform Friday night at the Clearwater Theater in West Dundee.

"I'm not going to do anything half-hearted," she said. "If I'm going to attempt to be a manager I will do it properly, professionally and with all the bells and whistles."

She had important criteria for the band.

"Let's form a band that George would have loved to be part of."

"We'd like this band to be quite unique from the other 500

Beatles bands out there. We're going to make our repertoire very, very extensive.

"That's something George used to complain about. He'd say, 'On these tours we'd only get to play our number one hits. It gets to be so boring.'"

So, Harrison carries on in her new role as band manager, once again helping to keep the Beatles' message of love and peace at the forefront of the public's imagination.

"We're making sure that George's attitude gets satisfied by playing scads of different things. It will be the kind of thing that George will enjoy."

"The whole thing from my point of view," she said. "... is to please George."