

## **The Bad Seeds Band Interview – May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

Questions provided by Mike Dugo of 60sgaragebands.com

Answers provided by the band members of theBadSeeds.com

Allan Jansen | David Toms | Dennis Fehler | Larry Drennan | Mike Rushing | Ronnie Mahan | Skip Spoons

### **Q1: How did you first get interested in music?**

[Skip] When I was 12 years old, my parents started me on piano lessons which I didn't have much interest in because I really wanted to play the guitar. The piano teacher, Mrs. Wilson, had her son's guitar for sell since he was through with it. I bought that guitar for \$15. It was a Sears and Roebuck Silvertone acoustic and the strings were half an inch off the fret board and barely playable. There was a lady from Oglesby, TX who gave me lessons at her house. After learning my basic chords, Dad bought me a Fender MusicMan guitar and a Champ amp from Chuck Harding's Music Store in Waco, TX. I took about a month of lead lessons there and learned how to play "Last Date" by Floyd Cramer. I started listening to rock songs from the radio and playing along by ear. Dad bought me my next Fender amp, a Deluxe Reverb; from Ray Hennig (by then he bought the music store from Chuck Harding).

[Larry] My interest in music started in the mid fifties. I spent a couple of weeks in the summer and lots of holidays with my grandparents in Seymour, TX and one of my aunts that still lived at home worked in Baylor Drug Store in Seymour. One of her jobs was to order the 45 singles each week. She was always bringing home the latest hits that we heard on the (AM) radio. She had an old RCA suitcase record player. It looked more like an over night makeup kit like many of the women traveled with in those days. I remember her bringing home "Love Me Tender," "You Ain't Nothin' but a Hound Dog," "All Shook Up," "Don't Be Cruel" and many others by various artists. I would spend hours singing along with the records until she would make me turn it off. That was my first experience with recorded music other than playing the jukebox at restaurants. My father influenced me greatly as he had sung in public at church and country parties as a young man along with his brother and some cousins. [He played the piano and guitar]. Dad took me to several southern gospel concerts at the Will Rogers Coliseum in Ft. Worth to hear groups like the Blackwood Brothers, Stamps Quartet, Oak Ridge Quartet as well as many others. I remember the hair standing up on my neck when hearing the wonderful harmonies and piano players. There was no other accompaniment, just the piano. In 1960 my parents moved back to Gilmer, TX where I was born and lived until 1950. I was 11 years old. My dad started singing in a gospel quartet at the church we attended. I had started to hear the different harmony parts and began singing in the congregation. My dad and his brother started listening to me and got me started singing along with them at practice. The lady that sang the alto or 2nd tenor part began coaching me and finally stepped down [later on] to allow me to sing with my dad, my uncle and another gentleman. That was my first experience with singing parts and performing in front of people. We later on brought my brother into the group and performed most every Sunday in the Northeast Texas area from 1961 to 1966 at homecomings, Memorial Day services, community singing conventions and the like. We performed on KLTV Channel 7 in Tyler on the annual telethon. We also had a radio program in Mt. Pleasant, TX at the local radio station. Our program was on each Saturday from 12:00pm to 12:30pm. You know, the station is still in operation.

[Ronnie] When I was very young, our families always got together, [cousins, aunts and uncles]. Most of the family played guitars, fiddles, and all of us sang together. Most of it was Country and Western, and I didn't really care for it, but I was still being exposed to music. Then, when I was 12 or 13, the Beatles came out. I don't know what it was but I have been a music freak ever since then.

[Dennis] For me it was about finding a way to get the (right) girls more interested in me. I could see when I watched the Ed Sullivan show that rock and roll music was potentially the key [for me]. Toward that end, I took piano lessons for a few years from Mrs. Hudson, and I remember not liking it very much so I stopped going to the lessons as soon as I could. I was in the High School band. I played the clarinet, and looking back at it now I should have been a sax player. The first memory I have of playing with a group was the 1966 McGregor High School Winter Festival. There is a picture in our High School annual where we all have white coats and bow ties and we look like the pencil neck geeks we were at the time. Before The Bad Seeds, I really don't remember playing with any one group for more than a few gigs. For sure, back then, it was all about the girls, but now it is all about the music. It is "funny" how that focus changes over time, huh?

[Mike] From an early age, my grandma had a gathering at her home every Wednesday night to sing gospel songs. She played the piano and everyone would sing in harmony. Both of my cousins could play the piano, so they would swap with grandma on piano. We would all play and sing and grandpa would set in his easy chair and just listen. My dad played the guitar until he lost two fingers in WWII which obviously stopped his guitar playing. Singing in church was a natural for me when I was in about the 6th grade, and I then played the cornet in the school band.

All through High School Skip and I were buddies and we would sit in band hall for hours and practice on his guitar. A few months later, then when we felt we were ready we both began taking lessons from Rufus [Moon] Mooney. I pretty sure Moon taught Allan too. A few months of lessons passed and I remember traveling to North Carolina to see the other side of the family where we put on quite a two or three song concert. Weren't we cool!

I was working hard on my music skills and when the Bad Seeds ask me to join them I jumped at the opportunity and the rest is history in the making.

[Allan] In the 50's, my family and I would attend family reunions in Georgetown, TX. There was an old gentleman and his son who would stop by and perform. The old man played the fiddle and his son played the guitar. I was thinking this was really cool and I wanted to learn to play the guitar. As luck would have it, my cousin had a Sears Airline hollow body for sale. My folks thought it would be a good idea to try, as they were getting tired of hearing me whistle off key. They had decided that I couldn't carry a tune if it had handles on it. After a year or so of learning on the hollow body, I was able to purchase a home-made solid body electric that I played through a pawnshop special amplifier. Now I was really hot! Later, in 1965 I traded for the brand new Fender Mustang and Pro Reverb amp I still play today.

[David] I was listening to The Four Tops' version of "I'm a Believer" back in the early '70s, and something about that song totally hooked me. I listened to it over and over again. It must have driven my mom half batty. I was only seven or eight, but I knew from that point on I would be a guitar player or a drummer. Turned out I was better at the drums.

**Q2: Was the Bad Seeds your first band? If not, which band was? How long was it together?**

[Mike] The Bad Seeds are the only band I have, or ever wanted to play with.

[Dennis] In McGregor High School we had a loose affiliation of musicians that played in various combinations. I don't remember any of the names other than Clifford's band or Allan and Donny etc. It was when I went to Kilgore College that provided my first opportunity to play in a band with a "real" name.

[Skip] I began jamming with local friends from school which led to joining my first band with Allan Jansen, Mike Rushing, Don Watson, and my brother Scott. One of our first gigs was a birthday party for one of the Gilmore girls next door.

[Larry] I had a very brief experience with a band that was introduced as Larry D and the Scorpions. We played at two different gigs in our brief tenure, one for the PTA meeting at the country school I attended, [Union Hill] and also at the Junior-Senior Prom my senior year. I think we did two songs about 3 times each, "Ferry Cross the Mersey" and I don't remember the other two.

[Ronnie] No. Dennis, Mikey, Allen, and Skip were a few grades ahead of me, but some friends of mine and me got together and started a band called The Changing Times. We started the band about my freshman year which would have been about 1966. We rehearsed quite a bit, and got quite good. We played a lot of the same songs as The Bad Seeds, and we listened to the them whenever they came back to McGregor to play, we all backed each other back then, that's what was so good about those times, we all helped each other out.

[David] The first bands I played in were jokes. You know you're in trouble when the only guy who knows a whole song is the drummer. I think some of those guys spent most of their time trying to create a cool looking logo. So, the first organized and uniformly talented band I played in was called Hellequin. That was 1985 to the Spring of 1986. We were pretty good. We covered all the glam metal from the 1980s, like Dokken, Ratt, and Motley Crue. We also did some harder stuff, like Metalica and Judas Priest. Aside from the singer being an ego-maniacal douche bag, it was a blast. You always realize later how great you had it "back then."

**Q3: Where was The Bad Seeds formed, what year, and by whom?**

[Dennis] The Bad Seeds were initially formed in Kilgore, TX by Allan Jansen in the fall of 1966. It certainly does not seem like it was 40 years ago does it?

[Larry] I was approached by Allan, Dennis and a mutual friend from my hometown about trying out as singer for an un-named band they wanted to form. I was all over that as I had already started breaking away from the gospel quartet much to my dad and uncle's disappointment. We set up in the back yard of the family Dennis and Allan rented a room from at Kilgore. It was pretty rocky but we showed a little talent. Ironically Allan, Dennis and I had a couple of classes together as we were aspiring to be auto mechanics and thus our friendship started. Us three have stayed in touch off and on throughout the years. This was probably around October or November 1966. Mike and Skip hooked up with us in late 1966 or early 1967 and thus the five principal members of The Bad Seeds came together. We played gigs around the Kilgore, Gilmer and McGregor area the remainder of that school year. In

June of 1967 I got a job in Ennis, TX with AT&T and moved away from home. Dennis contacted me a few times about getting the band back together. I wasn't really interested in getting the band back together as I was living in a new town meeting new people, with a new job and many beautiful girls around and living on my own. I decided to go down and give it a try with Dennis and the other guys in the summer of 1967. We reconnected and started tightening up our music and we all loved it.

**Q4: If you haven't already done so, please list the names of each member of original The Bad Seeds, as well as the instruments each played.**

Founding members of the Bad Seeds:

Allan Jansen - Guitar  
Dennis Fehler - Keyboard  
Larry Drennan - Vocals  
Mike Rushing - Bass  
Skip Spoonts - Guitar

With current members:

Ronnie Mahan - Vocals  
David Toms - Drums

[Allan] We did have some members that played a few times early on. Tommy Coleman was our initial bass player and Johnny Swanson was our drummer. We never had a long term drummer. I remember a complicated string of drummers that finally ended with Gene Gilstrap.

**Q5: There was another Texas band in the '60's, from Corpus Christi, named The Bad Seeds. Were you familiar with that group at all, or did you ever cross paths?**

[Allan] You know, those times were different. You didn't have computer access or the web and Corpus Christi was a world away from us. If they were on TV or the radio we might have heard of them.

[Larry] I was not aware of the band from Corpus Christi but did know of a group named "The Seeds" who had a top 40 hit titled (You're) "Pushin' Too Hard," which we always covered at our gigs.

[Dennis] We had no idea that there were any other Bad Seeds until around 1999. We learned of Nick Cave and the Corpus Seeds around then. I personally have no issues with any other seeds.., bad or otherwise. We are lucky enough to own the domain theBadSeeds.com [so we're OK, they're OK]. With any luck we can ride on each others coat tails and continue to make some good music.

**Q6: How would you describe the band's sound? What bands influenced you?**

[Larry] We tried to cover songs as close to the original artists as possible. Our equipment was really good for the times as Dennis, Allan, Skip and Mike bought all new stuff from Ray Hennig, Heart of Texas Music store owner from McGregor. Ray let us young musicians make installment payments and we were always buying more

new equipment. I remember Dennis playing a red Farfisa Combo Compact keyboard through a Fender Bassman amp. Allan played a Fender Mustang through a Fender Pro Reverb amp. Skip had a Fender Deluxe reverb amp with a white Fender Musicmaster II guitar with red pick-guard. Mikey played a Fender Precision bass thru a Fender Bassman Amp with two speaker cabinets.

Mike and Skip alternated on bass and rhythm and Skip played some lead along with Allan. Those three guys were pretty versatile on guitars. We used a twelve string on a few songs to get the sound we were looking for. The weakest part of the equipment up until the latter part of our hay day was always the main sound system. Back then we didn't have monitors so Allan and Skip would run extension speakers off of one or both of their amps and place the extra speaker over by the other so as to be able to hear each other. I usually walked out front to get a feel for the mix as we also didn't have a mixer board. Two pieces of equipment I remember we added to our sound was the fuzz pedal and the echo chamber. Fender, at the time, made an echo chamber that was actually a tape recorder which played back what was played through it. To make the echo effect, you adjusted an idler control that delayed the playback of the signal in milliseconds by increasing the distance the playback tape traveled from the recording head to the playback head, thus creating the echo effect. We used this on "A Day in the Life" from the Beatles, Sergeant Pepper's album. We thought we were pretty hot stuff and the fans were impressed with how we accomplished this. We were influenced by many of the English groups, Doors, Beatles, Dave Clark Five, Monkees, Kinks, Yardbirds, Animals, Rolling Stones, as well as American groups The Buckingham's, Sam & Dave, James Brown, Otis Redding, Marvin Gaye, Question Mark and Mysterians, The Uniques, Mouse and the Traps, John Fred and the Playboys, Sam the Sham and the Pharos, and many others that I can't name. If it was getting play time on the radio we were trying to cover it.

[David] I have more influences than I can name! My biggest ones: Jimi Hendrix Experience, Nirvana, KISS, Jeff Buckley, Beatles, STP, Bad Finger, Soundgarden, Buddy Rich, Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones, etc! I'd bet we are all better now than we were in our respective heydays. I think we're talented enough to cover just about anyone's music. However, we always throw in licks that show our own individual styles, culled from decades of experience. As for originals, the guys write great stuff that reminds me of everything from The Doors to Santana. Every chance I get, though, I try to sneak in a hard rock drum part! I can't help it. I'm a hard rock drummer at heart.

[Dennis] We found out very early on that the vinyl playback equipment that we all had access to in the 1960's was not really high fidelity. Well, in the late 60's stereo equipment was pretty good, but nothing was as good as a live band playing music that you only heard on a 6 x 9 AM radio speaker. When you heard the Bad Seeds play "Vanilla Fudge" or "Sergeant Peppers" it was really something you would never forget. At that time it was the most powerful thing that I have ever been a part of, and everyone [band and audience] genuinely felt that way too.

[Ronnie] Rock & Roll..., are you kidding. No really, everyone played mostly copy tunes, with a little original mixed in, so we followed the types of music being played at the time. I wish we would have had the type of sound equipment back then as we do now, whew, we would have been (even more) dangerous.

[Dennis] I need to mention that today we have what we call that skip-tone sound. That is where Skip puts his arm across the controls on his amp and sets everything to 10. (kidding). He says he got that idea from Jimi Hendrix. Seriously, we try to

play music that has the most interesting combination of tones, and because Skip is now our primary tone generator we label our [current] sound skip-tone." It does have a catchy ring to it..., The Bad Seeds skip-tone sound.

**Q7: Where did the band typically play (schools, parties, etc.)?**

[Allan] We played for mostly private parties that we would sponsor. We did a few football and teen parties and pep rallies for the Rangerettes at Kilgore, but we found out very quickly if we rented the place and promoted the dance ourselves we would make more money.

[Larry] We played for a variety of audiences from public dances where we ran the gate to auto dealerships for promotional events, private parties, fraternity parties, and a variety of other venues.

We also played one dance in Gilmer, TX my home town, about 30 miles from Kilgore. Most of the people had never heard our band other than the few that went to Fat City or maybe heard us around campus at Kilgore College. What was unique about the dances we did in our hometowns were early on our parents came to help out with taking money at the door or I guess to see what there little boys had evolved into.

One memorable gig we played was in Waco for a Baylor fraternity party. There were quite a few jocks from the college there. We decided to do Louie, Louie for our next song and Dennis thought as a different twist he would start the intro with a measure or two of The Old Rugged Cross. About three seconds into the intro one of the rather bulky jocks charged toward the stage yelling you can't do that and Dennis just kept on for another measure or two then we stopped and went into "Louie Louie" at that moment everyone started dancing as if nothing really happened. Fortunately none of us got "punched" but it was a little tense for a moment or two.

We played quite a few gigs in Ennis, Texas and Ennis was a largely Czech town had many fraternal halls around the town so venues were never hard to find. We rented and ran our own dances at the different meeting halls around Ennis, with the SOKOL being one of our favorites. We also played in Kilgore, TX at Fat City probably the most popular dance venue for college students from Kilgore College and of course Kilgore was the home of the famous Kilgore Rangerettes. We drew an exceptionally large crowd the night we played and brought the house down. Ironically we played the weekend between John Fred and the Playboys and Roy Orbison. The Playboys were a regional band with their big hit being "Judy in Disguise" [with diamonds]. Everyone knows Roy Orbison now I'm sure.

Where we really perfected our sound was in McGregor at the (then) Sons of Hermann Hall which was a small venue that was intended to accommodate probably a hundred folks. We packed crowds of 250 to 300 in like sardines in a can. Anybody who was anybody came to our dances, and I might add, still do.

**Q8: Did you play any of the local teen clubs? If so, which ones?**

[Allan] I remember one interesting story (that we only tell occasionally). It was what really started us promoting our own gigs. The local teen club president was a woman that had a "pay ceiling" for all of the bands that played for the club. She had a complicated explanation for why we would only get \$50.00 for the upcoming

dance. Well, we suggested we wanted more money, and she acted as if it was "her teen club" that the kids came to support. We rented the American Legion Hall and organized a dance the same night she planned for. She found out the hard way, it was about the music because "her teen club" had 3 people show up and the rest of the community came to The Bad Seed's dance. That experience made us all realize the drawing power we had in 1967.

[Larry] I mentioned previously the largest teen club we played was Fat City at Kilgore. The club was just a few blocks from the campus of Kilgore College and was the place to go for the college set as well as being a big draw for the entire region. There were many acts that went on to become stars in the music business that at one time or another played this venue, Mouse and the Traps, John Fred and the Playboys, Bugs Henderson (who later played with TREX and several other groups), and many others that I can't recall the names. It was a unique place with a balcony section that probably seated 150 or so and the lower level that also had tables and a large dance floor. The stage was a two or three tier oval arrangement with the drum riser being probably 12 feet or so off of the dance floor. Of course the big draw for the young men was the Rangerettes who frequented the place. This was probably the most exciting gig we ever played or at least at that time of our tenure it was. It certainly helped us gain popularity with the college set and especially with the Rangerettes.

[Mike] I remember that the Superintendent of dear ole MHS [McGregor High School] did not believe in the sinful act of dancing, therefore we could not use the gym for that purpose. Every time I see the movie "Footloose" it brings to mind our days at MHS.

**Q9: How far was the band's "touring" territory?**

[Allan] Our gig region was South of Dallas, North of Georgetown, West of Kilgore, and East of Gatesville.

**Q10: Did The Bad Seeds participate in any battle of the bands? If so, what other bands do you recall playing against? How well did the band typically fare?**

[Dennis] We played for one in Waco, TX at the Westview Skating Rink. The only band I remember that was there was the Morticians. I still hold a grudge from that battle of the bands contest from the mid 1960's. We were up before the Morticians and (in our minds) were the clear winner, however they took the stage and kicked off with a newly released Rolling Stones song titled "Paint it Black." They really rocked the house and were the hands down winners. I have never quite gotten over the disappointment. I'm working toward having a rematch sometime and see who the best band is in this century.

[Mike] The night we played at the Westview Skating Rink, Moon let me use one of his fender guitars, I think I had a Silvertone amp at the time and I was embarrassed to bring it. I'm ready for that rematch myself.

[Larry] The one that I recall the most was at the KJT hall in Ennis. I had played some with a local band there and I knew, for sure, that we had a better sound than they did. Having been living in Ennis for a while I had met many new friends and had taken many of them to McGregor to hear our band. They all encouraged me to

bring the Bad Seeds to Ennis for the big battle. The hall was a very large venue, a gymnasium with a large stage on one side of the gym. We were probably at our peak when we played this event. If I remember there were two other local bands and us. We were the last band to play and kicked butt. That was one of the times we performed "A Day in the Life" by the Beatles and used our echo chamber. I remember people just stopping dancing and listening to the song. I can't remember the names of the two bands we played against but I remember one of the bands had an older member who was a pharmacist and played a B3 Hammond with a Leslie that they had to cart in for any gig they played. He had a great sound but Dennis' Farfisa wasn't bad for the type of music that was popular then.

[Skip] We really were the best band in Ennis that night. I remember the second place band played on Sears and Roebuck Silvertone amps and guitars and played some of my cousin Buddy Holly's music.

[Dennis] What I remember best about that battle of the bands was the next month when we rented Sokol Hall and threw our first dance in that area. My favorite memory of that night was when Ronnie Roe and Jimmy Reeves were working our new light show. We made 8 (individually controlled) colored spot lights from one gallon [metal] peach cans and wired them to some 110vac light switches with a telegraph key for a controller. The lights appeared to "follow the music" precisely and we knew we had the best psychedelic light show on the planet. It was a really amazing effect in 1967.

**Q11: What other local groups of the era do you especially recall?**

[Mike] The Morticians and the Knights Bridge Quintet were two of the local best. The Morticians are still a quite popular in Waco, TX, but I don't know anything about the KBQ. Also there was a group called the Surfers were floating around. These kids were all blonde headed and had the sounds of the Beach Boys.

[Larry] The band that comes to mind for me was a band from Waco, The Knights Bridge Quintet. They had one original song that got some airtime around the region. The name of the song was Sorrow in C Major. We started covering the song at our dances and the fans said we covered the song better than they did.

**Q12: Did The Bad Seeds have a manager? If so, how did you hook up with him/her? How active was he/she in promoting the band?**

[Allan] We actually managed ourselves. We gave David Anderson the honorary managers' job because he got us a gig at the Kilgore nightclub Fat City. As Larry mentioned earlier we were the local boys and played the week between Roy Orbison and John Fred and the Playboys. David told us later that actually pulled in more people because the club had a limit of 850 people [at any one time] and the fire marshal didn't bother to show up to count heads for our "no name" band.

[Larry] We really did our own promoting with the guys from McGregor promoting us in that region and me promoting us around the Ennis area. We did have some very loyal followers and buddies that took care of us, helped us set up, tear down, transport, and keeping the folks "in line" at our dances. The late Mike Denn, Ronnie Roe, Steve Huffines, the late Ronnie (Tiny) Renfro and Jimmy (Baby Jim) Reeves. They were the best!

**Q13: How popular locally did The Bad Seeds become?**

[Dennis] We were gods [in our own minds] for about two years. Truthfully back then we were just "OK" musicians as individuals, but together we could make some serious sounds and rock the house. That "tightness" made us very popular (in our area).

[Larry] In the McGregor area we were the band that everybody wanted to hear and gained quite a bit of popularity in the Waco area. Ray Hennig "Heart of Texas Music Store" owner promoted us quite a bit and we got a few plugs on commercials he ran on the radio stating that we used equipment from his store. Ray was really good to us as we bought lots of equipment on the "easy installment pay plan." It didn't hurt that all of the band members from McGregor knew Ray and that Dennis lived next door to him. I don't remember a single dance that we played not having a full house regardless of the size of the venue. As Dennis mentioned earlier the sound we were producing was so far ahead of AM radio that kids flocked to see and hear us. We weren't a bad looking group either as we all still had hair at the time and flat bellies.

I remember we were getting ready to go to McGregor to play one of our first gigs there and this may have been before Mike and Skip joined the group. Dennis, Allan, Johnny Swanson (drummer) and Tommy Coleman (bass) and I went to a store in Tyler and bought white ribbed hip hugger pants and black dickeys to wear under your shirt that looked like a turtleneck. I remember always trying to keep the hip huggers pulled up and also being very uncomfortable. Fortunately we quit wearing those pretty soon after we bought them. The most fun was setting up and getting ready to play in McGregor the afternoon before the dance. Many of the girls from around town would come to hear us practice. Most of them knew all the guys except me so I thought I had died and gone to heaven to see and meet all of these new babes. I fell in love almost every dance. Dennis used to tell me during our dance when we would get ready to do "All These Things" by the Uniques, Joe Stampley being the lead singer for that group to sit down on the front of the stage and croon to the girls. I was a little uncomfortable doing it the first few times but the girls seemed to like it so I got over the uncomfortable feeling. Had we had a few more years with out interruption I believe we could have been an even bigger success.

**Q14: I don't believe The Bad Seeds recorded in the '60s. Why not?**

[Mike] We wanted to, but we ran out of time before we got to it.

[Larry] I really don't know why we never recorded anything. I think we were so caught up in performing and of course most of us didn't have any money to speak of that recording just never happened. Just like we only have one picture of us from that era.

**Q15: Did The Bad Seeds write any original songs? Who was the band's primary songwriter?**

[Larry] So far, Dennis and Skip have done most all of the original writing. Others of us have added tidbits of lyrics and arrangements but those two have to get the credit for writing, arranging, and being the creative ones. They both amaze me with their skills and dedication to the music.

[Dennis] I think for our next project we are going to record "cover" music in our rehearsal studio we call the Parlor. It is an old undertaker parlor and it is about perfect for us to do our thing.

**Q16: Do any (other) '60's Bad Seeds' recordings exist? Are there any vintage live recordings, or unreleased tracks?**

[Allan] Not really. In the 60's the only recording equipment we had access to was my old [mono] 5 inch reel to reel with a crystal microphone. We did a few live recordings at a few parties early on, but the crowd noise was of higher quality than the actual music [microphone placement].

[Dennis] At that time we thought we were going to live forever, play music when we wanted to, and we had all the time in the world to get it all done. About the time we were talking about going to Ft. Worth or Dallas and making a recording the war snatched us from the jaws of success.

**Q17: Did the band make any local TV appearances? Does any home movie film footage exist of the band?**

[Allan] Yes, we performed live on KCEN-TV channel 6. I remember the experience as if it were yesterday. The recording engineer said that we would perform "live" but we had to record the music and lip-sync and pretend to play the music. Dennis hated the idea but we did it anyway, after all we were going to be on TV. The hilarious thing was the [professional] recording engineer brought out a shotgun microphone and placed it on a pillow in front of the band. I look back on it and it still makes me laugh. Especially [when we were on the air] the engineer started the recording but forgot to pipe it in [so we could hear it] until after the first couple of bars had played.

**Q18: What year and why did the band break up?**

[Dennis] We didn't know it at the time but the Vietnam Tet Offensive (January 31, 1968) marked to end of the Bad Seeds. It was a matter of months; three of the Bad Seeds were off to fight the war. My date of military service is August of 1968, so I tell people that is when the band broke up only because I can remember that date. We swore we were going to get back together, but it took a long time to actually happen. The war and life had really changed our individual directions.

[Larry] I was drafted into the army in late June of 1968 and I believe Allan and Dennis went in sometime that same summer. It was a tuff time for us and a very sad time as we were really peaking with our music. I believe Mike and Skip were in college and luckily avoided the military. The following December or early January I was stationed at Ft. Hood, TX about 40 miles south of McGregor. Most of the troops at the post were gone for the leave during the holidays and I really hadn't been assigned a job yet. I found out Dennis was coming home for the holidays and he was stationed in Ft. Monmouth, NJ. I slipped off base (without orders or permission) and caught a bus to Waco and had our loyal buddy Tiny Renfro pick me up and spent about 4 or 5 days at Dennis' home with his folks that holiday season. The following April of 1969 I went to Vietnam for a one year tour. My location was near the DMZ (the line between North and South Vietnam). I was assigned to go to a technical class in Long Binh which was a few hundred miles to the south of my post and found out that Allan was stationed there with the MP's. We looked up and spent some great

but brief time together. I remember we played around with different arrangements of Stagger Lee. That was a welcome sight to see my dear friend and fellow Bad Seed in that not so desirable country.

**Q19: Did you join or form any bands after The Bad Seeds?**

[Skip] After the Bad Seeds unlike the other guys I continued to play. Just after the Bad Seeds broke up I played with the Rebellions in Gatesville, TX, then around 1973 I played in an acoustic trio named Trinity in Lake Jackson, TX. We played gigs at the local Pizza Boy and private parties. I remember that was when I purchased my first Martin D-18 guitar from Ray Hennig. Later that year, I bought my second Martin from Ray, this time a D-32 that I still have today.

From 1973 July to 1975 July I played acoustic duo gigs with Frank Corbin in Austin, TX. I worked about a year and a half on studio work (acoustic guitar and harmony vocals) on the Frank Corbin "Marbled Eyed Gypsy" (vinyl) album.

In 1978-1979 I did solo acoustic gigs with Longbranch Saloon Steakhouse every weekend.

From 1983-1985 I played acoustic and electric gigs with Jay Wilson in Dallas, TX. We performed at Chelsea Street Pubs, and various nightclubs in the area.

From 1985- 1995 I played with the Smithfield Band of Fort Worth, TX area. We played country/variety/1950's rock n roll. The band members were Rich Doty - guitar, vocals and front man; Waylon Davis – bass and vocals; Jerry Gibson - drums for several years, (previously primary drummer for Sly & Family Stone, numerous Hollywood recording engagements). The gigs were conventions at the Marriot, Sheraton, Hyatt Regency, and Flagship Inn. We played many nightclub/bar jobs, and played at the American Legions, Elks, Moose Lodges, Petroleum Club in downtown Ft. Worth, and the Shrine's Fort Worth Stockyards. I also remember performing at the White Elephant Saloon, Billy Bob's Texas, Chisholm Trails Days, Pioneer Days, and Downtown Singles Club for Ft. Worth, Dallas, and Arlington. On top of that it seems like we played (almost) every country club within a 100 mile radius of DFW.

After those years, I worked with various country and variety bands around Ft. Worth area including Jon Beaumont and John Brotherton (a local recording artist/writer).

[Dennis] For a very short time in 1982 I played as a hobby with Orval and Dave in Rolla, MO. We called ourselves "ODD" (for Orval, Dave, and Dennis). We borrowed some video equipment and created a video to play on the local Jerry Lewis telethon. We did two original songs and we performed "Just What I Needed" by The Cars. No, I don't have the tape anymore. It was poor quality, I think my dog ate it or something?

[Allan] There was a vocal group in a nearby town called the Brown Sisters who sang gospel and country at the time. They were invited to perform with Marty Robbins at a concert in Waco. They asked Ray Hennig, his son Steven, Rufus "Moon" Mooney and me if we could back them up as their band. We got a few numbers together and played the gig. They ended up signing a contract with Marty and toured with him. That was the last I saw some of them.

[Larry] I was one of the organizers of a band in Vernon, TX called The Baby Boomers. We started playing in the latter part of 1986. Ironically, I was helping broadcast hometown football games for the local radio station in Vernon and one of the guys also helping was my dentist. One night while sitting in the broadcast booth at the home field during a commercial he asked me if I had ever heard a song titled "Your Pushin' Too Hard" and I said as a matter of fact I have and I started singing the lyrics. He said where do you know that from and I said my band I used to play in called The Bad Seeds used to cover that song, and he said you've played in a band? Thus the Baby Boomers formed. We were a five piece with lead, rhythm, keyboard, drums and bass. I taught myself to play keyboards and bought a Yamaha keyboard. We performed about seven years in the Wichita Falls area and became quite popular doing gigs almost every weekend with some weekends having two gigs both Friday and Saturday nights. A divorce of one member and a separation of another member broke up the band.

These days I am leading a cowboy church band in Vernon and have been involved with the group for about a year, and yes, I still like rock n' roll.

[Mike] At our High School class reunions we talked about playing, but some how we never actually did it. It was late 1999 when I suggested we actually try to play together again. We got together at the Sons of Hermann hall Easter of 2000 and had what we called a Bad Seeds Bash. The MHS graduating class of 1967 had a class reunion that same night and we all had a big time.

[Dennis] Long after the war I remember talking about getting back together for our 40<sup>th</sup> birthdays. I drove from Atlanta to Vernon, TX to meet with Larry D. and The Baby Boomers (the band Larry mentioned he was performing with at the time). The Boomers had all the musical equipment for us to use, all we need to do was sit in and play. It turned out that Larry and I were the only Bad Seeds that could make it. It was a great time, but it wasn't the Bad Seeds.

**Q20: How often, and where, do The Bad Seeds perform today?**

[Ronnie] Most of the band members live away from where we rehearse. Mike lives in Montgomery, TX, Skip lives in Burleson, TX, Allan lives in Quinlan, TX, and David lives in Rockwall, TX. Dennis and I both live in McGregor now. We rehearse about once a month and perform for a few private parties and of course for Founders Day [in McGregor].

[Mike] At our early High School class reunions we talked about playing, but some how we never actually did it. It was late 1999 when I suggested we actually try to play together again. We got together at the Sons of Hermann hall Easter of 2000 and had what we called the Bad Seeds Bash. The MHS graduating class of 1967 had a class reunion that same night and we all got together and had a big time.

[Dennis] It sounds upside down, but we plan on a world tour when all the members are retirement age (which is not coming fast enough for some of us).

**Q21: What was the impetus for recording the CD?**

(Larry) I believe Dennis was the catalyst for the recording of the original music. He moved to California and made the time to compose and write music. Thanks to technology he was able to share much of this work with the rest of us. Then Skip

started doing the same thing and added the guitar pieces to it. I have to give those two guys the credit for the original recording and the original songs. It took them over three years but just listen to the results.

[Mike] There is something about the recording of music that will help you live forever. My daughter loves to hear us play "Mustang Sally" and she really appreciates our kind of music.

[Dennis] Two reasons actually. Reason 1) Before the war I had always dreamed of making a 45 record. Until I was married in 1970 it was the most important thing in my life. For thirty years for one reason or another I suppressed that need. Well, I waited through 45s, 8 tracks, cassettes, and CDs. At age 55 I realized that there were only so many more ticks on my clock, so if it was going to get done I needed to do it now. The good thing is (as of 1999) the Bad Seeds are back to playing music just in time for "the next big thing" which is, of course, music downloading.

Reason 2) Try to name anything that you can do as well as you did forty years ago. If I told you I could run as well as I did in the 60's, or drive as fast as I did back then, or boast about doing anything I could do "as well as" we did back then..., you would call me a liar (and rightly so). It turns out that music is the only thing the Bad Seeds can do better now than we did back then, and we are all proud we have the chance to prove it over and over again together. The CD is the best evidence of those facts.

**Q22: How do you best summarize your experiences with The Bad Seeds?**

[Skip] The once a month Bad Seed's rehearsal / jam session is something we all look forward to and all us guys have become like brothers. The camaraderie has been contagious and attracted more fellow McGregor Bulldogs whom we share our music with. During the jams, all troubles go away and we just cut loose with our music. The Bad Seeds have brought smiles and enjoyment to many people. We do some songs that will pretty much "knock your socks off" and to sum it up; "We ain't Elvis, but we don't suck!"

[David] After playing in several great bands in the '80s through the mid '90s, I had stopped playing music altogether by the late '90s. Then I got a chance to play for the Bad Seeds in 2004, and I have enjoyed every minute of it.

[Mike] The Bad Seeds is more than a band. It is a brotherhood of guys who enjoy each other as friends, best buds, and all things good. I remember before the war separated us, my grades weren't the best at college. My dad told me that I was going to have to quit the band and grow up. I was 19 then and I went to my room and cried big time. Have you ever seen a 6'3", 200 lb. rock solid jock cry..., well it ain't pretty. Today, when we are "clicking on all cylinders," there is nothing in the world that bothers me. Monumental is a great word for the experiences that I have had with the Bad Seeds.

[Ronnie] Well, I just love the guys, we really have a lot of fun, and it's for real you know. When you have the respect that I have for these guys, I mean it is just a pleasure to go and Rock my ass off with these dudes. I feel very fortunate to be able to "rock out" with my rock comrades.

[Larry] For a young man of 18 to be in a band in the 60's was my dream and to be able to stay in contact with such a fine group of friends all these years and still have the love for music and performing with these same guys pretty well says it all. Music is the universal language when all else fails music prevails.

[Interview ends]

Summary:

[Dennis] The Bad Seeds are a group that didn't "make it big" when we were young. We had fun, played some great gigs, and made some good music. Today, we are an original band with the original members that are making every effort to make up for 40 years of "lost time" and make it now in the music business. We know we have the talent and ability, we just hope we still have enough time.

Your readers can visit our web site:

<http://www.theBadSeeds.com>

Our press release is located:

[http://thebadseeds.com/theBadSeeds\\_press\\_release\\_2007.pdf](http://thebadseeds.com/theBadSeeds_press_release_2007.pdf)

Our publicity photos are located:

<http://thebadseeds.com/band>

Your readers can download our original music from Apple iTunes:

<http://theBadSeeds.com/itunes>

Thank your very much for the opportunity to relive the early times and tell our band history. Let me know if you have additional questions.

Regards,

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Dennis Fehler

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