

# Features

## Soon2B: Bringin' Blues to Beale

By: Brandon Stein  
Staff Writer

Being in a successful band is something many musicians aspire to be a part of some day. Playing in front of hundreds of people, being onstage with all your friends, and having your equipment with you are some of the best feelings ever.

For local band Soon2B, this was a reality. Soon2B, a rock fusion and jazz genre group, is comprised of Richmond senior AJ Verschaeve, L'anse Creuse junior Michael Hilgendorf, and Dakota senior Ethan Martel. They recently took a trip down to Beale Street in Memphis, Tennessee for the International Blues Band Challenge during January 20 through the 25.

"We rented a car. It was like a 12 or 13 hour drive down there," said Verschaeve.

Beale Street is one of the most famous streets in the country and is where this annual event is held. Bars, stores, lights, hotels, and hundreds of people line this 1.8 mile street.

It is a central hub in the city of Memphis, and a musical powerhouse every year during the International Blues Band Challenge. Stages are set at each corner of the street. This, accompanied with music coming out of the local establishments, makes it impossible to escape all the music going on.

This week-long festival just surpassed its 30-year milestone this past winter and has never disappointed the crowds it brings. Over 100 bands/acts flock to the festival every year to show off their talents and to provide live music.

Many hope to get recognized by record labels or independent recording artists.

And bassist AJ, guitarist Michael, and drummer Ethan are no exception.

All acts are separated into two divisions: Youth and Adult. The adult division competes

for prizes such as cash, prestigious titles, and pure industry recognition. The youth division, unfortunately, doesn't compete for anything. It's just a pleasure to play their music in front of a large audience.

Playing in the youth division, Soon2B didn't get to play the stages outside; instead they played in a bar called *Elfred's* right on Beale Street.

"Playing at Elfred's was an experience we won't forget," said Verschaeve. "We were playing in the epicenter of the blues genre, and it was cool to feel the crowd's energy."

Soon2B had a half-hour set which they used to play some original songs, as well as covers from artists like Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Robert Cray and Guthrie Govan.

The three-piece played for one day out of the whole week; however, they won a battle of the bands competition that let them represent Detroit in the youth division. In an international festival where bands from around the world attend. This was a big accomplishment. When not playing, the three teens checked out the various music stores and tents on the street, and refreshed their energy at night at a Holiday Inn a few blocks away from Beale Street.

Many of the bands that perform have their own merchandise tents where people can support the band. Soon2B had a fundraiser set up to raise money to cover expenses.

The festival is a large one with hundreds of people showing the streets. Of these people are booking agents looking for new interesting bands, one of which approached Soon2B and wants them to play another blues festival in Chicago this upcoming summer.

Verscaeve said, "If we decide to do it, it should be a huge opportunity."

## Tuna Sharks

By: Brandon VanCorp  
Staff Writer

For sophomore Haley Fortuna, taking care of her pet sharks is part of her daily routine; not many people can say the same.

The family has four sharks that live in a 700-gallon fish tank. Three of the four sharks are Horn Sharks and the other one is a Bamboo Cat Shark.

The Horn Sharks are a little smaller, usually around three feet in length and about seven inches in width. They are a light brownish color with black spots.

Their original habit is around the coastal waters off the western coast of North America, from California to the Gulf of California.

The Bamboo Cat Shark is a bit bigger, around four feet in length and around five inches in width. They are a much different color; the sharks are a black color with white strips.

These sharks are usually found in the Indo-Pacific region of the oceans and are quite often in the deeper part of the waters.

The Fortuna family decided to get the sharks two years ago. "My dad has always had an interest in fish and aquariums," said Fortuna, who added that his dad thought the sharks would be something completely different from what other people have.

The sharks live in what is more of pond than

a tank. The pond is about fourteen feet long, four feet wide and around four feet tall. The Fortunas have a refractometer and a hydrometer for the salinity of the water. These tools measure the amount of salt in the water so the tank is always regulated.

What the sharks eat consist of sea food. "We usually feed them frozen shrimp once a day," said Fortuna. How much the sharks are fed depends on the amount they were fed the previous day and if they are hungry or not.

The giant fish have their similarities and differences from other house pets.

"Like any other pet, we pick our fish up and pet them," said Fortuna. The sharks can survive out of water for about an hour, but they usually only bring them out for a couple seconds at a time.

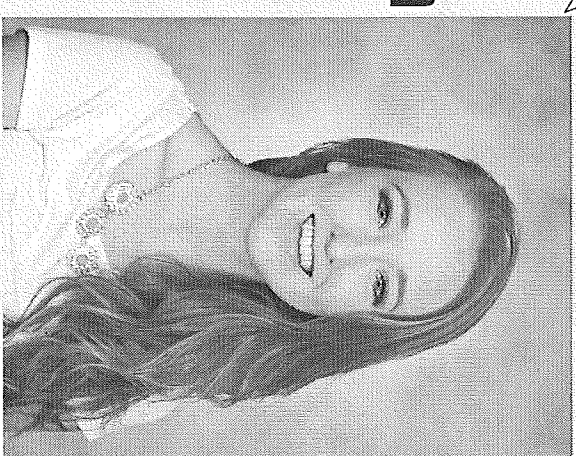
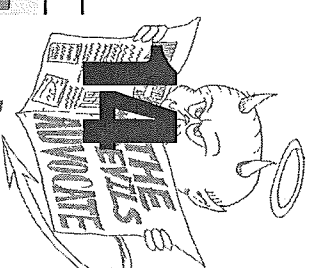
Although the sharks have some similarities to other pets, they are still quite different.

Considering the fact that they live in a 700-gallon fish tank, traveling with them is something they don't do. They always have someone watching over the sharks.

The sharks don't sleep much, but when they do it's much like other pets. "They stay in one corner of the tank and when someone walks in the room they are easily waked," said Fortuna.

Although these big fish are similar to other pets, they are much more expensive than

## Star Student of the Month



### Kate Nezieh

**Favorite Subject:** Anatomy

**Best Part About**

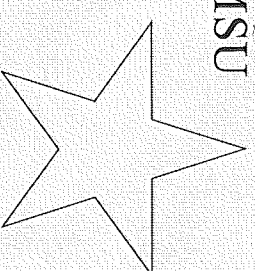
**School:** The atmosphere

**Favorite Extracurricular:** Tennis (first doubles)

**Future Plans:** Working at a hospital or somewhere else in the medical field

**Future College:** MSU

### Max Leesch



**Favorite Subject:** Drawing

**Best Part of High School:** Being with friends

**Favorite Extracurricular:** Theater

**Favorite Performance:** *Urinetown*

**Role Models:** His parents

**Future Plans:**

Have a family with a good house, job, and living.

