

incline action guide

what's goin' on in Incline Village this week and beyond



The Country Joe Band performed a spirited set at the Crystal Bay Club last weekend. Photo courtesy of Fran Ramirez.

Country Joe Band brings back the past

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After catching the Country Joe Band at the Crystal Bay Club this past Saturday night, all I can say is, *Whoa! Far out man!*

They are a reminder that in the mid-'60s, bands had left the pretty-boy mold of the vast desert that was the Bobbys (Rydell, Vee and Vinton) and became real musicians with a real voice.

The joint was rockin' as the band made up of all but Barry Melton of Country Joe and the Fish took the crowd back in time with such anthems and love songs as "Fixin' to Die Rag" (yes, complete with the Fish cheer), "Save the Whales," and the hauntingly beautiful "Janis."

Those who came for a taste of the "Summer of Love" were not disappointed, as the group reminisced and poked fun at the old days, with bassist Bruce Barthol introducing the older tunes as songs that were "from our first album, or was it the second? I don't remember."

A testament to the band's staying power was the number of people who came out, not to gawk at a curiosity, but to share once again a

time where the music told the story.

I always looked at Country Joe and the Fish as "the conscience of the people with an opening comedy act" and it's great to see that aspect hasn't changed.

In the '60s it was Vietnam—and now it's the Middle East—and while the country was made to look in the mirror via "Fixin' to Die Rag," back then, they been asked to look again, courtesy of Berthol's "Cakewalk to Baghdad," another black-comedy music offering.

We were fortunate to have a front row seat, which became unfortunate once people got up to dance and our toes had to dodge the revelers.

I really think the band should've been not in the lounge, but in the main theater, where they probably would have drawn even more than the estimated 200-plus fans.

The crowd was made up mostly of Baby-Boomers, ex-hippies, wannabe hippies and people who thought they were hippies because they wore bell-bottoms.

Me, I was fortunate enough to see the band during the days in San Francisco,

Those were the days of the Filmore, free concerts in the park and the "Human Be-in" and I have to say, they, like myself, may be a little older on the outside, but the spark of their youth and the music that made them world famous still shines bright.

Another great thing is, they haven't compromised the way they do things.

They did a lot of their old hits, mixed with some new material and I have to confess it all just sounded like good ol' Country Joe and the band, a sound that has never been duplicated, with songs that make us look at ourselves and laugh or feel guilty.

MacDonald, who was a little worried about the reception the band would receive, said he would love to come back and, if you're an ex-hippie, wannabe hippie, own a pair of bell bottoms, or just enjoy some kick-ass music, you'd better be there the next time to welcome him and the band.

For those of you who need a primer on the life and times of MacDonald and the band, I would suggest you pick up a copy of Ron Cabral's book, *Country Joe & Me*, available at Amazon.com and the Country Joe MacDonald website.