

Beans and Seeds

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Between the late afternoon rush of gamblers seeking to exercise their arms at the slots in a neighboring casino and those wanting to exercise by lifting beer mugs from the bar while watching football on TV, an oddly named band sought to entertain them.

Playing everywhere from daycares to watering holes, Beans and Seeds have established themselves as one of the hardest working acoustic duos in Southwest Florida.

The fans were sparse on the humid Saturday evening they were playing at Beef 'O' Brady's in Punta Gorda. It was the first Saturday of college games and since Florida is still technically out of season, the typical tourists and snowbirds were absent. Playing "Summer Breeze" by Seals and Crofts seemed almost contradictory given their surroundings.

However the lack of listeners and wind did not diminish the energy exhibited by the two. They played several sets throughout their three-hour performance.

Created in 2007, Beans and Seeds sprouted from the rich earth of the Guitar Army gatherings in Gilchrist Park. Beans, also known as Jaime Garza, met Seeds, Mark Cangelosi.

"Although some may think the name has an alternate meaning, the way we came up with it is quite innocent," said Cangelosi. Beans can mean pills and seeds can refer to marijuana in street slang.

Garza's nickname came from his childhood when he was called garbanzo beans by his friends. "My last name reminded people of cantaloupe seeds which was shortened to seeds," said Cangelosi. The Beans and Seeds name was born.

Garza is originally from "just outside" Detroit, Michigan. "From about the age of 7 I have been interested in music," said Garza. His mother arranged for piano lessons and Garza was hooked for a lifetime.

He moved to Englewood with his family and started a paper-supply business in 2004.

Cangelosi is from Staten Island and began playing guitar in 1966, later moving into radio

broadcasting in Florida and finally settling in Port Charlotte in 2000. He played with various bands over the years including The Apollo Sweepers and The Road Toads. He also did a stint in the United States Marines where he was stationed as a broadcaster in Japan for the Far East Network.

Garza likes to perform music from the golden age of rock, whereas Cangelosi likes songs from the '70s. Considering he was a radio DJ then, his passion for '70s ballads comes as no surprise.

Their tone is soft and can seem to meld into the background at times, which is a good thing. "We like to play in such a way where patrons can have a conversation with the person next to them without yelling," said Cangelosi.

Their song selection is diverse and includes some original work. Typical southwest Florida bar songs top the list of most requested. However they have their dislikes.

"I don't think any musician likes it when the audience requests "Freebird" or "Stairway to Heaven." The songs can be long and are played so often as to become cliché," said Cangelosi. "But we'll play those and just about anything for our fans," he added.

Since 2007 Beans and Seeds have been busy. They are playing four or more locations every week and cover from Sarasota down to Ft. Myers. Recently they have been hired by Woody's in Cape Coral and St. James City to play their locations every weekend until May 2013.

"This has become bigger than I ever expected. At times it can be a challenge balancing work, home life, and performing," said Garza.

They also make the rounds playing at Zeke's on Lemon Bay, Alli-Gators at the Port Charlotte Town Center Mall and a variety of other locations throughout the area. But that's not all they do.

"We will play at daycares, assisted living facilities, and for charity. We'll go anywhere we can make people happy," said Cangelosi.

Although typically a duo, the band does add additional members such as Ken Giunta from Ace Drums in Port Charlotte for some performances.

Beans and Seeds will be performing on Saturday at Alli-Gators in the Port Charlotte Town Center Mall from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.



SUN PHOTO BY TOM LEGROS

Beans and Seeds entertain diners at the Punta Gorda Beef 'O' Brady's on Sept. 8.