

JR. CADILLAC

Tacoma News Tribune, Jan. 8, 2001 By Rick Nelson



ONE OF THE LATE SINGER ROGER MILLER'S JOKES was, "I used to have a one-man band, but I couldn't keep it together." Miller's gag probably tickled musicians most of all because they know how hard it is to keep any band united and working.

In the past 30 years, many hundreds of groups have come and gone in the Northwest. As far as I know, only one has endured. On Saturday, Jr. Cadillac will celebrate it's 30th year of performing with a show at the Mountaineers Club in Seattle.

There have been personnel changes over the years, but Jr. Cadillac has thrived by playing a danceable mix of original and classic rock 'n' roll for hundreds of thousands of people. It's a remarkable achievement. Singer, guitarist and bandleader Ned Neltner,

who is also a KPLU-FM (88.5) disc jockey, was asked to reflect on the long, strange trip. "We have seen so many things come and go," Neltner said. "We've watched disco come, go and come again. We've seen the rise and current rule of disc jockeys. And all of the rock trends, like country rock, and groups that challenged our position: Annie Rose & the Thrillers, the Skyboys and groups that seemed to cut into our audience."

So what's the secret? Why is Jr. Cadillac about to celebrate 30 years while so many groups and so many trends, such as big-hair bands and new wave, are history? Neltner's answer came in three parts: the fact that the group stuck to music he and his band mates love (roots rock); that the members never got too entangled in each others' personal lives; and, probably most importantly, hard work.

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