

# LEISURE: Around Town

## 700 South, Fun Music from the Past and the Present

by Kelly Campbell



Picture by National Champ Caricature Artist Dave Washburn

What happens when four strangers, two from Michigan and a married couple from New York's Hudson Valley, get into their cars and hit Highway 75?

They end up in Atlanta – 700 South, miles that is, from home. And a band is born.

700 South ([www.700south.com](http://www.700south.com)), a four member ensemble featuring lead singer Lisa Weiland, bassist Casey Williams, guitarist Reed Schwallie and drummer Bill Weiland, is not your typical rock cover band but a diverse group of talented musicians with a signature style all their own. Together since 2003, 700 South goes “anywhere the music takes us”, playing weddings, corporate events, parties, and in local bars such as The Alley in Cartersville and Woodstock, Slapshots Bar and Grille and Bogey's.

Lisa Weiland grew up knowing she was born to sing. As a kindergartener, she heard the 1st grade chorus sing at school and “I was hooked. I knew that was what I wanted to do. I started singing to songs on the radio and ended up in chorus and in local bands all through middle and high school.” In middle school, Lisa was part of an after school program in which nine singers and a keyboard player formed a

band and took field trips to other schools to perform. As a teenager, Lisa was offered a pop recording contract but found it difficult to break into a market saturated by Debbie Gibson, Tiffany and the like. Taking a break from her musical career in 1999, Lisa and Bill raised two children but knew something was missing and, after three years in Atlanta, decided to place an ad in Atlanta Musician magazine and start a band. It was through that ad that they met bass player Casey Williams.

Williams, a Michigan native, came to Atlanta 7 years ago after being transferred through work. Williams saw the move as “an opportunity to do something new”. A guitar and bass player since junior high school, Williams performed with several original bands in college and released an album and the single “Who's Your Daddy?”

Reed Schwallie, a self-taught guitarist from Detroit, has toured and opened for Krackers, Eddie Money, John Melloncamp, and Pat Benetar. Picking up his cousin's guitar at age 8, he first played “Adam's Apple” by Aerosmith while the other children were still playing “Mary had a little lamb”. Although he took some lesson through school, Schwallie taught himself solos and soon became a sough-after lead guitarist. With the encouragement of a friend, Schwallie moved to Woodstock in 2002 and started his own business, Reed's Lock Service, but continued to write and perform original music and joined 700 South in 2003, a union says Weiland “was kismet. Things all came together when we meet Reed”.

Rounding out the group is drummer Bill Weiland, who the other band members refer to as the “Father of the Band”. Weiland received a drum set for his seventh

birthday was "hooked". Originally Weiland focused on his involvement in drum corps, drum lines and marching bands but saw performing in local bands as a "way to make some side money". Self-taught, Weiland continued to progress as a "rock and roll drummer" and has been playing with bands since junior high school.

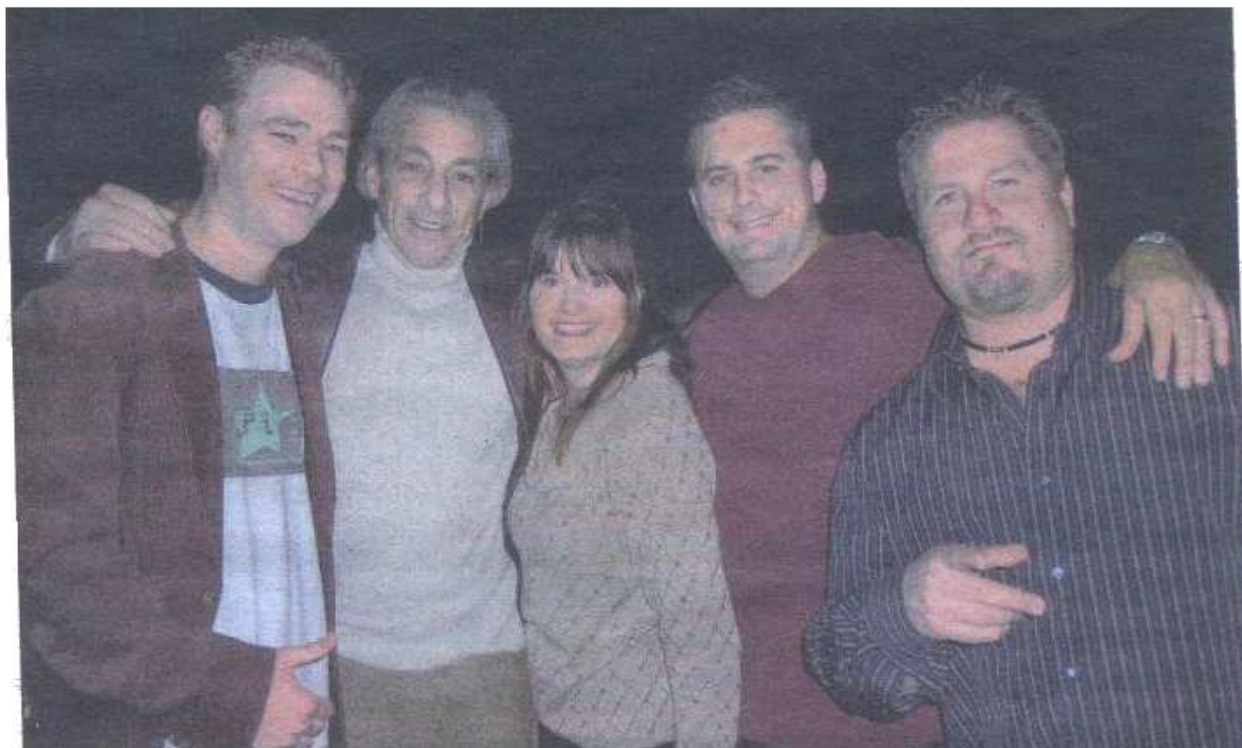
700 South played its first gig in Janu-

ary of 2003 at the then Firehouse Bar in Woodstock and "we just took off right away" said Schwallie. They were the first band to play live at Bogey's Bar and Grille in Woodstock and pride themselves in being "not just another rock band", covering all musical stylings from country to funk to R&B. Their goal, says Lisa Weiland, is to be "more well-rounded and more developed. To be who we really are." Schwallie concurs "We would like to do more originals than covers. We've written a couple of songs and had a video recorded. We want to be a good band with a good following, getting people interested and getting feedback from them."

One of 700 South's original songs, enti-

tled "3 Maybe 4", was written by Schwallie and the music video for "3 Maybe 4", written and produced by Michael "Shimmy" Schimmelman, is available for viewing at <http://vids.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.individual&videoid=1637902465>, [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com) and [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

In addition to producing a music video,



*700 South's Casey Williams, Ed Richman, Lisa Weiland, Bill Weiland, and Reed Schwallie. Photo provided by Ed Richman*

700 South will be the headlining act for The River 97.1 FM radio station's one-year anniversary celebration, held at Bogey's Bar and Grille in Woodstock on Saturday, January 27th. "A true honor" says manager and promoter Ed Richman.

Richman, also known as "Mr. Ed, the Birdman", has been involved directly with the rock and roll industry as a lead singer, blues harpist and percussionist for over four decades. The Birdman, along with his business partner Jay Koerner, is now in group and individual management as well as development and booking.

"We just went for it and here we go", says Weiland. 700 miles down and many more to go for this party band.