



Red Rider band members, from left, Ken Greer, lead guitar; Tom Cochrane, lead vocals, Peter Boynton, keyboards; Rob Baker, drummer; and Jeff Jones, bass.

Denise Grant photo

# Compatibility key to success

As lead singer Tom Cochrane puts it, "the band that plays together, stays together."

Thus lies the secret to Red Rider's compatibility, as Cochrane and bassist Jeff Jones disclosed Thursday how the rock and roll band manages to keep loose at home and on the road.

"Band and stage members alike play baseball and hockey in season, whenever they can.

"You wouldn't believe how sensitive, romantic musicians play. There's a few black eyes, and a lot of bruised egos," said Cochrane. "We can't afford to throw TVs out of the window yet, so we play."

Red Rider completes a three-night engagement today at Shuffles in the Harbourside Villa.

The Toronto-based group has released one LP in its three-year format which features Cochrane, Jones, lead guitarist Ken Greer, drummer Rob Baker and Peter Boynton on keyboard.

Don't Fight It sold well in Canada and the United States and had its top single, White Hot, a cut about a French poet who dies in an African desert, soared as high as number 48 on the Billboard Magazine charts.

As far as Canadian bands go, "certain bands sold better than

us, like Toronto and Max Webster," said Cochrane, but the troupe's chemistry makes the future look brighter.

"Our music is a little more rough-hewn than others. We rely on strong lyrics," said Cochrane. Songs such as Iron in Your Soul, Avenue A and the title cut on Don't Fight It demonstrate the band's versatility.

Recording on Capitol records has its advantages.

"They're showing a lot of faith in the band, and they believe in the promise of it, and it's artistic integrity. We've had the support a lot of bands haven't had," said Cochrane.

Red Rider's stop in Nanaimo comes in the middle of a recording session in Los Angeles.

A second album, As Far as Siam, is due to be released in July, with the strong possibility of a single hitting the streets in June.

"All songs on the new album are in the show (at Shuffles). It's a testing ground in a lot of ways," said Jones.

Red Rider appeared in Nanaimo as a prelude to Prism last spring, and backed up April Wine on a cross-Canada tour. A successful second album could instigate a major tour of their own.

"It depends a lot on the next album. We could play a lot of soft-seaters and jubilees in Calgary and Edmonton. If it all takes off, the sky's the limit. You never know in this business," said Cochrane.

A major tour would not be a streak of luck, as Jones said, "the band is not an overnight success. In reality, people don't see what you put in in apprenticing years." Greer and Baker formed the group seven years ago in Toronto, and were joined by Boynton two years later.

Jones, a 10-year veteran on bass guitar, had enjoyed success with Ocean, and was instrumental in their big hit Put

Your Hand in the Hand.

Cochrane has been singing for 19 of his 27 years, and headlined in Cochrane-Cooper, and Cochrane prior to his link with Jones and Red Rider three years ago.

"We basically all evolved from the Toronto bar scene," said Cochrane.