

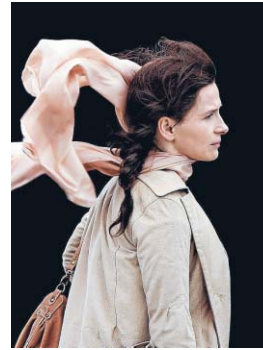
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The Southland Times

Unwind

TIME WITH
... Juliette
D3



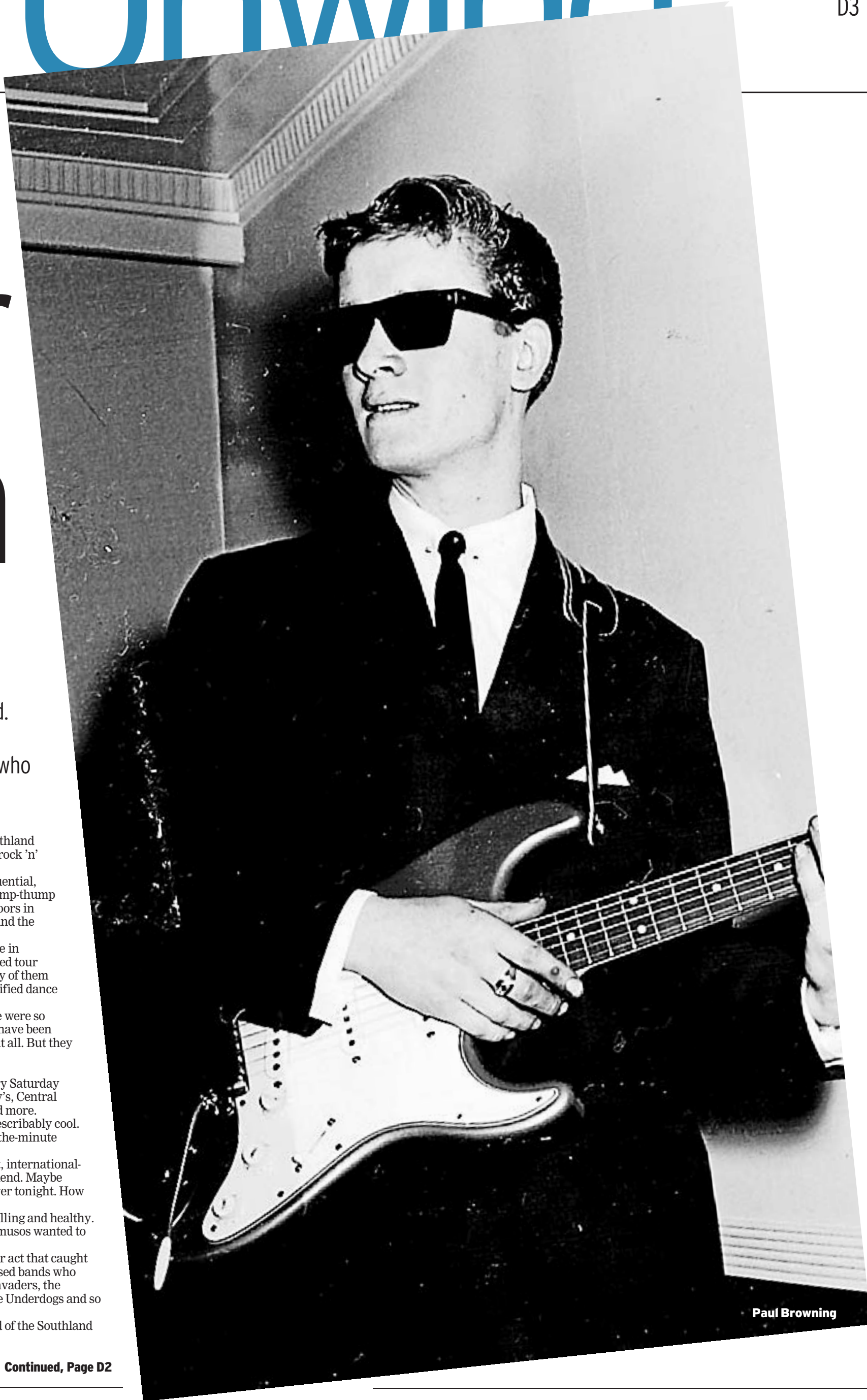
Star sign

If there's a rock and roll heaven, well you know they've got a hell of a band.

Chris Chilton observes a fallen Southland rock star who shone brightly in the 60s.

CONTRARY to urban legend, Southland was far from the arsehole of the rock 'n' roll universe in the 1960s. Throughout that turbulent, influential, swinging decade, the thump-thump-thump of thousands of feet dancing on wooden floors in Southland halls could be heard right around the rocking world. International hit bands took to the stage in Invercargill's Civic Theatre on star-studded tour bills. The bands here were the equal of any of them playing the wild new bottom-heavy electrified dance music called rock 'n' roll. The bands here were so good, and there were so many of them, that Southland kids could have been excused for becoming a little blase about it all. But they didn't. Hall dances were all the rage. Up to 3000 teenagers went dancing every Saturday night, in halls at the YMCA, RSA, St Mary's, Central Methodist, Otautau, Gore, Thornbury and more. The bands were accomplished and indescribably cool. They looked the part, turned out in up-to-the-minute fashions, and sounded a million bucks. Teens could take their pick of top-flight, international-standard covers bands on any given weekend. Maybe check out the Farthings. Maybe the Answer tonight. How about the Echophonics? Competition between the bands was willing and healthy. Despite their matey camaraderie, all the musos wanted to be the best. It gave Southland bands an edge to their act that caught the eye of the legion of nationally recognised bands who visited, such as Ray Columbus and The Invaders, the Meteors, Larry's Rebels, the La de das, the Underdogs and so on. They were amazed at the high standard of the Southland music scene.

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Paul Browning

Build a fence round it

MATE
Mark Wilson



RISKY things are often dangerous but usually also exciting, it's why people jump out of planes, swim with sharks and climb mountains.

The release of endorphins, while participating in such either challenging or dangerous situations, has coined terms such as thrill-seeker, adrenaline junkie and adventurer.

Let's split the population into two – those who know what they are doing when it comes to risk, adventure and outdoors activities, and those who have no idea and just want to sample the delights of an adventure-filled holiday complete with a few shots of adrenaline followed probably at the bar by a few shots of tequila.

Those in the know understand that the activities we seek for enjoyment in the great outdoors are risky and this is part of the attraction, they also understand they need to self-mitigate these risks in order to live to enjoy the thrill the next time. Furthermore if things go pear-shaped they know it was them and them alone who chose to engage in such activities and are happy to cop the blame.

The other side of the coin is those who come here for the thrill holiday, many have no experience in the outdoors, white-water or falling from the sky and rely on their Kiwi hosts to guarantee their safety as well as ensure their adrenaline fix, is delivered with a touch of garnish and flare.

The contradictory part of this situation is that the safer you make something the lower its risk, the more fences you build the less exciting the activity becomes and therefore less appealing to this market.

I don't want New Zealand to be seen as the killing fields of adventure tourism, where you enter at your peril but I also could not see the benefit in over regulating activities that, by their very nature, carry risk and always will.

How do we best manage this risk? Set the bar so high that operators fold under compliance costs, restrict the activities to make them no longer exciting and remove that element of danger and risk that actually draws people to them.

As a Kiwi I love the outdoors, regulated namby-pamby activities do nothing for me, I like to challenge nature and enjoy the rewards, you would have to pay me to jump out of a plane but I'm happy to run over a mountain or jump into a rapid on a raft. I accept all the risks that come with this and would never blame anyone else if I came to grief.

Maybe what is lacking is not the safety element but the understanding and education around the fact that these activities are as safe as we can make them but we are dealing with adventure activities that by their very nature are risky and therefore exciting and appealing to thrillseekers – ruin them with rules and you will turn away those who seek to gain the rush.

It's still more dangerous to smoke, be overweight or drive than it is to engage in New Zealand's adventure tourism market so we need to keep this in perspective, also.

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