

Where Did TIN WHISKERS Go?

August 31, 2026

From Jim Johnson, Tin Whiskers founding member, keyboardist and lead vocalist:

It has taken me several months to get around to writing this, but as I see that the band's website and Facebook page are still garnering several views every week, I realize that I shouldn't leave our loyal fans and supporters hanging any longer.

What follows are my own observations which may or may not be completely shared by anyone else.

To begin with, I want to sincerely thank all of the fans and venues that have so enthusiastically supported Tin Whiskers for 22 years! We love our fans and the fact that you love the Classic Rock that we all grew up with as much as we do.

One evening in 2004 the four original members of the erstwhile band Phantom Lake (1975-1979), with the addition of Kevin Jordan as a second guitarist, reunited for a jam session. That jam session in Carneys Point, NJ unexpectedly turned into the first rehearsal for a new Classic Rock cover band that would be called Tin Whiskers. The "classic lineup" you probably remember was reached when drummer Rick Miller left and was replaced by Loren Chard. The remaining members were Paul Bakan on lead guitar and vocals, Skip Hurst on bass and vocals, and Jim Johnson (me) on keyboards and lead vocals.

Following Skip's departure several years later, a long procession of bassists – I've lost track, but it was at least ten – came and went for various reasons. Then, at last! Bob Kay, our most reliable substitute bassist (*did that make him a sub bass?*) agreed to join permanently... only to pass away a few months later.

In 2023, as the revolving door of bass players was spinning, our old friend and TW founding member Kevin Jordan passed away following a long battle with cancer. This left us lacking the second guitarist and vocalist that were an integral part of the band's arrangements. Now without the use of Kevin's office, we had also lost our local practice space. Fortunately, Paul's employer was kind enough to let us rehearse in his large office in Woodbury, NJ.

Why did we go through so many prospective bassists? Well, the issues included:

- A lot of time wasted on a guy who thought he was God's Gift to Music, and therefore couldn't be bothered to learn his parts and rehearse them with the band.
- A couple guys who only wanted to play songs they already knew, and wanted us to learn *their* repertoires (as if we were joining them, rather than vice-versa).
- A couple who just wanted to do one or two quick, rough rehearsals and immediately start playing gigs, even though we had built a reputation of being a "tight" band where everyone knew their parts cold.
- We wanted to gig too often/not often enough for some (our goal was to get back to playing once or twice a month).
- And one that was unfortunately *our* fault: at least a couple guys became discouraged when rehearsals were frequently being canceled, pushing our return-to-gigging date further and further back.

So surely (*don't call me Shirley!*), at this point you know more or less where this is going. What was left of Tin Whiskers last rehearsed on February 10, 2026, after which the final prospective bassist dropped out, following yet *another* canceled rehearsal. As he pointed out, in the space of three months we had only rehearsed together for six hours. He was quite discouraged and frankly, so was I. At 72, I'd had enough of the various and sundry frustrations of trying to keep this formerly great band afloat. Even when the band was doing well, it didn't pay enough to recoup expenses (most don't – you just do it for the love of performing the music), and all the headaches and the physical drain of carrying the equipment, setting up, performing for four hours, then taking down and carrying the equipment again, was becoming too much of a grind.

And so, as if you hadn't already guessed: Tin Whiskers is apparently on "*indefinite hiatus*." That's probably a good "soft" way to put it. Anything stronger would sound too final, and I'm not ready to admit that to myself.