

# Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



Thursday, July 14, 1988 O&E

(R0-50X06C)

## Musical hilarity

### He sings of the 'fudgies,' raps about the Pistons

By Victor E. Swanson  
special writer

**Y**EARS AGO, when Edwin and Joan Riley of Birmingham were blessed with one of their sons, they couldn't have guessed in their wildest dreams he would grow up to write that famous song (sort of), which you might have heard recently while at Mackinac Island.

It's called "We Are the Fudgies" and is a tribute to the thousands and thousands who visit the world-famous resort island. But Shawn Riley did write it. He also grew up to be a local performer who has made a living entertaining people for nearly a decade.

When not on stage, Riley is really a rather laid-back person. During much of a recent interview at the offices of Uniglobe Travel Team in Southfield, where he works during the day, he sat back and often rocked back and forth in his chair. (He's a commercial sales representative for Uniglobe.)

Give him a guitar and an audience, and he's not necessarily so laid-back. That could be the reason management at Cobo Joe's, 422 Congress, Detroit, bills his act as "Outrageous Musical Hilarity."

It's a hard act to describe. Even Riley has difficulty describing it.

"I'VE NEVER really been able to say what I do," he said. "I always tell people, 'It's a potpourri of everything.' It's a lot of oldies, some new stuff... a little bit of what Weir Al does, changing the lyrics to songs... some original songs."

Basically, here's what is important to him: "I put myself in the audience's seat," he said casually. "I don't want to see somebody up there that's really into themselves, self-centered, not worried about the audience. I want to know what the audience wants. And I think that's my strength."

"I play an Ovation six-string guitar, which is an acoustic electric, and I use a Roland drum machine."

***'I don't want to see somebody up there that's really into themselves, self-centered, not worried about the audience. I want to know what the audience wants. And I think that's my strength.'***

— Shawn Riley

He talked about his singing and guitar playing. "My voice isn't bad. They're a lot better out there, and there's a lot better guitarists." After struggling to find the right words, he said, "But I think the combination of everything is what — it might sound egotistical — but I think it's what makes me unique from a lot of other acts."

Oh, there is one more instrument he plays. With a smile, he said, "And then I play the 'lip trumpet,' which is just a trumpet noise I play with my mouth."

The music that he plays and sings comes from such artists as Crosby, Stills and Nash, Harry Chapin, James Taylor, Chuck Berry, Bill Haley, Del Shannon, Dion, Buddy Holly and Kenny Rogers. He plays hits of the '50s, '60s, '70s, and sometimes '80s.

SOME OF THE songs he performs are his own. One of his favorites is "Marathon Girl," which was written for his wife, Doreen. The idea of "marathon" comes from their second date, which lasted about 13 hours.

By the way, "We Are the Fudgies" is really a takeoff on the song "We Are the World."

"A couple of weeks ago I had the 'Pistons Rap' that I was doing down at the bar when they (the Detroit Pistons) were involved in the race for the championship."

Neither the rap song nor the song about the "Fudgies" has been

recorded. Recording is something he'd like to do in the future. However, as he put it, "I don't want to write songs just to sell songs." Riley is happy doing what he's doing on stage, mostly as a solo performer.

"Occasionally, I'll have other musicians sit in, a piano player, a bass player. That's rare. It's once every couple months."

More often he's likely to allow a member of the audience on stage with him. "I let anybody up there, unless they're really drunk. That's my only cutoff — if they're really drunk — because I've had people fall on my equipment and knock it over." The reason for letting some people come up is simple. "Someone gave me a chance to do it 10 years ago, and now I'm making a living at it... so I feel if I can give somebody that same chance, even if it's just to 20 people, just a chance to get up there and do it... I really get a big kick out of it." He added, "But even if they're bad, it's fun to watch."

RILEY GOT his break when attending Central Michigan University, after graduating from Brother Rice High School in Bloomfield Township, in 1976. There was an open-mike night at a local bar. "I did it a couple times. And the guy hired me to do one night a week, and I was making \$50 a night, which was great... when you're at college."

At Brother Rice, he was in a '50s band. During grade-school years, he had taken lessons for violin, trombone, tuba and guitar. In the summer of 1980, he really got started as a performer by working at such places on Mackinac Island as Horn's Gaslight Bar.



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/Staff photographer

Shawn Riley, who has a daytime job in Southfield, works evenings as an entertainer at Cobo Joe's in downtown Detroit. He's also returning

to Mackinac Island for an engagement this month and another in September.

Riley reflected on what his parents had thought about him taking on an entertainment career. "They weren't thrilled when I started. But now they're my biggest fans. I had to prove it to them that I could do it and prove it to myself that I could do it."

Riley will appear at Horn's Gaslight on Wednesday-Saturday,

July 20-23, and Thursday-Sunday, Sept. 1-4.

Mostly, though, he entertains regularly at Cobo Joe's, as he has since late February. Usually, he's there Thursday-Saturday evenings.

"It's a lot of fun. When we get the crowds in, they'll stay the whole night... no cover charge, reasonably priced drinks, the coldest beer

in town. They serve their beer in — instead of in coolers — it's in a 12-foot (iced-down) trough.

"At night the only problem is they don't have a full menu. They just have an appetizer menu at night."

Riley said, still leaning back in the chair, "God's given me a talent. And I'm going to keep performing as long as I can and as long as I enjoy it."

### table talk

Salvatore Scallop Restaurant behind Norm's Oyster Bar in Southfield has changed its hours to 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Mondays-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays and 3-9 p.m. Sundays. It is a full-service Italian restaurant with homemade pastas, sauces, soups, and veal and chicken entrees, along with salads and sandwiches.

Monday, July 18, at the Hyatt Regency Dearborn. Eighteen Fairlane food and beverage purveyors will gather under brightly colored tents to offer samples of their specialties to the public at prices ranging from 50 cents to \$2.

**'Lobsterfest'**  
Red Lobster's fifth annual "Lobsterfest" celebration, featuring 11 lobster specials, continues through Sunday, July 31. Prices begin at \$8.95. The Lobsterfest menu also includes two 99-cent dinner special for kids: popcorn shrimp or fried langoustines with fish nuggets.

### Food festival

The sixth annual Fairlane Food Festival will be held from noon to 6 p.m. Sunday, July 17, and 4-9 p.m.

### SUMMER ARTS PROGRAM

The Summer Arts Program's 13 to 18 year old students and The Smith Theatre are pleased to present



A '50s Rock 'n' Roll Musical

Friday, August 12, 8:00 pm  
Wednesday, August 17, 8:00 pm  
Saturday, August 20, 8:00 pm

Tickets are \$7.00, \$6.00 for seniors and students.  
Call 471-7700

Oakland Community College, Orchard Ridge Campus,  
27055 Orchard Lk. Rd., Farmington Hills, MI 48018  
One block south of the I-696 and Orchard Lk. Rd. interchange.

**DON PEDRO'S**  
Authentic Mexican Cuisine

**FULL MEXICAN DINNER**  
**BUY ONE - GET ONE**  
**1/2 PRICE**  
FROM REGULAR MENU - DINE IN ONLY  
With Coupon - Expires 7-31-88  
2400 GRAND AVENUE  
DETROIT, MI 48206  
**OPEN 7 DAYS**

**BEAT THE HEAT**  
WITH  
THESE SPECIALS FROM  
**DETROIT POP CORN COMPANY**

<p><b>COUPON EXPIRES 7-17-88</b></p> <p>ENJOY THE BEST CARMEL CORN IN THE CITY</p> <p><b>8 OZ. TUBS OF DELICIOUS CARMEL CORN</b></p> <p>Reg. \$1.59 <b>99¢</b> EA.</p> <p>WITH COUPON</p> <p><b>COUPON EXPIRES 7-17-88</b></p> <p><b>American Greetings FORET ME NOT YELLOW RIBBON</b></p> <p>In 20 yd. roll</p> <p>Manufacturers price .79¢ ea.</p> <p><b>YOUR PRICE 40¢</b> EA.</p> <p>WITH COUPON</p> <p><b>COME IN &amp; SAVE!</b></p> <p><b>BRING IN THESE COUPONS &amp; SAVE</b></p> <p>DETROIT POP CORN COMPANY</p> <p>12065 Telegraph, Redford, MI 48239 (Between Telegraph and Plymouth Pk.) (313) 531-6262</p>	<p><b>COUPON EXPIRES 7-17-88</b></p> <p><b>1 GALLON TROPICCOOLER</b></p> <p>Fruit punch syrup makes 5 gallons of delicious fruit punch.</p> <p>Great for Hot Summer days.</p> <p>Reg. \$4.50 <b>\$3.99</b> EA.</p> <p>WITH COUPON</p> <p><b>COUPON EXPIRES 7-17-88</b></p> <p><b>WEDDING NAPKINS</b></p> <p>1/2 OFF the manufacturers marked price</p> <p>On Blue &amp; White 50 ct. wedding napkins with decorative wedding ball design.</p> <p>Lunchroom Reg. 2.99 <b>\$1.35</b> EA.</p> <p>Size NOW ONLY <b>\$1.10</b> EA.</p> <p>Stem NOW ONLY <b>\$1.10</b> EA.</p> <p>Stem NOW ONLY <b>\$1.10</b> EA.</p> <p><b>CLAIM CASH BACK 1/2 OFF</b></p> <p><b>DETROIT POP CORN COMPANY</b></p> <p>12065 Telegraph, Redford, MI 48239 (Between Telegraph and Plymouth Pk.) (313) 531-6262</p>
--	--

Here's a romantic weekend for two that's a one-of-a-kind deal.

**\$78** per suite, per night

A luxurious two-room suite complete with living room, private bedroom and wet bar with refrigerator. Free breakfast cooked-to-order every morning in our beautiful atrium. Plus an indoor pool, whirlpool and exercise facilities. So step up to The Suite Life®. At a price that's designed to spoil you.

**EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL**

1-800-EMBASSY

You don't have to be a fat cat to enjoy The Suite Life.™

**DETROIT — SOUTHFIELD**  
29100 Franklin Rd.  
(313) 350-2000

\*Price is per suite, per night up to two people Friday and Saturday only. Each additional adult is \$10. Children under 12 stay free. Taxes at this price subject to availability. Price subject to change.