

Glass City cynic turns into cut-up

By Bob Sadler
special writer

May 20, Steve Billnitzer competed, along with 24 other comics, for the right to open up at the Dave Coulier/Dennis Miller show at Pine Knob the following day.

Though Jim McLean took the prize, the regular open mike night crowd at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle in Royal Oak received a special treat.

Originally from Toledo, Billnitzer spent his childhood shuffling back and forth between the Motor and Glass cities. Upon graduating from a Toledo suburban high school, he attended the University of Michigan.

After working in advertising in Detroit for a number of years, the cynical Billnitzer now does stand-up full-time and has moved back to — you guessed it — Toledo.

"It's the center of the universe, as we all know," said Billnitzer, who actually started performing comedy on stage in 1988. "People stop here from all over the galaxy for spiritual and intellectual fulfillment . . . or

'It's (Toledo) the center of the universe, as we all know. People stop here from all over the galaxy for spiritual and intellectual fulfillment . . . or just to change a tire on the way to Cleveland.'

— Steve Billnitzer
comedian

just to change a tire on the way to Cleveland."

He actually believes living in Toledo puts him in a better geographic position to make some of his Midwestern gigs. Plus, they have "the best hot dogs in the world at Tony Packo's," Billnitzer said.

WHEN ASKED to describe himself and his brand of humor, that cynical edge resurfaced. First, he described himself.

there. There's no insight. There's nothing."

Billnitzer grew up admiring the humor of The Three Stooges, the Marx Brothers, Jack Benny and others of that bygone era.

"I remember watching Red Skelton and thinking what a great thing that would be to do," he said.

While he currently is content with performing his comedy on stage, he eventually sees himself moving behind the scenes. He thinks his future is in comedy writing — for either television or movies. He already has some screenplays in progress and readily admits an interest in someday writing for sitcoms in the mold of "Married . . . With Children" or "Dear John."

"I consider myself to be a good comic but a great writer," Billnitzer added. "That's what I've been working for."

Steve Billnitzer appears along with Jim McLean and Tom Frank Friday and Saturday, May 31 and June 1, at The Comedy Inn, 1655 Glenway, Walled Lake. For information, call 669-9744.



While the Motor City is quite familiar to comedian Steve Billnitzer, he lives in Toledo because he believes it puts him in a better geographic position to make some of his Midwestern gigs.

COMEDY CLUBS

Here are listings of some comedy clubs in our area. To let us know who is appearing at your club, send the information to: Comedy Listings, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

COMEDY CASTLE

Leo DuFour will perform with Mark Still Tuesday-Saturday, May 28-June 1, at the Comedy Castle, 269 E. Fourth, Royal Oak. Show time is 8:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and 8:30 and 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For reservations, call 542-9900.

JOEY'S ALLEN PARK

Kirk Nolan will perform Wednesday-Saturday, May 29-30, at Joey's Comedy Club and Sports Emporium, 15246 Southfield Road, Allen Park. Show times are 9 p.m. Wednesday.

Please turn to Page 6



Bill Thomas appears Friday and Saturday, May 31 and June 1, at Mainstreet in Ann Arbor.

Altie Presents
THREE WAYS HOME
by Casey Kurti
A High-Powered Drama Comedy

THRU JUNE 16
WED. 7 PM
THUR.-FRI. 8 PM
SAT. 5 PM & 9 PM
SUN. 2 PM & 7 PM
Co-sponsors: The Metro Times & Comerica Incorporated

"Three Ways Home" . . . powerful theatre that demolishes stereotypes."

FOR TICKETS AND INFORMATION:
Call 675-8284. General admission is \$10.
Third Ave. & W. Grand Blvd.
(Across from the First Theatre Parking Lot)

On the Town
DINING & ENTERTAINMENT

KOBE BEEF

Hand raised. Hand fed. The famous Black Cattle of Japan provide the finest ground yet firm, highly marbled Wagyu beef. Small amounts are imported from Japan and reserved for the finest restaurants in the world. Kobe Beef is now available at Musashi. It is however . . . how shall we put this . . . not inexpensive.

MUSASHI
JAPANESE CUISINE
AND SUSHI BAR

2000 Presidential Road Center, Southfield 48033-1911
Tues.-Thurs. 11a-11p, Fri.-Sat. 11a-1a

Marriott
HOTELS-RESORTS-SUITES

The Center of Attention
Two for Breakfast Weekend
\$69*

Pamper yourself at the Troy Marriott and enjoy everything the area has to offer.

- The Palace and Pines. Skydiving for sports and recreation. Oakland and Somerset Mills for shopping. Fisher and Birmingham Theaters for live entertainment and much more!
- Sax's Sea Grille, our own fine dining restaurant. Rick's Lounge for high energy entertainment.
- A special room with location amenities and a magnificent full breakfast.
- Health club, and a special in-room movies and free parking.
- Located in upscale Troy. Call for reservations (800) 777-4096 or (313) 680-9797.

TROY Marriott
DETROIT

220 W. Beaver Road • Troy, Michigan 48064

Charley's
EVERY DAY VALUE
HALF SLAB RIBS
Sunday and Monday
Charley's Original Recipe Cole Slaw and Freshly Baked Tavern Bread
\$6.95

PASTA YOUR WAY
Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday
(Seconds On Us)
Your Choice of Five Special Sauces, Charley's Original House Salad, and Freshly Baked Tavern Bread
\$6.95

FISH FRY
Wednesday and Friday
(Seconds On Us)
Charley's Original Recipe Cole Slaw and Freshly Baked Tavern Bread
\$6.95

• Livonia • Bloomfield • Eastside • Fairlane
422-4550 855-2244 884-2811 836-8550

Twin Medallions of Tenderloin Wesley.
A Complete Dinner
For \$12.95.
Who Could Beef?

Twin medallions of tenderloin, sautéed to perfection in a sauce of tomatoes, scallions and artichoke hearts. With our expansive salad bar, choice of potato, vegetable medley, and fresh rolls and butter. All for a mouth-watering \$12.95.

And you'll enjoy your dinner all the more because it's served in the warm setting of Seasons Cafe in the Sheraton Southfield Hotel, 16400 L.L. Hudson Drive, Southfield. For reservations call 559-6500.



SHOWCASE CINEMAS
& **Observer & Eccentric**

FILM • QUIZ

WIN MOVIE TICKETS* TO
SHOWCASE CINEMAS AUBURN HILLS!
It's simple and fun! Answer the question about this week's Showcase film and send your responses in. Winners will be drawn at random.

"SOAPISH"

Sally Field and Whoopi Goldberg star in this comedy about the off-camera, off-color lives of a daytime soap opera cast.

QUIZ: Sally Field starred with Julia Roberts, Darryl Hannah and Dolly Parton in which film? A) Absence of Malice B) Not Without My Daughter C) Steel Magnolias

ENTRY FORM:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Answer: _____

Send your responses to: Showcase Film Quiz, The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, MI 48150. (Expires on the date of the next Showcase film.) Please use the label provided. One name and one film per envelope only.



Come Out And Play

At
Kicks

The area's most sparkling new night spot.

Now Appearing!

"Area Code"

Now Through June 9



TROY Marriott

220 W. Beaver Road • Troy, Michigan 48064
422-4550