

LET'S GO! STREET SCENE

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Have a bluesy New Year's Eve

Blues fanatics who didn't get their fill from the recent autism benefit at the Soup Kitchen or homeless fund-raiser at the Majestic, have a trio of dilemma-inducing choices for how best to ring in the New Year:

■ Sully's, 4768 Greenfield, Dearborn, (313) 846-1920 — Chris Duarte, one of the hottest guitarists to burn up the rockin' blues turnpike this year, is certain to pack it to the rafters at Detroit's blues mecca.

Frequently compared to Stevie Ray Vaughn, Duarte does indeed share many of the string-sawing characteristics of the master, but, as his powerful Silverstone debut disc, "Texas Sugar/Strat Magik," admirably demonstrates he's nobody's clone.

Chockful of high octane burners that will bring Vaughn, Johnny Winter and Jimmy Thackery to mind, he works enough of his own gritty and strikingly soulful persona into the mix to emerge as a major player in his own right.

■ Slako's on the Boulevard, 5855 Monroe Blvd. at Van Born, Taylor, (313) 278-5340 — Harry Slako has what many local blues fans will consider the coup of the year for assembling the reunion of the coop of the year for assembling the reunion of the year.

Steve Gornall, who was hailed as one of the most important charter members of the local blues scene for years and relocated to San Francisco last winter, is back for a one-time reunion with the Blue Collar Blues Band at Slako's. Expect it to be one of the most emotionally charged parties of the year.

■ The Attic Bar, 11667 Joseph Campau, Hamtramck, (313) 365-4194 — Long known as the local haven for fans of straight-ahead blues, The Attic Bar has a local reunion of their own on tap as well.

Uncle Jesse White, who has been there every Saturday night for the last seven years, is assembling what is being called the Original 29th Street Blues band.

It won't really be original, of course. When White moved to Detroit in 1950 from Jackson, Miss., he found a community of like-minded enthusiasts and began hosting popular jam sessions at his 29th Street house. John Lee Hooker, Eddie Burns and Boogie Woogie Red were among the first to visit.

For this evening, he'll be joined by Johnny "Yard Dog" Jones and four other journeymen blues players.

If you have a question or comment about the adult alternative music scene, call Mark Gallo at 953-2047, mailbox number 1898, on a touch-tone phone, or write him at The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

'Holy Moly,' it's Wally Pleasant

Wally Pleasant has developed a following with his tongue-in-cheek acoustic music, and with the help of his Miranda Records is releasing his latest effort, "Houses of the Holy Moly."

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER



Tongue-in-cheek acoustic performer Wally Pleasant has played some pretty off-the-wall gigs, but none has intrigued him more than when he was asked to play the Ram's Horn in Maine.

"I thought it was a Ram's Horn restaurant. I thought, 'This is gonna be pretty weird,'" the always pleasant Pleasant said. "I wondered if I was gonna stand up on a booth or something."

When he got there he realized it wasn't a diner, but a hip coffeehouse on the campus of the University of Maine. "It was the complete opposite of a Ram's Horn. The walls were dark purple with a big Andy Warhol banana hanging on the wall. It was really a nice place."

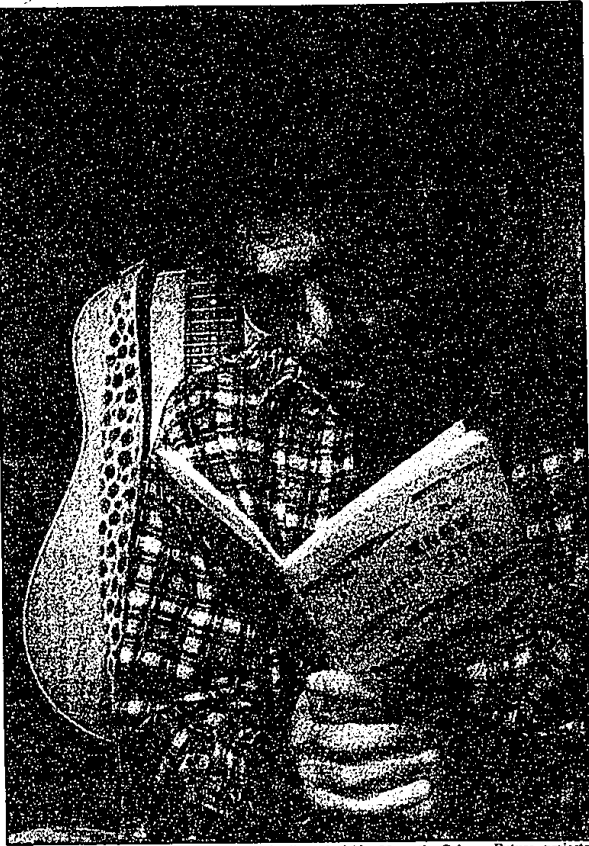
Restaurants are in the future for the former Birmingham resident, however. On Friday, Dec. 23, he'll play at an Arby's in Hastings where he'll share a bill with a ventriloquist and Santa Claus.

While Santa is celebrating Christmas, Pleasant is feting the release of his new album, "Houses of the Holy Moly" (Miranda Records) with an all-ages party at the Majestic in Detroit on Thursday, Dec. 22. Like his previous efforts, the acoustic, tongue-in-cheek performer's new CD takes a comedic look at life on the road and the perils of "twentysomething" life.

The frustrations of post-graduate degrees are covered in "Post-Graduate Overeducated" where he sings, "I was just lookin' for an easy high-paying career/But I could wallpaper my bedroom with the rejection letters I got this year/Cause entry level job picture just ain't what it ought to be/But at least I can blame all my problems on the economy/I got the post-graduate overeducated out-of-work blues."

That feeling continues with "Out of Work Blues" and "Stupid Day Job." He looks back to his campfire days with a cover of "Get Came Back."

The best song on the album is "Alternatene" where he pokes fun at the MTV generation. "Alternatene you are so beautiful to me with your Nine Inch Nails bumper sticker on



Pleasant fun: Wally Pleasant will celebrate the release of his third album, "Houses of the Holy Moly" with an all-ages performance at the Majestic in Detroit Dec. 22.

your black leather jacket/Alternatene, please take my hand and we can walk together to the mosh pit of life/Alternatene, would you go to Lollapalooza with me and we can pay \$5 for a glass of water?"

Pleasant sings about topics that almost anyone can identify with, which is probably why he's been so successful. The single "She's Addicted to

Clothes" reached No. 36 on the College Music Journal, charting above Rage Against the Machine and the Lemonheads one particular week.

"It's kind of weird for some goofy guy from Michigan getting higher than all these people who are spending all these millions of dollars on promotion. There's humor in that for some reason," Pleasant said.

Future projects for Pleasant include a 7-inch single based on an idea he got from Mad magazine as a child.

"When I was a kid (there was this single) that had seven different endings. The needle would intermittently pick an ending," he explained.

As owner of Miranda Records, he's trying to expand his roster.

Yard Boss: Staying 'tough' with '3'

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

After releasing their debut CD "Swollen" in

1993, Yard Boss became the "tough guys" in town, mimicking their namesake.

Ardent fans swarmed to Yard Boss shows.



Tightenin' up: Yard Boss — bassist Todd Pocobello (from left), vocalist/guitarist Marty Conselyea and drummer Rico Grazioli — has used the loss of two members to regroup as a tighter sounding trio.

screaming the band's name in between songs. The energy at the club-sized gigs rivaled any arena act's shows.

Riding high on the success of "Swollen," the Madison Heights-based band hit the road beginning what they now consider a lesson-learning trip. They went through the "on-the-road depression thing," according to vocalist Marty Conselyea.

During a southeast tour, two members of the band — guitarists Nick Sokolowski and Greg Savella — realized Yard Boss wasn't in their future. The band returned to their Dexter home after which the duo split for Seattle.

The remaining members — singer/guitarist Conselyea, bassist Todd Pocobello and drummer Rico Grazioli — meanwhile restructured Yard Boss as a tighter-sounding three-piece band.

"Two broken spokes in a wheel don't roll right," Conselyea commented in retrospect.

Once again the band is on a roll with the recently released EP "3," available only at Yard Boss shows. The six-song cassette proves the band still has a strong hold on Detroit's hard rock scene.

Vocalist Conselyea's one-part swirly, one-part funky guitars fill the dueling-guitar void. Pocobello's groove-heavy bass and the authoritative no-holds-barred drumming by Grazioli fill out each song more than the five-piece band ever did. Yard Boss plays only a few songs from "Swollen," but if it were up to Pocobello he'd "never play old stuff at all."

Conselyea, however, said their shows give fans an adequate Yard Boss update.

"It's a good realistic taste of what we're really like," he said.

Yard Boss performs at 3-D, 1815 N. Main St., Royal Oak, on Thursday, Dec. 29. For more information, call (810) 689-3344.

Have a listen

To hear music by Yard Boss and Wally Pleasant, you can call the Street Scene Music Line by dialing (313) 953-2025 with a touch-tone phone.

SOUND Bites

Liquid Plumber

Members:

- Mikey Plontek: singer/rhythm guitar
- Greg Gilson: lead guitar
- Rob Plontek: bassist
- Jeff Polster: drums



Photo by Ed Hession

Liquid Plumber has only been together for about six months, but the group can count tongue-in-cheek acoustic performer Wally Pleasant amongst its fans. Pleasant did what most local musicians wouldn't think of doing — hired an inexperienced band made up of barely out-of-high-school students to open for his record release party at the Majestic on Thursday, Dec. 22. He called Plymouth-Canton school district's high school radio station, WSDP, looking for a band and Liquid Plumber fit the bill.

Liquid Plumber's influences are a variety of acts from They Might Be Giants to Smashing Pumpkins. The band has played at University of Detroit Mercy's Grounds Coffeehouse and Ypsilanti's Cross Street Station.

Liquid Plumber may be a short-lived project, however. Singer Mikey Plontek is hoping to attend the Art Institute of Chicago upon graduating from high school. He also hosts WSDP's "The Anytum," a music and poetry improvisational show.

—Christina Fuoco