

ENTERTAINMENT

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FRIDAY



Enjoy an evening of "Merrie Melodies" with Bugs Bunny on Broadway in a salute to cartoons and classics with a live orchestra at Meadow Brook Music Festival. Tickets \$22.50 pavilion, \$12.50 lawn, (248) 645-6666.

SATURDAY



President James Marshall (Harrison Ford) prepares to overcome one of the Russian terrorists who have hijacked Air Force One in "Air Force One," an action-thriller at metro Detroit movie theaters.

SUNDAY



Disney and Wayne County Parks are offering a movie and free family entertainment including games, activities, and costumed Disney characters, 7 a.m. at the Edward Hines Park-Nankin Mills Area, 33175 Edward Hines Drive, at Ann Arbor Trail, Westland. "First Kid" (starring Sinbad) will be shown.



Skeptic Tank no joke to quartet

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO STAFF WRITER

The hard rock band Skeptic Tank vows to make rock 'n' roll fun again. "Other bands try their hardest to act like they're (so miserable) and the worst thing they ever did to themselves in their life was to pick up a guitar," singer Rob Schaeffer said. "We'll take endorsements and free stuff - anything. It's gonna be fun again to trash the backstage area, get free drinks, and have chicks hollering at us. We're not going to pretend like we hate it because we don't hate it. We love it." Injecting fun into rock 'n' roll is a logical goal for Skeptic Tank which was founded by Schaeffer, the producer of Drew Lane and Mike Clark's morning show on WRIF. The band's first incarnation took place between 1992 and 1993. "They were just a few losers who are all in a prison now or selling used cars or something like that. This was a band that never made it out of the basement or the garage," Schaeffer said. Earlier this year, Lane insisted that Schaeffer get all the original members back together for a "Drew and Mike" party in November 1996 at The Palladium in Roseville. About a week later, Schaeffer met former Ted Nugent drummer Gunner Ross

of Southfield at an Ozzy Osbourne concert. "Gunner asked me how serious I was about it. I didn't know how I was until he started calling me." As Schaeffer talked about Skeptic Tank on the air, "every musician in Detroit was calling me wanting to be a part of Skeptic Tank. I had guys from some of the best bands in Detroit calling me, and others who thought they were in the best band in Detroit." "When Gunner and I met, although it's kind of a rock 'n' roll cliché, we just knew." To round out the group, Ross recruited bassist Paul Anthony of Flint, and guitarist Scott Anderson of West Bloomfield. The Skeptic Tank reunion was only supposed to be one show but things quickly changed. "We were going to be as funny as possible but still try to sound halfway decent so we were respected as musicians. Once (Gunner) got in here and started playing, it wasn't funny anymore." "I truly think we're doing something different. We're '80s influenced but it's funny. You can only play what you know. Your influences are going to be basically what you're used to listening to or playing. We're not ashamed to admit that we come from that! '80s glam big hair Cinderella, Poison (orn). We're part of all that." The band is working on a CD that should be out by the fall. Fans can



STAFF PHOTOS BY LAWRENCE R. MCKEE

New gig: Former Ted Nugent drummer Gunner Ross (above) of Southfield now plays with the hard rock band Skeptic Tank. Skeptic Tank (above left) was founded by singer Rob Schaeffer, the producer for WRIF's morning team Drew and Mike who writes and performs most of the show's parodist songs. The band is, from left, guitarist Scott Anderson of West Bloomfield, Schaeffer, and bassist Paul Anthony of Flint.

- Who: Skeptic Tank opens for Exodus and Skindia
When: 8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 2
Where: Harpo's, 14238 Harper Road, Detroit.
How: Tickets for the 18 and older show are available at Ticketmaster.
For more information: Call (313) 824-1700 or (248) 645-6666.

expect some special guests to appear on the album. Schaeffer admitted that there's "nothing pretty or profound about what we're doing. Half the songs we write we write in about three minutes." "As far as the lyrics go I write most of the lyrics," Schaeffer said. "Most of the songs are kind of dark, kind of mean, kind of angry. But I'm not a dark, mean angry person. We write a lot about the end of the world, the end of relationships, and the end of life as we know. We write about the end of everything. It's

mean crunchy stuff that isn't meant to be taken seriously. I can't help anybody through life with my lyrics. They're just there. If I see (the fans) heads going up and down, that's enough for me." Once, the band was described as a "Spinal Tap-come-Chili Peppers joke fest." Schaeffer agreed somewhat with that comparison. "I think we're more Spinal Tap than the Chili Peppers. Paul and I tend to be very animated on stage." "I think we take ourselves lightly. It's part of our charm. We look funny, but you walk away crying."

COMEDY

Beneficial laughs: Comedian Elliott Branch is encouraging people to "Laugh & Make a Difference," July 28 at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle. Branch has assembled a cast of local comic characters to present a benefit for Caring Together.



Local comedians 'Laugh, Make a Difference'

BY KEELY WYQONIK STAFF WRITER

When he "gets older, starts losing his hair, many years from now..." comedian Elliott Branch would like to think there will be someone there to help him, and others. That's why this funny man from Royal Oak is hosting a July 28 benefit at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle for Caring Together, a network of volunteers serving the elderly in Detroit. "These are volunteer caregivers who assist senior citizens," explained Branch. "A lot of people would be in nursing homes if it wasn't for this help." Over the past four years Branch has hosted benefits for Caring Together at Porter Street Station in Detroit, but he needed a bigger venue, and Mark Ridley was glad to oblige. "Elliott's great to work with," said Ridley.

"Jerry Seinfeld, Jay Leno, and Bill Cosby, won't be able to be there this year," teased Branch, "but we've put together a show with the top comics of the Midwest." The cast, some of whom have been featured on HBO, Showtime, A&E and Comedy Central, includes Leo Dufour, Norm Stolz, WJR's Ken Brown, Keith Ruff, Tim Lilly, Gilda Hauser of Southfield, Steve Bills, Kevin Wheeler, Mike Green, David Glover, Pete LaDuko of Birmingham, Ben Konstantin and Jim McLean. "I get people to do it, I'm a good guy," said Branch explaining how he got all these comedians to volunteer. "I try to get a mixture of comedians. The comedians do it because they care. It will be clean. I want

Upcoming benefits
Laugh & Make a Difference
Christian Comedy Night
Motor City Women of Comedy
Caring Together

Please see LAUGH, E2