

Entertainment

The Farmington Observer

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Kathy Wysocki, Editor 313-953-2105

THE WEEKEND

FRIDAY



"The Living Nativity," is part of The Radio City Christmas Spectacular at the Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward, Detroit. Call (248) 433-1515 for tickets, and performance times.

SATURDAY

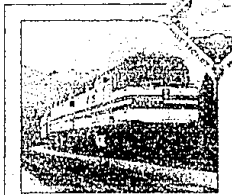


19 Wheels performs at the 7th House, 7 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. Doors open at 8 p.m. for the 18 and older show. Tickets are \$6. (248) 335-8100.

SUNDAY



Meadow Brook Theatre presents "A Christmas Carol," 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 28, at Oakland University, Rochester. Tickets \$23, (248) 377-3300.



Hot Tix: Toy & Hobby Expo '97, Friday-Sunday, Dec. 26-28 at the Novi Expo Center, 43700 Novi Center Dr., Novi features art work by Paul Adams, the world's largest mobile train display, new and used model railroad and toy trains, antique toys, collectible dolls and more, call (248) 348-5800.



PHOTO BY TONY HOFFMANN

Go cat go: When not touring the United States, the local rockabilly band Twistin' Tarantulas packs them in on Sundays at Fifth Avenue Billiards in Royal Oak. The band is, from left, drummer Alex "The Thrilla From Manila" Trajano, bassist/singer "Pistol" Pete Midgard, and guitarist "Gorgeous" George Friend.

Twistin' Tarantulas:



BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Feeling jovial, a teenage Pete Midgard popped Humble Pie's "30 Days in the Hole" into his eight-track player. "I had this speaker on the floor in my room that really was a cardboard box with just a round speaker tied into it (sitting) on a hardwood floor," Midgard recalled.

"I cranked it up really loud and when the bass came in, the speaker started skating around on the floor like one of those little football guys. That's when I said, Man, I want to be that guy. I want to be the guy who makes the speaker rattle across the floor and shake the glass." I wanted to be the bass player.

Midgard's bass playing abilities have undoubtedly improved since then as he's now known as "Pistol" Pete, the lead singer and upright bass player for the rockabilly band Twistin' Tarantulas.

Bass gripped tightly and sweaty hair flapping with the beat, Midgard and his band attract dancers like flies to fly paper.

O & E Band of the Year

An amalgamation of rockabilly, awing, blues, R&B and rock 'n' roll, the Twistin' Tarantulas play constantly and still the clubs are invariably standing room only.

The Twistin' Tarantulas were on the cusp of the rockabilly/awing revival long before others jumped on the now trendy bandwagon. Like rockabilly or hate it, the Twistin' Tarantulas rock.

The Twistin' Tarantulas are The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers' 1997 Band of the Year.

Side project

Midgard grew up in Pontiac attending Pontiac Central High School. He graduated, what he calls, "Phi Beta Drop Out."

"I was in a hurry to go to a new school - school of hard rocks. I got a PhD from the hard knock school of adolescent rage. I can't push the first button on a computer, but I still remember binary codes."

While he was in school, he played multiple instruments including the tuba and trombone. It was at age 16 or 17 that he plomped in the aforementioned Humble Pie tape.

Who: Twistin' Tarantulas, Mudpuppy and Nobody's Business

What: Performs

When: 9 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 31

Where: Upstairs at Fifth Avenue Billiards, 215 W. Fifth Ave., Royal Oak

Why: It's New Year's Eve

How: Tickets are \$35 which includes a complimentary glass of champagne, or \$60 per couple which includes a complimentary bottle of champagne. Both ticket prices include a light buffet and party favors. Only those 21 and older will be admitted. For more information, call (248) 542-0922

Other shows:

Twistin' Tarantulas perform at 10 p.m. Sundays throughout December and January at Fifth Avenue Billiards in Royal Oak.

They also perform at 10 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 10, at the Red Hot Grill, 45600 Mound Road, Utica. For more information, call (519) 734-1700.

Twistin' Tarantulas play Saturday, Jan. 31, at the Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., in Ann Arbor. Doors open at 9:30 p.m. for the 19 and older show. For more information, call (734) 996-8555.

To sign up for the Twistin' Tarantulas' mailing list, write "Pistol" Pete Midgard at 2748 Vermont, Detroit, Mich., 48216

"I was into Humble Pie, Kiss, Led Zepplin, Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, all the big arena bands. Back then I had a lot of the cultural habits that were real common in the '70s."

Hearkening back to his high school days, Midgard and the Twistin' Tarantulas cover Misfits songs and Motorhead's "Ace of Spades."

"What else? It's one of the greatest songs ever written as far as I'm concerned. I've done that song in every band I've been in. When I started playing the upright I wasn't about to change."

Midgard honed his skills in a variety of acts including the Frantic Flatpops and Flying Sauternes. In December 1993, the Twistin' Tarantulas were created as a side project

Please see BAND, E2

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Plan an informal, fun-filled New Year's Eve at home

What's On TV

New Year's Eve College Football Bowl
■ Sun Bowl, El Paso, Texas - 2 p.m. CBS (WVJ), Arizona State (B-3) vs. Iowa (T-4)
■ Liberty Bowl, Memphis, Tenn. - 3:30 p.m. ESPN, Pittsburgh (B-5) vs. Southern Miss (B-3)
■ Fiesta Bowl, Tempe, Ariz. - 7 p.m. CBS (WVJ), Kansas State (10-3) vs. Syracuse (9-3)

Countdown to 1998

■ Tonight Show, broadcast live - 11:35 p.m. NBC (WVJ)
■ Dick Clark's Rockin' Eve - 11:30 p.m. ABC (WVJ) after the local news
■ When New Year's Attacks - 11 p.m. Fox (WREX) - live from Reno, 90 minute show counts down to New Year's, features top musical performances, comedians, fireworks, Top 10 Scariest Moments of 1997, and a midnight stunt to bring in the New Year.

Sip champagne

BY ELEANOR AND RAY HERALD
SPECIAL WRITERS

You did it! You popped out and didn't get reservations for New Year's Eve! Don't fret, you have a week and can either plan to max out at the peak of hedonism or cheap out.

Champagne and hedonism pair nicely. In the category of magnificent, indulgent, unforgettable, extravagant making out for around \$145

a bottle, you can get the world's best, 1989 Champagne Krug or the 1985, to usher in the new year. You have the champagne idea; now for the caviar.

If you've not purchased caviar before, here are the basics. Russian caviars are identified by the species of



Please see SIP, E3

View a video

BY JOHN MONAGHAN
SPECIAL WRITER

Rest assured there are other ways to ring in a New Year than simply watching Dick Clark drop that silly ball in Times Square. Your local video store is more than happy to meet your needs, whether you're spending the holiday with friends, a lover, or just by yourself.

■ **Throw Your Own Premier** - It's easy to have your own premier with major movies that for some reason never made it to area screens. One that's getting decent notices is "Traveler," starring "Titanic's" Bill Paxton and "Boogie Nights" Mark Wahlberg as gypsies who traverse the rural South, bliking people out of their money.



Please see VIDEO, E2

Play a game

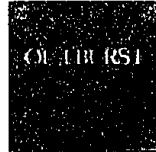
JOHN MONAGHAN
SPECIAL WRITER

For awhile there it seemed like parlor and board games were all just derivations of Monopoly and Charades. That's not true anymore as stores have whole aisles of clever ways to liven up New Year's Eve parties.

Here's just a sample:

■ **Outburst** - In a game that promises "common knowledge and uncommon hilarity" you are given a topic like "Canine Commands" and must come up with all 10 desired responses in only 60 seconds. Other categories: "Dances of the Sixties" and "Parts of the Body that Come in Pairs."

■ **Planet Hollywood** - Is the official game of the Tinseltown.



Please see GAME, E2