

Arts & Entertainment

Shootin' from the Hip hits target with new song

By Bill Allen

"Why ain't there no songs about Nebraska?" used to be the question asked by the country band, Shootin' from the Hip.

But with the group's new song release of that title, the question no longer is needed.

Though far from the top 40, guitarist Jon Hedges said the record is gaining popularity in Lincoln and across the state.

So is the band, if their summer schedule is any indication. Shootin' from the Hip played in several central Nebraska towns this summer, Hedges said. He said the group only had two weeks off all summer.

That's quite a jump for five former UNL band members who started playing as a group two and a half years ago "just for fun."

Hedges and fellow band members Bruce Erickson, Jeff Wilson, Phil Young and Bill Lovgren, are all former members of the Nebraska marching band.

Hedges said Young and he would get together at fraternity and band parties to entertain. Eventually the others joined the group, which at one time consisted of seven members.

The group first began playing at The Sidetrack, according to Erickson, the group's drummer. He said Joyce Durand of The Sidetrack is responsible for giving the band its start.

"The first time we played we sounded pretty poor," Young, who plays banjo and guitar, said. "Then as we got into it, we started to sound better. You see, at first we didn't know how long we would be playing, whether we would be able to make payments on our equipment, things like that."

"When we first started, our main concern was to have a good time," Hedges said. "I'd hate to think of this as a job."

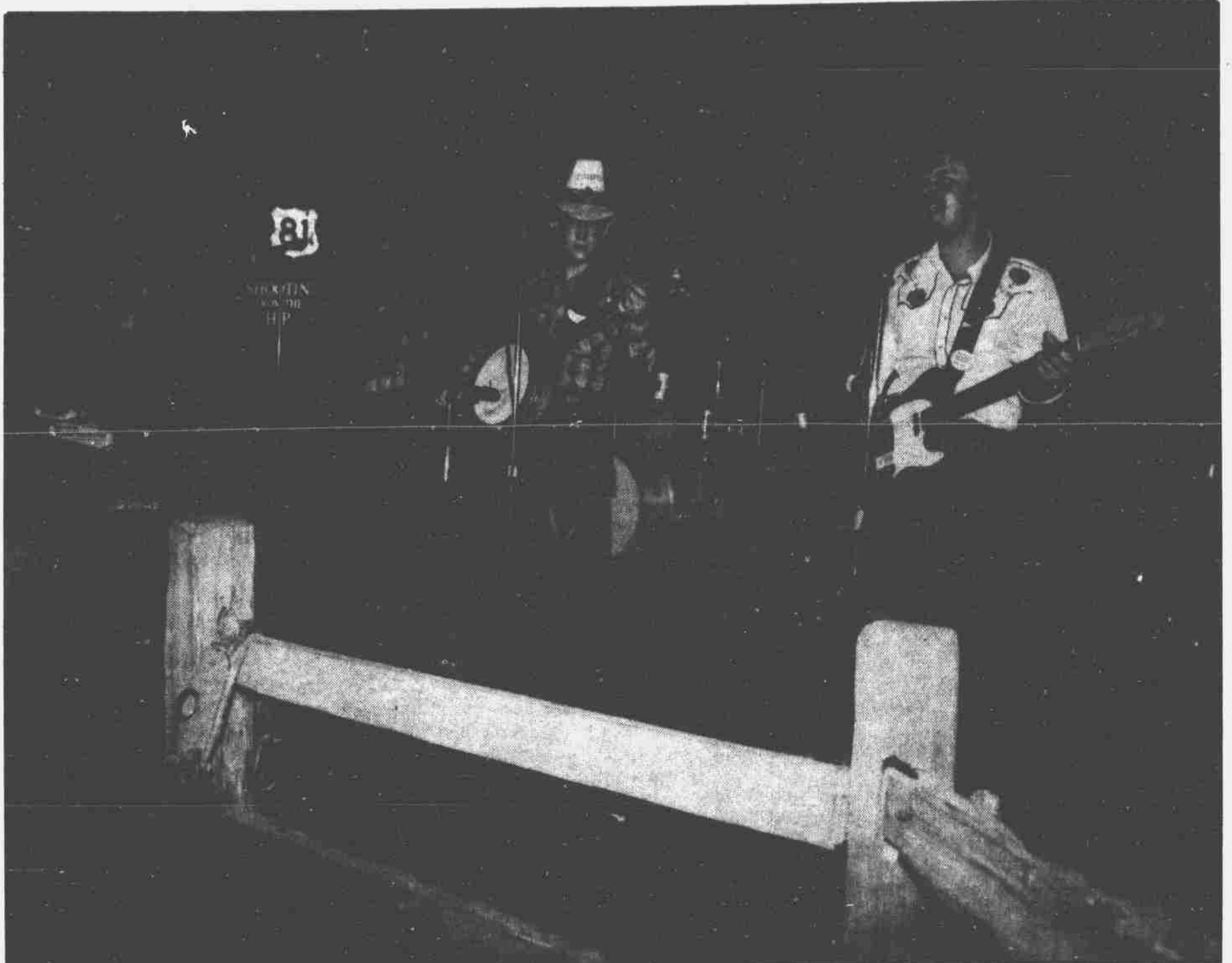
Perhaps this is because the members already have other jobs. All work in Lincoln, except Lovgren, who teaches in Shickley.

Concerned with fun

Having fun seems to be the band members' main concern at the present. Erickson said they usually start their act by playing crowd pleasers like "Redneck Mothers" and "Pissin' in the Wind," and eventually get into songs people can relate to.

He said the group tries to stay away from the slow, sad type of country music.

And, of course, they play their own songs too, including "Why Ain't There



Staff Photo by Dave Bentz

Shootin' from the Hip: (from left) Bill Lovgren, Jeff Wilson, Phil Young, Bruce Erickson and Jon Hedges

No Songs About Nebraska," and the flip side of their 45, "Some People Call Him Cowboy."

"We also make our own arrangements of other people's songs," Hedges said. "Probably 90 percent of the material we play is our own arrangement."

"Of people like Jerry Jeff Walker and Bobby Bare," Erickson added. "We try to get people into music they've never heard before."

According to Young, a major part of the group's success is audience participation.

"We try to get the audience in as much as possible," he said.

This participation includes sing along, hand clapping, as well as putting audience members on stage to sing with the group, he said.

Originally, if it had been up to Hedges, the group would have been entirely different. He initially wanted the band to be a rock group.

"I was outvoted," Hedges said. "I wanted rock 'n' roll. The rest wanted country. But the kind of music we play, using audience participation, lends itself to the country format. A lot of our regular listeners are not country fans."

Another factor in the group's popularity is their spontaneity, Young said.

"We try to use a different song list every night," he said. "A lot of what we play depends on each particular audience."

A step at a time

As for the future, the group doesn't seem to be rushing things. Hedges said it's possible that someday the band's members will give up their other jobs to play full time, but for now, they are taking things one step at a time.

Hedges said the next step probably will be another 45.

"It all comes down to money," Young said. "Whether we can live off of it. Right now it's just for fun. We like the freedom of playing when we want to."

Hedges said the band plays at fraternity, residence hall university functions, in addition to engagements at local nightclubs.

The band played at Little Bo's Sundowner this weekend, and is planning a reunion at The Sidetrack sometime this fall, he said.

What was Shootin' from the Hip's worst moment on stage?

"About a year and a half ago we played for this 50th wedding anniversary," said Hedges.

"The average age was 65," Young said.

"We were playing in this big auditorium, and about 12 people came in," Lovgren said.

"The acoustics were terrible," Young added.

Fortunately, said Hedges, such engagements happened only one or two times.

Bass player Lovgren has no trouble recalling the band's best night on stage, though.

"Tonight," he said.

On being young, restless, lonely on an early Friday evening

It was Friday, early evening, I was young, I was restless, I was a soap opera (not really), but it was Friday, early evening.

I could stay home, unpack a couple more boxes, hang some of my pictures on the wall, write my family, even study some, but it was Friday, early evening, I was young, I was restless, I was . . .

I stepped out the front door . . . white, free and female (later that night I would return to that very door in



T. Marni Vos

the same tragic condition).

As I was walking toward my vehicle I heard honking from a small foreign car. I looked down at the corner just in time to see a bicyclist with a Walkman attached to his ears, singing "another one bites the dust," crash into the curb. I thought to myself how dangerous curbs are.

I had one ticket to the horse races. I knew I was on a budget, but I felt lucky and, who knows, maybe I could

turn \$12 into this semester's tuition, or at least a couple of books for my linguistics class. I left the races at eight o'clock wondering if it was too late to apply for a federal loan. Just think two hours earlier I owned a car. Now I was young, I was restless . . . I was on foot.

I decided I would go to the Friday Afternoon Evening Late Night Morning Club that I belonged to. Lacking a six pack, I was not allowed to enter. I sold my shoes, borrowed a car and returned. There was a warm welcome with smiles and open hands.

I visited with Geff for a bit. We talked about the races and how they were probably all set up. He told me where I could find a good cheap bike . . . I asked him if I could please borrow a pair of shoes.

I left to meet a friend, Barb. It was going to be her birthday 10 days from last Saturday, but I had plans, so we had decided to go to a movie Friday night instead. I asked her if I could have a couple of slices of pizza and maybe borrow some money . . . we were off.

I had heard that "Beast Master" was worse than an evening with Secretary of the Interior James Watt. Finding this all hard to believe, I was tempted to go . . .

just to see how bad it was, just so I could be shocked and grossed out . . . tell all my friends . . . wonder how a film like that ever got made. Instead we went to "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas," with Dolly Parton. Barb and I both wondered where she got her shirts . . . we thought we might like some shirts like that. I found some popcorn on the floor. Burt Reynolds wore a bedspread . . . the woman behind us whispered that Burt was the kind of man that could make her acne flare up. I thought maybe I'd like to make a musical someday.

I arrived home rather late. I stepped over some of the still unemptied boxes. On the way to my room I noticed that the cat had knocked one of my pictures over . . . I bit her ear and broke her tail.

The answering service was flashing . . . long distance . . . my mother. She wanted to know if anyone knew of a T. Marni Vos or if she wanted anything for Christmas.

I cleared my unused used books off the bed. I started to drift. I remembered what Paul had written, "For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate."