Tablerockers stay at Zoo after national talent search

SOUNDS

By Matthew Burton
Staff Reporter

Some people get no respect.

This appears to be the case with Lincoln's own blues band, The Tablerockers. As The Tablerockers' bassist Larry Boehmer said, "We seem to be the Rodney Dangerfields of Lincoln music."

The Tablerockers, who serve as the Zoo Bar's house band, have been performing in one form or another since 1981, with guitar player Sean Benjamin and Larry Boehmer the only continuous members.

Despite the change in personnel, The Tablerockers still play a solid, authentic style of electric blues for people across the Midwest.

Along with Benjamin and Boehmer, The Tablerockers consist of Jim Cidlik on keyboards, Joe Gurly on drums and vocalist Annette Murrell, a crowd favorite.

"She's a real find; nobody can believe we found her in Lincoln," Boehmer said. "We feel like we've

got three real strong guns. Jim Cidlik's keyboard playing is very, very good, Sean is a tremendous blues guitar player and Annette is a tremendous singer."

Though being the house band at the Zoo, The Tablerockers don't limit themselves to gigs solely in Lincoln. The band plays several venues in Omaha, is a regular at the Grand Emporium in Kansas City, the Getaway Inn in Topeka — "an ex-biker bar" according to Boehmer and the Sioux City Blues Festival. Recently The Tablerockers performed at the First Annual Long Beach National Blues Talent Search in Long Beach, California.

The Tablerockers

The Tablerockers were accepted into the talent search, sponsored by KOLN-FM, Southern California's largest jazz station, as a last-minute decision after submitting a 10-minute demo.

In order to make the five-band roster at the competition, The Tablerockers had to play at a smaller, regional contest in Kansas City where they received the invitation to go to Long Beach.

In Kansas City, The Tablerockers played against previous blues contest winners such as the Blues Notions, John Paul and the Hellhounds, and occaisional Zoo Bar act, the Dan Doran Band.

Photo courtesy of Larry Boehmer

"So there were three pretty good bands that we competed against in K.C.," according to Boehmer.

"We pretty much got screwed by the thing. It ended up being a $3,000 sound check, because that's just about how much it cost to fly us out and put us up for three days.

"What we found out in the contest is that we are on that level; if the sound quality had been equal, we would have had a good chance at first or second place."

The Tablerockers will continue to play at the Zoo Bar with at least one gig a week there, and may even give the Long Beach talent search another shot next year.