

BEING PLEASANT

Wally Pleasant graces Lincoln tonight with unique, ironic touch

BY SEAN MCCARTHY
Music Critic

Tonight, Lincoln becomes "Wally World." No, not the Wally World in the movie "National Lampoon's Vacation." This one's more enjoyable.

Wally Pleasant — the offbeat songwriter best known for such songs as "That's Evolution," "Alternateen" and "Sons of Bob Dylan" — takes the stage about 10 p.m. at Yiayia's Pizza Beer & Wine, 1423 O St.

Pleasant is currently on tour supporting his latest album, "Wally World." Since his first compact disc, "Songs About Stuff," came out in 1992, Pleasant has sold more than 75,000 albums on his own Miranda Records label. Many were sold simply at shows.

Pleasant's mix of offbeat humor and sharp satire has helped him amass a following that continues to grow. In the last two years, he has been featured in the Wall Street Journal, landed spots on numerous College Music Journal charts and had a song appear on a compilation compact disc with such greats as Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan. The song, "Diamond Cuts," is about psychotic, racist, boozier baseball-great Ty Cobb.

Though his name is becoming more popular, Pleasant said he has no intentions of leaving Miranda Records to shop for a bigger

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WALLY PLEASANT
singer/songwriter

record label. Pleasant runs the record company out of his home and an East Lansing, Mich., post office box.

"The music industry isn't interested in me, to tell you the truth," Pleasant said. "I don't have that high of an opinion of the music industry."

Traveling in his minivan, Pleasant is on a two-month tour concluding next month in Alaska. The most interesting stop on the tour so far was at a Ft. Wayne, Ind., comedy club, where Pleasant performed for "Country Week," he said.

"Being from Detroit, I thought I fit in real well," Pleasant said.

Aside from Indiana, Pleasant has traveled to Texas, Ohio, Tennessee and West Virginia for this tour.

To pass the time on the road, he listens to his collection of books on tape. For this trip, he's brought Hunter S. Thompson's "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas" and Stephen King's "Gerald's Game." Pleasant listened to "Gerald's Game" while driving from Texas to Tennessee.

"It's pretty creepy," Pleasant said. "We were pulling an all-nighter, but driving through Arkansas at night can be pretty creepy too."

Pleasant has attacked many people and institutions on his albums.

He aimed a hilarious jab at the record industry and its followers in "Alternateen," a song on his "Houses of the Holy Moly" album.

Other topics Pleasant has addressed include the worn-out phrase "the next Bob Dylan" in "Sons of

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Bob" and self-promoting ex-punk Henry Rollins in "Hardcore Man."

One benefit of touring is seeing an audience's immediate reaction to his songs, Pleasant said.

"It's nice to write a song and get a response like people actually 'get it,'" he said.

This is not the first time Pleasant has performed in Lincoln. He's played before at Duffy's Tavern and the old Mudslide Slim's.

Pleasant said he would rather play small, packed halls of 100 people than half-filled halls of 200.

Along with watching Pleasant perform, the audience may be treated to a possible bingo game tonight.

"I ran out of bingo cards on my last show," Pleasant said. "I tried to stop at one of those dollar stores to get some."

Pop culture may be a favorite target for some of Pleasant's lyrics, but he said he tried to steer away from including current events in his songs.

"You don't want to be too topical," Pleasant said. "I'd rather do a song on something that won't go away, like the Internet."

Tickets for Pleasant's all-ages show are \$4. Bring your I.D. and some beer money, but above all, bring a sense of humor.

AARON STECKELBERG/DN

Playboy honors local tavern Magazine deems Brass Rail top college bar

BY BRET SCHULTE
Senior Reporter

After years of reviewing the women of college campuses, Playboy now has turned its eyes to men's other leading distraction — the bars.

For the first time in the publication's history, Playboy has compiled a list of the United States' Top 100 College Bars. The list appears in the recently released October "College Blowout Issue." Among the 100 bars selected is The Brass Rail, 1436 O St., Nebraska's sole representative in the nationwide survey.

Co-owner Tommy Mausbach said employees of the bar, both men and women, were ecstatic about the honor. He attributed the bar's success to the hard work of its devoted bartenders, servers and door workers.

"Our bartenders and doormen always have a good attitude, and it comes across," Mausbach

said. "The only reason we got (the recognition) is because of the workers we have."

As a cornerstone of campus social activity for more than 60 years, the bar sports the slogan, "One of UNL's longest running traditions," Mausbach said. Indeed, many of the bars that made the list boast a strong history in their respective communities. Among them is Smoky Joe's — near the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia — which was founded during Prohibition and has been serving students ever since.

The Top 100 College Bars list was compiled through the efforts of a campus marketing firm, Beyond the Wall, which organized a series of random surveys and an online polling component allowing students to vote via Playboy's World Wide Web site for their favorite watering hole. The survey asked students about atmosphere, service and prices of local bars. Playboy's list is not a ranked enumeration by

votes, but simply a collection of the 100 favorite bars of the survey's participants.

Mausbach said when he received a call from the Playboy promotions department, he was amazed to hear The Brass Rail had been voted the campus favorite.

"They said they got a lot of input that The Brass Rail is a top college bar, and that it appeared over and over again," he said.

Bartender Sara DeMars said the publicity has both customers and employees excited.

"I'm all for Playboy," she said. "We've always known the bar should be recognized as one of the most infamous bars in Lincoln and Nebraska."

Longtime regulars Dick and Dee Wehnes agreed, saying that The Brass Rail has earned a special place in Lincoln's social scene.

"They've improved their clientele, and it's a

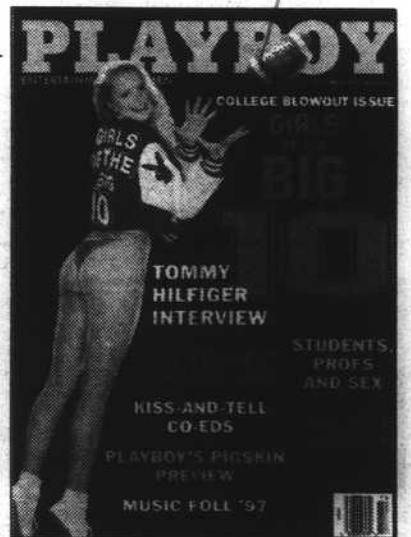


PHOTO COURTESY OF PLAYBOY
ALTHOUGH NOT FEATURED in the centerfold, The Brass Rail, 1436 O St., made its Playboy magazine premiere this week as one of the top 100 college bars in the nation.

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