


[Home](#)
[Around Town](#)
[Past Issues](#)
[Classifieds](#)
[Expert Directory](#)
[Advertisers](#)
[About West Life](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[To Subscribe](#)
[To Advertise](#)
[Where To Buy](#)
[Links](#)

## happenings

### Bar favorite Pat Shepard turns fans into friends

By Zachary Dzurick

happenings

Published May 3, 2006

Along the Westshore, there are plenty of places to hear music in a bar. Many performers are content being background noise, but Pat Shepard is not one of them. He has successfully transferred the atmosphere of late-night drinking in the basement and playing songs with friends to the bar.

"To be successful, you can't just play the guitar and sing the songs well," Shepard said. "When people are at a bar, they want to have a good time. I think you need to play good time songs. You also have to make a connection with people. And with the type of songs I write, hopefully most of the people have seen or experienced the stuff I am talking about. I want people to be comfortable and have a good time and when they leave, I want them to come back and see me again."

For Shepard, playing the bar scene is not just about picking up a few extra bucks. Shepard has a large following of friends that attend his shows. His goal is to make audience members feel as if they are also part of that inner circle. He usually plays three or four hours straight without a break.

"Unless I have to go to the bathroom I am not going to stop," he said. "I am comfortable, so why do I need to take a break? I also am afraid I am going to lose the audience. When you go to a real show, they don't take breaks. And I want it to be a real show and not just some idiot in the corner singing songs. I want people to pay attention. I want it to feel like a party and play songs everyone enjoys but still make an impression with my songs and the music I like."

The St. Raphael graduate is a big draw on the local bar scene. Also he seems poised to for even bigger things as he prepares to record a CD and play several dates at Frosty's in Put-in-Bay this summer. Shepard is a regular at Brendan O'Neill's in Westlake and will play this Friday at 9:30



Pat Shepard will perform at Brendan O'Neill's Friday night. (Photo by Larry Bennet)

p.m. He has become a crowd favorite at the Irish pub.

"I knew Pat from grade school, and heard he was playing shows, so we booked him on a Fat Tuesday party a few years back," Brendan O'Neill's owner Mike Schaffer said. "He had a great show and a bunch of people came to see him. We keep bringing him back because he's hilarious! He brings a fun crowd and has a great time with the audience. He mixes it up. He'll play his own stuff, songs that everyone knows, then some funny, off-the-wall songs. I never thought I would see a cover of 'Bernie, Bernie' in my life."

"Brendan O'Neill's has been great to me and they have helped me out a lot," Shepard said. "It was the first place I ever played that actually had a stage."

It is doubtful that anyone has started in the music business the same way as Shepard.

"I was 20 years old and painting houses in Lakewood with my buddy," Shepard said. "One day at lunch I was trying to watch Sports Center and I couldn't hear the TV because he was playing his guitar. Finally I said 'Give me that thing, I am going to learn to play something.' I pretty much taught myself how to play listening to the songs I liked."

Five years later, Shepard was entertaining his buddies one late night with the songs of Pat Dailey when one made Shepard an offer he could not refuse.

"My buddy said he would buy me a case of Pabst if I gave a real show a try," Shepard said. "So I talked to Granny."

Granny, aka John Granzier, had just bought Merry Arts Pub and Grille in Lakewood. He decided to let Shepard play what was supposed to be a one-time gig.

"I thought it was a one-deal thing to get my case of beer and be on my way, but I had a lot of fun and it was crowded," Shepard said. "It turned out all right and Granny asked me back and I did just that for a while."

Soon word of mouth led to other gigs.

"Jimmy Sheehan really got me started playing other places," Shepard said. "He let me play Sheehan's and I am sure that word of mouth allowed me to play other places. Jimmy talked to people at Gem Beach Marina at Catawba and they called me and this will be my third year doing dates out there."

Shepard is also a regular at the Public House, the Old Stand in Lakewood, Mullarkey's in Willoughby. He has an annual St. Patrick Day's show at Pickwick and Frolic and this summer he will begin playing the new Put-In-Bay Lakewood bar that was formerly the Lakewood Lanes. And then there is the real Put-In-Bay opportunity.

"People have been asking when I was going to play up there for years," Shepard said. "I wasn't really comfortable yet and I didn't know how to go about it. I don't have a manager and I didn't pursue it. I lucked out. The manager or the owner of Frosty's was at one of my shows at the Old

Stand and gave me the opportunity to do it."

He will play from 2-6 p.m. at Frosty's on June 10, July 8 and Aug. 26. Shepard loves the time slot.

"Everyone who has been there knows the crowds at Put-In-Bay get started early," he said. "So 2 o'clock is really 9 or 10 o'clock at any regular joint. It is a good time because people will be receptive."

Because Shepard loves Pat Dailey's songs, there is always a comparison and when Shepard first started, it was basically all he could play. He respects Dailey and credits him for his career.

"My first show might have been all Pat Dailey songs and one Warren Zevon song," Shepard said. "I would not be doing this right now if Pat wasn't nice enough to let me play his songs. Plus, I like playing his songs and there are not a lot of people who play all of his songs around here and that set me aside from everyone else. I did that for a long time, but really they were all the only songs I knew at first."

While Shepard loves Dailey's songs, he is now attempting to become more of his own man.

"I am now trying to work in my own stuff," he said. "I have written about 15 songs. I don't always play them all every night. The places where I am most comfortable playing is where I play my own songs."

Two original songs that are crowd favorites are "The Mistake on the Lake" with the lyric "So let's all raise our glasses, it's a drink that we'll take. It's so great to live in the Mistake on the Lake." and "The Mullet Song" which Shepard describes as a journey through the mind of a man who loves his mullet. Soon fans will be able to enjoy Shepard in the comfort of their own home.

"The CD is going to happen this summer," he said. "There will be four of us playing on the record, we are going to go in the studio and play each song live four or five times and just pick the best of each. If all goes well, we should finish it in two nights."

Meanwhile you can see Shepard nearly every weekend somewhere local. Check out [www.patshepard.com](http://www.patshepard.com) for times and dates. His musical career started as a lark, but it has now become an important part of his life.

"I am not going to stop doing this until my body tells me I can't anymore because it is too damn fun."

---

[Current Issue](#) • [News](#) • [Sports](#) • [Happenings](#)  
[Home](#) • [Around Town](#) • [Past Issues](#) • [Classifieds](#) • [Expert Directory](#) • [Advertisers](#)  
[About West Life](#) • [Contact Us](#) • [To Subscribe](#) • [To Advertise](#) • [Where To Buy](#) • [Links](#)

Copyright © 2005 – West Life Newspaper