



Greg Hahn brings high energy to his comedy act.

Hahn plans to go 'completely nuts'

Comedian to give Decatur show on New Year's Eve

By JIM VOREL
H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR — Comedian Greg Hahn describes his act as "like a re-enactment of being with your best friends at a party, and you're at the stage where you just like everything you see."

"You've had a few beers, and it's absolutely a fun time," Hahn said. "That's what I feel like when I get on stage. It's like performing for all the best friends I've never met."

Hahn will have quite a few opportunities to make new friends when he performs on New Year's Eve at the Decatur Conference Center and Hotel. The favorite of the nationally syndicated "Bob and Tom Radio Show" knows what his job is: make audiences laugh with his hyperactive, aggressive comic style. "I know they've got troubles and things on their mind, but when I'm up there it's just like I'm goofing off with my friends," Hahn said. "I look forward to going completely nuts."

Although Hahn is known for his energetic antics on stage, he didn't immediately pursue a career in comedy after school, instead serving as a

IF YOU GO

WHO: Greg Hahn.
WHEN: Friday, Dec. 31.
WHERE: Decatur Conference Center and Hotel.
TICKETS: \$27, includes after-party and toast; available at the door or www.1067thefox.com.
ON THE WEB: www.greghahn.com.

captain in the Marine Corps and working for an aerospace company. Eventually, though, he realized he could no longer keep his "goofy side" in check. "All that seriousness got to be too much," he said. "The more serious things are, the more ridiculous I want to be."

Comedy, however, never seemed to be a reasonable option while Hahn was growing up. The real push to try his hand at standup finally came from watching a fellow stand-up bomb on stage.

"I saw this guy who was really awful," Hahn said. "The crowd hated him, but at the end of the set I noticed, 'Hey, he still got paid.' So I said to myself, 'Hell, I can do better than that and actually make a living.'"

That didn't mean things were easy for Hahn in the early 1990s, but he eventually parlayed stage appearances into television specials and late-night talk show appearances. "I knew I had something,

but it took a while to get it under control," he said. "When you start out as a comedian, you can't really call yourself a real comedian because you suck so badly. You'll go through at least a few side jobs and a few cars driving up and down the coast first."

Hahn is probably best known to fans through repeated appearances on "Bob and Tom," where he remains a favorite. It was the last place the physically active, expressive comic would have expected to come to prominence, but he believes his innate energy comes through car speakers and Internet radios as well as it does on stage.

"The jokes do stand on their own, and the energy flows through the radio," he said. "I'm always loud and bombastic, so that helps. I've been on many, many times, but I still get excited about it every time."

Even Hahn's hobbies reflect his nonstop active nature. An avid drummer since fourth grade, he occasionally brings his drum set on stage or to the radio recording booth. On New Year's Eve, Hahn will be set loose to run wild on the conference center stage.

"I do stop moving sometimes and collapse in a heap for about six hours, but not often," he said. "It's more like sudden bursts of movement."

jvorel@herald-review.com | 421-7973

PEART

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did it, the title was 'Never on Sunday,' because it was a chance to do all kinds of music I could never do at a Sunday service," Peart said. "You hear a very limited amount on a typical Sunday morning of what the organ is capable of. It's a wonderful instrument."

Peart almost sees himself as an ambassador for the pipe organ, traveling the country throughout his career and playing concerts, building organs for churches and designing custom organs for himself. For the past 22 years, he has organized an annual "England and Scotland Organ Tour," taking organists and nonorganists alike to hear and play instruments throughout the United Kingdom.

"I like to show people that the organ can be very enjoyable and do things other than hymns at these shows," Peart said. "For example, one of the pieces is a Scott Joplin rag called 'The Strenuous Life.' Except I don't think it's a strenuous piece at all, so I've renamed it 'The Joyful Life.'"

Gretchen Barron, one of Central Christian Church's pastors, said the church was overjoyed to have Peart back for one more New Year's Eve show.

"Leslie brought a great richness to our worship and advocated for many world-class musicians to play here in our concert series," Barron said. "We were all thrilled to hear he would be able to come back and perform again."

Peart doesn't intend to quit anytime soon. His fingers may not be quite as limber as they were 50 years ago, but he believes half a century of experience likely counts for something.

"I've got no plans to stop," Peart said. "I'm still playing an awful lot of great music."

Plenty of other events are happening around Decatur on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Here's a sampling:

LOCK STOCK & BARREL: The bar and grill is selling a limited number of tickets for a large New Year's Eve party featuring the L-Win Motel band. Tickets are \$65 per individual and \$120 per couple and include open bar and drinks, appetizers, party favors and the obligatory champagne toast at midnight. The party will be from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. and will feature an early breakfast buffet at its culmination.

DECATUR CLUB: The annual New Year's Eve party theme is "Atlantic City," and the club will feature three floors of entertainment, including a casino and disc jockey, from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Diversity will perform, a champagne toast will be held, and a breakfast buffet will be offered. A shuttle service will also be offered to take partygoers home. Tickets are being sold for \$60, or \$100 for a couple.

DONNIE'S HOMESPUN PIZZA: The combination pizza restaurant, bar and music venue will feature two acts in a free New Year's Eve party. The seven-piece England Chambers Band, featuring Donnie's owner Neill Dresen, and Chris Bradley will perform, beginning at 10:30 p.m. No cover will be charged.

FAIRGROUND: Special New Year's Eve bingo will be held from 11 p.m. onward. Special games include six \$500 games, five \$300 games and three \$200 games. All

proceeds go to support the Decatur-Macon County Fair.

DECATUR CIVIC CENTER: The civic center will be hosting a special New Year's Eve ice skating party from 7:30 p.m. until shortly after midnight. Admission is \$8.50, and party favors will be distributed.

AIW HALL: The New Year's Eve party will feature Escaping Neverland and a champagne toast, and runs from 8 p.m. until 2 a.m. There will be no cover for this party.

SLIDERZ: The Riverbottom Nightmare Band will headline the New Year's Eve party, which will last from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. A \$5 cover will be charged, and a champagne toast will be held. Shuttle rides home will also be offered for \$5.

TIMBUKTU: Jury's Out will perform at the New Year's Eve party, which will likewise offer a champagne toast and party favors. There is a \$5 cover.

CURLY'S: The bar will be hosting "Karaoke Into the New Year" with its regular karaoke provider, Docta L.D. Party favors and champagne toast will also be distributed at this free event from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Did we miss your New Year's Eve event? Let us know at the e-mail address below.

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GAMERS

Continued from D1

events can be found at www.decaturgamers.com.

"The idea is to just get a taste of all the game mechanics for each game and decide what you like best," Jones said. "I wanted to do it in order to continue trying new things. There's so much variation and game types that I haven't tried before."

"Gamma World," the first game attempted in the RPG buffet format, is a colorful, fantasy infused, post-apocalyptic adventure pitting players against the elements in a 25th-century version of Earth decimated by nuclear war a century before. When creating or "rolling" characters, players consult "mutation tables" that can give player characters fantastic abilities such as electrical generation, multiple limbs or weather manipulation.

"It's pretty gonzo, actually, pretty out there," Jones said. "A little too much for me, probably, but that's the fun of it. You get to try it out and see if it suits you. And it's an easy game for beginners to pick up."

The next RPG buffet is the superhero-themed "Champi-



Herald & Review/Stephen Haas

The roleplaying game 'Gamma World' dates from 1978.

ons," which has little if anything in common with "Gamma World." Currently planned for Monday, it is open to anyone who ever wanted to create his own superhero. Jones assures newcomers that tabletop roleplaying games aren't nearly as arcane as they may seem. Most skills can be picked up simply by watching. The most important trait for a beginner is the enthusiasm to participate in a story.

"You don't have to understand all of the mechanics to play, you just have to know what you want your character to do and be able to vocalize it," Jones said. "That's why

it's called roleplaying. There's no expectation on our part that anybody comes here for the first time with any prior experience."

As for the geeky label sometimes applied to tabletop gamers, Jones invites newcomers to come see that people from all backgrounds are capable of enjoying a little roleplaying.

"You may wonder what kind of weirdos you're getting involved with," Jones said. "Honestly, we're just a bunch of well-adjusted adults with normal jobs and families who care about having fun."

jvorel@herald-review.com | 421-7973

CAIN

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Soderberg and his crew wanted in that movie were exactly where they wanted those sounds to be.

So in action films that feature explosions and crashes, the sounds are crafted carefully and intentionally.

(Recent discussions at the Herald & Review office have included talks about how our ear has been trained by sound artists in entertainment. Fire doesn't really sound like cellophane being crumpled, for example, but our ears expect to hear those sounds on screen after years of indoctrination.)

Sometimes, it's the mix of all of those sound elements that confounds our ears.

In addition, the conversion

to digital sound has been a detriment in some ways. There's little use in complaining about it, and the switch has certainly improved the looks and sounds of films.

But the exacting nature of digitalization has caused us to see and hear things we didn't used to see and hear. Just as digital music has changed the way our ears receive information — in many cases, digital music is mastered too loud, and the nature of delivery has removed the "warmth" of sound analog sources produced — digitized movies sometimes mean we see and hear things TOO perfectly.

We simply aren't accustomed to hearing sound the way it's sometimes presented in film these days.

Unfortunately, there's no easy answer for people like my colleague. A large part of

the enjoyment of a film for many is seeing it in a group of people. Theaters aren't about to adjust their sound levels for the older ear, nor should they. Again, movies sound the way they do for a reason.

So it's of dubious comfort to remind my colleague that he has the option of subtitles once films hit home video. (That's an option one imagines many use without admitting it to others.)

And it's of even more dubious comfort to point out that there are entire generations younger than us for whom the sound issue will never be a problem. They've always heard digital sound, so they will age without realizing the difference.

Of course, many of them will be losing their hearing due to excessively loud iPod use.

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