

String Cheese Incident 7/19/98 People's Bar & Grill, Ames Iowa

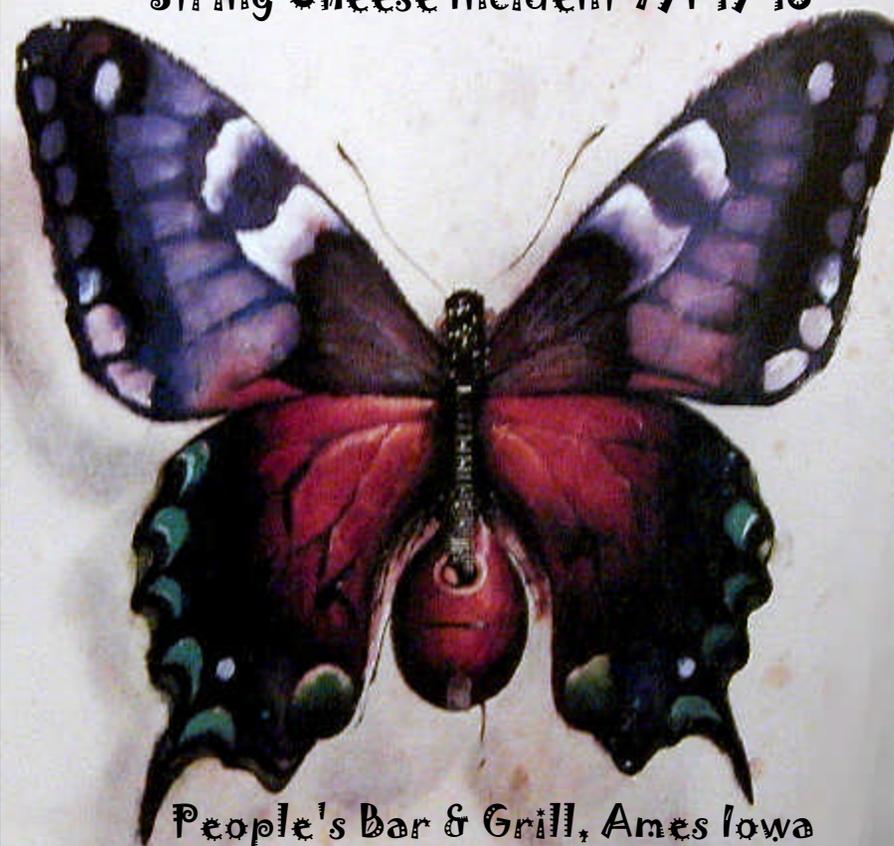
At a RV dealer you can buy a map of the United States where the states are outlined but are otherwise blank. As you travel, you get to paste in the states you visit. I don't know if String Cheese Incident has one of these maps in their bus, but if they do, last Sunday night they got to paste in Iowa.

String Cheese's first Iowa gig was at People's Bar and Grill in Ames. Ames is a college town of about 50,000 people, down to half of that number during the summer when Iowa State University is out. This, plus the bar's layout, lead to an intimate show. Iowa is also a beautiful state, with rolling green terrain, populated with warm, friendly people. Sunday night more wonderful people were in the state, including fellow Incidentalist, Dana from Oklahoma. It was great to meet him and was typical of the people I have met from this list - I just want to sit down and drink a pot of coffee with them while I hear their story.

People's is a rectangular bar with the stage on one long wall and the bar opposing it. That leaves no room for the soundboard, so it ends up essentially in the middle of the dance floor. It couldn't have been more than twenty feet from the stage. During the night, Billy would give exaggerated baby waves to John O, sitting right in front of him, to which John O would give baby waves back. Right then I realized one of the bonds between John O and the band: he's as goofy as they are. People's is a compact bar, emphasized by the small crowd. I estimated at the height of the attendance there were 175 people in the bar. My friend Hans, who got all of SCI's autographs this night, counted 90 to 100 people towards the end of the evening. Keith and Travis both sat on the stage during the set break and talked to fans. You could play pool fifty feet away from the stage and dance if you wanted to. To those people in the discussion a few weeks ago who were worried about SCI getting big, let me just invite you to midwestern gigs. The scene is still small here.

My favorite moment of the evening wasn't a musical one. After Come As You Are, Billy wanted a beer. He had one on stage but it was still capped and it wasn't a twist off. He picked up one of Travis' drum sticks, and using the fat end, started to pry the cap off. His guitar was in the way, so he swung it behind his back. With the beer in his right hand and the drum stick in his left, he popped off the cap. Nice trick. He threw down the drum stick, and with the beer still in his right hand, he reached around with his left, across his body and behind himself, for his guitar's neck. In the process, his body twisted and the guitar remained elusively out of reach. He tried again and once more the guitar swung away. Smiling, Billy realized he was in a silly situation and went for it, mugging to the rest of the band. He reached for his guitar's neck again and again with his left hand, his body twisting in a clockwise direction each time, the guitar moving away from his grasp. He twisted his torso as much as his guitar cord would let him, playfully trying to grab his guitar. It probably lasted only for about fifteen seconds, but for that moment, SCI had a terrier on stage chasing his tail.

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Set 1:

100 Year Flood
Rhum 'n' Zouc
The Old Home Place
Handsome Molly
MLT
She Don't Say
Black Clouds

Set 2:

Drums->
Come As You Are
That's What Love Will Make You Do
Stingray
Wake Up
Nardis->
Smile->
Jam->
I Know You Rider

Encore:

The Chicken
Jam
San Jose

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