

Hip Pocket readies for D.C. show

by Sharon K. Woulfe
Pantagraph staff

Sometimes life imitates art, and sometimes life imitates "Spinal Tap."

In the case of Hip Pocket, a local rhythm and blues band, they seem to be living a milder version of "This is Spinal Tap," a farce about an aging British metal band that lost 14 drummers to various fates - including spontaneous combustion and a mysterious graveside explosion.

This is the second time Hip Pocket has been invited to play at a presidential inaugural ball. And, both times, drummers' mishaps have caused problems for the band.

On Tuesday, drummer Gary Erwin was injured in a fall while trying to clean snow and ice from a roof. Erwin hurt his shoulder and knee, said Marc Boon, leader of the band.

"He always wears penny loafers," said Jim Kozak, tenor sax, and the running joke is Erwin fell off because he was wearing loafers on the snowy roof.

Repeat performance

Four years ago when the band played in the nation's capital, drummer Jeff Shoemaker had acute gastrointestinal distress and managed to make it through one performance at the Bloomington Radisson.

Boon did a little checking and found another band members had been on a roof four or five times to clean off snow. Boon warned the band members to stay off roofs, "stay away from sharp pointy things" and "threatened to lock them in the bathroom for two weeks."

If Erwin is still not able to play next Friday with Hip Pocket at the Madison Theatre in Peoria for a fund-raising concert to help with travel expenses, Shoemaker can fill in.

"It's nice to have 'Shoey' back, like an old friend, like an old shoe," Kozak said.

But going to play for the Illinois Inaugural Gala in the nation's capital won't be possible for Shoemaker, who will be attending the convention of the National Association of Music Manufacturers in Anaheim, California.