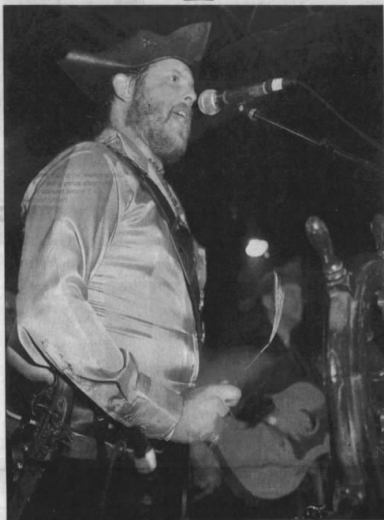


The pirate's tale



Wherein an *Alaskan lad* lands in *Tallahassee* and, among many other adventures, comes to lead a band of *musical brigands*

By Mark Hinson
DEMOCRAT SENIOR WRITER

It's nearly midnight on a Friday as a restless, well-lubricated crowd at the Beta Bar on Railroad Avenue teeters on the verge of mutiny.

The mood brightens when a heavily bearded Damon Victor takes the stage a few minutes after midnight.

Victor is a Tallahassee musician who performs as a rowdy rogue and scalawag known as the Alaskan Pirate. In real life he's a devout vegan, devoted husband of 10 years, cancer survivor and reformed skinhead who sports not a single tattoo. Not even a skull and crossbones. But more about the burly buccaneer's long list of contradictions later, there's a siege to stage.

For the midnight bash, Victor wears leggings, a sword, a Long John Silver-style tricorn hat and a puffy gold pirate shirt. He hoists a mug of beer as his band, His Salty Seamen, tunes up. The amplifiers squeal briefly with feedback.

"That's 40 lashes to the (expletive) responsible," Victor growls into the microphone.

The high-pitch squeal returns. "Now it's up to 60 lashes," he screams. The crowd members, some of whom sport eye-patches and bandanas, whoop approval.

And so, with promises of corporal punishment and with a wild look in his eye, Victor dedicates a song to "the mermaids of the night" and rips the cork off a new tune from his second CD, "Villainy Rewarded."

The crowd launches into a pirate dance that's a combination of a Highland jig, the pogo and a square dance held on the rolling deck of a boat lost on the high seas.

Mutiny avoided.

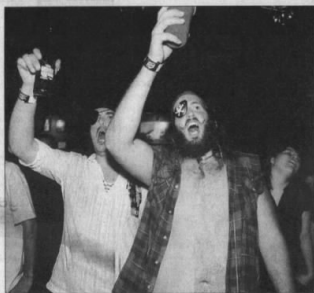
"They have a commitment to what they're doing," Tallahassee painter and recording artist Jason Emmett says as he watches the Alaskan Pirate bang a drum and sing "All For Me Grog."

"There's no irony. Which is refreshing and hard to find these days."

"I like all the different instruments," said Benjamin Thompson, a long-distance trucker who came to a pirate show dressed in

Alaskan Pirate Damon Victor, above, belts out a chantey with His Salty Seamen at the Beta Bar in September.

At right, Shawn Youngblood and Lufe Meisenheimer get into the spirit of the show.



PIRATES, LIVE!

- Hear the Alaskan Pirate and His Salty Seamen perform during the "Pirates of the Intermission" party at 9:30 p.m. Friday in the courtyard of the Florida State Student Life Cinema, 113 S. Wildwood Drive. It's free. "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" will be shown at 7 and midnight. Movie tickets are \$4 general public and free for FSU students.
- The Alaskan Pirate and His Salty Seamen will play a "Crooked River Pirates" show from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at the Crooked River Lighthouse off Highway 98 just past Carrabelle. It's free.

ON THE WEB

- Hear selections from recordings by the Alaskan Pirate at www.tallahassee.com. Also visit www.alaskanpirate.com



A band member wears appropriate attire, right down to his toes.

Please see PIRATE, 2D