

The comic in the wheelchair

By Steven Mazey

Citizen staff writer

It takes a minute for Alan Shain to be lifted onto the stage.

But when the 24-year-old with cerebral palsy settles into his chair and the microphone is lowered to his face, he seems instantly at ease.

He looks at the expectant crowd at Yuk Yuk's, the comedy club in the basement of the Beacon Arms Hotel on Albert Street.

He smiles, and begins to speak, carefully.

"I'm not wasted," he says slowly, his mouth stretching to enunciate the words. "I always talk like this."

The crowd roars.

"I am now going to juggle for you."

Shain tosses a few socks wildly into the air and watches with feigned sadness as they fall instantly to the floor.

"You people just make me nervous."

More big laughs, the kind of laughs comedians hear in their dreams.

As he tells his jokes, there are occasional pauses as Shain has difficulty getting a word out, but the crowd is with him, and he has the timing of a

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—Bruno Schlumberger, Citizen

Alan Shain at work: It's all in the timing