

Local comedians to perform in benefit show

The annual Laff-Off provides a chance for would-be comedians to compete for prizes

By Amy Jennaro
Oregon Daily Emerald

April Fool's Day is generally a time when people vie to get the greatest laugh. This distinction is exactly what 20 local comedians are competing for when they participate in the Fourth Annual Laff-Off on April 1 at the Actor's Cabaret.

The event is put on by Comedy Workout, a group of stand-up performers, to support the Greenhill Humane Society.

"We wanted the opportunity to benefit the community," said Leigh Anne Jasheway, Comedy Workout director.

Jasheway said the event started in 1994 as a one-time-only production to benefit the Lane County Food Service. But based on the positive response it received, the event became annual. For the past three years, the production has benefited the Greenhill Humane Society's violence prevention program, which provides support to abused women, children and animals in domestic violence situations.

"The Greenhill Humane Society has done some ground-breaking work," Jasheway said.

The event will give would-be comedians the chance to prove their mettle in front of a panel of judges. Anyone interested in competing for the title can participate. This year the panel of judges includes screenwriter and photographer Tom Overley, 1997 Laff-Off Winner Hannah Bradford, The Comic News publisher Don Kahle, cartoonist Jan Eliot and 1993 Slug Queen Bananita Sluginsky Sarah Ulerick. The event will be emceed by last year's Laff-Off winner, Nick Hoffman. The contestants will be judged on their involvement with the audience, the originality of their content and their emotion and delivery.

But Overley said he is looking for more than just the basics when he judges the competition.

"The intangibles like audience connection with the performer will be the difference between almost being a success and being a success," he said.

Most contestants are products of Jasheway's comedy class at Lane Community College, where they learn the basics about writing monologues and performing before an audience.

Gary Clark, who took Jasheway's course, decided to perform in the competition on a whim.

"It's a fun thing to do," he said. "Hopefully

I'll discover a hidden talent."

Jasheway said she hopes to the event will raise \$900. The production has been sold out in past years, and Jasheway said there are indications that this year's show will be standing-room only.

Jasheway said some changes have been made in the structure of the competition this year. In past years, the winner was offered a chance to perform in Portland coffee shops. But Jasheway said the number of contestants who have already performed in those venues led her group to make some changes in the event's structure.

This year the contestants will receive gift certificates from local sponsors, such as the Actor's Cabaret, Brushfire, The Comic News, Oasis and West Brothers. The winner will receive a \$100 gift certificate.

Kahle said he hopes the event will uncover some fresh talent.

"I decided to judge because I wanted to support the local comics," he said.

But Clark said winning the event wouldn't cause him to make drastic changes in his life.

"I won't quit my day job," he said.

The event happens 7-10 p.m. Tickets are \$10. Those interested can buy their tickets at the box office of the Actor's Cabaret located at 996 Willamette St. or by calling 683-4368.

News Briefs

Street repairs will limit traffic, parking

Weather permitting, street repairs begin today on a two-block section of East 19th Avenue. The project, which will span between Alder and Harris streets, is expected to take about three weeks. At least one lane will be kept open at all times, but some parking will be temporarily unavailable.

The city of Eugene also plans to install a temporary traffic signal at the intersection of Garden Way and Centennial Boulevard.

For information, call the city traffic relief hotline at 984-8484.

New clock part of Esslinger remodel

A new 8-foot clock will now illuminate the east facade of Esslinger. The clock stands 65 feet above the ground and was installed March 24. It is part of the \$20 million remodeling project for the new student recreation center and costs \$7,300. The project is paid for by student-generated fees.

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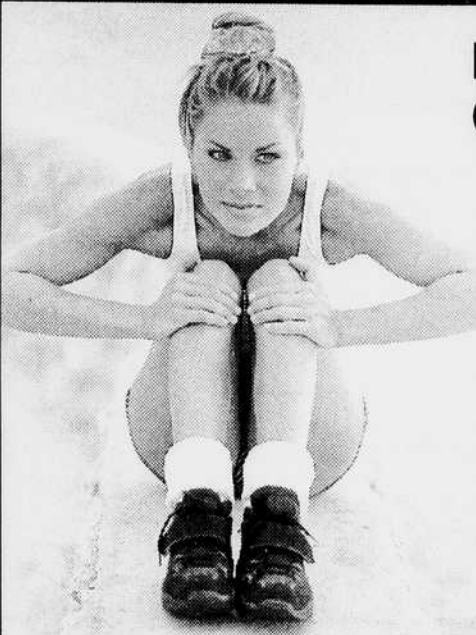
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