

Local comedians will take a stand

■ Twenty stand-up comics are scheduled to perform in Eugene's fifth annual Laff-Off this weekend

By Rory Carroll
Oregon Daily Emerald

Everyone's a comedian — in their dreams.

That's Comedy Workout director Leigh Anne Jasheway's principle behind Laff-Off 2000, the amateur stand-up comic competition slated for Saturday at the Actor's Cabaret in Eugene.

"Many people harbor this dream of doing stand-up," Jasheway said. "I think people see it as, 'If I can do this, I can do anything.' It's very empowering."

For the fifth consecutive year, 20 comics will be chasing their dream of bringing home first prize. All proceeds will benefit Greenhill Humane Society's Domestic Violence Prevention Program.

Twenty comics will vie for the title of "Eugene's Funniest Person." Each comic has five minutes to impress a panel of celebrity judges, which includes such local stars as Comic News publisher Don Kahle, Slug Queen Carmen Slugana, Register-Guard columnist Bob Welch and Stone Soup cartoonist Jan Eliot.

The competitors are aware that the Laff-Off is serious competition.

"The Laff-Off is different because of the time limit," said 1999 champion Jason Kronholm. "Because each comic only has five minutes, everyone has to use their best stuff."

The victor owns bragging rights, a plastic crown and emcees the following year's event. Kronholm will emcee Saturday night.

Variety is a strength of the Laff-Off. Comics ranging in age from 16 to 65 will attempt everything from music to puppet shows to gain the favor of the judges.

"Nowhere else can you see 20 comics at a time," Jasheway says. "The beauty of that is that if there are three you just can't stand, you're bound to find seven who you think are fabulous."

The Laugh-Off originated when professional comic Mike Jenkins did a comedy benefit for a food bank in Portland. He wanted Laff-Offs across Oregon so the winners could compete for the title of "Funniest Person in Oregon." To Jasheway's delight, Eugene's first Laff-Off sold out — as it has every year since. Other Oregon cities, however, were not as taken by the Laff-Off as Eugene was, and a state Laff-Off competition flopped. Jasheway decided to continue the Laff-Off in Eugene independently.

Jasheway attributes the success of the annual Laff-Off to Eugene's diversity and oddness.

"Unfortunately Eugene is not ethnically diverse, but we're diverse in other ways," Jasheway says. "I think Eugene is the type of place where people live for a while and then move on, so we have a lot of geographic diversity. One of our comics is from New Jersey, and he sounds like a member of the mafia," Jasheway added jokingly.

Jasheway follows Jenkins' example by continuing to donate Laff-Off proceeds to charity. The Greenhill Humane Society's Domestic Violence Prevention Program is an organization that provides a home for pets when

domestic violence breaks up a relationship. According to Jasheway, women will stay in a relationship out of fear of what will happen to the animal if it is left behind. Greenhill allows her to make her decision — stay or go — without having to worry about what to do with the pet, Jasheway said.

"I chose Greenhill because they are one of the best humane societies in the country, and at the same time they benefit people," Jasheway said. Greenhill has been their charity ever since.

Sally Sheklow, a member of local improv comedy troupe WYMPROV!, is one of this year's celebrity judges. She sees the benefit as a positive aspect of the Laff-Off.

"Because it's a benefit, there is a spirit of, 'We're all here because we believe in something,'" she said. "It creates an automatic camaraderie within the audience."

Jasheway believes the Laff-Off will continue to be a success because of the support of both participants and audiences. Many competitors who have never placed in first return with hopes of taking the crown, she said.

"People keep coming back until they win," Jasheway said, adding that the Laff-Off will continue to elicit aspiring comics.

"How many people would even entertain the idea of, say, taxidermy as a hobby? But a lot of people want to try comedy," Jasheway said. "Also, it allows the people in the audience to think, 'I'm funny too,' and look at how many funny people there are and how different they are."

Tickets are \$12.50, and reservations are recommended. Call 693-4368 for reservations.

WOW HALL

Community Center for the Performing Arts 8th & Lincoln


■ Tonight ■
Prince Paul,
The Visionaries featuring DJ Rhettmatic, Boom Bap Project
Hip-Hop
\$13 advance, \$15 door, 9:00 pm

■ Friday ■
Groove Juice Special,
The McKenzie Project
Funk
\$7 door, 9:00 pm

■ Saturday ■
April Fool's Ball with The Sugar Beets,
Nectar Way
Bluegrass/Rock
\$7 door, 9:00 pm

■ Tuesday ■
The Melvin's
'2x4' Tour - Two Sets x Four Guys' with special guest Leif Garrett
Heavy Rock
\$8 advance, \$10 door, 8:00 pm

All Ages Welcome • 687-2746



Late Night at Lyon's is back!

Yes, we're now open 24 hours.

Thursdays are U of O Student appreciation day.
Show us your U of O student ID and receive a 10% discount.

Come play pool and electronic darts in our Sports Pub or watch sports action on our big screen or one of our 5 other televisions.


The way we do it here.

Buy One Sandwich or Hamburger, Get One* For

\$1.99

*Of equal or lesser value CTC2. Offer expires 4/31/00

Served After 11 a.m.
Not valid with other offers or discounts. One coupon per person per visit. Dine in only.





Buy One Get One* For

99¢ BREAKFAST

*Of equal or lesser value CTC15. Offer expires 4/31/00

12 a.m. - 6 a.m. Every day
Not valid on Pyramid Breakfast or Weekend Brunch Specials. Not valid with other offers or discounts. One coupon per person per visit. Dine in only.





74.7 NBS

OASIS


PLUS SPECIAL GUEST TRAVIS

APRIL 6, 8PM


ARLENE SCHNITZER CONCERT HALL

RESERVED SEATING

All tickets subject to service charge and/or user fee



doubletee.com



at selected Fred Meyer stores statewide

CHARGE-A-TICKET

224-TIXX

INFORMATION

going overseas? catch the oregon daily emerald
on the world wide web: www.dailyemerald.com