

FALL 1986

ComedyTM USA

GARRY SHANDLING:
Why is this Man Smiling?

**A Conversation with
CAROL LEIFER**

**FATHER GUIDO
SARDUCCI on the
Campaign Trail**

**Comics &
Commercials**

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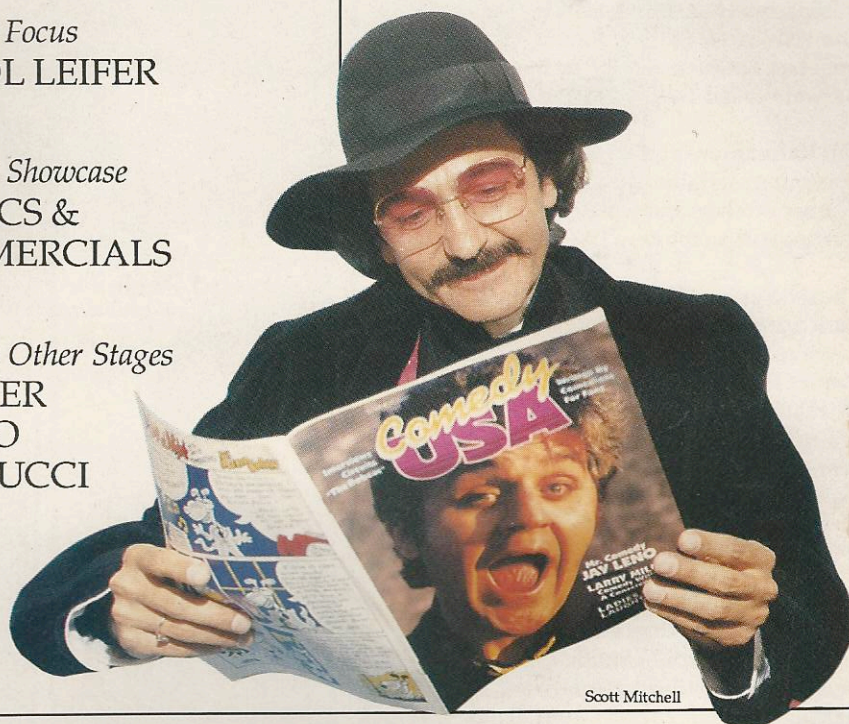
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Scott Mitchell

What people say about COMEDY USA...

...I recently picked up a copy of COMEDY USA I enjoyed the articles and was impressed with the quality of the entire publication. I feel this format is long overdue!...**Santa Monica, CA**

...I find it intriguing to read about comedy from the perspective of comedians. As comedy becomes recognized as a distinctive form of expression, your publication will provide the observations helpful to appreciating this form more fully....**Manhattan, NY**

...It's a fantastic magazine!...**Wheaton, IL**

...The response has been great! It's a super magazine and a great way to create interest in the comedy industry.... **Club Owner, Montgomery, AL**

...We have many repeat customers who are really into the comedy scene and who are really keeping up with what is happening with their favorites, by reading COMEDY USA.... **Club Owner, St. Louis, MO**

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FOXY BOXING
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HOLLYWOOD HOTEL starring
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WEST

LOS ANGELES

Pat Paulson, the Emmy-winning writer/performer on the old *Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* named himself Mayor of Asti, a town with "more pets than people" near Santa Rosa. It helps that the Paulson family owns Asti, plus of course, Pat Paulson Vineyards. Paulson swore himself in and vows to run for President in 1988 as he did in '68 and '72.

Comic Jason Stuart best known for his comedy traffic school just completed the TV movie *Can You Feel Me Dancing*. Stuart has also optioned a pilot co-written by Beverly Berwald called *Traffic School*.

Bill Kalmenson is busy. He will appear in the upcoming Mel Gibson film *Lethal Weapon* for Warner Brothers and will also do a guest starring role on the new T.V. series *L.A. Law*.

The sixth annual Comedy Day in Golden Gate Park drew 40,000 people, police estimate. The gala event from noon to six featured seventy comics with a special performance by Robin Williams. Jose Simons, Comedy Day producer, is already looking for a more spacious location for next year.

DENVER

Louis Johnson Jr., a winner of *The Funniest Person In America* contest recently filmed a *Showtime* special due to air in October. Matt Berry will be on the road for several months starting off in New York. Michael Floorwax is finishing up a six week tour of the Funny Bones. Steve McGrew will be in Houston at A Good Humor Bar and then Seekers in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Not all of Denver's finest are on the road. There will be a few taking it easy around town. Vince Curran, John Paul, Reid Harrison, Todd Jordan, and Dave Sipos at the Comedy Works. Jeff Harms, Matt Woods, Luanne Buckstein, and Edith Weis are at George McKelvey's Comedy Club.

The International WHIM Humor Conference will be held April 1 to April 5 at Arizona State University. For information write to Don L.F. Nilson, WHIM, English Department, ASU, Tempe, AZ 85287



Mack and Zack

These two St. Louis natives weigh in at over 250 lbs of laughter each.

SAN FRANCISCO

Michael Pritchard (who appeared in *The Right Stuff*) landed a role which benefits his 6' 6", 235-pound frame: the star of a national TV commercial for Idaho potatoes.

Mike Wally Walter is a comic from the Pacific Northwest who recently ventured down the coast to test the waters of the hot California circuit.

The 11th San Francisco International Stand-Up Comedy Competition was a tremendous success. Finalists represented many areas outside the host city. Jake Johannsen collected the \$20,000 first prize. Eddie Strange was second, followed by Rich Ceisler, Milt Abel, Dana Gould.

MID AMERICA

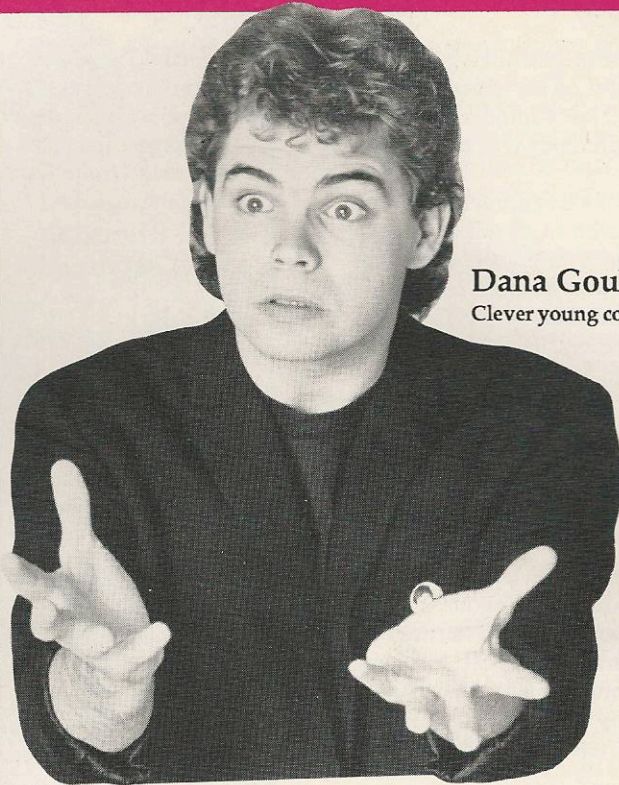
Comedian Sharon Sparks is writing a weekly humor column for a local Nashville paper in addition to keeping up her full road schedule. Bob Morton, segment producer for the Letterman show auditioned over 30 comics in Chicago recently. Those heading to New York for a second look are Larry Reeb, Danny Storts, Jim Higgins and Mark Roberts. Jeff Garlin, sometimes known as the "Grand Poobah" of comedy recently took the stage at Zannies in Chicago clad only in high top sneakers and a bathrobe to host what he called his slumber party. The audience was invited to join in a game of truth or dare. Chicago comic and filmmaker Greg Glienna recently completed two short films called *The Exterminator: Parts 1 & 2*. The films feature comics Jane Voights and Vince Moranto, and the death of a mime.

In the last two years some 300 comics have appeared on cable TV's *Nightshift with Kevin Ferguson*. The showcase features two comics a week and is broadcast live from Snickerz in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, every Sunday night.

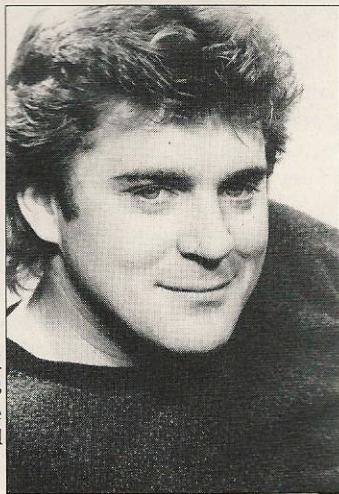
EAST

BOSTON

At a sold out show at Nick's Comedy Stop, **Paul Provenza** reminisced about his early days, admitting that one night he actually slept in the lobby of a club....Comedy USA congratulates **Bob Goldthwait**, who was married August 31 in San Francisco. Bob co-stars with **Whoopi Goldberg** in the film, *Burglars*. The Comedy Cruise along Boston harbor was a big hit this summer drawing thousands of people each night. **Chance Langton**, **Tommy V**, **Mike Moto**, **D.J. Hazzard** and **Fran Solomita** were headlining the floating show....**Sean Morey** returned after six years to the Comedy Connection, a club he helped found. Stitches features **Barry Crimmins**, **Steve Sweeney** and **Kevin Meaney**. **Rich Ceisler** and **Dana Gould** went west for the San Francisco Comedy Competition.



Dana Gould
Clever young comic



Jack Simmons
Entering the recording world

NEW YORK

Jack Simmons released his first album entitled *I Want A Wife Like Alice Cramden*....**Scott LaRose** is currently appearing in a Levis 501 commercial....**Joe Bolster** spent the summer touring with *Sha Na Na***Gilbert Gottfried** is now seen regularly on *MTV* ...**Bill Hicks**, from Houston by way of Virginia was in town to do the Letterman show and stayed long enough to appear at *Rascals* in New Jersey. **J.J. Ramirez** has been on the road most recently at Niagara Falls. **Robert Ross** is warming up audiences for *Kate and Allie* . **Mario Joyner** does the same for the *Cosby Show* ...**Barry Sobel** is co-starring in the new *Ellen Burstion Show* on ABC.

Comedy USA

SOUTH EAST

The original Punch Line, in Atlanta, held its annual Southeastern comedy competition in August. **Pat Miller** is on location in Charlotte, North Carolina for the filming of *Born to Race* under the direction of **Jim Fargo** (*Every Which Way But Loose*). Miller also appears in **Steven King's** *Maximum Overdrive*.

Jordon Brady was the emcee at the Mobile Punchline, when he was spotted by *BBC* personality, **Wendy Leavesley**, the host of *Fax* (the British answer to *That's Incredible*). She brought a tape of Brady back home and a lot of people were impressed. Now Brady has a standing invitation to play the English club circuit as well as appear on the Isle's top "chat" show. Brady may pay a call to England very soon, or become the U.S. correspondent for *Fax*.

Eddie Murphy Productions has cast **Tommy Blaze** for a part in a cable special in December. Blaze was a finalist in *Showtime's Funniest Person in America* last year.

Bill Hicks
Late Night regular touring the country



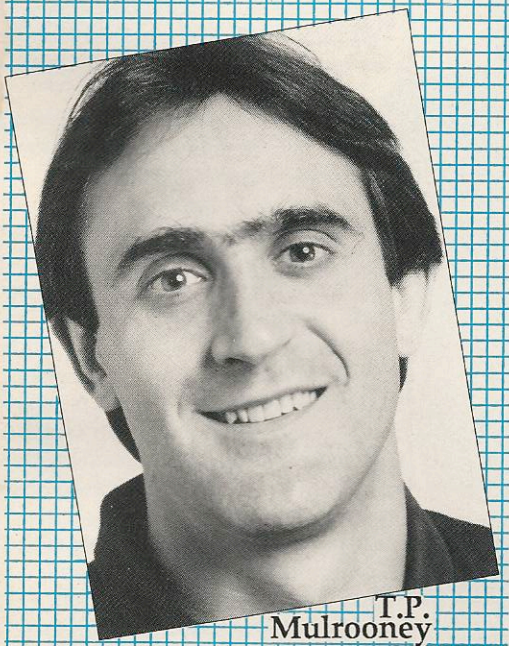
Circuits CLUB NEWS

The **Richmond Comedy Club** is getting set for its anniversary show on November 4. Expect the best; there are a lot of rumors going around and a lot of stars who started at the club...

The **Other Cafe** comedy club celebrated its 10th anniversary with an all-star cast at the prestigious **Davies Symphony Hall**. A sold-out house of 3,000 paid as much as \$50 each to see **Robin Williams, Elayne Boosler, Bobcat Goldthwait** and others. The Other Cafe also played host to a charity roast of talk-show personality **Larry King** to benefit the **San Francisco Children's Hospital**. Appearing were **Kevin Pollack, Bob Sarlatte, Bobby Slayton** and **Giants' baseball announcer Hank Greenwald**.

Fubar's and **Tommy T's** in **Concord, California**, held benefits for **Kimberly Chittock** and family. The 13-year-old girl was struck by a car in February and has remained in a coma ever since. Performers included **Dr. Gonzo, Bob Rubin, Tree, Jonny Steele, Ed Hart, Tom Kenny, Carrie Snow, Al Clethen, Jr.** and **Jim Samuels**.

Another 10th anniversary, this one at the **Comedy Womb**, **Lyons, Illinois**. Founded by comics **Tim Holum** and **Ed Fiala**, the late August reunion featured **Emo Philips, Judy Tenuta, Ted & Ed**, and co-hosts **Larry Reeb** and **Paul Kelly**. The event was co-sponsored by **Miller Beer** to benefit the **American Cancer Society**.

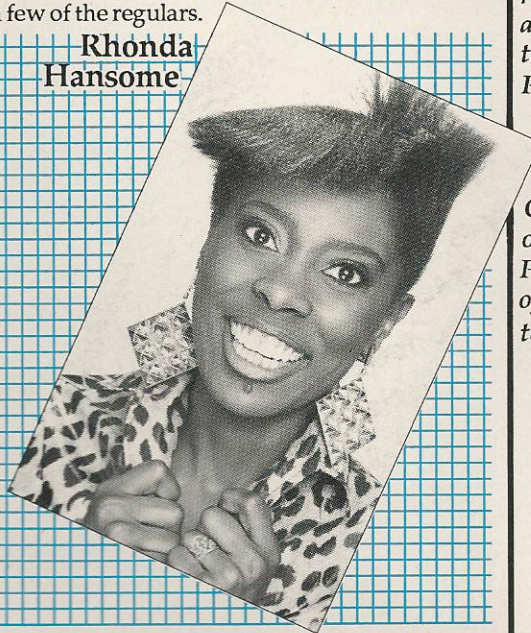


T.P. Mulrooney

Willie's Comedy Club of **Dayton, Ohio** recently celebrated its fourth anniversary by bringing back opening night headliner **T.P. Mulrooney**.

Dangerfield's continues to attract people from all over the country. The famed **Manhattan nightclub** is a must see on the list of top **New York tourist attractions**. **Rhonda Hansome, Scott Bruce, Hiram Kasten** and **Danny Curtis** are a few of the regulars.

Rhonda Hansome



The **Main Street Comedy Club** of **Ann Arbor, Michigan**, recently co-hosted the **Frog Island Folk and Comedy Festival**. Comedy appearances at the outdoor festival were provided by **Dennis Wolfberg, Gary Kern, Eddie Strange** and **Kirkland Teeple**.

In our summer **Circuits**, **Comedy USA** reported **The Annex** was the only developmental room in **Texas**. **Danny Martinez** of **The Comedy Showcase** in **Houston** wrote to correct the error. **Martinez**, a comic himself, runs the **Showcase** with his wife and takes pride in the success of acts developed in the room.

The **Paper Moon** in **New York** offers a rare chance to see out-of-town acts from other cities right in the heart of the **Big Apple**. Comic **Eddie Brill** runs the club and is busy with his own career, appearing on **Star Search** this season.

The **Original Improv** in **New York** has broken new ground with its new late night television commercial. Owner **Silver Friedman** recognizes the potential for expanding the comedy audience from the ranks of those who have never been to a comedy club.

Golf tournaments marked the summer with the **First Annual Wise Guys Classic** in **Syracuse** and **The Comedy and Magic Club Charity Tournament** in **Hermosa Beach** with **Harry Anderson**.

In our summer issue, **Comedy USA** featured its first **Club of the Month** and asked our readers to write in and cast a ballot for their favorite club. Please continue to write as **Club of the Month** will return in the next issue. This month, **Comedy USA** thanks our entire club network. Please keep us informed of news important to your club.

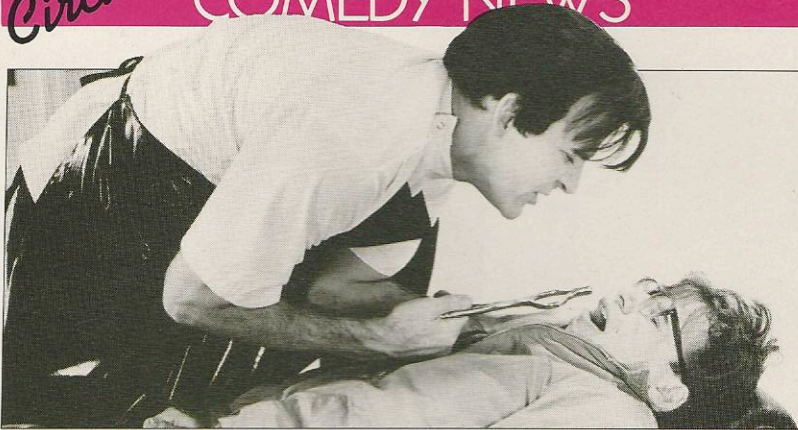
Albuquerque, New Mexico has a new club. **Laffs** opened its doors in September with **Kozak the Magician** and **Peter Petoffski**. Shows run nightly, **Wednesday** through **Sunday**.

There is a new club at the **Sands Casino** in **Atlantic City** bearing the name of a pretty popular comedian. **The Eddie Murphy Comedy Club** joins the **Comedy Stop at the Trop** as bastions of laughter in the gambling mecca.



Emo Philips

Comedy USA



Steve Martin examines Rick Moranis

WHAT AN ACTOR: In *Aliens*, he played Burke, the despicable company man who would sell his mother for a tip on stock futures. Off screen, Paul Reiser is actually one of the nicest and funniest young comedians in the country today. Paul made his big screen debut as Modell in *Diner* in 1982. Later he appeared in *Beverly Hills Cop* as the guy with the locker next to Eddie Murphy's. Most of Paul's work in that film wound up on the cutting room floor. Those who did see it reported he had done an excellent job. Perhaps that helped him get a key role in this summer's sci-fi blockbuster opposite **Sigourney Weaver**. With the movie behind him, Paul is again working the clubs of Comedy USA. In his spare time, he mulls over the next move in a screen career that might soon make Paul Reiser a household name. In the meantime, catch him with Carson and Letterman et al, where the only killing he does is with the audience.

A.K.A. SUCCESSFUL: A few years ago Paul Rodriguez was the star of the ill-fated Norman Lear sitcom *A.K.A. Pablo*. Today, things are looking up again with the recent release of *The Whoopee Boys* and his first album which is doing quite well.

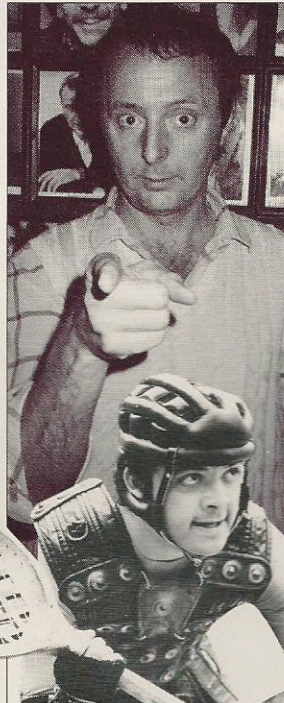
JUST TALKING SHOP: These are two of the hottest young comedians in the USA. Jerry Seinfeld, known for his appearances on the prestigious late night TV circuit and Dennis Miller, *Saturday Night Live* news anchor are both on their way to greater national notoriety. Miller will return for his second season behind the desk this fall with an expanded role in the cast. Seinfeld recently appeared on **Rodney Dangerfield's** second HBO special and followed that with a shot on the 25th anniversary of *The Tonight Show*. There is also a possible cable deal in the works. Needless to say, Comedy USA fans will have ample opportunity to see these comic stars in the comfort of their own home. Your home, not Dennis' or Jerry's.

Comedy USA

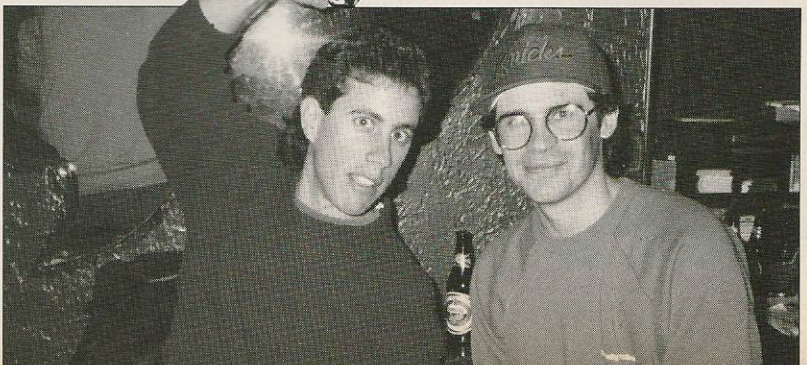
Seinfeld and Miller



Reiser Carrott



Rodriguez



LITTLE SHOP OF BIG STARS: Steve Martin and Rick Moranis star in the movie version of *Little Shop Of Horrors* which moved to Broadway this year after an extended run in the East Village. The movie is slated for November release from Warner Brothers.

ONE FUNNY FIREHOUSE: While filming *Roxanne*, with Steve Martin in Vancouver, Canada for Columbia Pictures, a group of stand-ups staged a fundraiser for the local townspeople. The comedians, all of whom are in the movie, drew straws to determine the line-up. What a show it was! Max Alexander was the jolly firefighter who led the stand-up charge with Damon Wayans, Steve Mittleman, Rich Shydrer, Kevin Nealon, Jeff Josephs, Maureen Murphy and Fred Willard all doing some time. The comics raised \$1,000 for muscular dystrophy and had a good time in the process.

THE BRITISH INVASION: When in England, comedian Jasper Carrott is a national celebrity. But when he works the USA comedy club circuit, he finds himself to be one funny man in a sea stocked with funny people. Carrott had a notion to bring some of his American comedy companions back home but feared the nuance of American stand-up would be lost on the British audience. So, with the help of producers John Starky and Les Ward, he decided to tape the creature in its natural habitat. Starky and Ward spent months scouring the showcases, making sure they saw as many comics as possible before selecting 23 comics for the series. During a two week period in April, *Comedy In The USA* was taped for the BBC at The Improv in LA and The Comic Strip in New York. The 23 comics appearing in the series were Mort Sahl who is slated to be the exclusive feature of one program, Kip Adotta, Bob Goldthwait, Marsha Worfield, Jay Leno, John Mendoza, Bill Kirchenbauer, Bobby Slayton, Kevin Pollack and Glenn Hirsch on the West Coast. Back East, Rita Rudner, Joe Bolster, Rondell Sheridan, Fred Stoller, Emo Philips, Dennis Wolfberg, Mike McDonald, Carol Leifer, Jerry Seinfeld and Gilbert Gottfried led the invasion of Britain.



In a relatively short time as a professional comedian, Garry Shandling has emerged as a major star in the comedy world. After years as a writer for many of the most popular sitcoms of the seventies, Shandling took to live performance and soon landed a job as guest host of the revered *Tonight Show*.

His stand-up reflects a neurotic personality consumed with dating, life and daily survival. His monologues flow like a well-written play, the punchlines hitting like a hammer when least expected.

Garry was the first of a cavalcade of comics to appear on the *Comic Relief* benefit for the homeless. He is currently appearing in his own series on *Showtime* entitled *The Garry Shandling Show* which received a rare A+ rating from *PEOPLE MAGAZINE*.

COMEDY USA spoke with Garry to explore his feelings on sudden success and where it will lead him.

GARRY SHANDLING:

Why is this Man Smiling?

Interview by BARRY WEINTRAUB

Edited by MARTIN PEDERSON

COMEDY USA: *You didn't start as a stand-up, you were a writer first?*

SHANDLING: That's right. The first show I wrote for was *Sanford and Son*. I did three *Sanford and Sons*, then I moved on and wrote for *Welcome Back Kotter*. I also wrote for a show called *The Practice* with Danny Thomas, which was really the best written show I worked on.

COMEDY USA: *What happened to that show?*

SHANDLING: It didn't do well in the ratings. But it was extremely well-written. It was created by Steve Gordon, who wrote the movie *Arthur* and it was as clever as *Arthur* was. I think I lasted two seasons. And then I went on to write some pilots, then worked on *The Harvey Korman Show*, which was the last show I worked on. That was in 1978, when I decided to stop writing television and do stand-up.

COMEDY USA: *Had you ever done it before?*

SHANDLING: I had gotten up and done stand-up on amateur nights at *The Comedy Store* (in Los Angeles) about a dozen times. I was never a natural performer. I was always nervous. I didn't have any stage technique whatsoever. I was just one of those guys who got up and said material. That's still what I am. I just liked to create an expression. I didn't really care if it was me getting the laughs, or Redd Foxx. I don't have an ego thing about it. Writing a situation comedy is the same thing as having to do stand-up on television. It's limiting. Worse than doing stand-up on television. Once you crank it out, you've gotta like writing formula. I just got tired of writing the formula.

COMEDY USA: *How did you break into television writing?*

SHANDLING: What happened is, I got lucky. I came to Los Angeles when that era of sitcoms were really starting up — like *All In The Family* and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. It was just exploding. And they were looking for

writers. There weren't that many young guys, and they were interested in looking for young guys. I was 24 when I started writing television. And I just wrote a spec script and got it to somebody and they liked it and I got a job. That was for *Sanford and Son*.

COMEDY USA: *Where are you from originally?*

SHANDLING: Tucson, Arizona. Sometimes on stage I say Tucson, Arizona and people laugh. They think I'm making a joke. Most people think I'm from New York, so if you say you're from Arizona, people would think you're making a joke.

COMEDY USA: *People think you're from New York?*

SHANDLING: A lot of people do...

COMEDY USA: *You smile too much to be from New York.*

SHANDLING: Yes, that's correct...I'm happier than most of the other comics I know from New York.

COMEDY USA: *You've done both Carson and Letterman. Are the audiences for those shows any different?*

SHANDLING: Sure. Everybody knows that certain stuff works better in different places...I don't think it comes from one being more sophisticated than the other, or one being more intelligent than the other. It's just a different consciousness.

COMEDY USA: *Now that Joan Rivers has left The Tonight Show to host her own show, has anyone contacted you about becoming the guest host?*

SHANDLING: I guest hosted for a week in June and another in July. I'd never done a whole week before. That was unknown to me.

COMEDY USA: *How much notice do you get to host the show?*



"I'd be too intimidated to call Johnny on the phone."

SHANDLING: Except for those two weeks, it's been brief every time. The first time I hosted the notice was the night before. The second time they called me the night before. And the third time they asked me to host they called me at noon and asked if I could do it that afternoon.

COMEDY USA: *Is it true Jim McCauley (the talent coordinator for The Tonight Show) once told you that you weren't right for the show?*

SHANDLING: Actually, my agent's first encounter with Jim McCauley was one where he said he wasn't sure I was right for *The Tonight Show*. I'd never met Jim McCauley and I didn't know that he'd ever seen me. When you work the clubs you never know who's sitting in the back and gonna look at you. He told my manager he wasn't sure I was right for the show but maybe he would come out and look at me again. So Jim came and I did more of a *Tonight Show* set. I used my television material and he loved it immediately and booked me two weeks later on the show. So I think that if somebody who books a television show comes in unannounced and watches somebody's act, he might not see what the person would do on television, or what the person is really capable of doing. He might walk into a club on a night where a person is working out. I go into clubs on certain nights and really don't do well, because I'm working on new material, or trying to do attitudes. I may not do any of my set material. So I think probably the first time Jim saw me I was knocking around on stage and when he saw me do my material we hit it off and he's been an enormous help.

COMEDY USA: *You didn't have too many appearances under your belt before hosting the first time.*

SHANDLING: No. I'd done *The Tonight Show* about eight or nine times.

COMEDY USA: *What kind of relationship do you have with Carson?*

SHANDLING: He's great to me. He appears in my *Showtime* special. I've never called him. I would never - I'd be too intimidated to call Johnny on the phone.

COMEDY USA: *He's really chairman of the board.*

SHANDLING: Yes, he is. That's a good description, in fact. But he's been great to me.

COMEDY USA: *Tell us about the Showtime project you're working on.*

SHANDLING: The *Showtime* project is great. I wrote the pilot with Alan Zweibel, who was one of the original *Saturday Night Live* writers. He was there five years. He and I wrote a script that was like the old *George Burns Show*. It's a situation comedy, but I talk to the camera. It's about my life and my friends. I break the fourth wall. I have a deal to do six shows. We started shooting in July. It's a series. They pick it up for six and then you see how the six go and then you see if you want to do more. But it's too creative a show for the networks to do. They're afraid of people talking into the camera right now.

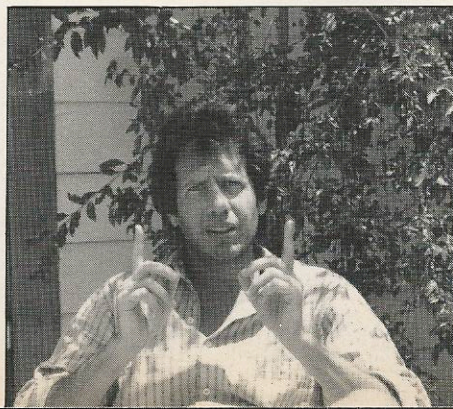
COMEDY USA: *Are there any other cast members?*

SHANDLING: Yes, there's my best friend who's married and has a kid, but kind of wishes he were single. And my platonic girlfriend who we discuss relationships together with. Plus my mother and my other best friend, Louis.

COMEDY USA: *Rumor has it that you're not even doing stand-up any more.*

SHANDLING: Actually, the *Showtime* series was all I was working on, but *The Tonight Show* called and had

"... If somebody who books a television show comes in unannounced...he might not see what a person is really capable of doing."



asked me to host for a week, so I had to start going to clubs. I had to start working out again. I didn't want to really go on stage for a while. I reached a plateau creatively, and I'm not sure where I want to go next in my stand-up. I'm getting bored with it. I have to look for new avenues within my stand-up, within the material, see what I want to talk about next. I certainly don't need more jokes. I want to move into more areas that I want to talk about, that I care about.

COMEDY USA: *You appeared on Comic Relief. What was that experience like?*

SHANDLING: That was a great experience. I'm actually very shy. You know we are all shy, and to be thrown into a group of fifty of your peers can be a very unsettling experience. But everybody was so nice that it turned out to be a great experience. I was able to talk with Martin Short, who I'm a big fan of. I enjoyed meeting Dick Gregory. Everybody was in a great mood. And there were some strange moments. Jerry Lewis was there and I actually found myself saying, "Hi, Jerry." And I just had this flash. I've never said "Hi, Jerry" in my life. I felt like Rupert Pupkin (from the movie *The King Of Comedy*).

COMEDY USA: *What was his reaction?*

SHANDLING: "Hi, Garry." Jerry Lewis is a very nice guy. And I actually said to him, "I didn't expect you to be like this. I thought you'd have an attitude and be sort of intimidating." He said, "I'm only like that when I have to be."

COMEDY USA: *What about on the way up? Before you got into the business, was there a favorite comic? Someone you looked up to and whose material you liked?*

SHANDLING: The guy who's influenced me since 1967 is Woody Allen. From 1967 or '68 on. From his monologues and the book *Getting Even*. And then *Take The Money And Run*. I saw it in Los Angeles in '69...he was my influence. Actually, so was George Carlin.

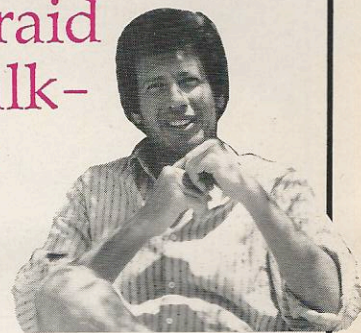
COMEDY USA: *Have you met either of them?*

SHANDLING: When I was in college, in Tucson I drove up to Phoenix to see George Carlin in the clubs. Because there was no way I could get any feedback growing up in Tucson. I was completely isolated. I had no creative outlet whatsoever. So, I drove up and I took all the courage in the world to walk up to Carlin and say, "Mr. Carlin, would you read this? I wrote some material." And he said, "Sure, I'd be happy to read it. Come back tomorrow night." I came back the next night and sat in his dressing room and he said, "Gee, this is pretty funny stuff, you should pursue this." And that really inspired me. So I knew when I graduated from college that I'd go to Los Angeles and pursue writing and maybe performing. I didn't know which one I was really going to do. And I still don't, because I still write a lot.

COMEDY USA: *Do you remember what that material was?*

SHANDLING: It was right at the stage when Carlin had grown his hair long, he was just making the transition, and I wrote three sketches. One was if marijuana was ever legalized, what would the television commercials be like. And I wrote a television commercial for it. I don't remember what it was, but it was funny. And I wrote a sketch for what it was like when a draft protest was being formed by the leader before the cameras got there. He was directing everybody, what to

“...It's too creative a show for the networks...they're afraid of people talking into the camera...”



do, which signs to hold up. And the other premise was a sex education teacher. It was kind of "stock" premise because the teacher was basically shy about sex.

COMEDY USA: *Have you seen Carlin since?*

SHANDLING: Carlin had been on my mind for ten years. He's part of the reason I got inspired enough to come out and do comedy. And at some point I met his wife in Los Angeles because she was working for HBO. I told her the story, and then I finally bumped into Carlin. I was really hoping for this movie-scene experience, where he would remember this kid coming up to him, but, actually, he didn't remember too well. But I told him what it meant to me, and he was very taken by it. It was a great moment for me. It was an emotional experience for me to tell him that ten years ago I had sheepishly come into his dressing room and asked him to read my work. It inspired me to go on.

COMEDY USA: *So now you've got a lot of things "cooking"?*

SHANDLING: Yes, I don't know where it's all going to end up. I mostly strive to be creatively satisfied. And that's why I stopped doing stand-up for a little while - because I wasn't creatively satisfied. Now I've got to start up again and see what I can come up with.



Howard Barash

Carol Leifer warms up with pal Jay Leno.

A Conversation with CAROL LEIFER

A Taste of Carol Leifer:

"I was married for four years, hoping that my marriage would last five years because the gift for five years is wood. 'Honey, I know you had your eye on that fur coat, but heck, you're so special, I got you 20 feet of 1X8.'"

"Sex when you're married is a little like going to a *Seven Eleven*. There's not as much variety, but at three in the morning it's always there."

"Some people have their marriages annulled. That means the marriage never existed. Boy, talk about denial. What do you say to people when they see your wedding album? 'Oh, that was just some play I was in...some family theatre thing I did.'"

BY
DONNA COE

"My first time was on September 5, 1977. He got me into it."

"He" is comedian/actor Paul Reiser and the date refers to Carol Leifer's New York debut as a stand-up. Both Leifer and Reiser were students at the State University of New York in Binghamton at the time. The following year Reiser graduated to perform full-time and Leifer transferred to Queens College to be closer to the club scene and more involved in what would shortly become her career.

With a B.A. in theatre clutched firmly in hand, Leifer became a waitress at The Comic Strip in Manhattan. "I lasted about a month. I don't know how they do it." How she did it was to run back and forth between the bar and the room delivering one customer's drink at a time. Inefficient perhaps, but methodical in a way that paid off in her next job venture - working for a private investigator. "Actually, he was the King of the polygraph tester." And, in the next two years, as comedy started to pay more and more of the bills, the 9-to-5 world lost its funniest secretary.

Leifer's first big break came as one of the five finalists in *Showtime's* 1980 *New York Laff-Off* where she placed 4th - one spot higher than the then unknown Eddie Murphy. An appearance on the syndicated TV show *An Evening at the Improv* soon followed.

Her newly acquired agent persuaded her to move to Los Angeles where she was seen on *The Merv Griffin Show* and HBO's *Young Comedians Special*.

A tremendous honor was bestowed upon Carol Leifer last September when she was asked by Lorne Michaels, the producer of NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, to become the first woman staff writer that show had seen in many years. Not only was it a prestigious position, but she got to move back home to New York. "I took the job for a lot of reasons. I was really tired of being on the road. People who don't go on the road don't realize how alone you are there. And, with *Saturday Night Live*, wow, a staff, writers, people, (I had) a steady job. I needed and wanted a change. And I wanted to see if I could cut it, if I could be a staff writer for a big comedy show."

And, cut it she did. Some of her favorite sketches were presented by the likes of guest hosts Dudley Moore, John Lithgow and this year's Oscar winner, Angelica Huston in a *Prizzi's Honor* send-up about Mafia greeting cards.

How did she fare, you might ask, as the lone woman on an otherwise all-male writing



staff? "Coming from a stand-up background, I'm used to being around a lot of guys. I had a great time with them."

This August heralded Leifer's eleventh appearance on NBC's *Late Night With David Letterman*. Among the glory of being seen by millions of viewers, there is also "the pressure of being really great in just five minutes." The pressure is alleviated somewhat by the show's host. "Letterman, being a comedian himself, has a very genuine sense of how tough it is and he appreciates women doing comedy."

"The first time I was on the show, he came backstage from his desk, right before I went out, and thanked me for doing the show. Here's David Letterman thanking me for doing the show. What I really love about him is he's such a regular guy."

With all her TV exposure, Leifer has had to

make only one concession, and that is an effort to "work clean. I'm very conscious now of not trying anything dirty in the clubs, because what's the point? I can't use it on TV."

This is a performer who cares about her act as well as her audience. "I don't want the men to feel alienated which can happen with some women comedians." What this means is, you'll never hear her do a "female" joke and then say, "Am I right, ladies, am I right?"

It's this kind of concern for her craft that makes her a strong opening act for such heavyweights as The Beach Boys and Peter Allen. Most recently, Leifer has been working the road with fellow comedian, Jay Leno.

"Right now I just want to concentrate on my act," she states. That means more opportunities to catch this lady perfecting her craft, and that's good news for comedy lovers everywhere.

Carol's consistency on stage should keep her in the public eye for years to come.

Comics & Commercials

Question: What happens when a nice Jewish girl spends her formative years surrounded by Mormons in Salt Lake City? Answer: She grows up to be **Roseanne Barr**. And just who is Roseanne Barr a.k.a. "Domestic Goddess?" Well, five years ago she was living in Colorado with her postal clerk husband and their three children. Today, she's seen on *The Tonight Show*, *Late Night With David Letterman*, and in a Rodney Dangerfield HBO special portraying the wife of the man who gets no respect.

Somewhere in between there was a lot of hard work and some heavy duty eating. Barr has found her looks helpful to her act which revolves around the plight of the average housewife. "The way I look at it, if the kids are still alive when my husband comes home from work, then I've done my job," quips Roseanne.

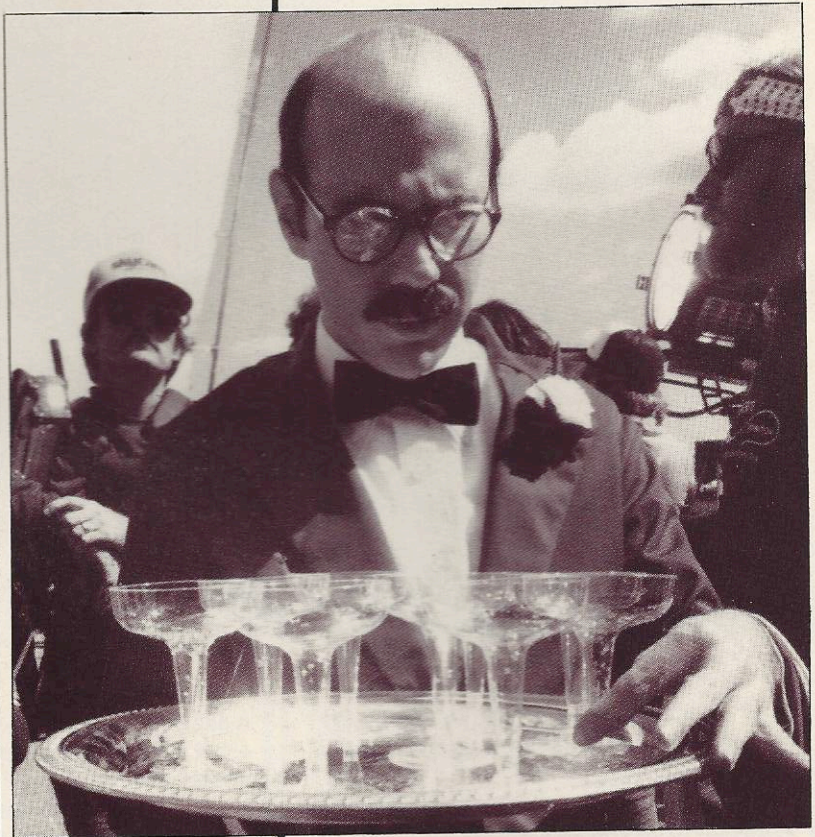
If you don't stay up late enough for Carson or Letterman, you've probably seen her pointing out the virtues of *Pizza Hut* in her first national commercial, directed by another stand-up comedian --

David Steinberg. On top of that, she's finished a fifty city tour as the opening act for Julio Iglesias.

Not bad for your average housewife. If Roseanne Barr is an average housewife, then a *Rolls Royce* is just a car.

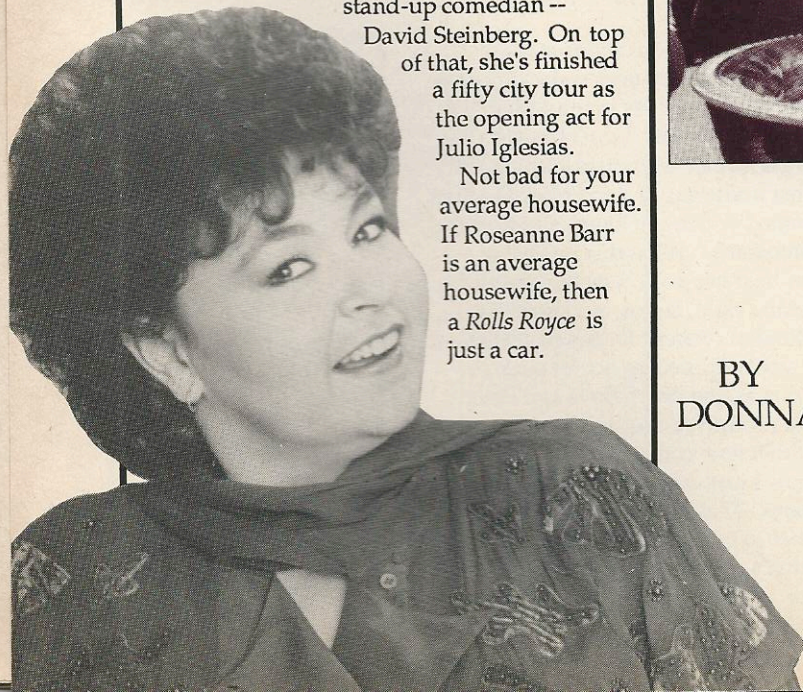
Comedians spend the greater portion of their careers selling themselves -- to audiences, club owners and to television talent coordinators.

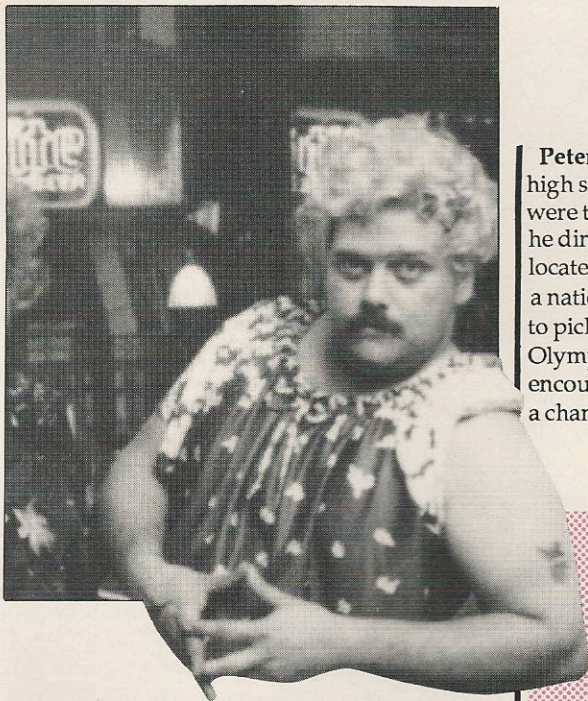
Finally, someone has come up with the idea of putting the comedian's skills to work in another area. Enter the humorous commercial. Here we introduce you to five of the many comedians who make those intrusions into our favorite programs a lot more enjoyable.



Stu Trivax, a stand-up veteran of seven years, began his venture into television almost two years ago with a *Federal Express* commercial. He's also been seen on the tube pushing *Sports Illustrated*, *Matchbox* cars and comedy clubs in the Northeast. Stand-up is his first love, but he is actively pursuing commercials, because in his own words, "They pay so big." Most recently he was seen in the HBO special, *Robert Klein On Broadway* and December will give us even more Trivax with the release of his first feature film, *Rebel High*. They say you can't have too much of a good thing -- so it is with Stu Trivax.

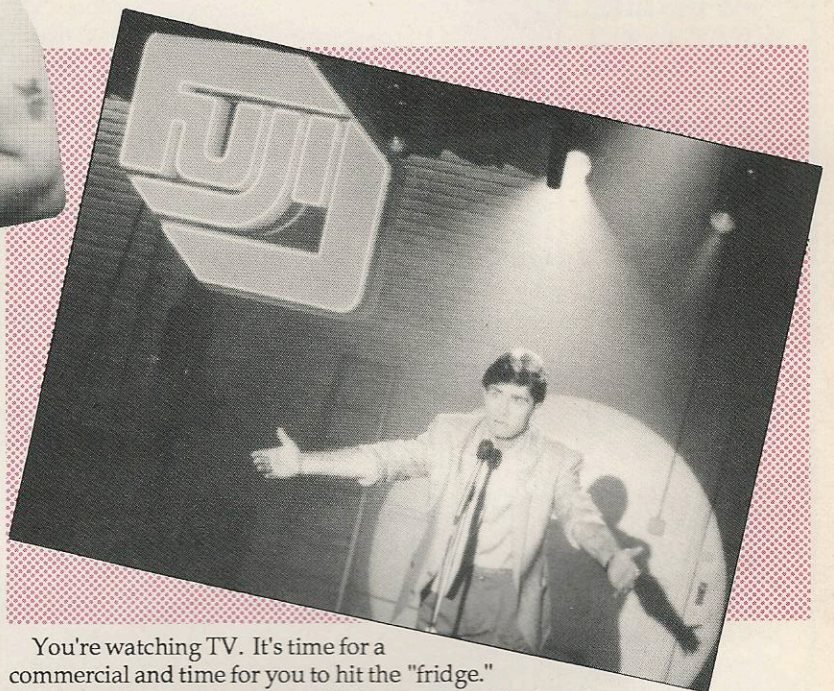
BY
DONNA COE





Peter Spellos has been doing comedy in some form or another ever since high school. He has worked as a puppeteer; he and partner Jim Brownold were the morning comedy team on New York radio station *WPLJ*; and he directs, teaches and performs in his own improv company, *Who-Prov*, located at *Who's On First* in Manhattan. Spellos can currently be seen in a national spot for *Miller Lite* beer starring Joe Piscopo. It won't be difficult to pick him out of the bunch, however; Spellos portrays an ex-East German Olympic swimmer -- in drag -- complete with his own mustache. It's encouraging to see TV commercials give comedians like Peter Spellos a chance to strut their stuff -- even if it is in high heels.

Four years ago a friend dared **Max Alexander** to get up on stage at the *New York Improvisation*. That dare paid off in a big way. Due to his stand-up experience, *Federal Express*, *SOS Soap Pads* and *Sony* have used his talents to sell their products. A native New Yorker, Alexander moved to Los Angeles last year. In the interim, he has done a TV pilot for Chuck Barris (of *The Newlywed Game* and *Gong Show* fame) entitled *Comedy Courtroom* and he has just returned from filming on location in Canada for the new Steve Martin picture, *Roxanne*. With no end in sight, you'll be able to see even more of Max Alexander, the man who parlayed a dare into a career.



You're watching TV. It's time for a commercial and time for you to hit the "fridge." All of a sudden you hear Robin Williams, Edith Bunker, the Road Runner and Johnny Carson on your set. You turn to see what epic has brought these characters together, but the only thing on the screen is an attractive, young man in front of the *Fuji* logo. Meet **Maurice LaMarche**. The 28-year-old from Toronto has racked up quite a string of credits in the six years since he moved to Los Angeles.

LaMarche has been an opening act in Las Vegas and Atlantic City for such headliners as: *The Pointer Sisters*, *Donna Summer* and *Rodney Dangerfield*. He is a natural and in great demand for commercial voice-overs. He can be heard in spots for *Volkswagen*, *McDonald's* and *Nike*. Soon you will be able to hear him as the voice of the Harold Ramis character in the cartoon version of *Ghostbusters*. Viewers may have caught him on *The Merv Griffin Show*, *Showtime's Faerie Tale Theatre* and TV's *Bloopers & Practical Jokes* where he convinced Debbie Boone she was speaking to President Reagan on the phone.

LaMarche calls himself "a walking *Trivial Pursuit, Baby Boomer Edition* -- a human xerox machine." And for good reason. He performs forty voices (out of the 100 in his repertoire) in a twenty minute act.

For the moment he's a bachelor, but wait until word gets out that he's also a gourmet cook. Just think of the possibilities -- an aperitif with Jack Nicholson, escargot with Dudley Moore and maybe, just maybe, dessert with Maurice LaMarche himself.



FATHER GUIDO SARDUCCI

BY
MARTIN
PEDERSON

Father Guido Sarducci's press secretary and personal manager said the St. Patrick's Cathedral visit was "absolutely not a campaign appearance of any sort." Still, the renowned gossip columnist for the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* was in Manhattan recently, fueling speculation about a possible promotion to Cardinal of the New York Archdiocese. Of course, the Sarducci aide cautioned, such a bold move by the Vatican would involve promotion of Bishop John O'Connor to another post. And at one point during his rambling and often obtuse news conference held on the steps of the Cathedral, Sarducci suggested that O'Connor would make an excellent "Deputy Pope."

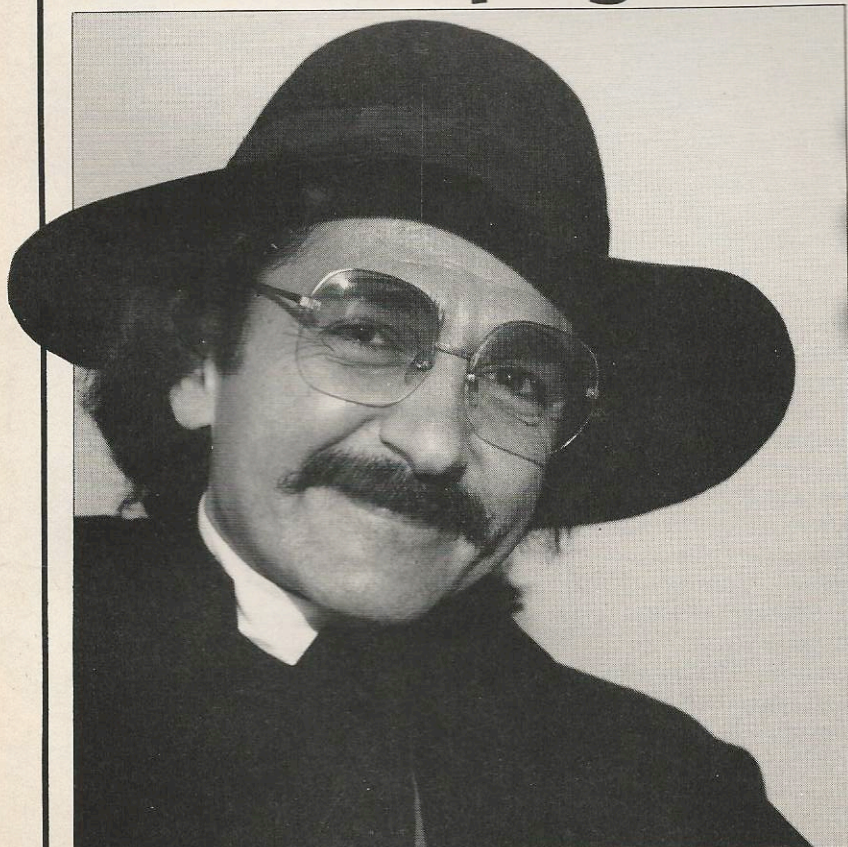
According to most Vatican observers,

Sarducci's comeback is nothing short of remarkable. Following the creation in the early '80s of his renegade "People's Catholic Church" -- a reaction, some detractors say, to his failure to achieve promotion to Monsignor despite the fact that "everyone in [his] class got the job," Sarducci became something of an outcast in the Holy City. "The phone stopped ringing," says Sarducci of those dark days in Rome. Yet in its short-lived incarnation the People's Catholic Church broke new theological ground. "In the People's Church," says Sarducci, "all men were popes, everyone was his own authority. The women popes got pants suits and the logo was fish...and chips. In its brief life the People's Church made over three thousand people Pope!" Later Sarducci dropped the effort upon receiving a firmer commitment for promotion with the next graduating class.

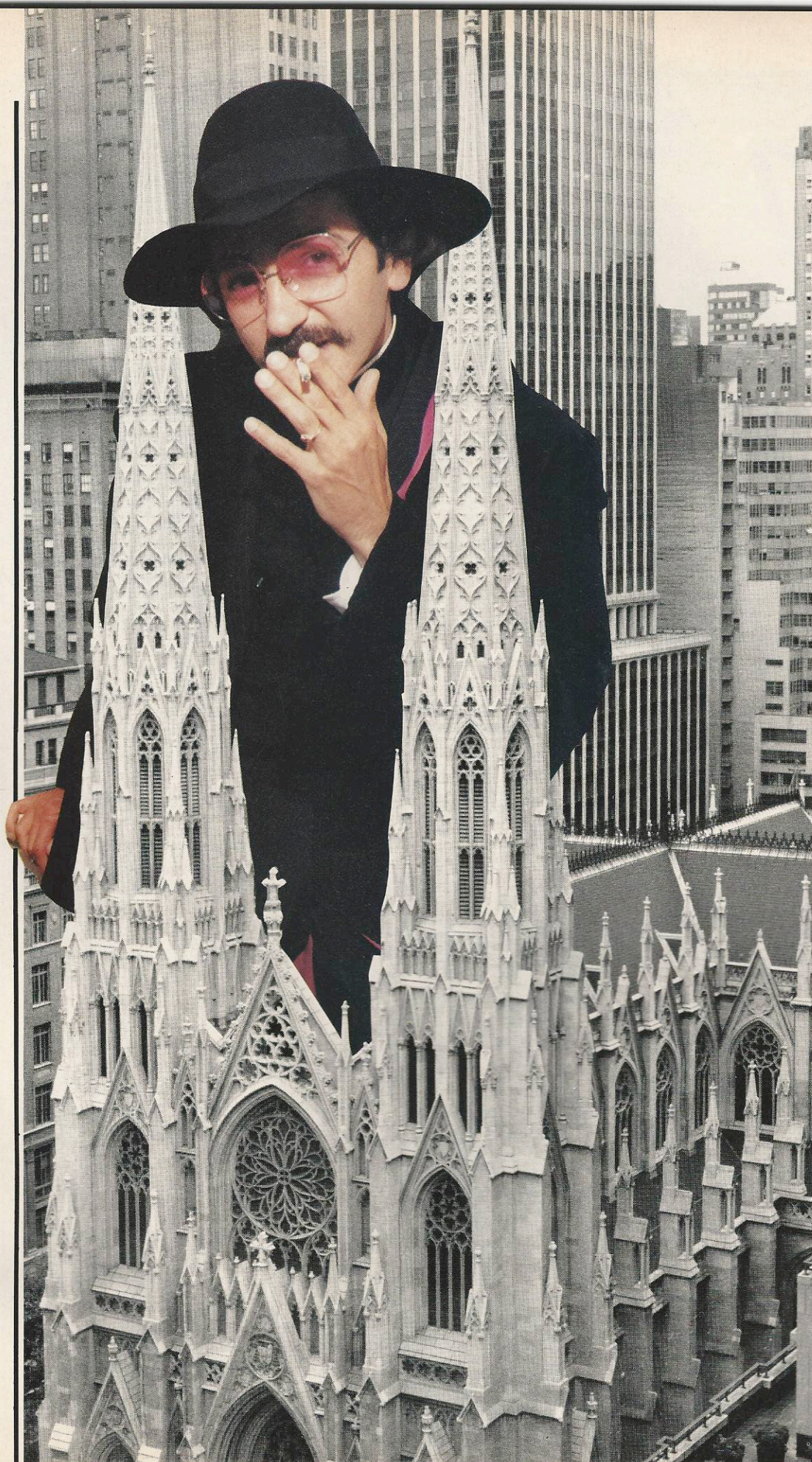
When asked about his plans for the New York Archdiocese, should the call to serve come from Rome, Father Guido expressed an interest in placing a casino atop St. Patrick's Cathedral. "The great thing is that any losses at the gambling tables can be converted into tax deductions for the Church," says the fiscally-minded priest. In the meantime, Sarducci has kept himself busy with the Bicentennial-ennial, which is the ten-year anniversary of the Bicentennial. "We've done real good on buttons and T-shirts and that sort of stuff," reports the enterprising man of the cloth. He's also been consumed with his work as assistant editor of *The Vatican Inquirer*, where he was responsible for breaking the news that Mussolini is alive and living in Denver, Colorado.

But, until a firm confirmation is made on the move to New York, Father Guido will continue to live in his Rome apartment, a converted bowling alley. "The Vatican is buying a whole mess of them," he says. "It was twenty lanes, but now it's twenty apartments and every ten get their own snack bar. Plus, with every apartment you get a free pair of shoes..." Yet, holding court on the steps of St. Patrick's, there's a righteous gleam in his eye, prompting veteran Vatican watchers to think Sarducci would give it all up for one crack at The Big Apple.

on the Campaign Trail



Scott Mitchell

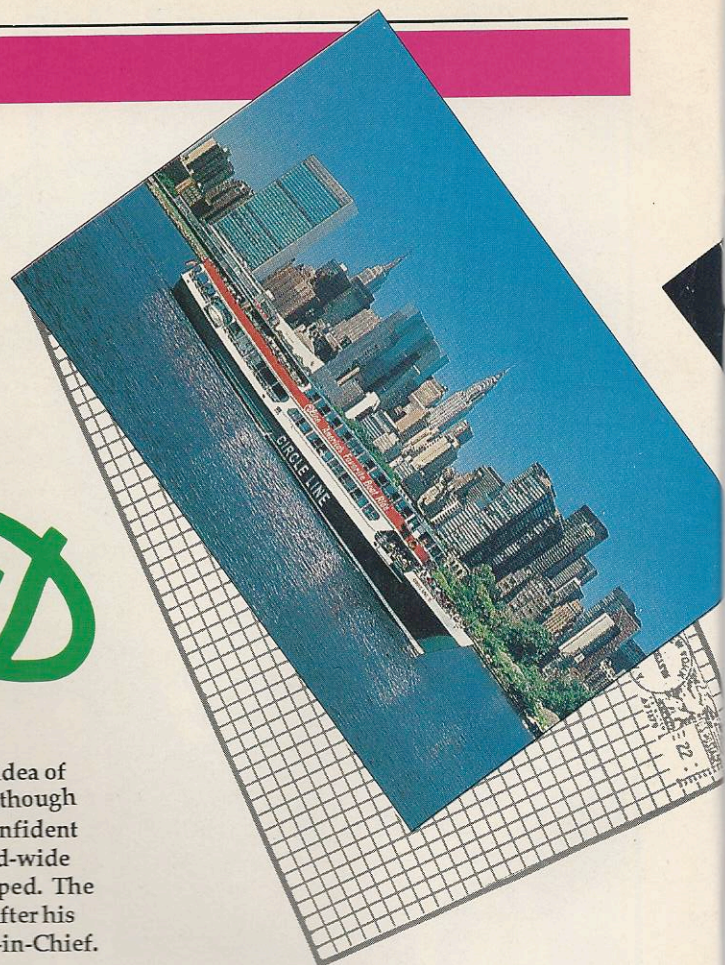


Don Novello began his career in 1973 on the fledgling San Francisco comedy club circuit. He was a cast member of *The Smothers Brothers Show* on CBS in the early seventies before entering the publishing field in 1977 with the release of *The Lazlo Letters*. This compilation of correspondence by the fictional character Lazlo Toth deals with hundreds of public figures over a three year period. The Toth character established a political point of view a little to the right of Jesse Helms. Novello is best known for his portrayal of Father Guido Sarducci on *Saturday Night Live's Weekend Update* in the late '70s. He has published a second book called *The Blade*, which is a photo essay of a town inhabited by sheep in their senior year of high school. Novello produced nine episodes of *Second City Television* in 1982 and is currently promoting his latest album entitled *Breakfast in Heaven*.

Written by
Barry Weintraub

A COMIC ABROAD

BY MIKE ROWE



Comedian Mike Rowe approached COMEDY USA with the idea of doing an article on the international comedy club scene. Although expensive, we granted him the budget that he requested; confident that he would return with an incisive, in-depth report of his world-wide comedy club travels. Well, things did not turn out quite as we hoped. The following is a transcript of the interview I had with Mike Rowe after his "trip."
-- Barry Weintraub, Editor-in-Chief.

BW: (Blows into microphone) *Test...1,2,3,...Okay, just talk into this microphone here.*

MR: This'll be on tape?

BW: *Yeah, this is how I do all my interviews.*

MR: Oh...

BW: *Is there a problem?*

MR: No! -- Why would there be a problem?

BW: *Okay, let's get started then. (Papers rustle) According to your notes here, your first stop was Australia. What was that like?*

MR: Great people, the "Aussies!" I played a club called the Comedy Pouch. Even with the translator, they were very responsive to my stuff.

BW: *Translator? The people in Australia speak English.*

MR: Huh?

BW: *Australians speak English.*

MR: Oh, of course. I knew that. It's just...uhh-did I tell you about Spain?



The Beautiful Hawaiian Sky?

BW: *Uhh, no, Mike. Tell me about Spain.*

MR: They have clubs that feature comedy and bullfighting. For only a few Yen you can stay all night long. It was the best. "Viva La Spain" as they say out there.

BW: *Yen, huh? I don't see any receipts for that anywhere in your files. (Papers rustle) In fact, I don't see any receipts at all.*

MR: Oh, did you want me to hang on to those little suckers?

BW: *It would've helped, yes.*

MR: I did get snapshots from the trip...Here...

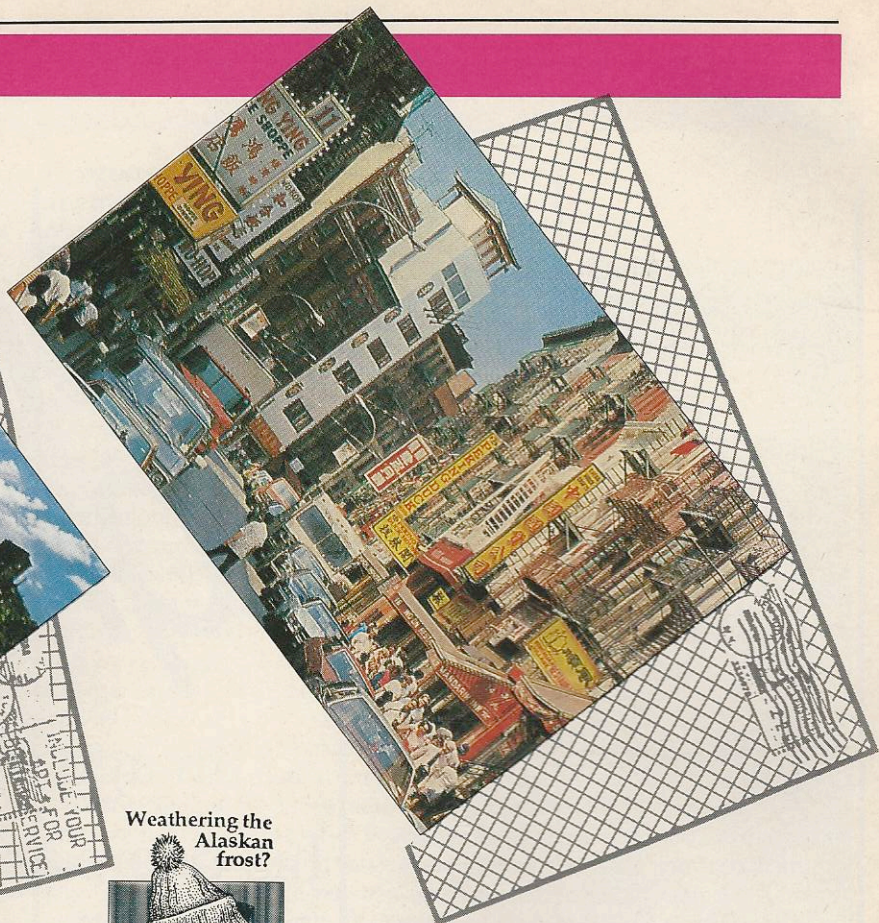
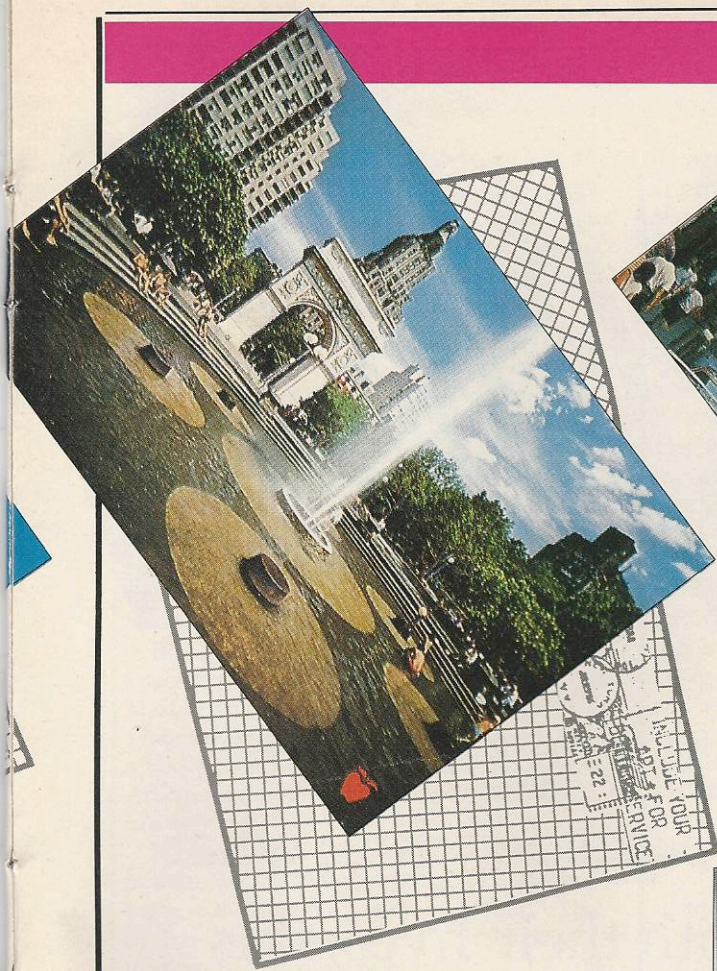
BW: *Two pictures?! That's it?!*

MR: That's me in Hawaii and here I am in Alaska.

BW: *C'mon now! How am I supposed to know where you are in these pictures. Look at them.*

MR: This is me at the Woolworths in Alaska and this is me at the Woolworths in Hawaii.

BW: *Yeah, right. And what about these postcards you sent us?*



Weathering the Alaskan frost?



I have one here from Peking, China...

MR: They have comedy night on Mondays at the Moo Goo Gi Dinner Theater. It's not a good show place because all the dinners are to go.

BW: *Okay, but wait, let me finish. Here's one from Venice, Italy...*

MR: Uh, huh.

BW: *One from Paris, France. Another from Lome, Togo. I have dozens of cards here, all supposedly from different countries.*

MR: Isn't that what you wanted?

BW: *Yeah, but they all are postmarked from New York City.*

MR: Boy, look at the time. I can't...

BW: *New watch, huh, Mike?*

MR: Huh? No!

BW: *Diamonds, the works...nice.*

MR: Hey Barr, thanks for stopping by...(Intercom buzzes)...Who is it?

Man on Intercom: Mr. Rowe, Midtown Electronics. We got yer wide screen TV down 'ere.

BW: *Well, it seems you have things to do. I'll run along, uhh, unless you need help here.*

MR: It's obviously a mistake. I'm not going to unpack that TV. I never ordered such a thing.

BW: *I thought you might need help unpacking that stereo in the box behind the couch or that crate of crystal under the table over there.*

MR: Heh...uhh.

BW: *Mike, welcome home and you'll be hearing from our attorney in the morning. Have a nice day.*

(Intercom buzzes frantically)

Tape: (Spinning on the pick-up reel) ticka-ticka-ticka-ticka...

Editors note: Michael Rowe is a stand-up comic and comedy writer. He recently co-wrote and co-produced "The Edison Photoelectric Network," a television "mockumentary." He also wrote this article word for word.

By KEN WOLF

RORY ROSEGARTEN

Four years ago an Arizona State University student, Rory Rosegarten, took a summer internship at *Playboy* magazine and never returned to school. Now he's working with Robert Klein and a bunch of rising talents, including a comic headliner Joe Bolster, who calls Rosegarten "a show business protege."

At 24, Rosegarten has become a high-rolling entertainment manager, handling the business end of show business for his clients, who also include *WABC Radio's* Alan Colmes, comedy writer David Kolin and actor Eddie Mekka (Carmine from *Laverne & Shirley*). Rosegarten was an associate producer for Klein's last two HBO specials, his writing has appeared in *Playboy*, and for a while, he hosted a syndicated radio interview show, *Face To Face With Rory Rosegarten*. Producing will be Rosegarten's next challenge, he's currently developing a TV program for *20th Century Fox*, and holds the option to *Late Night Comic*, a Broadway musical to open late next year.

"Some people think a manager is an agent with a better suit," said Colmes, "but not Rory." Definitely not.

Rosegarten looks comfortable behind his desk, fielding calls, consulting with clients and offering advice to friends, while others on hold wait to speak to him.

Hanging on his office wall, where his college diploma might have been, are autographed posters of George Burns, Hunter S. Thompson and G. Gordon Liddy with indecipherable messages and "Best Wishes" scribbled on each. He's dealt with celebrities of every kind from Rodney Dangerfield to Jesse Jackson. In his office, surrounded by pictures of stars, associates and friends, he says, "I'm doing exactly what

At an age when most of his peers are deciding what to do with their lives, this 24-year-old is helping others keep their careers in order.

Ken Maguire



Rory Rosegarten and Robert Klein

I've always wanted to do."

Success came quickly to Rosegarten, who was interviewing Dustin Hoffman, Gregory Peck, the Smothers Brothers and others while he was in high school. His fast start took some by surprise at first. "The editors of the school paper didn't even know who I was," Rosegarten recalls, when he was interviewing his first celebrity, Imogene Coca, backstage of the Broadway show, *On The Twentieth Century*. Rosegarten had finagled his way to her dressing room posing as a student newswriter on an assignment from his school paper; he was lying, of course. What had really brought Rosegarten backstage, and eventually into show business was a fascination with fame.

Rosegarten became a writer for the school paper after all; writing was his way to the stars. The Coca interview turned out to be his first in a monthly series of celebrity interviews for the school paper. His writing career led him to Arizona State, *Playboy*, Klein and eventually, to a new career in personal management.

Rosegarten must be playing humble when he says, "I guess I've always had a knack for being in the right place at the right time." The truth is Rosegarten has a knack for making the time and the place right for him. Either that, or dumb luck follows him around like a pull toy.

When Rosegarten began working with Klein, he had no experience in theatrical management, nor had he known Klein a long time, having met him on an interview for *Playboy*. But somehow, not long after that interview, Klein and Rosegarten really hit it off and began working together.

Other performers were soon to be represented by The Conversation Company, LTD, a management firm founded by Rosegarten. With enough clients to keep him busy seven days a week, Rosegarten put college on permanent hold and left *Playboy* to become a full-time manager.

Sounds impossible, doesn't it?

Not to Joe Bolster, Rosegarten's second client. "I believe in Rory," he says. The two met at *The Comic Strip* in New York, while Rosegarten was working on a promotional piece on comedy for *Playboy*. "The man," Bolster says of his manager, "literally soaks up information."

Using the tenacious confidence that got him backstage with Coca and a job with Klein, Rosegarten hound-dogged the Letterman people to put Bolster on the show. The "getting on" process took months of work for the performer and the manager.

"He kept after them," Bolster recalls. It took three auditions, and for each, Bolster rehearsed word by word with

Rosegarten playing the role of audience, critic and friend. The two worked out the subtleties of every joke, the gestures and expressions, the timing, the split-second between set-up and punch line that makes a good joke great and a great joke a show-stopper.

"To be what a performer needs you to be" is the "Rosegartian" theory of personal management. "It's a lot easier to get Robert (Klein) on the show. I just call up and say 'He'll be in town Thursday, is it okay?'" Rosegarten says, in comparison. For Bolster, it took months of uncertainty.

Finally success came and Rosegarten was there, in an NBC dressing room waiting with Bolster for him to go on. It was a shared triumph. "I looked at Joe, he looked at me and we just hugged -- we didn't say a word," Rosegarten says. "For me, that is the essence of why I do what I do." That night from backstage he watched his friend on the monitor performing coast to coast.

Rosegarten has a personal and professional relationship with Bolster and with all his clients. To him, that's part of the job. "There's a difference between being an agent and being a manager. Both serve important roles, but an agent is essentially selling a catalog with hundreds of names in it. If one guy doesn't fit into a role he's got another ten. I've only got five clients and I go to bat for my guys."

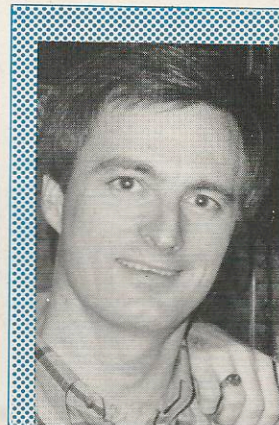
"To have him as a manager makes a difference," Alan Colmes says. "Rory tunes into you. He's very intense."

However hard it may be to believe what Rosegarten can do and has done so far, you must believe he enjoys it. He's had a chance to spend time with some of the most fascinating celebrities in the public eye. One night he and the legendary gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson went out on the town drinking margaritas. Last fall *PM Magazine* did a segment on his life, so did *The New York Times*. For relaxation, Rosegarten hangs out at the New York comedy clubs with the local talent, his friends. As a manager, he's obliging to any performer who wants his ear or his opinion, but only has the time to represent a few.

Not coincidentally, Rosegarten's favorite movie is about another theatrical manager, the character from Woody Allen's *Broadway Danny Rose*. "I loved the way that guy believed in his acts no matter how hopeless they were." But do Rosegarten and the Danny Rose character share any similarities besides the flower in their names?

No, not really.

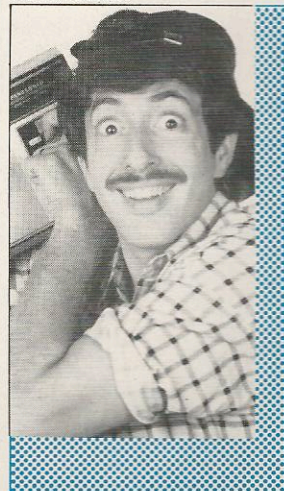
"For one thing, I don't handle balloon folders or parrots who sing 'I got to be me.'"



Joe Bolster Alan Colmes



David Kolin



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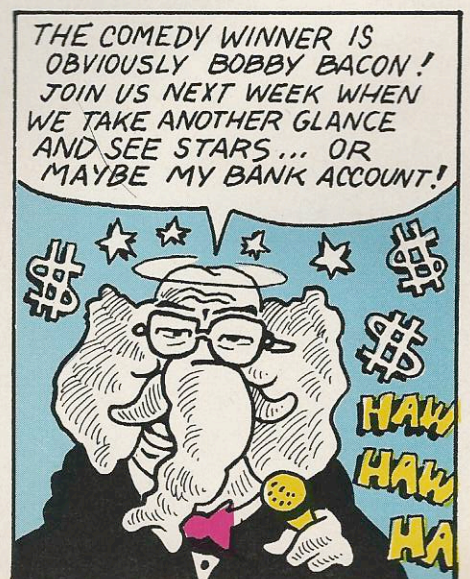
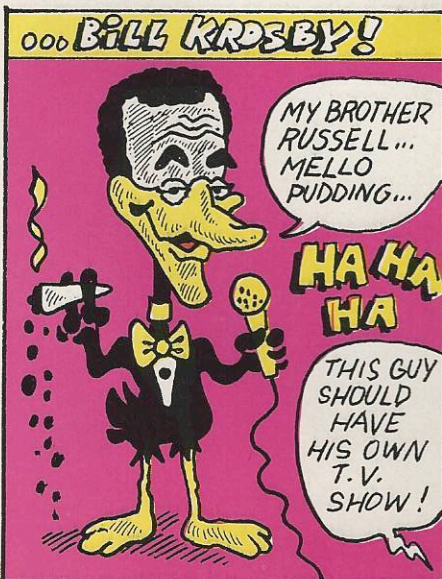
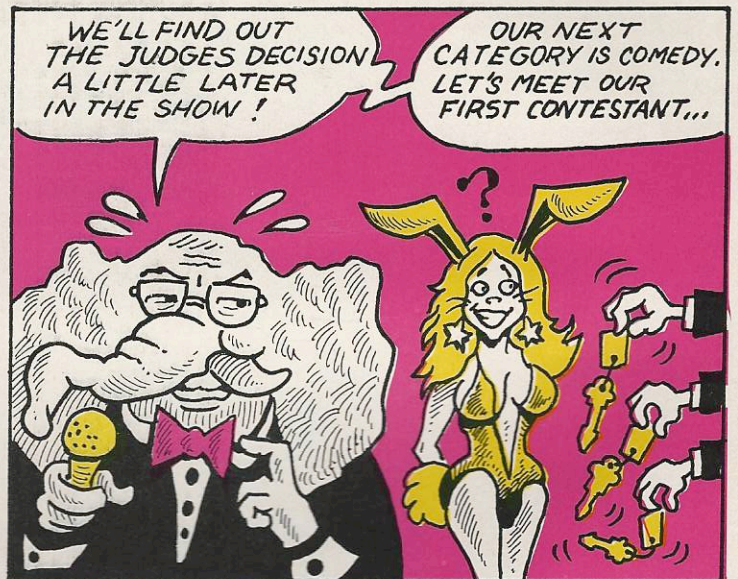
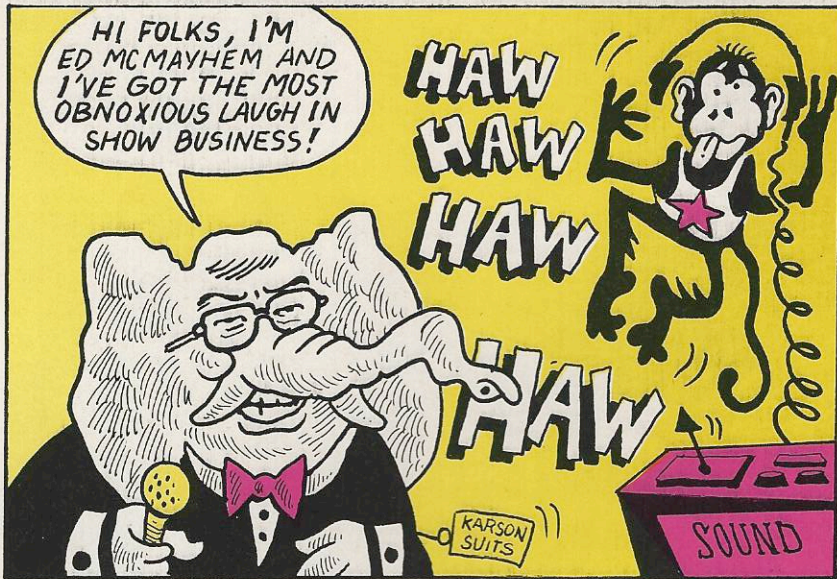
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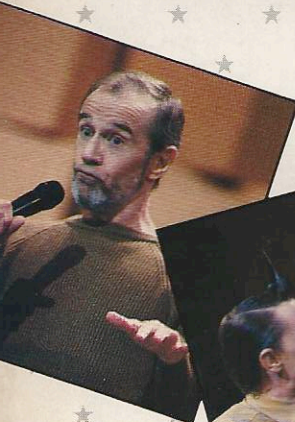
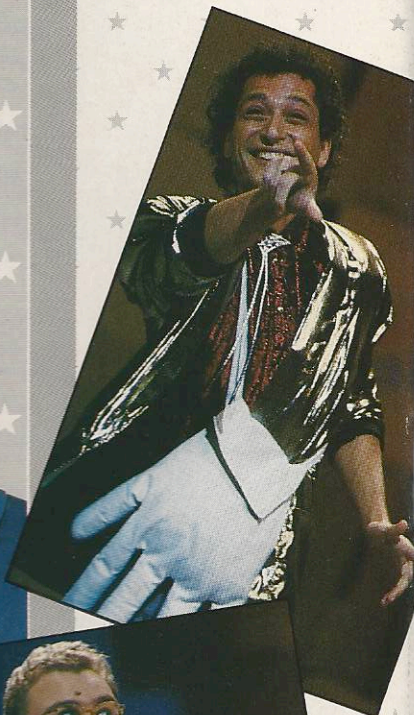
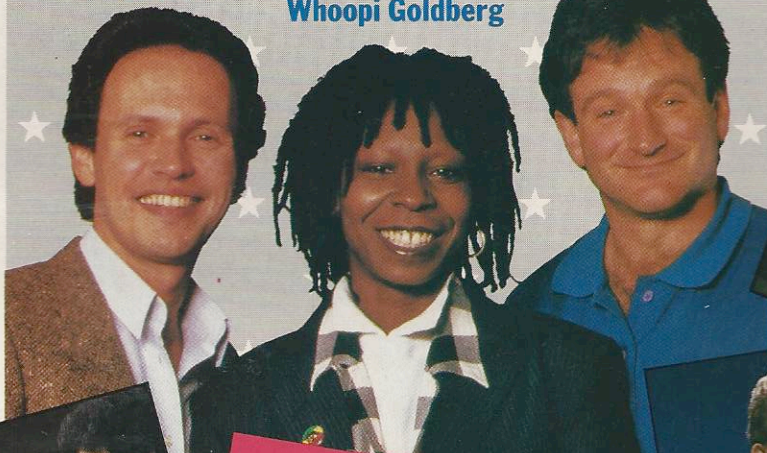
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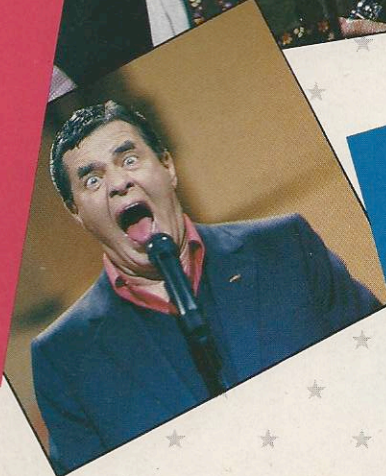
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