

Entertaining Guest slated for center's funny bone feast

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

A comedic combination of Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley and James Thurber will descend on the Farmington Community Center when Fabulous Fridays begin Oct. 5 at 9:30 a.m. The collection of funny bone ticklers usually goes under the name of Edgar Guest III of Birmingham, who has several other guises, including actor and dinner-theatre producer.

His one man show on American

humor evolved during his college days at Denison University in the late 50's. A professor encouraged him to put a one man show together during his junior year. In the spring of his junior year, he auditioned for a unit which took shows throughout the country.

"They hired high school auditions. If the kids liked you, you were hired. If they didn't like you, you were not," Guest, 38, said, as he energetically tapped one end of his cigarette against the edge of the table.

"Once hired, he had another year to perfect the act by working the Ohio banquet circuit.

ANOTHER STUDENT who was encouraged by the same professor ended up doing a one man show, also. That student was Hal Holbrooke, who eventually brought his one man show to Broadway.

In the fall of 1960, after graduation from college, Guest took his show through Indiana, Ohio and the length of New York state.

"I liked meeting new people," he said.

He needed something to compensate for getting up at 6 a.m. to make the first show on the luncheon circuit at 9 a.m. after wading through 22-foot high drifts in New York.

"I've never missed a show. I'm proud of that," he said.

He was on the road in Flint when his first child was born. He managed

to arrive for the birth of the child, then left for the next night's show.

Through that kind of experience he learned how to play it by ear when giving a one man show that borders on a reading.

"There's a short form and a long form," he says of the show he will give at the Farmington Community Center. "There's nothing worse than to have this kind of program go flat. If you change your material in mid-

program, then you know you're in trouble. You start thinking to far ahead. It never fails, then you'll say something that will embarrass you," he said.

HIS PROGRAM WILL include some of his grandfather, Edgar Guest's homespun poetry. Among them will be "Home" which begins, "It takes a heap of living in a house to make it a home."

"When I first started, I wasn't doing anything by my grandfather. People were disappointed," he said.

In addition to working from a platform, Guest is "pleased as punch" with the way his dinner theatre projects are doing.

He's directing "I Do, I Do," by Neil Simon at Vittorio's in Livonia and A Thurbur Carnival at Alvaro's in Royal Oak.

When Simon's play, "The Last of the Red Hot Lovers" comes to Vittorio's, Guest will be on the other side of the stage as an actor.

Dinner theatre offers a different more intimate atmosphere than bigger houses, such as the Fisher Theatre, according to Guest.

"It can show small intimate shows that get lost in the Fisher," he said.

Guest's shows concentrate on small musicals and reviews, with small casts.

"So everybody makes a couple of bucks for their time," he said. "A large cast gets you into financial trouble."



EDGAR GUEST III

PROFILES

Kicking the habit gives that thinking feeling

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

At this moment, there are 40 million nail biters in the United States who are revving up to do their worst to their hands.

If they stopped to think about what they are doing, chances are they could say good bye to their nibbled digits within a short time.

That's the word from Gregory Nunn and Nathan Arzin, authors of "Habit Control in a Day," which will be published by Simon and Schuster later this month.

Nunn, a clinical psychologist who conducts a habits clinic near Chicago, is slated to direct a workshop for professional counselors in Mercy Center, Farmington Hills, Oct. 10-11.

Part of their method for ridding persons of bad habits is to encourage the patient to think about all aspects of the practice.

Looking into a mirror and going through a performance of the bad habit, then writing out a description of the scene is part of the treatment.

Along the way to fulfilling this assignment, the practitioner begins to realize that there is more to his habit than meets the eye. There are a sequence of movements and situations which lead up to the habit. Nunn calls these associated movements.

"LET'S SAY THAT the bad habit involves nail biting. The person may either bring his hands to his face or interlock his hands," Nunn, 27, said.

Interlocking hands can prompt nail biting in some patients and hands that travel to the face can end up in another nail mauling session.

Once the entire sequence of bad habits have been ferreted out, the patient and Nunn begin to rehearse some alternative movements which will distract the person from the habit while making him conscious of the number of times the action comes into play during the day. It's a lot easier to stop a smoker from pulling out another cigarette than to take one from him just as he's about to take a drag. Nunn says his method of alternative movements uses that philosophy as a base.

"We want to stop the habit in the early steps

which we can inhibit without anxiety," he said.

If a nail biter finds himself placing his hand against his face, a step which could lead to his biting his nails, he uses an alternative movement to stop the sequence. If he's writing he can place his hand on the desk. To remind himself of the reason he's going through the action, he places a small amount of pressure against the desk.

THE MOVEMENTS increase awareness of the habit without disrupting daily activity, according to Nunn.

He helps the patient become accustomed to the alternative movements by carrying on a conversation with the person and observing his actions. When the bad habit sequence begins, Nunn winks or points to indicate that an alternative movement should be made.

After the first day of habit control the persons should have reduced the number of times the habit appears by 90 per cent, according to Nunn.

Pride and encouragement from friends also play their parts in the program. Close friends are let in on the program and are encouraged to gently remind the patient when he's performing the sequence. They praise him when they see that he's carrying out the program.

Control over the habit is floundered. Nail biters, for instance are encouraged to learn to manicure their nails and wear jewelry that points out their hands.

Patients have a reason for getting rid of a habit. Nunn's patients are asked to write out the reason and to describe embarrassing moments which the habit is causing. At first, the person might be vague about describing the inconveniences of his habit, preferring to forget them, according to Nunn, who's been using the method for five years.

ONCE THE HABIT is broken the alternative movements are almost automatically discarded. They aren't used long enough to become habits within themselves.

For those who are too young to read and write there are other ways to break a habit, such as thumb sucking. A child

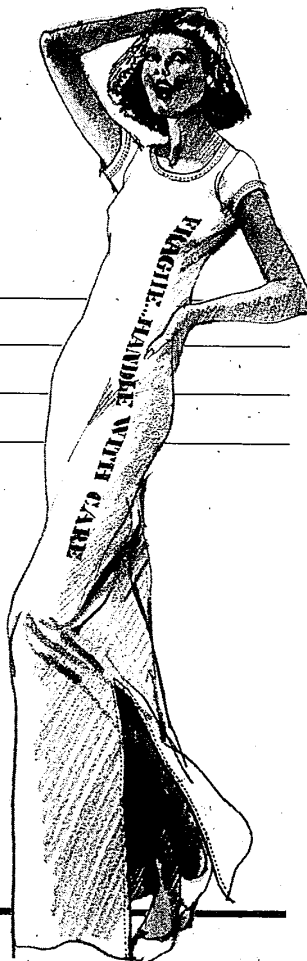
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