

'Hot Fudge' and the Raven

Career expands right around home

By MARILYN LAINE

Ask Ron Coden and he'll tell you "Detroit is show business."

"You don't have to live in Los Angeles or New York if you are an actor, entertainer, or musician. There are numerous recording studios, clubs, theatres and TV studios in Detroit, in which a performer can make a living," Coden said.

Without singing or acting lessons, Coden was singing and performing at weddings and bar mitzvahs by the time he was 6 years old.

Born in Detroit, he moved with his family to Oak Park when he was 14. As a teenager he was part of a rock group, in which he sang and strummed the guitar.

After graduating from Oak Park High School in 1960, he became a featured folk singer at the Raven Gallery, located in Southfield. His budding career brought him club work at the Rector and Chess Mate. He performed in concerts in California, Missouri and Canada.

FOR THE LAST five years Coden has appeared as a regular character actor on the "Hot Fudge Show" broadcast on WXVZ.

"I like to play Detective Tomato the most," he said. Coden also appears as Professor Emotion, Holy Moley Man, Mr. Nasty and Hyman Kneep Pad.

Nationally syndicated, "The show deals with children's emotions and feelings and the awareness of emotions and feelings," he said. Coden also was featured as narrator and host for a local

segment of "Kids Are People Too," a network TV show, shown in Detroit in December.

"I perform contemporary music with my group at various clubs and lounges in the city," Coden said. "Naturally — it is called 'The Ron Coden Show.' Talented Steve Fava plays base guitar and Ron Bright plays guitar. I play an Ovation guitar, which has an electric pick up.

"We perform folk and country songs, music from Broadway shows, and comedy songs. Our act is entertaining, where our audience sits back and enjoys themselves."

"The Ron Coden Show" is being featured at Mountain Jack's Lounge, in Troy, during January and February.

"MY ROOTS are in Detroit," Coden said, "I'm a family person, and this is where I want to perform and make a living." Home for Coden is a ranch house in Oak Park, which he shares with two cats, and his 6-year-old son David.

As a single parent, his eyes light up when he talks about his son. "I'm the homeroom father for David, who is in the first grade at Roosevelt School in Ferndale.

American history is another love. He owns an extensive collection of books pertaining to the life of Abraham Lincoln.

"For relaxation I watch old movies. Two of my favorites are 'The Old Man and the Sea' and 'Captain Courageous,' which stars Spencer Tracy, whom I have always idealized."



Ron Coden is performing at Mountain Jack's Lounge in Troy, through February.

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