Laugh-makers strive to crack tough craft

Hey, did you hear the one about the stand-up comedians and magicians per-forming Monday nights in Rochester's Petker's Place and other Detroit-area

small bars?

They are filling the needs of the small bar owners by increasing business on slow nights, but look again, they are also filling their two main

ness on slow nights, but look again, nesson slow nights, but look again, hey are also filling their two main needs.

The need to get exposure in the cornedy world and the need to practice their routine until it is letter perfect in every detail but still "looks so easy."

No punch line there.

The Troupe of Comedians and Magnissa, a division of the Southfield-based control of the company of Recommond of the company of Recommond of the company of Recommond of the company of the comp

BEFORE BECOMING a comedian, the sole method by which he makes his living now, D'Aoust was an art student in college and has also worked as a

chimney sweep.

Now, he said he spends all of his time watching old comedy movies and listening to old comedians in an effort to try to pick out what made them so successful. If it was good enough for them, after all, maybe it'll work again, he said!

people, we sneeze to ourselves," Couwlier performs. "You go 'at-choo, we go 'at-me." Couwlier said he was always consid-ered the class clown while in school. He

ered the class clown while in school. He particularly remembers high school days when he imitated the teachers at his Harper Woods High School to the delight of his fellow students.

delight of his fellow students.

FROM THERE, he went on to a short career at a local PM radio station. One of the things that he would really like to try, he said, is street comedy in downtown Detroit.

"When the weather gets warmer, that is something that sounds so exciting to me. Robin Williams (from the television show Mork and Mindy") got his start doing street comedy, He would pass the hat around after the performance and held collect about \$75." Couwlier said. Money may seem an elusive thing to the members of the troupe, since they are not paid for their efforts on stage through Recom Communications. A \$2 cover charge assessed to each person entering the business establishment for the evening is used to over business expenses for Recom Communications.

"WE LOOK AT ourselves as steering them in the direction of paying jobs," Kesner said. The comedy busi-

ness really boomed about eight weeks ago, and he and his partner, Mike Schwartz, saw the trend as a business

Schwartz, saw the trend as a business opportunity.

Bars are usually slow during the week, and the establishments they approached, he said, saw an opportunity to "make a sure buck and sell some booze." The combination of the two attitudes has resulted in the kinds of shows now being staged at Petker's.

Since some establishments only consider the monetary aspects of the venture, the owners of the bars sometimes are not sensitive to the egos of the comedians, however, Keener said. This has caused some tension within the group.

"It is a frustration to the comedi-ans," Schwartz said. "They want to be great, they think they are great. But the comedy business is a tough one to break into. They (the comedians) have to realize this. They have to get street-wise."

What happens when they don't?
Well, cover it up with a quick quip:
when they groan in mock agony, say
that you "were just testing to see if
they were still awake." Hopefully, they
will laugh at that, and the comedian

will have the audience back in his good graces.

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BOUNCING OFF the audience — or learning how to think quickly on your feet and using their reactions to your feet and using their reactions to your feet and using their reactions to the most important the solid of the total content to stripe undersolid of the total closest to strong each of the table closest to the the table closest table c

"I hope my braces on my teeth aren't bothering any of you ladies at the front table here," Couwlier apologizes. "My friends tell me that they make me look like I'm 15 years old. They also call me all the typical

ALL THAT REMAINS now is to be recognized by a big-time talent scout sitting in the audience. Someday it will

happen. Someday soon.
"I'm heading out to California. Soon, although I don't know exactly when," said one of the comedians. "You'll be hearing about me, I'm not worried about that at all."



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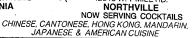
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