Stealing jokes isn't really bad, comedian declares

By GARY DEVINE

So many people admire fresh and in-novative entertainment, and yet so few entertainmers are in fact original. Take comedy. Robin Williams, star of the show 'Mork and Mindy,' is prob-ably the biggest star to hit television since Renry Winkler. Critics and the public marvelled at Williams' ability and originality. After the show's enormous success, there were articles circulating nationally saying that a number of Los Angeles-based comics accused Williams of

stealing their material and using it on his television show.

Loyally, these great admirers of Ro his Williams were surprised and many sprang to his defense.

The QUESTION I ask is: Why were these people surprised? Stealing material, or "lifting lines," as it is so quaintly called, is a common element in comedy. Just ask Don Rickles or Milton Berle.

Jack E. Leonard used to say Rickles stole his entire act and Milton Berle will not deny he stole from everybody and erazi.

I hasten to remind the public that entrainers in centuries past were an unsavoy lot, including con men and la-

George Carlin will admit he patterned himself after Lenny Bruce. Surely Carlin doesn't at like Lenny Bruce, but there are similarities. It is natural for one professional to watch another professional at his craft; and if the observing person is interested in the craft, he might want to be as good as the performer but not necessarily like him.

REGARDLESS OF the choice of profession, coaches, teachers and parents have always told youngsters. "Watch the pros, watch how they do it." I will admit I admired George Carlin, Bill Cosby and David Frye. I don't know what similarities there are between those comics and myself, but those

were the three I watched intensely.

Of course, I would not be so foolish as to try to use their material because they are so well renowned. There is nothing worse for a comedian than to stand up and tell a joke when the audi-



Gary Devine specializes in political satire and in impressions of such personalities as Kermit the Frog, President Carter, Sylvester Stallone and Mayor Coleman Young.

E. Maple Rd. at Stephenson Hwy. @ Troy @ 689-2332

Kingsley Inn

Would like the pleasure of hosting your next banquet or party. Call us today. Our experienced staff, headed by Mr.

URL NIL NOM

Exotic Cocktails
Open Mon-Thurs. 11-1, Fri. 11-2, Sat. 4-2, Sun. 1-12

Distinctive Cuisine of All China

Writer fell into stand-up comedy

Gary Devine of West Bloomfield

Gaiy Devine or West Bloomfield backed into stand-up comedy. "In 1974, I never thought I would be a stand-up comedian," said the 6-foot-tall, curly haired entertainer who has a master's degree in English and speech communication.

communication.

"I knew what the trials and tribula-tions of a comic were," he said. "I spent a summer at Pine Knob as an

usher in 1973 and saw what these performers went through.

"I talked to the talent backstage. It was a rough road for a lot of them."

When Devine was out of a job, however, after cutbacks by the magazine distributor who employed him as a marketing representative, he decided to try comedy.

That was when the Comedy Castle in West Bloomfield and the Delta Lady in Detroit (now defunct) first began book.

"TO WRITTEN a sketch about Jimmy Carter and Coleman Young and a political convention. I've been writing skits like that ever since, for one and a half years," he said.

Devine writes all his own material, as do other local comics who are his friends. In contrast to some, who want to make it as big-name comedians, he centers his efforts on the writing.
"It would like to be known as a come-

"I would like to be known as a come-writer, for TV, stage or screen-

them rolling in the aisles over not espe-cially funny ones and looking deadpan at jokes he thinks are boffo. "It baffles me."

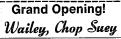
me."
Only recently, Devine was pinkslipped from his job as a teacher's aide in Birmingham. He worked at the main office and then Berkshire Junior High School before the cut.

But the performer keeps up his com-edy capers at the Comedy Castle and also at Doug's Body Shop in Ferndale.

by Writer, fur 1v, stage or screen-plays," he said.
"Performing offers a different per-spective," Devine said. People's react-tions to jokes can be surprising, with







• LUNCH • DINNER • • CARRY-OUT 10% OFF

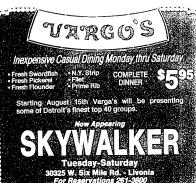
Birmingham 3 blks. N. of 14 Mile

Operated by Lola & Seto



1112







Serving the finest in Chinese & American Cuisine

Luncheons • Dinners • Carry Out Orders
Chinatown Style Welcomed
Open 7 days:a week
Men.-Thurs. 11 a.m.-10 pm.; Fri. 11 a.m.-11 p.m.
Sar. 12-11 p.m.; Sun. 12-10 p.m.

469 S. Woodward, Birmingham 644-2913





Whether it's business or social, large or small, our catering consultants will make your event a memorable one. Call Tim O'Connor, our Director of Catering, who will be pleased to plan your function and suggest an appropriate menu for the occasion.









Enjoy a Long John Silver's Chicken Planks* Dinner or any of our delicious meals, and get a Coca-Cola in this 24 oz. Tiffany-style tumbler for just 49°l Collect a whole set! But hurry, offer good through August 31, 1980, or while supplies last.

We Only Taste Expensive.

Long John Silver's. SEAFOOD SHOPPES

Good only at Redford Township, Westland, Southfield, Garden City and Troy Shoppes.