

Meet Geechy, a cerebral but naive jokester

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

It's Thursday night at the Lakeview Inn. A tall, slender man in a red and black Mickey Mouse jacket bounces on stage and starts lobbing grenades.

Some go off, shaking the house. A few are duds. All take a few seconds before impact.

Comedy is back.

Perhaps it's more accurate to say that Geechy is back. Comedy came back in January, when it replaced golden oldies as the main attraction at the Lake Orion nightspot.

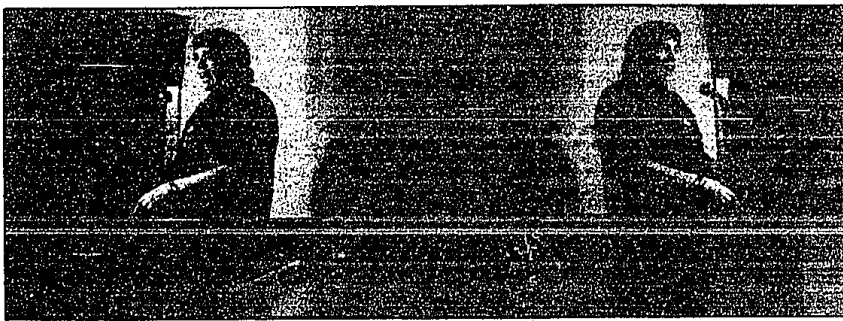
Geechy is the cerebral but naive persona created by Mike Cathers, a 1982 graduate of Rochester High School in his second year as a full-time comic.

"Grenades" are what Geechy calls his jokes. "I tell 'em, and there's a little pause before people laugh," he explained. It's like in the movies, when somebody pulls the pin on a grenade... there's a delay... then they go off.

Geechy seemed a little skittish before his March 30 appearance. Jitters before a hometown crowd are to be expected. But this was a small crowd, about 10 people, including the bartender.

"I like more people," Geechy said. After a reminder that perhaps a few came out just for him, he smiled. "It'll be a challenge."

IT'S NOT that Geechy is not a huge draw, said Sue Jettie, manager of Rachel's Comedy Club. That's the entertainment side of the Lakeview, which was known as "Reflections,"



JIM RIDER/staff photographer

No, there are not Geechy twins. That's just a reflection of the one and only cerebral but naive jokester, the alter ego of comedian Mark Cathers, a graduate of Rochester High School.

when disc jockeys the oldies but goodies.

But the nightspot doesn't usually have live entertainment on Thursdays, so people aren't used to coming out, Jettie explained. "Besides, Thursdays are just laid back. Nobody does anything," she said.

But a good opening act can get even a small crowd going. And comic Ed Head did just that with questions like "How come pit bulls don't have names like 'Fluffy'?" and observations about condoms as fashion statements.

Then Geechy ambled on stage

with a blank expression and an aura of innocence and naivete. His 6-4, 170-pound frame seemed confused... maybe even lost.

Then came the grenades. First, a word about his roots. He had a good job before Rochester Hills Incorporated, Geechy said, but he had to quit. "Who ever heard of a cilly idiot?"

Then Geechy ventured a prediction. "I'm going to win the Psychic of the Year Award in 1992," he said. In a moment of introspection, Geechy, a bachelor, confided to the audience that he was having prob-

lems with his girlfriend. "I asked her what I could do to improve our love life," he said. "Got any friends?" she asked.

The response from the audience reminded him of his love life, Geechy said. "Laughs in the bedroom and groans on stage."

LIVING THIS fast lane life of a comic in San Francisco is what he's always wanted, Geechy said. But the cosmopolitan life has prompted him to ask some probing questions, he said.

"Why does it cost \$500 to file

bankruptcy?" he asked.

"How come the penalty for skipping school is expulsion?" Geechy said. "And how come nobody works on Labor Day?"

The Geech said his travels also helped him find religion, or at least the Bible. "I really got into the Bible while I was at a motel," he said. "So I took it. I really liked it until I got to the part about 'Thou shalt not steal'."

Geechy wondered if the Christ Child missed out on much because his birthday was on Christmas.

While he didn't consider himself to be overly religious, Geechy said, he did give up his New Year's resolutions for Lent.

Although he's single, Geechy said he does have a child, "at least until the parents pay the ransom."

Given the tough neighborhood he grew up in, that's not far-fetched, Geechy said. "Gun shops in our

neighborhoods used to have 'Back to School' sales."

Geechy has appeared in nightspots such as Catch a Rising Star in New York and the Comedy Store in Hollywood. The 24-year-old has also been on shows like "Showbiz Today" on CNN. He won the 1988 Inland Empire Comedy Competition.

Perhaps the most sage bit of wisdom he'd ever received, however, came from his grandfather, Geechy said. The crazy-faced old gentleman looked at him solemnly and said in a clear voice, "Don't ever take advice from anybody."

Geechy got rousing applause when he finished. Whatever the crowd lacked in numbers, it made up with enthusiasm. Several asked for autographs.

Some had indeed come out just for Geechy. "I liked his innocence," said Jennifer Moore, who works in Rochester. A friend, Lynn McRobb, said she liked Geechy's naivete.

Diane Kaiser, a Rochester resident who went to junior high school with Geechy, said she liked his clean, offbeat sense of humor. "He's not like those guys who are filthy rather than funny," she said.

Asked what, if anything, would prompt him to give up comedy for a regular job, Geechy looked puzzled. "Maybe a radio job that paid \$60,000 a year to do what I'm doing right now," he said.

FOR THE time being, however, Geechy doesn't have to worry about that, according to Jettie. That Thursday crowd was small, but we were almost packed on Friday and Saturday," she said, referring to the final shows of his three-day stand. Geechy said although he makes a living, he's still looking for the big break that will put him in the category of a Steve Martin or get him on the Johnny Carson Show.

He expected his career to get a boost from his Friday appearance on the Showtime Comedy Club.

COMEDY CLUBS

Here are some listings of comedy clubs in our area. To let us know who is appearing at your club, send us the information: Comedy Listings, Observer & Eccentric, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

● **BEA'S COMEDY**
Darwin Hines will perform Friday-Saturday, April 14-15, at Bea's Comedy Kitchen, 541 Larned, Detroit. Showtimes are 8:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. For information, call 961-2581.

● **CHAPLIN'S EAST**
Mark Pila will appear Wednesday-Saturday, April 12-15, at Chaplin's East, 34244 Greenbeck, Fraser. Showtimes are 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and 8:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 792-1902.

● **CHAPLIN'S WEST**
Ben Creed will perform Tuesday-Saturday, April 11-15, at Chaplin's West, 16890 Telegraph Road, south of Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 533-8888.

● **COMEDY SPORTZ**
Comedy Sports at the Heidelberg will have improvisational comedy at 8:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. The club is at 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. Showtimes are 8:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. For reservations, call 965-8888.

● **JOEY'S**
Downtown Tony Brown will perform Wednesday-Saturday, April 12-15, at Joey's Comedy Club, 36071 Plymouth Road, west of Wayne Road, Livonia. Showtimes are 8 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Thursday is no smoking night. For information, call 261-0555.

● **LOONEY BIN**
Tony Hayes will perform Friday-Saturday, April 14-15, at The Looney, The Wolverine Lounge, 1655 Gingsberg, Walled Lake. For information, call 569-9374.

● **MAINSTREET**
Blake Clark will perform Friday-Saturday, April 14-15, at Mainstreet Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty, between Division and Fifth, Ann Arbor. Showtimes are 8:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. Tickets are \$13. For information, call 995-9080.

● **SIR LAFF-ALOTS**
Darwin Hines will perform with Chris Moss on Friday-Saturday, April 14-15, at Sir Laff-Alots Comedy Club, 26745 Michigan Ave., just

east of Inkster Road, Inkster. For information, call 561-1695.

● **COMEDY CASTLE**
Bobby Clayton will appear Tuesday-Saturday, April 11-15, at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle, 2593 Woodward, Berkley. Showtimes are 8:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and 8:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For reservations, call 542-9900.

● **STEVEN WRIGHT**
Steven Wright will perform at 8 p.m. Thursday, April 20, at the Power Center in Ann Arbor. For information, call 423-6666.

● **SANDRA BERNHARD**
Sandra Bernhard will perform at 8 p.m. Saturday, May 6, at the Power Center in Ann Arbor. For information, call 423-6666.

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