

Lazer laughs it up on stage, radio

By Julie Brown
staff writer

Comedian Gary Lazer is an early riser these days.

Lazer, 32, recently started working as a radio personality at WPLR-FM in New Haven, Conn. He and another stand-up comic do the morning drive time show.

Lazer has been on the job there for less than two months. He has no other experience in radio.

"None whatsoever, that's what's so exciting," he said. "So it's really kind of an interesting experience."

Rather than taking radio personalities and trying to make them funny, station staffers are having comedians work as radio personalities.

His radio program airs 8 to 10 a.m., "which is quite a change for me." He and the other comic do pre-recorded bits on a variety of subjects.

Lazer and his partner do some talking on the air and play rock and roll music. "It's very, very light and funny." They did a piece on what would happen at a Woodstock get-together in 1989. Such a gathering would include, for example, regular financial updates from the stage.

Lazer's originally from Florida, and moved to New York to attend New York University. He earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts with a concentration in theater.

Acting is part of Lazer's professional background. He stayed in New York City after graduation and did some work "off-off-off Broadway."

He started auditioning for comedy performances and has worked for about seven years in stand-up comedy, including three or four years as a full-time profession.

BEFORE THAT, Lazer waited on

tables, sold shoes, "the stereotypical kind of stuff in New York."

He's found that stage time is the key to perfecting his craft. Whether there are three people in the audience or 100, stage time is what counts.

Lazer's done work for MTV, including "Gary's Guide to Comedy." He's noticed that at parties, partygoers who make others laugh are encouraged to pursue careers in comedy. The work is often seen as being easier than it is.

"There's just been such a saturation of comedy everywhere," he said. And that's had an impact on audiences. Audiences used to be more receptive, but now there's more of a "make me laugh" attitude, Lazer said. He recommends that audience members pick and choose carefully. There are so many people working in comedy now, and some material is stolen.

"I think that's a danger in the business," he said. Lazer writes his own material, a job he finds both rewarding and difficult.

"That's the hardest part of the whole job. Performing is great." He bases his material in part on what he reads in newspapers. Personal observations form the basis of much of his work.

He writes about things that affect all of us, "dealing with everyday life. There's so much going on in the world right now. I think laughter is a way to release that."

CRIME, the weather and other subjects appear in Lazer's performances. He's found audiences are receptive to his approach.

His job at the radio station includes doing the news. Lazer's get-



Gary Lazer has found a new niche for his comedic talents — as an early morning radio deejay in New Haven, Conn.

ting a bit more topical in his comedy work, incorporating some of that news material.

His comedy work takes him throughout the country. On weekends, he must fly out Friday night and return Sunday.

"I like the Midwest area . . . Chicago, Michigan." He also enjoys audiences in New York and Los Angeles.

Lazer's found audiences in the South are the least receptive. He sensed hostility there, as if those people still held a grudge over having lost the Civil War.

He's getting used to working early morning hours at the radio station.

"My body clock is just getting adjusted. Now I'm getting into the groove," he said. "Actually, it's been a pleasant change for me."

He plans to stay at WPLR-FM, if ratings for the show are good. It's too early to know that just yet, but Lazer has no regrets about working in radio.

"Whatever happens, it's just been a great experience."

Gary Lazer will perform at 8:30 and 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 1-2, at the Mainstreet Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty, between Fifth and Division in Ann Arbor. For more information, call 996-9069.

COMEDY CLUB

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

BEA'S COMEDY KITCHEN
Jeff Brannen will perform with Tommy Chan and Tony Edwards Friday-Saturday, Sept. 1-2, at Bea's Comedy Kitchen, 541 Larned, Detroit. Showtimes are 9 p.m. and 11:15 p.m. For information, call 961-2581.

CHAPLIN'S EAST
Jay Charbonneau will appear Wednesday-Saturday, Aug. 30-Sept. 2, at Chaplin's East, 34244 Grosbeck, 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 PLYMOUTH
Ron Haney will appear Thursday, Aug. 31, at Chaplin's Plymouth in the Plymouth Radisson, 14707 Northville Road, Plymouth. For information, call 454-4693.

CHAPLIN'S WEST
John Rathbone will appear Tuesday-Saturday, Aug. 29-Sept. 2, at Chaplin's West, 16890 Telegraph, south of Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 533-8866.

HOLLY HOTEL
Reben Raben and Michael Bonner will perform with Steve Bell and Brent Cushman Thursday-Saturday, Aug. 31-Sept. 2, at Holly Hotel, 110 Battle Alley, Holly. Show times are 8:30 p.m. with additional 10:30 p.m. shows on Friday and Saturday. For

information, call 634-1891.

JOEY'S LIVONIA
Michael Blackman will perform along with Chris Rich Thursday-Saturday, Aug. 31-Sept. 2, at Joey's Comedy Club, 36071 Plymouth Road, Livonia. Showtimes are 9 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 8:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Saturday. For reservations, call 261-0555.

LOONEY BIN
Tim Butterfield will perform Friday-Saturday, Sept. 1-2, at the Wolverine Lounge and Looney Bin Comedy Club, 1655 Clegary, Walled Lake. Showtimes are 9 p.m. Friday and 8 and 10:15 p.m. Saturday. For information, call 669-9374.

LOONEY BIN TOO
Lowel Sanders will perform Friday-Saturday, Sept. 1-2, at The Looney Bin at The Rixy, I-94 and Haggerty. Showtimes are 9 p.m. Friday and 8 and 10 p.m. Saturday. There's a \$5 cover charge. For information, call 699-1829.

MISS KITTY'S
Al Katz will appear with Andrew Ford Thursday-Saturday, Aug. 31-Sept. 2, at Miss Kitty's Comedy Club, Long Branch Restaurant, 595 N. Lapeer Road, Oxford. Showtimes are 8 p.m. Thursday, 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 628-6500.

MAINSTREET
Gary Lazer will perform Friday and Saturday, Sept. 1-2, at Mainstreet Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-9069.

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MichCon-UW Torch Drive Run/Walk Celebrating 40 Years Of Caring

Sunday, September 17, 1989
HART PLAZA, DETROIT

DISTANCES AND TIMES:

5k Run (3.1 miles) — 9:00 a.m.
5k Walk (3.1 miles) — 9:05 a.m.
10k Run (6.2 miles) — 10:00 a.m.
400 Meter Run (1/4 mile) — 11:30 a.m.
(Families with children under 12 only)

LOCATION: Hart Plaza at Woodward and Jefferson in downtown Detroit.

COURSE: Starts near the Guardian Building at Congress and Griswold and finishes at Hart Plaza. Course maps will be sent to all pre-registered runners in their entry packet.

AWARDS: 10K: Top Male: \$1,000 U.S. Savings Bond. Top Female: \$1,000 U.S. Savings Bond. Top Male Master: \$500 U.S. Savings Bond. Top Female Master: \$500 U.S. Savings Bond. The top three finishers will win special commemorative plates. Medals will be awarded to the following finishers: Top 200 men and top 200 women, 39 years and older; under 75 men and 50 women, 40 years and older; top ten wheelers, and to all runners 60 years and older.

AWARDS: 5K RUN: Special commemorative plates to the top three male and female finishers. Medals to the

top 100 men and women finishers and the top ten wheelers.

AWARDS: 5K FITNESS WALK: This is not a race. Commemorative badges and certificates to all finishers.

OTHER AWARDS: Special award(s) to the five organizations with the most participants in all three events.

SPECIAL GIFT: A MichCon-United Foundation 40th Anniversary T-shirt will be given to all entrants.

ENTRY FEE: \$8.00 (non-refundable) if postmarked by September 7, 1989. \$3.00 for children 12 and under. All entries after September 7th are \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children, with late registration only taking place at Hart Plaza on Sunday, September 17th.

Checks should be made payable to MichCon-UW Torch Drive Run/Walk. Do not send cash.

Mail to: UW Torch Drive Run/Walk, 500 Griswold Street, 7th Floor, Detroit, MI 48226

NOTE: Race number and packet will be mailed one week prior to the event. All entries after September 7th are \$10.00 and will only take place on Hart Plaza after 2:30 a.m. on September 17, 1989.

MICHCON-UNITED WAY TORCH DRIVE RUN/WALK — OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

ENTRY FEE: \$8.00 (All entries after September 7th are \$10.00) \$3.00 for children 12 and under. (All entries after September 7th are \$5.00)

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PHONE _____ AGE (in 9/10/89) _____ SEX: M _____ F _____

EVENTS YOU ARE RUNNING: 10K ☐ 5K Run ☐ 5K Walk ☐ 400 Meter ☐ (Each team member must submit a separate entry form. Team captain must submit a complete list of team entries by September 7, 1989.)

WHEELER: To be signed by the athlete, or parent/guardian if under 18.

For and on behalf of the participant, the MichCon-UW Torch Drive Run/Walk, I agree and release all rights and claims for damages I might have against the MichCon-United Way Torch Drive Run/Walk, The City of Detroit, The State of Michigan, The Road Runners of America, The Athletics Congress, or other officials for injuries or damages sustained by my participation in said run/walk to include all sponsors, named and unnamed.

ATHLETE _____ PARENT/GUARDIAN (if under 18) _____

Entry cannot be accepted if waiver is not signed. Make checks payable to: MichCon-United Way Torch Drive Run/Walk, 500 Griswold Street, Detroit, Michigan 48226

Return to: United Way Torch Drive Run/Walk, 500 Griswold Street, Detroit, Michigan 48226

NOTE: The above listed entry fees do not include other costs for this event. These fees do not represent a donation to United Way. Local sponsors may have other costs.

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