

STREET CRACKS



Wayne Cotter has always admired the work of television-era comedians such as Alan King.

Comic gears act for TV

By Bob Sadler
special writer

Just when you thought all the comics in the world came from New York, here comes Wayne Cotter. Opa. He's from New York, too. But he was born there, not just transplanted by the necessities of comedic big time. Still, a lot of the comics roaming the American club circuit happen to be from the city that doesn't sleep, the Big Apple. Cotter just thinks the comedy factor is a matter of percentages. "There's a lot of people living in New York," Cotter said.

BORN IN the Bronx, Cotter shuns any comparison with that Brooklyn bad boy whose career has taken off like a rocket recently — Andrew "Dice" Clay. "That act of his... well never mind. I forgot for a minute that this is print," Cotter said.

Cotter has maintained a commitment to clean material through the years, and it has earned him regular status on "Late Night with Letter-

man" and appearances on the Showtime Comedy All-Stars and "The Tonight Show." He believes the television work has been a natural outgrowth of his approach to comedy.

"I'VE ALWAYS done my act like I was working on television," Cotter said. He mentioned how he leaves the microphone on the stand (something only a fellow comic would pick up on) and keeps the comedy squeaky clean.

He started developing the comedy technique at an early age, making an impression on family, friends and others.

"In fourth grade, my teacher called my mother in for a conference. I was terrified. I didn't know what I was doing wrong."

"My mom came home all excited because what he'd wanted to discuss was her kid's exceptional sense of humor."

By Cotter's teen years, his zeal for comedy became even more apparent.

"ALL THE kids back then were getting into Iron Butterfly and Mountain. I had comedy albums. I had a big clunky tape recorder that was my dad's."

"I used to hold the microphone to the TV and record the comedians, then listen to them over and over again. I had all of them memorized."

Among his favorite comics of that time were Robert Klein, Bob Newhart, Shelly Berman, Albert Brooks, Mel Brooks and Alan King. "If I could turn into another comedian, Alan King would be the guy."

When Cotter finished high school, an electrical engineering scholarship put him in Philadelphia — at the University of Pennsylvania.

He never got his degree but managed to get a day job in engineering. At night he performed at Philly's Comedy Works, one of the first places on the infant club circuit.

BY 1981, Cotter quit his day job. The turning point of Cotter's career came in 1987, when "Late Night with David Letterman" left a mes-

sage on his answering machine. He was on the show the next day and has become a regular.

Those appearances on "The Tonight Show" and Showtime (with Birmingham's own Tim Allen) also increased recognition of him.

Like all the comics around today, Cotter is riding the crest of the comedy boom, which has seen clubs spring up just about everywhere.

However, Cotter knows all good things must come to an end, and that eventually the club circuit will shrink, with just the better-run places surviving.

He's determined to still be standing on his comedic feet.

"There were comedians before (the boom), and there'll be comedians after it. I'm just trying to make sure I'm one of the guys still there."

Wayne Cotter will appear Friday and Saturday at Main Street Comedy Showcase in Ann Arbor. Call 996-9080 for information and reservations.

COMEDY CLUBS

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**
Jimmy Rhodes will perform with Downtown Tony Brown and Dan Logan Friday-Saturday, Sept. 15-16, at Bea's Comedy Kitchen, 541 Larned, Detroit. Show times are 9 and 11:15 p.m. For information, call 981-2581.

• **CHAPLIN'S EAST**
John Caponera will perform Wednesday-Saturday, Sept. 20-23, at Chaplin's East, 34244 Groesbeck, Fraser. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 792-1902.

• **CHAPLIN'S PLYMOUTH**
Dwight Slade will perform Thursday-Saturday, Sept. 20-23, at Chaplin's Plymouth in the Plymouth Radisson, 14707 Northville Road, Plymouth. For information, call 454-4680.

• **CHAPLIN'S WEST**
Ross Bennett will perform Tuesday-Saturday, Sept. 19-23, at Chaplin's West, 16890 Telegraph, south of Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 533-8866.

• **HOLLY HOTEL**
Downtown Tony Brown will perform along with Halley Panzer and Chris Jakeway will perform Thursday-Saturday, Sept. 21-23, 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**
Leo DeFore will perform along with Brent Cushman and Steve Bills Thursday-Saturday, Sept. 21-23, at Joey's Comedy Club, 36071 Plymouth Road, Livonia. Show times are 9 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Saturday. For reservations, call 251-0555.

• **LOONEY BIN**
Peter Berman will perform along with Tommy Chann and Stacy DuFord Thursday-Saturday, Sept. 21-23, at the Wolverine Lounge and Looney Bin Comedy Club, 1655 Glenbury, Walled Lake. Show times are 9 p.m. Friday and 8 and 10:15 p.m. Saturday. For information, call 669-9374.

• **LOONEY BIN TOO**
Mario! will perform Friday-Saturday, Sept. 22-23, at the Looney Bin at

the Roxy, I-94 and Haggerty. Show times 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**
At April will perform along with Garie Lewis Thursday-Saturday, Sept. 21-23, at Miss Kitty's Comedy Club, Long Branch Restaurant, 595 N. Lapeer Road, Oxford. Show times are 8 p.m. Thursday, 8 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 628-6500.

• **MAINSTREET**
Kirkland Teeple will perform Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 20-21. Tim Cavanaugh will perform Friday and Saturday, Sept. 22-23, at Mainstreet Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-9080.

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