

# Comedy and Coen: He's always wanted to do it

By Julie Brown  
staff writer

Comie Jack Coen has found it pretty difficult to avoid doing war-related material in recent weeks. At the same time, he doesn't want to hurt or offend people with family members in the Middle East.

"I wouldn't want my son there," said Coen, 32. "I don't mean to make light of their situation."

Coen, who lives about 40 minutes north of Los Angeles, isn't sure yet how he feels about U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf crisis.

"There's a part of me that just feels war is wrong."

He avoids telling offensive jokes about Arab-Americans.

"I don't want Arab bashing to become the new racism-in-America."

He tries to find the humor in a grim situation. In one part of his routine, he asks people to imagine what it would be like to be in Iraq right now. "I want them to see what I'm laughing at. I like to stay abreast of what's going on."

HE'S NOT sure people necessarily need comedy more so now than during peacetime.

"It'd be nice if they really needed it. When the war began, that could have been the case."

"They didn't want to hear about it, they wanted to escape it." The war's impact is severe for those with fami-

**'I don't put my family down. I don't praise them either. I've got to find humor.'**

— Jack Coen

ly members in the Middle East. For others, it's almost unreal, he said.

Coen comes to the Detroit area about once every six months or so. He'll be at Chaplin's Comedy Club West Feb. 19-23.

"I always have a good time at Chaplin's. It's a great club." He's found audiences there responsive.

Coen, who grew up in New Jersey, has been working full time as a stand-up comedian for more than 10 years.

"It's just something I always wanted to do." He began in the mid-1970s, performing at a bar in New Jersey while in high school. That experience wasn't the greatest.

"It was just really horrible," Coen said. "A few years went by before I did it again."

HE WAS taking night classes at Middlesex County College in New Jersey, and did some performing at the student center. At 21, Coen headed west to Phoenix, Ariz., on his motorcycle.

"That's when I really started doing stand-up a lot." He stayed in

Arizona for several years, and took some classes at Mesa Community College.

Comie Richard Belzer came through Phoenix and told Coen he'd get more work back east. Coen took that advice, moved to New York City and began to work regularly as a comic.

His work now takes him throughout the U.S. Coen's performed in Hawaii and the Bahamas, and kept vacationers entertained on a cruise ship that traveled from Los Angeles to Mexico and back.

"It was really an enjoyable experience and I would do it again." Coen was able to take his family along on the cruise.

He and his wife have a 5-year-old son and another child due in March. Coen's family does some traveling with him when he's on the road.

Family situations find their way into his material.

"I don't put my family down. I don't praise them either. I've got to find humor."

HE TALKS about having played

sports when he was growing up, and how that compares to watching his son play.

Coen's done TV work. "I've done just about every show, including The Tonight Show." He's appeared on "Star Search" and various TV comedy programs.

His future includes polishing his craft.

"I want to be a really good stand-up comedian, which takes a lot of dedication."

He'd like to branch out into acting, and has taken acting classes. He's interested in working on stage with other people and in evoking reactions other than laughter from audience members.

"Ultimately, I would just like to be good."

In his free time, Coen enjoys playing racquetball and tennis.

"I can sit and throw a football all day long with anyone." He runs, plays basketball and enjoys other sports. Coen's a New York Giants fan and won a hot bed made last August when the Giants won the Super Bowl this year.

Jack Coen will appear Feb. 19-23 at Chaplin's Comedy Club West, 16501 Telegraph, south of Six Mile in Detroit. Performances will be 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday Feb. 19-21, 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 22-23. For reservations call 313-555-5500.



Jack Coen, who grew up in New Jersey, has been working full time as a stand-up comedian for more than 10 years. Comedy, he said, "is just something I always wanted to do."

## COMEDY CLUBS

Here are listings of some 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.

### SECOND CITY

Second City Touring Company will perform six shows a week through Sunday, Feb. 22-24, at the Attie Theatre, Third Avenue and West Grand Boulevard, Detroit. Showtimes are 7:30 and 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 2 and 7 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$19.50. For information, call 875-8284.

### CHAPLIN'S EAST

Willie Tyler & Lester will appear along with Jay Vermetti and Sean Hunter Tuesday-Saturday, Feb. 19-23, at Chaplin's East, 34244 Groesbeck, Fraser. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and 6:30 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Sat-

urday. For information, call 792-1992.

### CHAPLIN'S PLYMOUTH

Darwin Hines will appear along with Andrew Ford Wednesday-Saturday, Feb. 27-March 2, at Chaplin's Plymouth, 14707 Norville. Show times are 8:30 Wednesday and Thursday; 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 454-4680.

### CHAPLIN'S WEST

Jack Coen will appear with Dave Klein and John Heffron Tuesday-Saturday, Feb. 19-23, at Chaplin's West, 16850 Telegraph, one block south of Six Mile. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday; 6 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 533-8866.

### MAINSTREET

Taylor Mason will perform Friday-Saturday, Feb. 22-23, at Main-Street Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Lib-

erty, Ann Arbor. Show times are 8:30 and 11 p.m. Friday and 7, 9 and 11 p.m. Saturday. For information, call 956-9080.

### COMEDY CASTLE

Tim Lilly will perform Tuesday-Wednesday, Feb. 19-20, and Louise DuArt will perform with Tim Rowlands Thursday-Saturday, Feb. 22-23, at the Comedy Castle, 269 E. Fourth, Royal Oak. Show times are 8:30 Monday through Thursday and 4:30 and 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For reservations, call 542-9900.

### BEA'S COMEDY CLUB

Tony Hayes Toni Roni and Downtown Tony Brown will perform Friday-Saturday, Feb. 22-23, at Bea's Comedy Club, 541 Larned, Detroit. Show times are 8:30 and 11 p.m. For information, call 961-2381.

### LAUGHTER HOURS

Rueben Rueben will perform Wednesday, Feb. 20, at Hurley's in Northfield Hills, 5800 Crooks Road, at I-75. For information, call 872-2100.

### JOEY'S LIVONIA

Joe Dunkell will perform along with Gilda Hanner Wednesday-Saturday, Feb. 20-23, at Joey's Comedy Club, Plymouth Road between Wayne and Livonia roads. Live-on Show times are 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, 6 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 4:30 and 10:30 p.m. Saturday. For information, call 252-0557.

### JOEY'S ALLEN PARK

Norm Stult will perform with Al Langston Wednesday-Saturday, Feb. 20-23, at Joey's Comedy Club and Sports, 15224 Southfield Road, Allen Park. Show times are

8:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and 6 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 382-7047.

### JOEY'S AT THE ROXY

Klaus Meyer will perform Wednesday-Saturday, Feb. 20-23, at The Roxy, Haggerty Road near I-94, Belleville. For information, call 669-1425.

### MISS KITTY'S

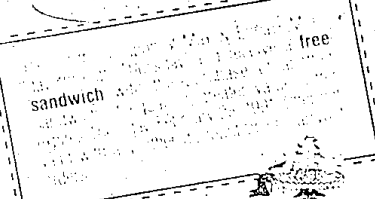
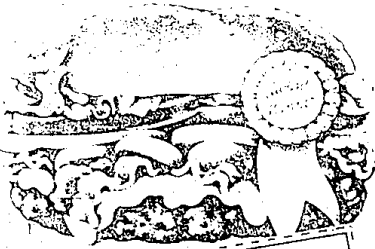
Steve Kimbrough will perform

with Paul Diglio Thursday-Friday, Feb. 21-22, at Miss Kitty's Comedy Club, Long Beach, 595 N. Lapeer Road, Oxford. For information, call 628-6500.

### LOONEY BIN

Bill Washburn will perform with guests Brian McFee Friday-Saturday, Feb. 22-23, at the Looney Bin Comedy Club, 1655 Glenway, Walled Lake. For information, call 669-5574.

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**"KING RALPH"**  
John Goodman stars as Ralph Jones, a Las Vegas piano player and a distant relative of the royal throne who becomes King of England after a freak accident that accidentally wipes out the royal family.

QUIZ: Name the weekly television sitcom that John Goodman co-stars on: A) Cheers B) Roseanne C) Night Court

ENTRY FORM:

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