

# Edison's humor lights them up

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Comedy for Dave Edison is something he can plug in and flip a switch.

His style is definitely state-of-the-art. The punline is the transistor and laughter is measured in kilowatts.

"Technology has gone too far, too fast," said Edison, who worked at Thursday through Saturday at Joe's Comedy Club in Livonia. "I think we're having trouble keeping up. We're getting a lot of things that we didn't even ask for."

"There are mistakes today that you can make in your microwave. Does it make any sense?"

Instead of "McDonald's jokes" or lines about "my wife is so-and-so," Edison got a lightbulb of an idea to try something different. One joke about a video game started him on the way down the circuit breaker path of comedy.

Today Edison culls science journals such as Popular Science and Omni, looking for gadgets or new technology they are ready to spring on.

His brand of humor has won them over in clubs and Radio Shack's nationwide. He's performed on television's "Late Night with Joan Rivers"

and "Robert Klein Show." The Manhattan resident started in comedy after graduating from Lehman College. He is also working as director and co-producing of the TV show "Comedy USA."

Edison's material, though, doesn't require an electronics diagram or a spare with a slide rule and six sharpened pencils in his pocket to comprehend. He did work for three months at a Radio Shack. "I was the guy behind the counter who said, 'No sir, the batteries are in back-wards.'"

BASICALLY, Edison's comedy simply pokes fun at the high-tech world we live in.

Like for instance, musical greeting cards. "Do we really need them?" asked Edison. "I mean a sympathy card shouldn't play 'Another Bites the Dust.'"

Edison admits he's tackling an odd subject. "I get an occasional stare like the proverbial RCA dog," he said, "but I dance around it. I can usually pull the rabbit out of the hat."

The rabbit rears its head more often than not. Since Edison joined the comedy ranks 10 years ago, things have grown more competitive.

There's twice the number of clubs and twice the number of comedians. And twice the number of comedians



Dave Edison gets a lot of his material from today's technology.

doing the same stale material. Edison's tapped into a different outlet.

"Electronic companies are writing my material for me," he said. "I performed at the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago recently. Between sets, I took a stroll around the floor. It's amazing the things they are coming up with today."

"I don't know if they're giving me toys to play with or material to make jokes with."

Dave Edison will perform Thursday through Saturday, July 13-15, at Joe's Comedy Club, 36771 Plymouth Road, east of Livonia, Livonia. For information, call 261-0555.

# Comedian keeps it clean onstage

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Wash your hands and face. Clean comedy is Mike Toomey's speciality.

Stories about how his mother used to buy generic cereal instead of the real "Tony the Tiger" Frosted Flakes is about as risqué as it gets when the Chicago native takes the stage. Swear words? Oh my. Tsk. Tsk. Tsk.

Actually Toomey, 26, doesn't take a pious attitude about comedy. Profanity spiked humor is simply not his forte.

"That's what works for me," said Toomey, who will be performing at Miss Kitty's Comedy Club Friday and Saturday, July 14-15. "The less people you offend, the more people can enjoy you."

Simple enough. Anecdotes about growing up and living in the big city — in his case Chicago — are things many people can relate to.

His act also includes impressions of TV sit-com characters from "My Three Sons" and "Andy Griffith." Just nice stuff. Not the kind of thing Aunt Bea would slap your face for.

Today, when the vile humor of Sam Kinison appears to be in vogue, things would appear tough for an uptight comedian toting the pure line. Not so, according to Toomey. "Actually, I think it's all positive,"

Toomey said. "If you're clean, you can work anywhere."

IN TOOMEY'S case, that means even performing in front of his family at 5 years old with impressions of Jack Webb and Alfred Hitchcock. He started out professionally seven years ago, performing at "open mike" nights at Chicago comedy clubs.

Since then, Toomey has appeared at clubs in the Midwest and South. He also won third place on WGN-TV's "Comedy Bowl," taking home \$1,000 prize.

Those are the nice gigs. Toomey can also tell you about performing in front of uninterested students in college cafeterias during lunch and half-empty nightclubs.

"I guess there's been a few," he said about the less-than-standing-ovation nights. "I had this three-night job at a hotel and the same people would be there each night. And they didn't even laugh the first night... They just sat there and stared at us."

Of course, all comedians can relate similar stories. Toomey didn't expect anything different, jumping into the comedy business at 18 after graduating from high school. College was only a passing thought as the stage is where he wanted to earn his degree.



Mike Toomey's humor centers on growing up and doing impressions of TV characters like "Opie" from the "Andy Griffith Show."

Mom and dad, the people who make up a portion of his act, didn't agree with his decision.

"They were apprehensive at first because they didn't know the business. Neither did I for that matter," he said. "Seven years later, they've learned to accept it."

Mike Toomey will perform Thursday through Saturday, July 13-15, at Miss Kitty's Comedy Club, 895 N. Lapeer Road, Oxford. For information, call 628-4500. Also, he will perform Wednesday through Saturday, July 19-22, at Chaplin's East, 34244 Groesbeck, Fraser. For information, call 792-1902.

## 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 KITCHEN**  
Altrero Shelton will perform along with Steve Beils and Doreen Tony Brown on Friday and Saturday, July 14-15, 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**  
Taylor Mason will appear Wednesday-Saturday, July 12-15, at Chaplin's East, 34244 Groesbeck, 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**

Steve Balrd will appear Thursday-Saturday, July 13-15, at Chaplin's Plymouth in the Plymouth Hilton, 14707 Northville Road, Plymouth. For information, call 454-4680.

**CHAPLIN'S WEST**  
Willie Farrell will appear Tuesday-Saturday, July 11-15, at Chaplin's West, 15890 Telegraph, south of Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 535-8866.

**HOLLY HOTEL**  
Lowell Sanders will perform along with Tim Harrod and Mike Orenstein Thursday through Saturday, July 13-15, 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 634-1819.

**JOEY'S WYANDOTTE**  
Dave Edison will perform on Sunday, July 16, at Shots on the Water, 207 Biddle Ave., Wyandotte. Showtime is 9:30 p.m. For information, call 281-SHOT.

**LOONEY BIN**  
Danny Ballard, along with Skeeter Murray and Steve Billatzer, will appear Friday-Saturday, July 14-15, at the Wolverine Lounge and Looney Bin Comedy Club, 1555 Glencair, Walled Lake. Showtimes are 9 p.m. Friday and 8 and 10:15 p.m. Saturday. For information, call 669-9374.

**LOONEY BIN II**  
Mark Fenske, Kenny Mitchell and Danny Logan will perform Friday-Saturday, July 14-15, at The Looney Bin at The Roxy, 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.

**MAINSTREET**  
Peter Berman will perform Wednesday and Thursday, July 12-13, and Tim Ales will perform on Friday and Saturday, July 14-15, at the Mainstreet Comedy Castle, 314 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Showtimes are 8:30 and 11 p.m. For reservations, call 996-9080.

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