

STREET CRACKS



By Susan Steinnueller
staff writer

Taylor Mason often shares center stage with a puppet, Romeo. The act allows Mason to use the ventriloquism skills he has been honing since he was a child.

It also allows Romeo to be gainfully employed, said Mason, noting that jobs for puppets are hard to come by. Romeo, in the past, has been forced to work as a mannequin in a Sears window.

"There's got to be at least one puppet's job," Mason said he told Romeo. "He told me, Dan Quayle's already got it."

MASON, A comedian for six years, will appear at Chaplin's West this week, the second time he has appeared for the Chaplin's chain.

The New Jersey-based Mason travels all over the country to do his act. He has appeared in nearly 100 clubs coast to coast, including the Comedy Cafe in Washington, D.C., the Punchline in Atlanta and San Francisco, and Stand Up in New York.

He has also performed in theaters, including the famed Second City in Chicago and the Paul Sills Story Theater in Chicago.

His television credits include ap-

pearances on the "Today" show, and he has been seen in shows on cable and network television, including the Showtime Comedy Club network.

He has performed everywhere from "bikers' bars" to "Boy Scouts' banquets."

"I like working little clubs," he said. "I really enjoy doing my act. I'd probably do it anywhere. I just like to work. I enjoy performing."

MASON, WHO holds a master's degree in advertising from Northwestern University, is a "well educated" comedian.

Upon graduation, he decided to write jokes instead of ads, because "I didn't want to write 'Nut'n'Honey' commercials."

Nevertheless, his education has paid off.

"I studied agriculture and communications as an undergrad, which means I can talk to animals. This comes in handy when I play many of the so-called 'comedy clubs' in America," he said.

MASON STARTED to perform comedy while still in graduate school in Chicago, between 1981 and 1983. He performed on a regular basis at Second City, where many big names in comedy got their start.

"There's a lot of big names that came out of Second City — but I'm not one of them," he said.

After graduation, he worked as an emcee at Zanies in Chicago, introducing comedy acts.

Mason and his wife, Marsia, then made a "career move" to New York, where he further honed his skills in clubs.

The couple then moved to New Jersey, where they have lived for two years.

IT'S A long way from Ottawa, Ill. Mason grew up in a town so small that he said "everybody got to be mayor."

He describes his style of comedy as "observational." That means that he makes jokes about "everything," he said. Lately, the economy has been the target of many of his jokes.

"You probably know that we have a \$31 trillion debt. That's pretty bad. We couldn't even get a Visa card."

POLITICS ALSO provides fodder for many of his jokes. But Mason said he won't make fun of Barbara Bush, whom he admires.

Mason's show is spiced up with his ventriloquism act — "there aren't too many ventriloquists out there," — and he sings and plays the piano.

Mason plans to continue to travel the country doing comedy.

His wife is supportive, he said, although, "I don't know if either one of us knew how much time it would take."

He looks forward to appearing in Michigan again.

"I like Detroit," he said. "You can't beat Michigan — the giant hand state."

Taylor Mason will appear at Chaplin's West, 16890 Telegraph Road, Detroit, Tuesday-Saturday, Sept. 5-9. For reservations, call 533-8866.

Oh, Romeo!
He laughs it up with a puppet

'I studied agriculture and communications as an undergrad, which means I can talk to animals.'

— Taylor Mason

Taylor Mason doesn't mind sharing the stage with a puppet. After all, Romeo is a part of a comedy act that features observational humor.

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, 36231 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

BEA'S COMEDY KITCHEN
A.J. Jamal will perform with Mike Bonner and Edward Phillips Friday-Saturday, Sept. 8-9, at Bea's Comedy Kitchen, 541 Larned, Detroit. Show times are 9 p.m. and 11:15 p.m. For information, call 961-2581.

CHAPLIN'S EAST
Ronnie Bullard will perform with Michael Blackman and Nick Paredes Wednesday-Saturday, Sept. 6-8, at Chaplin's East, 34244 Groesbeck, Fraser. Show times 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
Elair Shannon will perform along with Brent Aichison and Roland Kimble Thursday-Saturday, Sept. 7-9, at Chaplin's Plymouth in the Plymouth Radisson, 14707 Northville Road, Plymouth. For information, call 454-4660.

CHAPLIN'S WEST
Taylor Mason will perform along with Nancy Redman and Jennie McNally Tuesday-Saturday, Sept. 5-9, at Chaplin's West, 16890 Telegraph, south of Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 533-8866.

HOLLY HOTEL

Norm Stolts will perform along with Bill Bauer and Keith Ruff Thursday-Saturday Sept. 7-9, 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
Downtown Tony Brown will perform along with Tim Herrod and Tim Fryer Thursday-Saturday, Sept. 7-9, at Joey's Comedy Club, 3071 Plymouth Road, Livonia. Show times 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
Mike Oresteta will perform along with Joe Washburn and Glida Hauser Friday-Saturday, Sept. 8-9,

at the Wolverine Lounge and Looney Bin Comedy Club, 1655 Gengary, Walter Lake. Show times are 9 p.m. Friday and 8 and 10:15 p.m. Saturday. For information, call 669-9374.

LOONEY BIN TOO
Rabla Rubla will perform Friday-Saturday, Sept. 8-9, at the Looney Bin at The Roxy, 1-94 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
Kirk Nolan will perform along with Brad Nelson Thursday-Saturday, Sept. 7-9, at Miss Kitty's Comedy Club, Long Branch Restaurant, 595 N. Lapeer Road, Oxford. Show

times are 8 p.m. Thursday, 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 628-6500.

MAINSTREET
Ken Sevara will perform Friday and Saturday, Sept. 8-9, at Mainstreet Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. For information, call 926-9080.

RIDLEY'S COMEDY CASTLE
Glenn Hirsch will perform Tuesday-Saturday, Sept. 5-9, at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle, 2593 Woodward, Berkeley. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday and 8:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For reservations, call 542-9900.



THE Observer & Eccentric NEWSPAPERS FAMILY FITNESS DAY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1989
9:00 A.M.—3:30 P.M.
Middle Rouge Parkway
(Edward Hines Drive)

The Parkway will be closed to all traffic from Outer Drive to Haggerty for the safety of all participants

...9:00 a.m. Run-Walk-Bikathon—Bring the entire family and enjoy scenic Hines Drive. Everyone participating will be entered into our prize drawings. Check in by 2:30 p.m. at Nankin Mills, Merriman Hollow or Haggerty.

GRAND PRIZE

Trip for two to Mackinac Island for 1990 Labor Day Bridge Walk donated by Wayne County Park System

ACTIVITIES AT NANKIN MILLS:

- ...1:00 P.M. What's new in running?—Randy Step, 1989 Michigan Runner of the Year Parkway Art—Kids create chalk drawings using Edward Hines Drive as their canvas
- ...1:30 P.M. Bicycling Trends—Speaker from the Michigan Bike Federation Big Wheel Grand Prix—Sprint races for all ages (bring your own big wheel)
- ...2:00 P.M. Walking for Exercise—Patricia Donahue, Physical Education Director, Livonia Family YMCA
- Diaper Derby—A crawling race to crown our King and Queen (crawlers only)
- ...2:15 P.M. Toddler Trot—Races for five and under
- ...2:45 P.M. Prize drawings—Including Mackinac trip and tennis shoes

