

STREET CRACKS

Perfect fit

Norm Stulz blends comedy and family life

By Loraine McClain
Staff writer

Michigan born and bred, Norm Stulz says being a professional comedian is the best of two worlds. "I can really write my own life," said the father of three teenagers. "If I was going to have to miss the birthday party or the Halloween play, it didn't matter if I was two miles away or in Los Angeles — or if I was working as a pharmacist or on stage."

Now, as a full time comedian I have turned down shows to talk to the kids' drama class and I have been able to book shows at times and places to dovetail into my family life."

His folks live in Traverse City now, so six months ago Stulz booked himself a stint in Traverse City Comedy Club over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. A sister in Farmington Hills, a sister in Plymouth, a sister in Traverse City and his own family from Holly all were able to celebrate the holiday together and he didn't have to take the weekend off.

"Many, many times my work in Florida has been planned around the kids' vacations, so they can enjoy the beach," said Stulz, who comes to Chaplain's West for five days of humorous storytelling Tuesday through Saturday, Dec. 12-16. Showtime is 8:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, and 8 and 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

"He won in the contest sponsored by Johnny Walker last year and he's been moving through the ranks at a pretty fast pace ever since," said Bob Hargus of Chaplain's West.

OF THAT Stulz said, "I am just now becoming recognized on a national scale. I am an overnight success that started in '81."

The success has come with his being a storyteller.

"I take you out of your world and bring you into mine, so of course, there is a lot about my family and my teenagers in the material," he said. "There are no one liners and no put downs."

"I have a one hour show — standard is 45 minutes — and the mate-

rial doesn't change so much as it just keeps growing. The material is proven and the show consistently gets a good response."

Stulz' penchant for comedy started when he was in the second grade in Lodge Elementary School in Detroit.

That was when he wrote his first comedy skit and that was when "I fell in love with the laughter."

"My first skit was a success," he said.

In the fifth grade he adopted Dickens' "Christmas Carol" into a comedy and the faculty liked it so much, it was incorporated into the school's holiday program that season.

"I was never the class clown — the class clown interrupts the class," he said. "I was the class comedian. I embellished whatever it was with laughter, and I was always liked by the teachers."

His love for entertaining, comedy, music, playing the guitar, never stopped.

In the eighth grade, at Murphy Junior High School, he started going steady with Sharon. And after gradu-

ation from Redford High School, he married his childhood sweetheart.

IT WAS AT that time, Stulz entered Wayne State University's College of Pharmacy, a profession he has never entirely given up.

"I still have a good working relationship with Perry Drugs," he said. "I can call them up any time any where I am and ask if they need me. More often than not they say yes. It sure is a heck of a lot better than sitting in a hotel for three or four days not doing a thing."

"Or if I wanted to stay home altogether for a while I can go to work for Perry's. I told you I had it all, didn't I?"

During the transition period from full-time pharmacist to full-time comedian, there was "a lot of moonlighting and a lot of 16-minute shows for \$20," he said.

Now he is booked solid into July 1990 and consistently plays the A clubs — Dangerfield's in New York, A Comedy Store in Los Angeles, Punchline in New Orleans and Chaplain's in Detroit.

Norm Stulz has the best of both worlds — performing in the best comedy clubs and having a family life.

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

Tim Butterfield, Tim Lilly and Downtown Tony Brown will perform Friday and Saturday, Dec. 15-16, at Bea's Comedy Kitchen, 541 Larned, Detroit. Show times are 8:30 and 11 p.m. For information, call 961-2581.

• CHAPLAIN'S EAST

T.C. Hatter will perform along with Tim Pryor and Jim Villanucci Wednesday through Saturday, Dec. 13-16, at Chaplain's East, 3424 Gruesbeck, 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 792-1992.

• CHAPLAIN'S WEST

Norm Stulz will perform with Randy O'Brien Tuesday through Saturday, Dec. 12-16, at Chaplain's West, 16899 Telegraph, south of Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 533-8866.

• CHAPLAIN'S PLYMOUTH

Carl Strong will perform with Steve Iott and Stacey Duford at Chaplain's Plymouth in the Plym-

outh Radisson, 14707 Northville Road, Plymouth. For information, call 454-4680.

• MAINSTREET

Jeff Nease will perform Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 13-14 and Jerry Elliott Friday and Saturday, Dec. 15-16, at Mainstreet Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, 8:30 and 11 p.m. Friday and 7, 9 and 11 p.m. Saturday. For information, call 996-9080.

• JOEY'S LIVONIA

Gary Hardwick along with Ruben Hudson and Danny Gray will perform Wednesday through Saturday, Dec. 13-16, at Joey's Comedy Club, 36071 Plymouth, east of Levan, Livonia. Show times are 9 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Saturday. For reservations, call 261-0555.

• HOLLY HOTEL

Sheila Kaye will perform with Jeff Hefron and Harry Artie Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 14-16, at Holly Hotel, 110 Battle Alley, Holly. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Thursday and 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 634-1891.

• JOEY'S ALLEN PARK

Tim Allen will appear Wednesday through Saturday, Dec. 13-16, at Joey's Allen Park, Southfield Road. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and 8 and 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 382-7041.

• MISS KITTY'S

Van Gunther and Dan Dillon will perform Thursday-Saturday, Dec.

14-16, 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.

• LOONEY BIN

Kirk Noland with special guests Ken Brown and Karl Anthony will perform Thursday-Saturday, Dec. 14-16, at the Wolverine and Looney Bin Restaurant and Comedy Club, 1655 Glengary, Walled Lake. Show times are 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 8 and 10:15 p.m. Saturdays.

For more information, call 669-9374.

• LOONEY BIN TOO

Brent Cushman will perform Friday-Saturday, Dec. 15-16, at the Looney Bin Too at the Roxy, 1-94 and Haggerty, Belleville. For reservations, call 699-1829.



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