

STREET CRACKS

He's comedy's 'Good Sport'

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Louie Anderson is a walking help book with pages turned by laughter.

Anderson talks openly, humorously about his girth that was up to 410 pounds on a six-foot frame at one time.

He's written a poignant book, "Dear Dad," filled with letters to the stand-up comedian who to his alcoholic father that is now in paperback.

On stage, Anderson muses about his addiction to food. He's not vile or mean. He's not slimmer with repressed anger like a Roseanne Barr. Louie is Louie.

Which is saying something in these times of hiding behind facades.

"You either have humor or hatred," Anderson said in a telephone interview. "I wasn't good at the hatred part."

"You go through tons of shame coming from a dysfunctional family. Shame in this country is what keeps us from our real potential. We're a religion-based country and that religion keeps us under a constant shame blanket."

"I think the '90s have changed that and people are getting into recovery and that's the new religion. . . . A lot of the cycles were broken in the '90s."

Anderson continues to break a few cycles of his own. So far, he's shed 70 pounds in attempt to become healthy ("I know when they ask me to do the Nike ads that I've reached my goal weight," and to kick a compulsive eating disorder).

AND, AFTER this year, the St. Paul, Minn., native will take a year off from stand-up to concentrate on two films he's writing. He plans to

star in one of them.

Yet, it just seems just like yesterday when Louie Anderson was one of several comedians displaying his deadpan humor on "Rodney Dangerfield's Ninth Annual Young Comedians Special." The show featured the likes of then rising stars Rita Rudner, Sam Kinison and Bob Sagel. The HBO special first aired in 1985.

Anderson laughs at the irony, mentioning he just had lunch with Dangerfield and is touring with Rudner.

"That group of comedians was the last group of comedians really to make it I felt. I know there's the old time guys, classic comics like Hope, Carson and King. And then there was the new era that came along in the early '80s that is the stable of comedy today like Leno, Letterman, Williams and all those people."

"Then you have a new group of comics coming up. I don't know where they're going. There's not too many people with definite style. I see them copying style of the people of the '80s."

ANDERSON IS not easy to emulate, simply because his humor is so personal. Things have been that way since day one when a group of friends dared him to jump on stage at a Minneapolis comedy club.

Within six months, Anderson was completely transfixed by the allure of stand up. He quit his job counseling emotionally disturbed children, instead touring the Midwest college circuit.

He then hooked up with the master of the one-liner Henry ("Take my wife . . . please.") Youngman. He wrote for Youngman, who responded by giving the upstart comedian a sterling recommendation to the comedy brethren. He also gave An-



Louie Anderson doesn't have a familiar name in the Detroit area, but he does have a familiar face as a result of commercials he's done for The Sports Authority.

derman a bit of advice: Keep it clean.

"If you can be funny and clean, it's to your advantage."

Television beckoned, especially after Anderson's shining debut on "Tonight Show" in 1984 when Johnny Carson asked him to return for a bow.

He also landed small roles in films such as a fast food employee in "Coming to America."

One aspect of media Anderson hasn't explored until recently is

commercials. He is seen in this market, touting the wares of The Sports Authority.

Louie Anderson appears tonight (Monday, July 1) as part of "Budd Friedman's Night at the Improv" at Pine Knob, Sashabaw Road and I-75, Clarkston. Also appearing will be Mike Binder, Joe Nipote, Bobby Collins and Ron Pearson. Tickets are \$24.50 pavilion and \$7 for lawn. For information, call 377-8200.

COMEDY CLUBS

Here are listings of some comedy clubs in the area. To let us know who is appearing at your club, send the information to: Comedy Listings, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

● JUDY TENUTA

Judy Tenuta will perform Friday, July 5, at Phoenix Plaza Amphitheater, Saginaw and Water streets, Pontiac. Tickets are \$10 for reserved seats and \$5 for lawn. For information, call 952-5017.

● CHAPLIN'S EAST

Kirk Noland will appear with Vince Valenzuela Tuesday through Saturday, July 2-6, at Chaplin's East, 34244 Groesbeck, Fraser. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday; 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 792-1902.

● CHAPLIN'S WEST

Darwin Hines will appear with Mario and J.R. Hemick Tuesday through Saturday, July 2-6, at Chaplin's West, 16890 Telegraph Road, one block south of Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 533-8866.

● COMEDY CASTLE

Tim Stagle will appear with Downtown Tony Brown Tuesday-Saturday, July 2-6 (closed on July 4), at the Comedy Castle, 269 E. Fourth, Royal Oak. Show time is 8:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and 8:30 and 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For reservations, call 542-9900.

● JOEY'S ALLEN PARK

Ruben Ruben will perform Wednesday-Saturday, July 3-6, at Joey's Comedy Club and Sports Emporium, 15246 Southfield Road, Allen Park. Show times are 9 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday; 8:30 and 10:45 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 382-7041.

● MISS KITTY'S

Richard Chasler will perform with Jason Dixon Friday-Saturday, June 27-28, at Miss Kitty's Comedy Club, Long Branch, 593 N. Lapeer Road, Oxford. For information, call 628-6500.

● MAINSTREET

John Tambirino will appear Friday-Saturday, July 5-6, at Main-Street Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Show times are 8:30 and 11 p.m. Friday and 7, 9 and 11 p.m. Saturday. For information, call 996-9080.

● BEA'S COMEDY CLUB

Downtown Tony Brown will appear with Skeeter Murry and Dan Logan will perform Friday-Saturday, July 5-6, at Bea's Comedy Club, 541 Larned, Detroit. Show times are 8:30 and 11 p.m. For information, call 961-2581.

● LOONEY BIN

Hall and Brandt will appear with Lisa Glick and Rick Haggatt on Friday-Saturday, July 5-6, at The Jakes For Steak and Looney Bin Comedy Club, 1655 Glegary, Walled Lake. For reservations and show times, call 669-9374.

● DUFFY'S

The Bob Pasch Comedy Show will perform 9 and 11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays during June at Duffy's Waterfront Inn, 8635 Cooley Lake Road, Union Lake. For reservations, call 553-9469.

● PINE KNOB

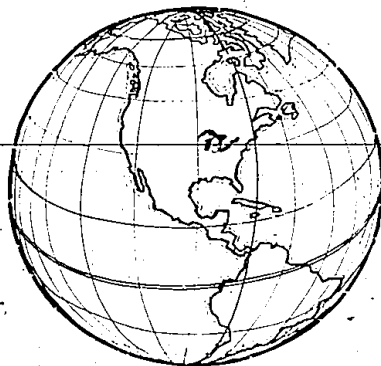
The New Pine Knob Music Theatre Series No. 1 will feature Don Rickles with Toni Tennille, July 9; and Alan King with Paula Poundstone, Aug. 7. Series No. 14 features Budd Friedman's "Night at the Improv" with Louie Anderson, Joe Nipote, Mike Binder, Bobby Collins and Ron Pearson, July 1; Jay Leno, July 24; and George Carlin with America, July 25. For information, call 377-8200.

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