

# "Yuk Yuk's is not an obscure love position"

By WARREN CLEMENTS  
 "Yuk Yuk's is not a Chinese food place. It's a place for Canadian comics. It's not an obscure Oriental love position. It's a place for young comics to go, grow, and become one with the universe."  
 So much for the introduction.

Mark Breslin, founding father of Yuk Yuk's, turned the microphone over to the first of five struggling stand-up comics playing at his establishment. (The line-up varies from Wednesday night to Wednesday night, but they all stand up, and most of them are struggling.)

The youthful patrons sitting in the basement of the community hall at 519 Church sit expectantly, awaiting the new routines.

"Cockroaches are really clean creatures. I mean, you always find them in sinks and bathtubs."

Well, maybe it's not terrific, but nobody's expecting the earth. Yuk Yuk's has been open since June, and the comics who grace the stage have been gradually improving. People don't groan out loud anymore.

"When Ted Woloshyn did his first act," recalls Breslin, "I sat in the back with my knuckles turning white, wrinding my teeth to powder and saying to myself, get this jerk out of here. But he's improved tremendously."

To the point, in fact, where a week ago yesterday he was given a chance to headline the act. After a few of his colleagues did their five to ten-minute bits, Woloshyn had the chance to carry on a twenty or

thirty-minute routine. He won't give George Carlin any sleepless nights, but then he's just starting out, and who cares about Carlin anyway?

"Cockroaches are really sociable, too. When you step on one cockroach, ten other ones come to its funeral."

That wasn't Woloshyn. That was Tony Molesworth, who gets a chance to headline on December 15. That's the way Breslin operates things; if you prove you can handle the short bits, you get a chance to try a long routine. If you fall flat on your face, you creep back to the land of short bits until you get your act together.

Yuk Yuk's charges two dollars, which patrons pay, some unhesitatingly and some reluctantly.

"You're sort of torn," confided one regular over a cup of coffee. "On the one hand, you can't expect too much from the acts. On the other

hand, they're not getting paid (only the headliner gets a cut - a percentage of the evening's gate receipts), and so two dollars seems a bit high."

Most of the audience consists of friends of the performers, would-be performers, and people on the fringes of the entertainment world. They're all sympathetic, and the atmosphere is warm.

"Did you get your two dollars worth?" Breslin asks at one point near the end of the evening, playing the role of MC in an oversized suit that looks as though it's about to eat him.

"Every week," shouts back a lone voice. Breslin looks for additional support.

"No, really, did you get your two dollars' worth?"

Somebody claps. "That's good," Breslin smiles.

Some brief history. Breslin worked as a balloon-blower at the Bohemian Embassy at Harbourfront, graduated to running variety revues with Don Cullen in the Harbourfront Theatre, and left the job (along with Cullen et al) in April of this year.

"It was a philosophical dispute," recalls Breslin. He pauses. "Better you should write that Harbourfront couldn't programme its way out of a paper bag."

Leaving behind a tree-ring circus of "Peruvian bug-squashers and a festival of medieval Valium addicts" - Harbourfront's attempt to popularize its cultural activities - he ran concerts at Glendon and other places, including a Henry Morgentaler benefit. (Brief plug: Breslin graduated from York with an honours BA.) In June, he stumbled onto the Church St. hall, and Yuk Yuk's was born.

It's a long, narrow room, with flowered tablecloths and blue candles adorning tables which have been arranged along two of the walls. At the far end stands the stage, with a backdrop resembling the obscene pair of lips (minus the tongue) familiar to fans of the Rolling Stones' corporate logo. Pepsis and doughnuts are sold at the other end of the hall, and there's an elaborate loudspeaker system which Breslin occasionally uses to devious effect.

"You didn't see it tonight," says Breslin, "because nobody was really bad tonight, but most weeks we use the hook, a gaily-striped hook which pulls an act off the stage if he's really bombing."

If you have a free Wednesday evening, and \$2 to spend on comics who are bound to drop a few good one-liners into your lap, show up at 519 Church at 8:30 p.m. and enjoy the spirit of Yuk Yuk's. Then, years from now, when some new Woody Allen or George Burns breaks onto the scene in a Canadian club, you'll be able to smile at your friends and say, "I was there when he started out."

"And he's still using the same jokes."



## Really, there's only one place to buy a diamond.

When it's your time to buy a diamond buy from the people who "know" diamonds. It makes sense. Chapman Brothers have a reputation as one of the finest diamond specialists in the world. They are members of the American Gem Society. For 102 years they have served 5 generations of customers from their Yonge Street store.

Visit Chapman Brothers. They will help you select the "right" diamond. They will show you the four "C's" in diamond buying. They will show you the brilliant beauty of your very own diamond under the diamondscope. Remember, your love deserves a Chapman diamond.

**Chapman**  
 Brothers Limited  
 102 Years of Diamonds

261 Yonge Street, Toronto 364-7664



2867-4

## McGill

### School of Nursing

#### B.A. and B.Sc. Graduates Unique Opportunity

Are you interested in pursuing a professional career in Canada's rapidly developing health care delivery system? A three-year program leading to a Master's degree and preparation for licensure in Nursing is offered to non-nurses graduated with high standing from general arts or science programs. The program is designed to prepare specialists in nursing for responsible roles in managing, teaching and research in nursing and health care.

For information write:

McGill University, Master's Program in Nursing  
 3506 University Street, Montreal, PQ H3A 2A7

## YIN COURT

### FAMOUS CHINESE FOOD

10% DISCOUNT

ON PICK-UP FOOD ORDERS OF \$4.50 OR MORE OR FREE DELIVERY AFTER 5 P.M.

OPEN Monday to Saturday 4 p.m. till 1 a.m.  
 Sunday 4 p.m. till 11 p.m.

TELEPHONE: 667-8282

1033 STEELES AVENUE WEST

(1 block west of Bathurst; Willowdale)

Enjoy the holiday season....  
 but remember, you have  
 to live to graduate.

It's up to you.

Think before  
 you drink  
 and drive.



Ministry of  
 Transportation and  
 Communications

Hon. James Snow, Minister



#### VACATIONS

### Ski Mont Ste. Anne

Dec. 18-23 or  
 Dec. 27-Jan. 1

\*Bus \* Hotel Hilton  
 Lowes le Concord or Chateau  
 Frontenac \* Transfers

From **\$123** Quad PP

DEC. 18

**NASSAU** FROM \$219

DEC. 19

**JAMAICA** FROM \$199

DEC. 19

**PALM BEACH** FROM \$179

ABOVE INCLUDE FLIGHT, TRANSFER,  
 HOTEL ETC.

CALL TODAY

**CONQUEST TRAVEL**

3333 BAYVIEW AVENUE  
 226-5040