

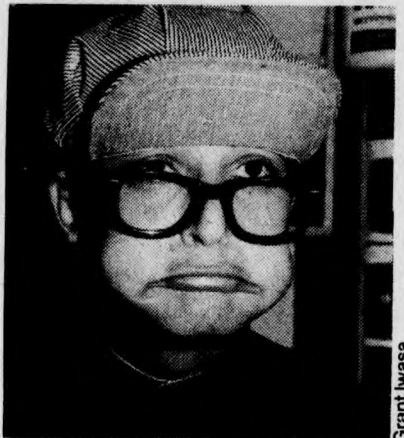
# entertainment

## Yuktobberfest: a month of laughter

By Julie Manning

I challenge you, for one night, to do something different. Yeah! Something other than the movies or the discos. Go see a live show! Go to Yuk Yuk's, sit back, sip on a coke, and watch a whole array of live comedians doing their thing. It's quite an experience!

Howie Mendel, a natural lunatic and born comedian, has one of the most varied and interestingly funny shows. In addition to himself he has four other characters (or



Howie Mendel during a quiet moment backstage.

should I say four other sides to Howie) which are all equally as funny.

The man is truly amazing. The facial expressions he uses frequently and easily are superb. They enable him to take on the whole physical appearance of his characters, so that you believe he is Donny, Vince, Bobby, or an Indian medium, all of which are his characters. And his jokes, they're all him, all funny incidents that have happened to him.

In an interview with Mendel, it becomes apparent that rarely is he serious. He confesses "originally I wanted to be a fern tree," because of his apparent love of the outdoors, but when he was 15 he decided that he should become a comedian. "My parents and my younger brother used to stand at my door every morning at 7 am and point at me and laugh hysterically, this is true, they'd wake

and then build up a tremendous amount of money, and when I'm about 50, I want to retire and become a fern tree somewhere," he says, smiling with his boyish grin.

Serious he's not, but humorous; "I have the best time up there, all those characters that I do are me anyhow, if you've spoken to any of my friends, I've been doing them for years - I'd walk into a party with diapers on... I'm very comfortable doing that." It's obvious! Even when a group of younger kids became a little rough, Mendel quickly controlled the situation. "...I think it was enough for anyone in the audience,.... but I wanted to have fun with it so here's a tool to have fun with, right? The guy's being obnoxious, and that's a tool to have fun with, and I think the audience isn't going to sit there and watch me reprimand, and I don't want to spend my time reprimanding people, so why not make a show out of that."

"Any tool, anything that you can grab at to entertain someone is fantastic, whether it's somebody's ignorance,..... you have to make it more entertaining, and I think it worked." And it did, very well. "I like to play, I have a good time, I love it up there, really love it, it's such a rush for me. There is no night that I don't love it. I loved it tonight no matter how bad people say the audience is, it's just that I can stand up there and people want to watch me."

Because of his quick success, Mendel is still in awe when people ask him to do a show. "When somebody gives me a job I just flip. 'You wanna see me, just do nothing?' And to him it is nothing; he doesn't prepare anything, except one poem, preferring to be spontaneous. He is truly funny; I think the audience gets a "rush" seeing him be himself.

Different from Mendel is Steve Brinder; he is a clown in the true sense of the word. While he can make you laugh, he can also make you cry. He's touching, warm and sincere.

Canadian comedian, Brinder explained: "You can not stay in Canada and be a stand up comedian as of yet...first of all television is against you already...I played Ottawa and the audience has never seen a stand up comedian, and they were drinking and yelling.... But it's difficult, you have to make it in L.A., I'm sorry to say, if any of us are going to take it seriously..."

"I went from the Al Hamel show, staying in the classiest hotel room, and two days later I was in the biggest dive in Ottawa; it's the weirdest feeling, from the 29th floor of the Hyatt Regency, overlooking the bay, being paid \$70 a day, having a limousine at my service, to staying in a place comparable to the Warwick Tavern, a \$1 a day room."

He's a little angry, but Brinder loves his work; so much so that he regrets the day (should it come)



Steve Brinder hypnotizing our interviewer.

that he'll have to choose from being either a substitute teacher or a comedian. Personally, I think that day will be soon, but modesty keeps Brinder's head above the water. And that's what keeps him going.

Yuk Yuk's is truly a haven for such outstanding comedians as

Mark Jalerin, Chas Lawther and Suzette Coucher. They're creative, imaginative, and work with some heavy pieces, but they're good. All well worth the \$4.50 to get in. Even Mark Breslin, owner and M.C., is comical or rather insultingly funny. He warms up the audience and sometimes tones them down, but for a guy his size, he commands a lot of control.

That's right, Yuk Yuk's is friendly, informal and a million laughs. Who knows, you might win the Win-A-Date with Mark Breslin Contest, not restricted to any sex by the way. Yuk Yuk's is located at 1280 Bay Street; their new hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday at 9:00, Friday at 8:00, and 10:00, and Saturday at 8:00, 10:00 and 1:00, or call 967-6425 for further information. Go, you'll have a laugh or two, or maybe three, but just go.

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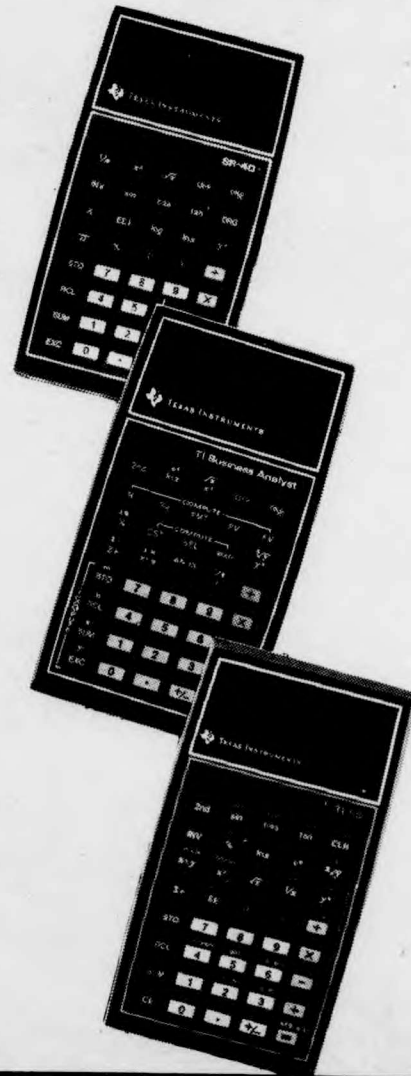
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Audience caught in mid-laugh at Yuktoberfest.

me up, 7 am every morning, I'd open my eyes and there they were, standing at the doorway, pointing at me, and laughing hysterically. I woke up one morning and I said 'Hey, I must be funny,' and that's when I decided to go into comedy."

But he remained an unknown comedian until late in April of '78, when his friends finally talked him into doing a show at Yuk Yuk's on amateur night. Since then he's done numerous shows all around Toronto.

When I asked him about the hardships of being a Canadian comic he said, "Well I really haven't had any. Since April I've been working all the time." So much so that he had to sell his own business. While he has another job now, just as a backup, the hours are flexible so he can realize his ambition.

"My ambition is to become one of the top ten comics, in the nation,

A former Yorkite and Excalibur reporter, Brinder's been around, and knowledge is the tool he uses in his act. His insights will creep up on your emotions - he's got a message that he wants to tell you, and he'll give it to you in a way you'll never forget.

"Where does it say that we can't combine the two, that we can't have drama and comedy at the same time, because that's how life is: life is funny and life is sad.... I do a retarded kid on the T.T.C., which is at the end when they don't expect it, and it's a real rendering piece, I had one person say to me, 'I have a 16-year-old retarded son, thank you very much,' and five minutes later someone came up to me and said, 'You shouldn't make fun of retarded people,' they couldn't accept it,...., but that's good, it shakes them up, to see things."

When asked what it is like to be a

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