

WILLOW GLEN



Photograph by Vicki Thompson

What a Kick: 'Thursdays at the Theater' headliner Jeff Applebaum does clean comedy in the Willow Glen Little Theater. It's the first in a series of shows to aid the school's music boosters.

Comedy show a night of good, clean fun

Second season has boosters smiling

By LAURA RHEINHEIMER

“Thursdays at the Theater” began on a Friday—that’s the first joke. But the laughs didn’t stop there as local comedians performed for Willow Glen families at the Little Theater on the high school campus. It was this year’s opening show in a series of performances, with the proceeds benefiting the Willow Glen Music Boosters.

The night included professional Bay Area comedians Jeff Applebaum and Sandy Stec and high school students Charley Guptill, Michael Kvamme and Nathan Habib. There was also a guest appearance by Applebaum’s 10-year-old son Josh.

The comedians touched on some common themes: travel, school, health and hip-hop. Notably, all the acts were clean.

“Most people would say it’s a lot more difficult because it restricts the range of material to draw from,” says Dan Edwards, who organized the evening’s list of comedy performers.

Comedians can’t rely on jokes that use profanity and references to adult topics, says Edwards, because the show was designed for families with children, not

catering to an adult audience.

The comedy went off without a hitch. It was genuinely funny and the material was appropriate, he says.

Edwards, a Cisco project manager by day and funny man by night, hosted the evening and added his own personal humor about health and his family.

Michael Kvamme, 17, the first teen to perform, is a Menlo High School junior who is no stranger to the stage.

“It’s good to be here,” he told the crowd. “It’s good to be anywhere; I was recently grounded.”

For Michael, getting into comedy was a simple as buying a Seinfeld DVD and spending a week writing some jokes. At age 14, he showed up at Rooster T. Feathers to perform in its New Talent Showcase. He has performed there monthly ever since, entertaining audiences with his jokes about the distractions facing teenagers.

“I was getting good grades,” he boasts, “then Xbox 360 came out.”

Willow Glen High School freshman Charley Guptill was a surprise sensation at last year’s comedy show at the Little Theater when he hobbled on stage in crutches, dropped them and exclaimed, “Did I get the parking spot?”

This year, he jokes about his intended major—“youthful optimism”—and the different clubs offered at the school.

“They made an android in the robotics club,” he says. “You can see it walking around with bloodshot eyes and arms extended.

“And then you look and you’re like, ‘no, that’s the principal,’” he says.

Nathan Habib, a 16-year-old who attends Gunn High School, adds more variety to the show when he takes caroling to a whole new level.

He sings a new Christmas hit, “Santa Claus is Comin’ to the Hood,” which he raps to a hip-hop beat.

Nathan wants to become a professional comedian, a venture that started on stages of high school talent shows and open mic nights.

Josh Applebaum, the 10-year-old son of the night’s headliner, isn’t waiting for high school to crack jokes. He climbs on stage and delivers humorous one-liners.

What’s with this spinach ban? he asks. “They even took *Popeye* off Cartoon Network.”

Mark and Laura Longshore of Willow Glen say they are pleased they can enjoy humor with their daughter, who is in middle school, and encourage the performing arts.

“They have a talent, and it’s great to give them an opportunity to share that with people,” Laura Longshore says.

The evening’s headliner, Applebaum,



Photograph by Vicki Thompson

Acting Up: Willow Glen High School student Charlie Guptill tested his chops for the second year doing stand-up comedy. The show was the first in a series of performances sponsored by the Willow Glen Music Boosters. Other shows will include magic, music and movies.

Comedy

Continued from page 7

is a veteran clean comedian who performs in comedy clubs in front of corporate audiences and community centers throughout the Bay Area and beyond. Applebaum knows what's appropriate for a family audience.

"I'm not even a comic, people," he tells the crowd. "I'm here to talk to you about timeshares."

Applebaum is a true family act; he and Josh will do a father/son show on Dec. 10 at the Sonoma Chicken Coop in Campbell.

Stec, on the other hand, doesn't claim to be a clean comedian. She says keeping it PG is one of the biggest challenges in comedy.

"The best topics are safe topics," she says, such as food, weight loss and her experiences working as a radio show host.

She muses that making vitamins in the form of chocolate chews may have been a bad idea.

"35,000 grams of calcium," she says, patting her stomach. "I'm almost a fossil."

Audience members may have heard Stec's voice before on Mix 106.5, and she also performs comedy to an adult crowd at clubs such as the San Jose Improv.

Stec says although she includes some mature topics in her regular repertoire, she steers clear of them in a clean gig.

"The kids won't get it; the parents will be angry and concerned," she says, "Basically, everybody goes home unhappy."

Brent and Phyllis Chinn, who have one child at Willow Glen Middle and another



Photograph by Vicki Thompson

Smart Cookie: Sandy Stec, a former radio show host on Mix 106.5, kept all her comedy at the show PG. She was one of five performers at the 'clean comedy' night. All the proceeds go toward helping Willow Glen Middle and High schools' music programs.

at Schallenberger Elementary School, went home happy and amused.

This kind of comedy is rare, Phyllis Chinn says. "It's always clean and enjoyable."

Willow Glen Middle and High school students and parents can expect the entire Thursdays (and Fridays) at the Theater series to be age-appropriate. The next event will feature Dan Chan Magic Man

on Oct. 19.

On the bill are movies, music and magic, and more comedy. An amateur night in April, followed a week later by a talent show, will be a chance for more students to take to the stage and try to make people laugh.

For more information, contact the Willow Glen Music Boosters 408.464.3643 or visit www.thursdaysatthetheater.org.