

Life's a laugh for this Aggie joker

Student moonlights as stand-up comic

By Todd Stone

Of The Battalion Staff

The true love you always dreamed about tells you it's over. So what do you do? Senior education major Jason Porter became a stand-up comic.

"My shows weren't going that great because I was happy," Porter said. "I was in love."

Porter was performing once a week last spring at "Amateur Night" at Houston's Comedy Workshop. He transferred from A&M to the University of Houston to be closer to his girlfriend and pursue comedy. On a day when Porter was suppose to perform, he learned the bad news.

"I called her, but he answered," Porter explained. "That night, I didn't want to go on stage," he said. "I was tense. I was emotional. My voice used to be monotone, but that night, I was outgoing. I bitched about being dumped. I was still upset, and I didn't even know I did a good show."

"Then, the manager walks up and says, 'Good show — you're a regular.'"

Porter began performing at the workshop six nights a week through the summer and also performed at Garfield's in College Station.

"I wondered, 'To be a good comedian, do I have to get dumped every week?'" Porter said.

Porter became the weekly opening performer at Garfield's and returned to A&M in late August to get his degree.

"If it wasn't for Garfield's, I wouldn't have my friends and my degree," Porter said. "I owe everything to Garfield's and the great audiences."

Porter's background with the Comedy Workshop in Houston has given him the opportunity to observe and work with many talented comics, such as Sam Kinison. Porter said one of his best moments in comedy came during two days that he spent with comedian Barry Sobel, who was a regular on the NBC sitcom "227."

"It was great just to hang out with him," Porter said. "He gave me a very open attitude, and I bounced ideas off him. I was getting coached by someone who coached Tom Hanks (for the movie "Punchline")."

Porter was impressed with the success and notoriety Sobel had achieved.

"It's weird sitting across from someone who says, 'Oh yeah, Paula Abdul is a cute girl,'" Porter said.

For Porter, being a comedian is a great opportunity to relate with people and share mutual problems.

"It's therapy for me," Porter explained. "I go up there (on stage) and say what my problems are. If they (the audience) applauds my problems, that means they've had them too."

One of Porter's favorite topics to discuss on stage is his problems with women.

"One girl wanted me in the worse way possible — as a friend," Porter joked. "I think PMS means Poor Man Suffers."

"I asked a girl if she wanted to go to a party with me, and she says, 'I don't know. Are there going to be any good looking guys there?'"

Porter says he looks forward to performing every week, but he wouldn't describe being on stage as heaven on Earth.

"It's not quite orgasmic, but it's a great feeling," he said. "After a perfect set, it's the best. Especially when people come up to me after shows and say what they liked."

Although he's not famous yet, Porter already has noticed that his status as a comedian makes him different from others. Porter says he prefers people to think of him as a person first, a comic second.

"If you're a comic," Porter explained, "and people find out, the first thing they say is, 'Tell me a joke,' or 'I've gotta joke for you.'"

"It's not like I'm an expert on comedy. I'm not the funniest guy at A&M. When people ask, 'Who is your favorite comedian?' and I say, 'I am,' that's when I know I'm good."

Porter said that his first performance in comedy was at Fish Camp '88. He impersonated David Letterman and was a big hit among the students and counselors.

An hour before his first performance as a stand-up comic in Houston, three counselors from Fish Camp '88 came to see him perform. Porter was flattered by the support.

"I felt I owed something to Fish Camp," he said.

Porter returned to Fish Camp last summer and performed during all four sessions for no money. He hoped to be a Fish Camp counselor this summer.

Porter still has problems being a supporter of A&M traditions.

"I tried to hitchhike to the bonfire last year," Porter said. "Everyone kept driving by, yelling, 'Gig 'em.'"

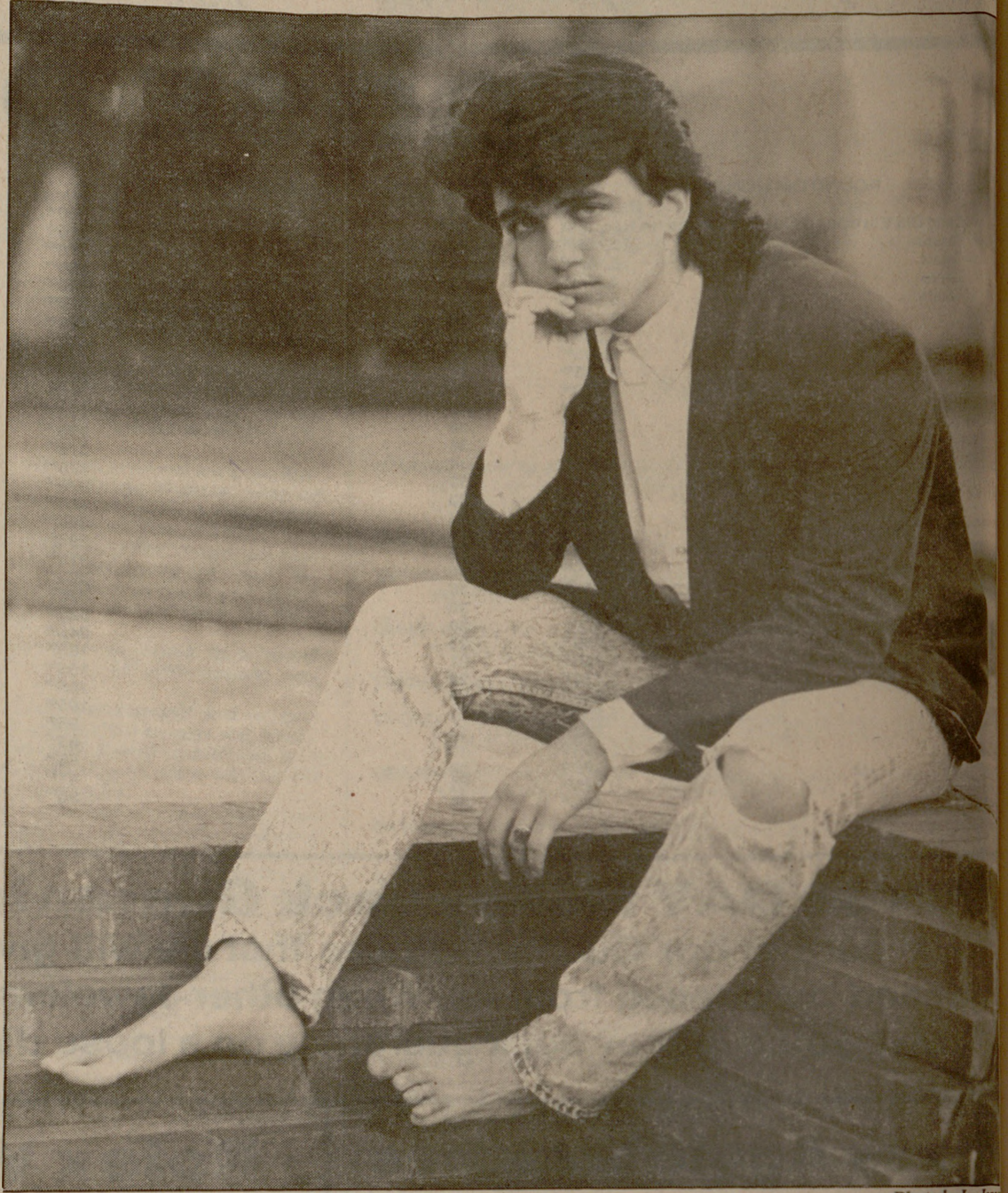
After graduation, Porter plans to teach for a few years, but he still wants to perform as a comic.

"I would like to get booked over the summer and during Christmas," Porter said. "Ultimately, if things work out, I'll dump teaching because comedy pays better."

With success in comedy being difficult to achieve, Porter remains realistic.

"Comedy isn't going to last forever unless you get a movie deal with Steve Martin or Mel Brooks," Porter said.

"Of course, that's my dream."



Jason Porter, a stand-up comedian and a senior education major at A&M, has been performing for several years. His first comic performance was at Fish Camp '88.

Nachos! Get your hot dogs! Egg rolls! Pizza!

By James A. Johnson

Of The Battalion Staff

If the way to a person's heart is through his or her stomach, then all Aggies must be in love — with Food Services, that is.

Lloyd Smith, director of Food Services, said the number of dining facilities on campus has increased considerably in the last 10 years. In the early days, Aggies didn't have the freedom of choice we enjoy today.

Between 1912 and 1979, there wasn't much variety for students and faculty. Only 10 campus sites housed eating places within those 57 years. Since 1979, though, that figure has more than doubled. Currently, Aggeland features more than 20 different places where people can either enjoy a formal luncheon or zip through one of the many snack bars available for those who prefer to eat and run.

"The whole university is in a catch-up game with campus growth," Smith said.

A catch-up game, indeed.

In an average food shipment, Food Services receives half a million pounds of hamburger meat, 400 to 600 cases of lettuce and 500,000 pounds of frozen potatoes. Shipments are delivered two or three times a year, depending on demand.

The oldest facility on campus is Sbis Dining Hall. Like Elephant Walk, Silver Taps and Twelfth Man, Sbis is another one of those names so familiar that, when you hear someone mention it, you can immediately identify them as an Aggie.

Along with Commons and Duncan Dining Halls, Sbis offers full breakfast, lunch and dinner meals. An extensive variety of menu items are offered at the different food stations in each dining center including several entree selections, vegetable and salad bars, dessert choices, fresh breads, and fruit and beverage lines. What has lured many people to the three centers is the second helpings they offer.

Gena McElyea, a junior recreation and parks major from Mesquite, said convenience is what she looks for in food.

"I enjoy eating at Sbis for the freedom and variety it offers," McElyea said. "I can get what I want — when I want it. At some places, the hours suck."

Although hours vary at different eating locations, they are scheduled to meet the busiest hours and days of each semester, Smith said. He added that serving hours depend on the dining hall: what it serves and where it is located.

The Memorial Student Center Cafeteria opens earliest on campus (at 6:30 a.m.) while Bernie's Place stays open until 1 a.m. Most other campus eating places are open from 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

The MSC Cafeteria, located on the main level of the MSC, is another popular facility for students and faculty because of its quick, hot selections and adequate seating space. Offering cafeteria-style meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner, it features a variety bar and deli. Unlike similar off-campus cafeterias, it publicizes specials every day so frugal-minded customers won't lose their appetite once they reach the cash register.

register.

Smith said the MSC Cafeteria is probably the most expensive dining facility on campus because the cafeteria offers a wider variety of foods, which all are served on china.

Rumours, located on the south side of the MSC, serves gourmet hamburgers, hot dogs, sandwiches, Mexican food, snack foods and beverages.

No matter what your nationality, the Underground will have something that will make you feel like mom is in the kitchen. Located in the northwest corner of Sbis's lower level, it features Mexican food, Oriental food, good ol' American food, an ice cream parlor, fresh bakery items, a deli, fresh salad and fruit bar, snacks and a variety of drinks.

Smith said ethnic backgrounds were taken into consideration when the Underground was proposed as a new site.

"You have to please people from all backgrounds, ethnicities and religions," Smith said. "We aim the menus in many of our facilities to cover a broad spectrum."

Another facility which offers a distinct menu is Bernie's Place. Located above the Underground at

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'Back To Future II' offers action, pleasant surprises

By Todd Stone

Of The Battalion Staff

Warning: "Back To The Future Part II" should not be seen until the original "Back To The Future" has been viewed.

If you haven't seen the original, you will be lost — you'll miss many of the subtle and funny references to the first film.

Part two is a clever continuation of part one. The filmmakers of part two begin exactly where the original ended.

Marty (Michael J. Fox), Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd) and Marty's girlfriend (Elizabeth Shue) take off



sequel.

In an era of filmmaking where the sequel fails to deliver the quality of the first film, this movie is a much-needed relief. It isn't as good as the first, but part two is definitely entertaining.

With the success of "Back To The Future," a sequel was inevitable. Money rules, and sequels keep appearing. However, the filmmakers worked hard to put together a great story. The laughs are not as consistent as they are in the first film, but the plot goes in many wild directions.

Robert Zemeckis returns as the director and wrote the story of both films with Bob Gale. Zemeckis keeps the action going, which makes up for the lack of one-liners. His vision of the future is fascinating, and the special effects are fantastic. Zemeckis also brilliantly uses doubles for the same actor playing two parts in a scene.

If you liked Michael J. Fox before, there's nothing in his performance in this film to keep you from liking him again. Christopher Lloyd is still amusing as the sweetly obsessive Doc Brown. Thomas F. Wilson returns as the obnoxious Biff, and he adds more flair and style to his character than the principal stars.

It's disappointing that Lea Thompson, who plays Marty's mother, didn't have more to do (she was great in the original movie). However, there wasn't enough room with Fox, Lloyd and the creative ideas of Zemeckis and Gale, so Shue, too, disappears after the first few scenes of the film.

The ending is left open because there will be a second sequel. The previews for part three (shown at the end of part two) suggest that it may be the best of the trilogy. Both parts two and three were filmed at the same time. Zemeckis and Gale couldn't fit their brainstorming into only two films.

"Back To The Future Part II" is a clever table-setter for the third film, which is scheduled to be released this summer. The cliffhanger ending may disappoint you, but part two certainly whets your appetite for another sequel.

Bowie collection charms even devout CD haters

By John Righter

Of The Battalion Staff

Let me start out by saying that I hate CDs. I hate them because they are too damn expensive and because they have single-handedly made LPs obsolete. Also, I have rarely heard a CD that has sounded much better than the original recording.

So, to call a spade a spade, I'm a CD basher, and a quite proud one, too.

But last week this situation changed slightly. I was finally presented with a CD (actually a whole collection) that was worth all the hype dished onto the CD market by record companies and listeners alike.

Ryko, a Massachusetts-based firm that is arguably the best CD company on the market, two months ago released David Bowie's *Sound & Vision* collection (Bowie's pre-1984 albums are soon to follow, a la the Beatles) to great interest and critical acclaim. Much of this interest was due to the fact that the collection is the first smidgen of pre-*Let's Dance* material released for Bowie on CD.

Because Bowie has been embroiled in a major legal squabble with RCA, his early material for RCA and Mercury (RCA had the rights to his Mercury material as well) has been held up for years, awaiting first a resolution with RCA (who has been phasing out his early material altogether) and then the right company to remaster, package and market Bowie's fantastic induction into the age of silver disks.

An audacious endeavor for any company, the early success experienced by Ryko only pours on more praise for this tiny Jack-in-a-world-of-cannabilistic-conglomerate-music monsters.

Large collections highlighting an artist's musical career have become as common as a Who farewell tour over the last couple of years, but none have actually succeeded in capturing the essence of the artist.

Bob Dylan's *Biograph*, the first so-called "box set" released four years ago, came close, especially in reference to selection, but any remastering done for it (if there was any) was horrible, leaving too many songs that sounded like they were recorded in a 4-track

garage.

On the other hand, Bowie's collection offers a whole new insight to his material through the remixing and remastering alone. For the first time the separation of each instrument is decipherable, and passive, subdued sound effects are finally clear and audible in songs like "Ashes To Ashes."

The difference in sound quality between this collection and his original recorded material is remarkable, and this includes the many songs picked from Bowie's three live albums and some unreleased obscure recordings (a quality the Rolling Stones can't claim on their dismal box set of early singles).

Every song on the CD sounds like it were recorded yesterday, which adds a necessary element of relevance. Unlike the totally forgettable box-set attempts by Jethro Tull and Rod Stewart, Bowie's collection is as applicable today as it was 15 to 20 years ago.

Sound & Vision is split into four CDs (it's also available in a three-cassette package), the first three presenting a 180-minute-plus chronological selection of all 16 of his pre-*Let's Dance* albums, plus a couple of previously unreleased outtakes and demos, and the fourth presenting three new live tracks and a CD-video for "Ashes To Ashes."

Ryko also has taken care to provide a magnificent package and a great 36-page booklet chock full of facts, quotes and photos. Great effort has been expended all the way through to provide a clear understanding of this legendary performer who is responsible, among many things, for creating the rock alter-ego with duo-personas such as Ziggy Stardust, Aladdin Sane and The Thin White Duke.

The original demo for "Space Oddity," recorded in 1969 as a duo with former partner John Hutchinson, a German version of "Heroes" ("Helden"), a psychedelic cover of Bruce Springsteen's "It's Hard To Be A Saint In This

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