

Comedian Ketler brings stand-up talent

Karla Tipton
Herald Staff Writer

Comedian/producer Christopher Ketler likes to connect the dots. He returned to his roots in Ohio after living in Florida for years, and found his calling: stand-up comedy. Now he brings the comedians he met while touring the country to Northeastern Ohio through Funny Noizes Productions.

The next production, the “Mafia Ties Comedy Show,” is set for 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 24, at the newly renovated West Theater in Barberton. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

“I know the people and I just sort of connect the dots,” he said in an interview with the Herald. “But there are so many other people who make these shows happen. It’s a team effort.”

Ketler said the company strives to put on high quality shows, working with sound companies, radio emcees, and other industry professionals.

The company also produces local shows at the Not So Fragile Theater, the

Rialto and Barmacy. Now there are plans to produce a stand-up comedy show once a month at the West Theater.

The second show at the venue is already scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 1. “An Evening with Gary Garcia and Friends” will be headlined by Garcia, the house comedian at Caesar’s Palace, Atlantic City.

The shows are reasonably priced, too: \$12 per ticket.

The Northeast Ohio comedy scene has existed for many years, but has recently been on the rise, he said.

The “Mafia Ties Comedy Show” based on the eight-part drama about organized crime set in Youngstown, is scheduled to debut on Amazon Prime by the end of the year. Although the TV show is not comedy, many area comedians contributed their talents to the locally and independently produced series. These comedians comprise the lineup of the West Theater show, along with headliner Greg “The Greek” Kritikos, an “Old School New York” comedian.

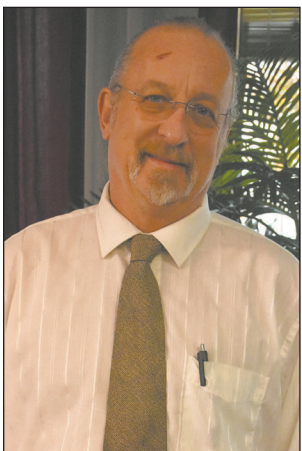
After the show, there will be a meet and greet session, when interaction between attendees and comedians is encouraged.

Ketler will also perform, as he does for all Funny Noizes productions. He takes his position in the line-up based on the caliber of the other comedians, and has never put himself at the top of the bill.

A carpenter by day, Ketler lives in rural Wayne County, and loves life in Ohio. He turned to stand-up comedy as a way to express himself, allowing him to “say things that shouldn’t be said,” after a difficult divorce and the hard times that followed. His comedic voice as “the Bitter Dude” came about because “that’s my perspective on life, and having that kind of an attitude makes it funny.”

Over the past seven years, he has performed gigs in New York City, Chicago, Detroit, and Orlando, where he met many up-and-coming comedians.

“I’m booking fresh blood,” said Keltner, adding these comedians will be “the next big thing. You’ll be saying, ‘Hey, I saw this



HERALD PHOTO/Rich Muller

Comedian Chris Ketler books nationally known stand-up comedians to local theaters. The “Mafia Ties Comedy Show” will be performed at West Theater at 7:30 p.m. Saturday.

guy in this little theater in Akron that seated 100 people before he ever did that Netflix special.”

In addition to \$12 tickets, there are limited VIP tickets with special reserved seating for \$25. Order tickets online (<https://330tix.com/organizations/funny-noizes-productions>) or by calling 330-975-0072. The West Theater is at 1017 Wooster Road West. Free parking is available.

Business loans available from BCDC

Loan funds through the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Barberton Community Development Corporation (BCDC) for Barberton area businesses are available.

The BCDC is offering low interest loans for property acquisition, equipment purchases, image enhancement and working capital.

“We have a wide range of financing programs that can accommodate most City of Barberton businesses” said, Scott Wagner, Executive Director. The EDA loans range from \$10,000 to \$150,000 and interest rates start as low as 4 percent depending on credit worthiness.

In addition, loan funds are available through the BCDC’s Small Business Administration (SBA) Intermediary Lending Program. The BCDC can utilize this funding source in Barberton, Norton and New Franklin. The SBA loans range from \$10,000 to \$200,000.

“Economic development is a business; we have the ability to put together packages that allow businesses to achieve their long term goals,” Wagner said. “In addition, if a company is unable to obtain traditional financing, the BCDC can review the project and make a determination on funding.” The BCDC has been offering

loans to Barberton area businesses since the mid 1980s and is committed to providing economic Development services in the City of Barberton.

The BCDC has assisted hundreds of companies throughout the Barberton area and helped to create thousands of employment opportunities.

Companies interested in financing are encouraged to contact the BCDC office to discuss the available programs or to schedule a meeting. Hours are 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call-330-745-3070 or email scottwagner@bcdc.org or kathleensawyer@bcdc.org.

Fatherhood sessions offered

Embrace Clinic & Care Center and the Summit County Fatherhood Initiative host fatherhood classes. The 7 Habits of a 24/7 Dad program is free and runs 6:30-8 p.m., at various times throughout the year on Wednesdays at the center, 180 First St. NW. The classes are open to all dads and dad role-models in Summit County. For information or to register call 330-825-1900 or visit <http://embraceccc.org>.

FROM THE FRONT

Magic

(Continued from Front)

Mediumship events promote healing to people who have lost loved ones, said Agnoni. “It can be very comforting when a medium can give them a message from the other side that resonates with them, something that nobody else would know.”

At Magic City Mediumship Night, attendees may put their names in a hat. Ten names will be drawn by each medium, who will then “connect to the other side and give that person a message,” said Agnoni.

The mediums in attendance include the Rev. Tim Brinard, who has done readings for more than 40 years, had a radio show for 15 years, and has appeared on Fox TV. The Rev. Jane Voneman-DuPerow is a TV show host, author of “Tune into the Magic Within” and originated the app “Spirit Dice.” The Rev. Ellen Bourn is a former president of the Lily Dale Assembly and serves clients in the Western New York area.

A meet and greet after party with the mediums will be at the M and M’s Taphouse, 523 W. Tuscarawas Ave., behind Lake Anna Hall. For further information, or for those unfamiliar with online methods of purchasing tickets, call 216-832-1473.

Smoke

(Continued from Front)

can terminate service with us. So, if we would break our promise with the \$150 with no increase you could terminate the contract with us,” said Kendrick.

Shaun Jaber, owner of Rocky’s gas station said he understands cigarettes are bad but the fees are what make him apprehensive. He mentioned other cities that have changed from a one-time fee to a yearly fee. Jaber brought seven 18-year-old students and graduates to the meeting to show council they are adults who have made the decision to buy cigarettes. The legislative meeting wrapped up with the members adopting all ordinances on the agenda.

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