

Taking comedy seriously



Side-splitting performances examined

Check your chair before you sit down today. Don't bend over to pick up any quarters you see on the ground. And don't agree to any offers from out of nowhere that appear to be too good to be true.

Your chair most likely has a Whoopee cushion on it, that quarter is glued in place, and that offer is a hoax. Happy April Fools' Day.

Today is dedicated to getting laughs at the expense of others. Pranks and jokes — some simple, some elaborate — are the order of the day.

It's said that laughter is the best medicine. Hearing a good joke or watching a funny movie can make you forget about your troubles for a while. The website **Splitsider.com** is devoted to the entertainers on screen and stage who make us laugh.

The site features clips, interviews and articles on comedy in the movies, television, comedy clubs, theaters and online. It offers commentary on contemporary comedy, a look back at



KEVIN O'NEILL

InSites

comedic history and previews of what may make us laugh next.

Visiting the site is a double-edged experience. Watching clips of funny performances is a great way to kill some down time. Comedy is like music in that different people have different tastes.

Splitsider has a wide variety of performers who offer something for everyone.

On the flip side, watching comedy is much more enjoyable than reading about it. Much of the reading on the site analyzes jokes, bits and performances. Perhaps this is useful to those in the business, but I think most people will find it long-winded and a bit pretentious. If you have to explain a joke to someone, it has already failed.

Some of the interviews on the site are decidedly unfunny. A lot of comedy comes from a place of anger. Comedi-

ans are good at pointing out the absurdities of life. When they do it in their acts, it makes us laugh. When they pontificate about it in long-winded interviews, they can come across as bitter.

The site is set up as a blog with a series of posts you can scroll through. There are two main sections, Features and News. Features has a collection of posts with a good shelf life. It looks back to the recent and more distant past at people and events that impacted comedy. The News section has more current and breaking stories.

Most of the posts have photos and articles about a wide range of performers. Many also have video clips, which is where the site is the most fun. You may have to dig a little to find the people you find funny, but it's worth the effort.

KEVIN O'NEILL is a staff artist for The Times-Tribune. Share your favorite websites and apps with him at koneill@timeshamrock.com.

