

COVER STORY

Hundreds slain at Comedy-on-Main

By RICK GUINNESS
HERALD STAFF

NEW BRITAIN — The annual funniest-comic-in-Connecticut contest culminated Saturday night at the Trinity-on-Main performing arts center with the announcement of winners in professional and amateur divisions.

The series started with a pool of 250 competitors. Eliminations were held at various clubs throughout the state over the past several weeks, leaving Peaches Rodriguez champ of the professional division and Jim Sharky as best amateur comic.

Sharky said he had been in a lot of contests, but had never before won.

Saturday, before a crowd of more than 220 people, was a big win. In addition to \$500 in cash, Sharky was able to secure work in comedy through Brad Axelrod, the promoter whose Treehouse Comedy Productions brings comedy to Trinity-on-Main throughout its performance season.

Rodriguez, who said she got into comedy "for the fun of it," was in rare form Saturday.

"After my first two jokes tanked, I thought, 'They hate me,'" Rodriguez said, but if she was thinking about bombing, it didn't show. During the course of her 10 minutes, she found her timing and had the crowd eating out of her hand. She was awarded more than \$2,000 and a comparable amount of work from Axelrod.

The competition was judged by a panel of three who took into

DOWNTOWN WAS LAUGHING ALL THE WAY TO THE BANK

The night was not just a success for Trinity-on-Main — the show ran until around midnight, and nearly everyone stayed until the very end — but for the downtown district, as 40 people from the audience filed into the new, nearby Hardware City Tavern after the show for drinks and conversation.



The audience laughs during the finals of the funniest-comic-in-Connecticut competition held Saturday at Trinity-on-Main in New Britain.



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PEACHES RODRIGUEZ
Winner of the professional division in the funniest comic in Connecticut competition

account stage presence, likability, material, timing and the indefinable catch-all category of "funny" and deducted points from comics who used more than two "F-bombs" per set or ran over their allotted time of seven minutes for amateurs and 10 for professionals.

The night was very funny and every comic's set was likely to offend somebody with its content, with or without "F-bombs." Little of what was said over the nearly four-hour show was printable in a family newspaper — certainly not the funniest stuff.

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expensive places. "I took her to the gas station," he said. "We made out at Pump 10."

Master of ceremonies Billy

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Winn told the story of how he took his wife on vacation and she was pulled out of line at the airport in Florida by two security guards with wands. They told her to unbutton her shirt, unbuckle her pants and take off her shoes.

While watching her comply with the Homeland Security pro-

cedures, he said to himself, "I've got to get one of those wands."

Sharky bashed Bush supporters who still haven't scratched off their Bush/Cheney bumper stickers. He also riffed on the recent horrors to come from the Texas polygamist camp, saying he told a polygamist it was wrong to marry a 13-year-old girl.

"The guy said she doesn't look a day over 8," Sharky said.

Rodriguez's work also showed a mix: There a somewhat gentle impression of Michelle Jackson (Michael Jackson taking the next logical step and getting a sex change operation). Rodriguez, a

tall woman, was surprisingly agile and managed to not only sing like Jackson, but to also move like him.

She also joked about a new model of cars named after parts of the body. "Wherever you park it, men can't find it," she said.

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The next Trinity-on-Main comedy event is scheduled for May 17.

For information about Comedy-on-Main events, or to catch the acts of any of the comedians featured in the contest, visit www.TreeHousecomedy.com.

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