Comic happy to keep it clean

BY SANDRA BOLAN
sbolan@yrmg.com

We're only a couple of weeks into the new year but it's been one heck of a tough start.

First there was the ice storm recovery, then -40 C temperatures that swung the thermometer over to the positive side causing flooding. To top all of that off, recycling and compost pickup was less than timely.

It's enough to make you want to bury your head under the covers until mid-June.

But what you really need is a good dose of laughter.

Three comedians will do their best to make you forget about all this stuff during the Jan. 23 Yuk Yuk's show at the Lebovic Centre for Arts and Entertainment - Nineteen on the Park.

"It's not a high-brow performance but it does address the entertainment element that is important to us," said Steven Foster, cultural facility and programming co-ordinator for Nineteen on the Park.

This is the sixth comedy-based show in five years at the downtown arts centre and "there's room for expansion of the program in coming seasons. We may add another installment," Mr. Foster said.

Headlining this show is Chris Quigley, whose bio states he has "a satirical approach to the seriousness of life with a Dylan-esqe style of writing and hair to match". What sets Mr. Quigley apart from many other comics is his lack of vulgarity.

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"I want to be different than everybody else," he told The Sun-Tribune. "The F word is such a powerful word. The more you use it the less powerful it is."

He said not using F-bombs in his act started about 20 years ago after he went to a show with a couple of veterans and prior to hitting the stage, they were notified cussing would not be allowed.

Not everybody likes vulgarity, but everyone wants to hear funny stuff, he said, noting people will compliment him after the show for keeping it clean.

Mr. Quigley got his start in comedy as a matter of survival. He was the youngest of seven children with the second youngest being 11 years older than him.

"I always had to be the funny one to fit in," he said.

At 11, while at a youth rally, the MC asked if anyone from the audience wanted to come up on stage to tell a few jokes. Mr. Quigley and two other boys took to the stage.

"It felt good people laughed at what I said," Mr. Quigley said.

What made the pre-teen decide it would be his career path was when someone from the event ran into his mother at the local bank a few days later and mentioned how funny he was.

Also performing in Stouffville Jan. 23 is Hunter Collins, who is known as "North America's foremost nincompoop comedian".

Some of Mr. Collins' more memorable performances have taken place at underground rattlesnake fights and festivals, according to his bio.

He can be seen on MuchMusic's Video on Trial.

Rounding out the night is Michelle Shaughnessy. She beat out a number of comedians from Canada, Ireland, South Africa and the United States to make it to the finals of Yuk Yuk's Great Canadian Laugh Off in 2007.

You must be over 19 to attend the show. Tickets are $25 each and available at http://nineteenonthepark.com.

Headliner Chris Quigley got his start as a comedian at age 11. He's in Stouffville next Thursday.