

POPCORN™
The Aristocrats: Puts The Lib
Back in Ad-Lib

One Popcorn, Poor • Two Popcorns, Fair • Three Popcorns, Good • Four Popcorns, Excellent

By **MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER**
3 popcorns

What's the difference between one hundred of our most gifted comedians and four or five adolescents who have just learned a new dirty joke? Not much if you go by "The Aristocrats," the hilariously obscene, over-the-top, sure to be randomly banned, crazy idea for a movie directed by Paul Provenza.

The brainchild of funnyman Provenza (who directs) and magician/comic Penn Jillette (who produces), "The Aristocrats" is certainly anything but aristocratic. But that's the joke. Hardly more than a concept, it hangs by the slimmest of threads. And yet through it's telling, the outlandish documentary repeatedly, often side-splittingly, proves something we always knew.

The point being, who would you rather have tell you a joke, Don Rickles or your accountant? Precisely. As any aficionado of the droll arts can inform you, it's all in the telling. Therein lies the kernel of comedic DNA that spirits the whole idea of Messrs. Provenza and Jillette raunchily and unapologetically delve into the depths of what joke smiths politely call working blue.

Filmed in various different locales and venues, approximately one hundred quipsters tell the same gag. Oddly, unless you're a professional humorist, you've never heard this particular bit of outrageous filth before now. That's because it's an inside joke, literally; traditionally used as an indoctrination rite by would-be wits going all the way back to Vaudeville.

The more prudish, close-minded and easily offended will be abashed and argue that it has no business being spewed upon the lay public. Those of a liberal bent with a keenness for laughter will see it as no more than what it is: a very funny survey of the farceur's world, replete with some cutting edge insight and the naughty self-satisfaction of getting a rise out of its detractors.

Naturally there's the folks-in-between these two dipoles of opinion. They can go either way. After seeing "The Aristocrats," some will leave their spouse, children and the family farm for a life of sin and misery either in Las Vegas or New Orleans, depending on which flights are cheaper at the time of their damnation. Then of course there are always those who prefer the much more empowering alternative: Don't see it, but have an opinion just the same, and a rather vociferous one at that.

So now here's what all the brouhaha is about. Only the beginning and the end are always the same. This guy walks into a talent agent's office and says, "I have this great bit. It's a family act...me, my wife, my son and my daughter."

"What's it like?" asks the agent. At this point, the entertainer is on his own to improvise as he sees fit, or unfit to be more exact. The time-honored predilection is that the father then goes into the most ludicrous, horrific, filthy, scatological and pornographic detail. At the end of this unspeakable description, the agent asks, "What do

you call yourselves?"

"The Aristocrats," Dad answers in a notably proud tone. Drew Carey prefers to add a matador-like snap of the fingers when delivering the punchline. By itself, it's only a step or two up from the famed faux joke, wherein one of two elephants in a bathtub asks the other for the soap, to which the other responds, "No soap, radio."

But again, it's in the presentation. The midsection is where the kibitzer makes his imprimatur, to quote one of the film's several co-narrators and industry theoreticians.

By film's end, the joke has been told up, down and sideways, as well as dissected comically, intellectually and ad nauseam. The result, if you don't walk out on it in disbelief and disgust, is laughter and giddiness. You have been generously brought into this secret world, where only professional stand-up artists have strutted their private shtick for the approbation and amusement of members only.

The cast consists of greats, near greats and some of the more promising up-and-coming talents, all taking their celebratory shot at this comic piñata. But the lineup is hardly random. There is fine method within the overall madness as Mr. Provenza, aided by Emery Emery, distinguishes himself not only as a director, but also as an editor.

It moves lickety-split. The camera pans from Paul Reiser's tongue-in-cheek evaluation of the wacky goings-on, to George Carlin's learned dissertation of just why the routine is funny, to the irascible Pat Cooper's priceless denunciation of the whole project.

And then it switches, with Reiser offering the heady stuff and Carlin immersing himself in the muck and mire of the smut under scrutiny. Roles are but a ruse. The liberating power of humor gains momentum; whole theories about what makes us laugh are espoused. We bask in our freedom of speech.

On a much more basic level, it's all simply a bawdy variation on one of comedy's mainstays - degradation of character. Only instead of Scrooge's top hat being topped by a snowball, a whole class and the notion of an inherently dirty thought are debunked for what they are by this ribald recitation.

The great array of talent helping out in this bemusing demystification gives credence to the project's thesis. Top bananas such as Phyllis Diller, Don Rickles, David Brenner, Shelley Berman and Mr. Carlin matter-of-factly discussing The Aristocrats lend a nutty air of respectability.

The ironic result: "The Aristocrats" is zany proof that no matter how many times you tell this ostensibly dirty joke, no one is brutalized, starved, cheated or sent to war because of it. Hence, there are some who may not want to see it.

 "The Aristocrats," not rated, is a ThinkFilm release directed by Paul Provenza and stars 100 comics and entertainers including George Carlin, Paul Reiser, Sarah Silverman and Drew Carey. Running time: 86 minutes.



CLASSIC TIME...On Wednesday, August 17, the Westfield Car Show drew record numbers of spectators and car enthusiasts alike to the downtown intersection of Elm and Quimby Street. Registration for the show cars topped at 130 cars, after which potential registrants were tuned away. Pictured above are classic cars from previous shows, not the most recent.

Record Attendance
Enjoys WF Car Show

By **MARYLOU MORANO**
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD - You could say it was the warm, late-summer evening that had people out and about, but there's no denying the real reason for the crowded Westfield streets: it was the cars.

On Wednesday, August 17, 2005, the Westfield Car Show drew record numbers of spectators and car enthusiasts alike to the downtown intersection of Elm and Quimby Street. Registration for the show cars topped at 130 cars, after which potential registrants were tuned away.

"We ran out of room," explained Bill Mackey of Westfield, one of the organizers of the event.

After the registration limit had been reached, many finely appointed cars were spotted driving around town, their owners attempting to garnish a little visibility for their vehicles, even if they couldn't participate in the show.

The cars and their owners came from as far away as Delaware, Budd Lake and Staten Island.

The restaurants adjacent to the show site enjoyed brisk dinner business, especially those with outdoor tables, which provided good vantage points for all the activity.

According to Mr. Mackey, the Westfield Car show is an educational experience for both children as well

as adults.

"It gives people a chance to see the types of cars that aren't around anymore," he explained.

Sixteen awards were presented at Wednesday night's car show, and among the winners were two Westfielders. Chris Wendel won the "Best Sports Car" trophy for his 1959 Porsche 356A Cabriolet and Dr. Stan Gersch won "Best Classic Car" for his 1957 Thunderbird.

The "Best in Show" award was presented to Ted Gallagher from Clark for his 1956 Lincoln Premier and "The People's Choice Award," the Westfield Car Show's top honor, went to Frank Novak from Union for his 1960 Jaguar XK150.

Alison O'Hara, Executive Director of the Westfield Chamber of Commerce was pleased with the success of the event.

"Our goal was to create a way for the community to come together, not only to enjoy the cars, but to take advantage of what the downtown area offers - for example, restaurants and shopping," she said, adding that she feels the Chamber met its goal.

Other sponsors of the Westfield Car Show were B & G Salsa, Brinton Auto Body, J. Belford Tire, G-Wiz Care Detailing, Midas Muffler, Porta Soft Co. and Jeanette's Graphics & Designs.

AREA Education News

Library Friends Award Scholarship to Smith

WESTFIELD - The board of the Friends of the Westfield Memorial Library unanimously voted to grant Jennifer Smith a second-year, \$1000 scholarship as she continues to further her education in the field of library science.

Ms. Smith began her career in the library as an adult page in the summer of 2000. She currently is employed as a Reference Librarian trainee, a position in which she not only helps patrons in the reference area, but also maintains the foreign language book collection and deals with interlibrary loans.

Since 2004, Ms. Smith has been working towards her Master of Library Science degree from Drexel University. She has taken all her classes online and each class has a website that contains discussion boards and a chat room.

The students communicate with the professor and fellow students via online postings. Ms. Smith expects to graduate in the spring of 2006.

McDermott Named To American Dean's List

WESTFIELD - Emily McDermott, a junior in the School of International Service at American University and majoring in International Studies, was named to the Spring 2005 Dean's List. Emily is a resident of Westfield and a graduate of the Union County Magnet High School.

To earn Dean's List at American University, a student must obtain a 3.5 grade point average or better on his or her semester courses.

Brian Dyke Graduates Hartwick College

WESTFIELD - Brian R. Dyke of Westfield, son of Kermit and Martha Dyke, has graduated from Hartwick College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Management and a minor in Philosophy. Brian received Departmental Distinction in Management.

At Hartwick, Brian participated in Darkling Gaming Club and was awarded the Douglas Meyer Award in Management.

Brian is a 2001 graduate of Westfield High School.



Jennifer Smith

News from Washington D.C.'s American Univ.

SCOTCH PLAINS - Two local students have been accepted by American University, and will be members of the Class of 2009. Perry Sacks, a graduate of Westfield High School, and Katie Zaleski, a graduate of Scotch Plains Fanwood High School, will both begin their studies later this month.

Sara Woods, a sophomore in the Kogod School of Business at American, was named to the Spring 2005 Dean's List. She is a resident of Scotch Plains.

Westfield Student Honored at Pingry

Pingry Headmaster Nat Conard and Upper School Director Jon Leaf are pleased to announce Sam Blum's recent appointment to the Upper School's end of year honor roll. Sam is a 11th grade student and Westfield resident. The honor roll recognizes students for achieving a B+ average or better with no individual grade lower than a B-.

Kroncke Graduates Hartwick College

WESTFIELD - Lauren C. Kroncke of Westfield, daughter of Eugene and Elizabeth Kroncke, has graduated from Hartwick College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Management with a minor in Philosophy.

At Hartwick, Lauren participated in Women's Varsity Tennis, Alpha Omicron Pi and Women's Varsity Lacrosse.

Lauren is a 2001 graduate of Westfield High School.

Fall Programming Begins At NJ Workshop for the Arts

WESTFIELD - As September approaches, parents are faced with many choices regarding programs in which they can enroll their children, or programs in which they can also participate.

The New Jersey Workshop for the Arts, located at 150-152 East Broad Street in Westfield, offers a variety of classes, which can bring out the creativity in each of its participants, regardless of age.

Students, both children and adults, can enroll for vocal and instrumental music lessons at The Music Studio, where private instruction is given in a 30, 45 or 60-minute format. The fall session, which begins on September 12, includes lessons in voice, strings, guitar, woodwinds, brass, percussion and piano.

Kids on Keys, a program that helps children learn the fundamentals of playing the piano, uses Musique Rapide. This easy-to-understand system provides students with a take-home kit that includes a keyboard and game board. Susannah Marks will begin teaching the 10-lesson after-school program on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, beginning September 14.

The Music Studio also offers opportunities for musicians to play in many of its bands, symphonies and ensembles, including the Chamber Orchestra, the High Notes Band, the NJWA Concert Band, the String, Brass and Woodwind Ensembles, the

NJWA Symphony Orchestra, the NJWA Jazz Band, the Alphorn Workshop and Ensemble, the Friday Morning String Ensemble and the Full Count Big Band.

Other performance opportunities include participation in the Musical Theater Performance Workshop, for students ages 10 to 18, and the Light Bulb Players, for those ages 13 to 18. The Little Opera Company of New Jersey, directed by Juan and Valerie Pineda, brings together professionals and young artists to present fully staged operas. Please phone the Workshop for audition times for the Light Bulb Players and the Little Opera Company.

Young children, ages three to five, can join Kids 'n' Arts, an art, and music and theater craft experience. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays, from 9:30 to 11:30 am or 12:30 to 2:30 pm, children create arts and crafts; learn about rhythm and pitch and use percussion and tonal instruments. In theater crafts, they will express themselves through acting, theater games, creative movement, dance, puppetry and pantomime. Classes, taught by Diane Burkam, Valerie Pineda and Dr. Ted Schlosberg, begin on September 27.

For information on these or any programs of the NJWA, please call 908-789-9696, or visit their office at 150-152 East Broad Street, Westfield. Information is also available at www.njworkshopforthearts.com.



NATURAL PRESERVE...Adults, ages 18 and older, enjoyed horseback riding while learning about the local flora and fauna on a scenic tour through the Watching Reservation offered through Trailside Nature and Science Center and Watching Stables last May. Due to its popularity, the "Nature Trail Ride" will be offered again on Tuesday, September 20th from 6:15-7:30 p.m. as part of Trailside's Autumn Workshop series for adults. Pre-registration is required as space is limited. For information on this program or for a complete listing of autumn adult, family or children's workshops please call Trailside at (908) 789-3670. Trailside Nature and Science Center is located at 452 New Providence Road in Mountainside. Watching Stables is located at 1160 Summit Lane in Mountainside. Trailside and Watching Stables are facilities of the Union County Department of Parks, Recreation and Facilities.



THE ZOO VISITS WESTFIELD...The Westfield Board of Education offers a Summer Extended School Year Program from Pre-K through Grade 8 to provide academic and supportive services to students. Pictured above, left to right, are Matthew Jenkins, a student who participates in the program, Vince Sharp, a representative from the Turtle Back Zoo, and Doreen Grzelak, a paraprofessional with the program. Miss Grzelak organized the visit for the 56 students who attend the Summer Extended School Year Program.

Children's Choir Auditions Held At Methodist Church

CRANFORD - Auditions will be held for the Celebration Children's Choir on Tuesday September 6 and Wednesday, September 7 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Cranford United Methodist Church, at the corner of Lincoln and Walnut in Cranford.

The Celebration Children's Choir is a tuition free opportunity for talented singers between the ages of 9 and 13 to sing a variety of music ranging from classical to Broadway. Rehearsals are held on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Cranford United Methodist Church. The season begins on Tuesday, September 13 and will include concerts with the Celebration Singers adult choir on December 9 and 10.

The Children's Choir is sponsored by the Celebration Singers, an adult non-profit organization not affiliated with any church or school. The Celebration Children's Choir is under the direction of Tom Pedas, former music teacher with the Cranford and Linden Public Schools. Mr. Pedas was named "Master Music Teacher" of New Jersey by the New Jersey Music Educators Association, his choirs have won top honors at choir competitions and he consistently places many singers in State and National Honors Choirs.

The Celebration Singers have been in existence for over 60 years, having performed at the 1964 Worlds

Fair, however Pedas formed the Children's Choir ten years ago. The Choir consists of 40 youngsters from several different communities. The Children's Choir performs selections on its own and also performs in concert with the Celebration Singers giving an intergenerational flavor to the concert.

For additional information or directions to the auditions call Tom Pedas at (908) 245-2339.

WHS Student Raises 400 Dollars For Darfur

WESTFIELD - Julie Tiedrich, a junior at Westfield High school, has raised over \$400 for the Darfur Foundation, a non-profit charity she created to help save the victims of the genocide in Darfur, Sudan.

The money was raised over the summer by selling 200 "Save Darfur" wristbands, each at \$2. Currently, over 400,000 men, women and children have been raped, tortured, and murdered in the Darfur region by a group called Janjaweed, only because of their race.

All proceeds are being donated to the American Jewish World Service to then buy medical aid and food for the victims of the Darfur genocide. The Darfur Foundation encourages anyone interested in helping out to contact Julie Tiedrich at julie@eboycharity.com.



HOLDING AUDITIONS...After a successful concert this spring, The Celebration Children's Choir holds auditions for a new season

A COMPLETE MUSIC PROGRAM ...DONE RIGHT!

Paul Nazzaro Music Studio
 Piano Lessons and Music Technology

PIANO LESSONS FOR GRADE SCHOOL JUNIOR HIGH HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE LEVEL ADULTS

137 Saint Paul Street Westfield NJ (908) 232-3310 www.NazzaroMusic.com

Our program inspires **excitement, creativity, and virtuosity.**

Nowhere else will you find the classically trained **teachers that motivate**, can teach so many styles of music and utilize technology seamlessly with learning.

Nowhere else will you get a **professionally mastered CD** of your music simply by taking lessons at the studio.

The **performing opportunities** at the studio are fun, encouraging, and invite success.

Our **adult student program** takes great care of adults who want to pick up the piano again, and makes the brand new student feel comfortable and inspired.

Academic Year Lessons and Summer Session: call any time for availability.

IndieFilm

Advance Screenings, Compelling Interviews & Fascinating Discussions
 See the Best of Sundance, Cannes & Toronto in a New Jersey Theatre
 www.PrivateScreenings.org
 1.800.531.9416