

The Clipper visits Norm Laviolette

Founder of Improv Asylum brings comedy to life at Saturday's DEF fundraiser

BY JONATHAN PAPPALARDO
CLIPPER CONTRIBUTOR

Improv comedy, according to Duxbury resident and improv mastermind Norm Laviolette, is “the art of listening, accepting and moving ideas forward.” The dispensing of ideas is center stage in his world, one in which he has turned thinking on his feet into an art form.

Laviolette is the co-founder of the Improv Asylum, a comedy theater featuring improvisation and sketch comedy on Hanover Street in the North End of Boston. On Saturday, the troupe came to Duxbury for the third annual DEF Presents...Improv Asylum, a fundraiser to support the Duxbury Education Foundation's efforts to fund innovative programs in Duxbury schools.

The event, held last Saturday at the Performing Arts Center consisted of a kid-friendly performance in the evening and a show for teens and adults at night.

“The style of the show is very conversational,” said Laviolette. “We talk a lot with the audience, tell stories and improvise off of all that. It's impressive to watch these actors. The musical improvisers are super funny. It's impressive to watch them knowing they're working without a script.”

“The idea is not to repeat what has worked in the past,” he added. “Each show is unique. It's impossible for us to do the exact same show again.”

During the family-friendly performance, the kid attendees have opportunities to join in the fun on stage. Although the main difference between the shows is the demographic of the audience, Laviolette says age is not a factor for overall



Duxbury resident Norm Laviolette (left) with his Improv troupe members Jeremy Brothers, Ceara O'Sullivan, Pat Parhiala and Kiley Fitzgerald.

Photo courtesy Michelle Kelly

enjoyment.

“We have fun and laugh no matter the rating,” he said. “It doesn't matter if the show is G, PG or even X-rated.”

With the Improv Asylum turning 20 this summer, it would be easy to assume Laviolette has dabbled in comedy since he was a child. If you ask him if he was a theater kid he will respond, “Hell, no. I

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wasn't smart or disciplined.”

His passion for improv began at UMass Amherst, where he was an active member of the school's comedy troupe Mission IMPROVable. Laviolette also hosted Beyond The Norm, which he refers to as “terrible campus TV.” Fresh out of college he accepted a marketing job in New York City, a position where he found great success and the possibility of a promotion. Still, he knew it was not his right career track and he said that he felt if he

thing in Boston.”

Performances at the Improv Asylum have run six nights a week since inception.

“They are fully improvised,” he explained. “It's a job where it pays not to be prepared. It's all improv, made up on the spot.”

The success of the Improv Asylum has afforded the company the opportunity to grow exponentially.

“We now own a venue in the Seaport, Laugh Boston Comedy Club,” said Laviolette. “And we perform shows all across the country.”

Those cross-country shows include the annual DEF fundraiser in Duxbury. The partnership flourished through his wife, a former DEF trustee.

With two children in the Duxbury school system, Laviolette said he knows first hand the important work the DEF is doing for education here in town.

“DEF is a community that supports many things, like arts, music and science,” said Laviolette.

He likens the DEF's work, which fosters a wide spectrum of opportunities for students of varying interests, to the art of improv.

“It draws everybody,” Laviolette said proudly. “Improv is an inclusive atmosphere for athletes, theater kids and even shy kids who feel they don't fit in anywhere else.”

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The flushing of water mains is a necessary function to improve the water quality to all of our customers. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Water Department at 781-934-1100, ext. 5520 or 5521.

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LAST CHANCE FOR CONFESSIONS BEFORE EASTER
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	<p>HOLY THURSDAY, April 13 8:15 AM - Morning Prayer 7:30 PM - Mass of the Lord's Supper 10:30 PM - Night Prayer</p>	<p>HOLY SATURDAY, April 15 8:15 AM - Morning Prayer 8:00 PM - Vigil</p>
	<p>GOOD FRIDAY, April 14 8:15 AM - Morning Prayer 3:00 PM - Living Stations of the Cross 7:30 PM - Service of the Lord's Passion with Communion</p>	<p>EASTER SUNDAY MASSES, April 16 7:00 AM - Church 8:30 AM - Church 10:00 AM - Church & Parish Hall 12:00 PM - Church</p>
		