

'Native Kings of Comedy' hit Gallup

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
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LOTS OF LAUGHS at the Gallup Downtown Conference Center

Don Burnstick has got to be the most hilarious comedian to hit Gallup and then to team up with our already acclaimed Ernest David Tsosie, will be the most talked about show to come to town – from promotional poster for Native Kings of Comedy

It was a night filled with laughter as Native Stars hosted *Native Kings of Comedy*, presenting Don Burnstick, Ernest David Tsosie, and Drew Lacapa at the Gallup Downtown Conference Center, 204 West Coal Ave. April 12.

Starting the show off was no stranger to the comedy stage, Ernest David Tsosie, with his comedy act called *Leave the kids at home*.

Tsosie has been doing comedy for the past 18 years, starting out in 2001. Prior to comedy he's been acting since the 1990s. Along with all that, he is a motivational speaker. Currently, Tsosie has been auditioning on some possible movie scripts, but comedy is his niche. He says working the stage with Burnstick and Lacapa is awesome, since they're comedy veterans.

"It's these two guys that inspired me to do comedy, so it's inspiring to be here on stage with them," He said. "I love doing comedy. Other than that, it's always nice to do something related to the comedy area. If a movie part comes up that would be great, too."

Taking the stage right after Tsosie was comedy veteran Drew Lacapa. This was his return to the stage. Lacapa took an 8-year break due to health problems. He began his comedy career in 1982. Since being away, he found he really missed it. He says being on stage helps him deal with issues and it's a great way to get those things off his chest. He considers it his own form of therapy.

"Over this 8-year hiatus, my act before was all clean stuff, but now I noticed it's become not so clean," he said. "It's probably because I've become a grumpy old man (laughing)."

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Lacapa says it's great that he can always get up on stage and talk, which is a plus. He finds it's a blessing to be able to speak and get paid for it. When asked if he felt a little apprehensive about coming back to the stage, he said, "It's like jumping off a mountain. You just got to go for it". He also said it doesn't matter if he likes his comedy act, but what really matters is if his audience likes it.

"Either way I'm okay with it of how the audience reacts to me," he said. "Every venue is different, and every audience is different. I can hear the mumbles, whether they like the language, the attitude. I'm ok with it."

Headlining the comedy night was Don Burnstick. Coming from the Alexander First Nation in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, Burnstick is a Cree Native American. Burnstick fell into the comedy scene by accident several years ago. He was watching an Anglo bombing on stage with a comedy act in front of a group of Native American women. The next thing you know, Burnstick was asked to take over, and, as they say, the rest is history. That was 24 years ago.

"When I started I got noticed and soon word spread and that's how I began," he said. "It was just timing."

His comedy act primarily hits on topics such as family, relationships, and Native humor. Burnstick says it's pretty much across the board in talking about typical reservation life. All Native Americans can understand the reservation life, growing up on the "rez", eating commodity food, sharing clothes (laughing). He says it's what Native families do.

"The gist of telling Native humor is not just telling a story, it's about teasing. Native humor is teasing." he says, "The best time we have is when we're sitting around with family and friends telling stories. That's our best times. So, when I get up there (stage), I like to tease and make a family of everyone."

Since hitting the stage Burnstick said he wouldn't believe he would be doing this full-time. He says it's fun living the good life, although he said it hasn't always been that way. At one point in his life Burnstick was a drug dealer, a bad drunk, and now happily says he's been sober for the past 34 years.

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"I just turned 56 and it's been a good journey aye (jokingly)," he said. "I believe you should try to live for your people, for your family and everything else will fall in place. Once you start living for yourself, that's when become selfish, and that creates problems. If you give of yourself and be kind, it will come back to you, as versus if you are selfish, you will have problems."

For more information on upcoming events visit www.nativestars.com/upcoming-events-gcc

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