

VIEW

Comedic couple compile book of funny advice

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Go ahead. Laugh at them. They're used to it.

In fact, Brian McKim and Traci Skene want you to laugh. The southwest residents are stand-up comedians and have been headlining at Big A's Comedy Club at The Orleans, 4500 W. Tropicana Ave. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays this month. Nov. 24-26 marks their final performances. Tickets are \$15.99. Call 365-7075 or visit orleanscasino.com.

The duo have a he said/she said act billed as "Mr. & Mrs. Comedy."

"We give advice and bust up marriages," Skene said.

McKim and Skene want also to pass along the love of their craft. They've just released a book, "The Comedy Bible: the Complete Resource for Aspiring Comedians." It's available at amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com.

The 256-page book is full of tips for those whose career goal is to be a comic. The couple pulled information from their years in the business.

"The hardest part was putting ourselves in the (mind-set) of someone who didn't know the first thing about comedy," Skene said.

The book is an overview of all types of comedy. Word play is a type of comedy: "My optometrist is so egotistical. Everything is eye, eye, eye." The book includes how to craft a joke, choosing a persona, why point of view is important and following the Rule of Three.



CRAIG L. MORAN/VIEW FILE PHOTO
Comedian Brian McKim takes a dip in the pool at his southwest home. He and fellow comedian and wife, Traci Skene, have written the book, "The Comedy Bible." The duo's last performances at The Orleans are Nov. 24-26.



Traci Skene shares a laugh with her husband Brian McKim as the comedic couple sit in the kitchen of their southwest home. The couple's book breaks down the craft of being a comedian for those thinking about a career in the business. JAN HOGAN/VIEW

One of the more important parts of the book? How to train the mind to be a comedian.

"Some people are witty at work, but how does that translate to writing material and doing it on command? That's the hard part," McKim said.

The couple -- yes, they're married in real life -- have performed in all 50 states and were featured on season seven of NBC's "Last Comic Standing." Skene appeared on VH-1's "Fools for Love," "VH-1's Stand-up Spotlight," and A&E's "Comedy on the Road." Her blog is Road Atlas Shrugged.

McKim has also appeared on numerous network, syndicated and cable TV shows and on "The Bob & Tom Show." He is a regular performer at the famous Comedy & Magic Club in Hermosa Beach, Calif.

Because of their long tenure in the business and their online magazine, McKim and Skene were in the enviable position of being contacted by a publisher and asked to write the book. But it almost didn't happen.

The couple were approached through their website, sheckymagazine.com, in early October. When he first skimmed the email, McKim mistakenly thought the London publisher wanted them to review a book. The second email made him think they were being asked to simply write a chapter for a compilation book. The third email got the message through.

"I went, 'Oh, they want a 'book,'" McKim said.

Maybe the Rule of Three applies to emails, too.

Both had been writing about comedy since 1999, so tackling "The Comedy Bible" was not as overwhelming as it might seem. Still, the year was a whirlwind of activity for the couple.

They were busy with their magazine and working gigs. They were also packing up and leaving the East Coast for greener entertainment pastures -- Las Vegas.

"Philadelphia has the Liberty Bell, but it doesn't have Shecky Greene," Skene said.

They wrote in the car and hotels rooms as they worked their way west, whenever they could find time.

"Sometimes I'd be up in the middle of the night working on it when I was inspired," McKim said.

Now making this their home, both said they wanted the book to pave the way for new comics.

"Who knows? Ten years from now there could be a headliner who started because of the book," Skene said.