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OU student plans for a life in comedy

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, OU Web Writer

Peter Banachowski sees life as a joke — literally. As a comedian the events in Banachowski's life often become the topic of his stand-up bits. From humorous every day events to funny past relationships, Banachowski hopes to make a career of making people laugh. The OU junior is already getting his start performing locally in stand-up clubs and working with OU's Student Video Productions club.

"I've been making people giggle since I was three. I was always this attention-getting kid. In eighth grade, I learned the different between getting a laugh and trying to get people to laugh out of their own free will," Banachowski said.

In high school, Banachowski decided to give stand-up a try. Every year, the school's talent show would be announced and Banachowski would debate trying a stand-up routine. No stranger to the stage, Banachowski used to play the saxophone in a jazz band and participate in the drama club at Oxford High School. Eventually, during his senior year, he decided it was his last shot. So he signed up and won the open category. Banachowski then went on to participate in a talent show with students from other schools. From there, his desire to perform stand-up continued to grow.

After coming to Oakland University, Banachowski settled in to a program in math and political science, aiming to be a high school calculus teacher. He is still pursuing his education, but he's also taking classes through The Second City in improvisation and writing. The schedule amounts to a combined 24 credits, which he juggles with two part-time jobs.

"I don't have friends. I've only been to one party in my life...all I know how to do is work," Banachowski said. "I just love knowledge. The more knowledge you have and connections you can make the more jokes you can write."

Banachowski likes to write, which is something he has enjoyed since high school. However, he said he was never good at writing academic papers. However, he did write a persuasive argument for an English class in high school about why women should date him. Now his writing efforts have turned to writing sketches similar to those on NBC's Saturday Night Live."

"Humor is about life," Banachowski said. "My best routines come from whenever I get a good, raw emotion about something. I can write four minutes of material about a fortune cookie if the mood strikes me, but I can't write a joke for the sake of writing a joke."

Banachowski has been doing stand up for about a year and a half, but really began immersing himself in it in the last few months. He even purchased a mic stand and mic to practice his routines. Banachowski said the crowd at each performance is different and each night, his set might go over differently with the crowd. Either way, he's able to take the compliments or heckling and move on.

"Sometimes people get tired of laughing," Banachowski said. "I think my ability to handle the heckling comes from years of abuse from my brother. I'm so used to getting heckled at home, where it matters because these are the people who are supposed to love me. From a stranger, the heckling doesn't bother me. I will just go out there and make them laugh next time."

Within the next 10 years, Banachowski would like to build a name for himself in the Detroit area and then move to Chicago once he is finished with college. He would like to perform on The Second City main stage before he's 30. His ultimate goal is to be a writer and talent for "Saturday Night Live."

"Nothing may work out and I'll go back and get my certification and be a calculus teacher," Banachowski said. "I live a life where I don't want regrets. I don't regret anything I've ever done. Every step has led to a next step or a good stand-up routine."

SUMMARY

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