

Friday, January 14, 2005

- [NEWS](#) ▶
- [SPORTS](#) ▶
- [OPINION](#) ▶
- [DEATHS](#) ▶
- [COMMUNITY](#) ▶
- [FEATURES](#) ▶
- [HELP](#) ▶
- [CLASSIFIEDS](#) ▶
- [SEARCH](#) ▶
- [CONTACT US](#) ▶

© 2005  
Observer  
Publishing Co.  
Washington,  
PA

# Entertainment

## Riggle room

BY BRAD HUNDT, *Staff Writer*

[bhundt@observer-reporter.com](mailto:bhundt@observer-reporter.com)

Nostalgia seems to be as deeply ingrained in the human condition as love and hate, hunger and thirst.

Whether we like to admit it or not, everyone is nostalgic about something – it could be smelling coal smoke in the winter, listening to Pittsburgh Pirates games on transistor radios in the early 1970s or watching MTV in its infancy. Where there's a yearning for a time that's irrevocably gone, there's nostalgia.

**What:** Randy Riggle's "Nostalgia"  
**Where:** The Uptown Theatre  
**When:** Tonight and Jan. 29, Feb. 12, Feb. 26, March 5 and March 26  
**For information call** 724-223-8101 **or go online to** [www.nostalgiashow.com](http://www.nostalgiashow.com)

Because he's a 43-year-old, you would probably expect Washington County comedian Randy Riggle to feel nostalgic about popular culture from the 1970s and 1980s: mood rings, "The Six Million Dollar Man" or "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman." But his coordinates, as far as nostalgia goes, actually date back to the 1950s and early 1960s. He calls it "a love affair with that time-frame."

"The things I watch the most and the things I buy the most are old-time TV shows," he said, citing Jack Benny, Red Skelton and the "I Love Lucy" series as influences. "It's nothing against today's TV or movies. I just think there's a charm about those people, especially since they're now gone."

Starting tonight and continuing over the next few months, Riggle will be turning the clock back to things he – and, undoubtedly, quite a few other people – are nostalgic about in "Nostalgia," a one-man, multi-media show that will be at the Uptown Theatre in Washington.

In a little over 90 minutes, "Nostalgia" will cover American history and popular culture from the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 to Neil Armstrong setting foot on the moon in 1969.

At leisure  
Asian TV shows are hard to resist

Music

Events  
Briefs  
**Riggle room**

Theater  
Plays don't always go according to script

Riggle will be using props and the new video screen that has been installed at the Uptown, and says "Nostalgia" isn't a standard stand-up show, but is "more along the lines of a Las Vegas revue or a Broadway play."

"We cover 30 years of time," he added. "It's just celebrating some of the fads, the lifestyles and the people who made those times."

By Riggle's own admission, "Nostalgia" is the most ambitious thing he's ever undertaken. It bounces from subject-to-subject and includes impersonations of everyone from Kermit the Frog to Johnny Mathis. Connecting all the dots presented more than a few challenges, Riggle explained.

"I didn't know exactly how I was going to put it together," he said. "I knew I wanted to celebrate those times because the people that influenced me most in my career were people who were performing back then."

"Nostalgia" acknowledges, however, that it wasn't all hoola-hoops and Davy Crockett hats between 1941 and 1969; World War II, obviously, was a pretty grim affair, and the postwar era was packed with more than enough tumult and division, from McCarthyism to the Kennedy and King assassinations and Vietnam.

Riggle also admits that "Nostalgia" can't hope to be comprehensive. "You can't possibly cover everything," he said. "There are going to be people coming up to me, saying, 'Oh, what about this person back then.'" In any event, he hopes it will both enlighten and inform.

"It's almost like educational entertainment."

"Nostalgia" is being staged dinner-theater-style, with dinner being served one-hour before showtime. Reservations for dinner must be made at least 48 hours in advance; however, tickets for the performance by itself are also available tonight and for subsequent weeks.

Riggle's "Nostalgia" is helping to inaugurate a new season at the Uptown Theatre, the restored moviehouse which opened its doors a more than a year ago. Starting this week, the Uptown is embarking on a four-nights-a-week schedule, with entertainment from Wednesday through Saturday nights. They're also launching a happy hour every Friday starting at 4 p.m.

Their schedule for the weeks ahead is heavy on local and regional entertainment, including Washington singer-songwriter Patrick Arena and tributes to Patsy Cline and Frank Sinatra. Last spring, the Uptown experimented with booking national acts like country band Asleep at the Wheel and jazz saxophonist Gato Barbieri, but, for the moment, the only performer on the schedule with a national profile is country singer Tommy Cash, the brother of Johnny Cash, who will be there March 19.

"We're regaining our momentum," said Dan Dye, the owner of the Uptown.

Along with a video screen 16 feet wide and 12 feet tall, seating at the Uptown has been reconfigured. Tables have been added, and seating capacity has been shrunk to 250. However, the tables can be removed and seating capacity shifted back up to 500 if an event demands it.

"It's a way to make the place more versatile," Dye said.

The food menu has been expanded and, perhaps most importantly, the Uptown now has a liquor license. Dye admitted that potential customers had told him that the venue needed to serve alcohol, "and that's something I took to heart."

There's also the possibility that the theater will host afternoon wine tastings, fashion shows, cooking shows or open-mic forums for local political figures.

In late 2003, the Uptown Theatre had been put up for sale. Dye declined to discuss whether it was still on the market. "We're not going to talk about that today," he said.