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Staging Benefit: Museum booster Steven Alan Green at L.A.'s Comedy Store.

## Standing Up For Museum Is No Joke

Comedian thinks he and his peers should be institutionalized.

A museum of comedy? For Steven Alan Green, that's no laughing matter.

The comedian believes there should be a museum dedicated to his craft. So he has been hosting a series of fundraisers to get the idea off the ground.

The most recent was to be a comedy night last weekend at the **Comedy Store** on Sunset Boulevard across the street from the House of Blues. Stand-up veteran Steve Mittleman and comedy writer David Feldman were among those scheduled to perform.

Proceeds from the event, which charged \$20 to \$30 for a ticket, will go toward estab-

lishing what Green calls the Comedy Museum Exploratory Committee. He hopes to raise a total of about \$75,000 to develop plans for the museum, which could include exhibits about the history of comedy, spotlights on influential comedians, events and performances.

"I lived in England for a long time and I saw how the arts are respected and studied," said Green, a writer and producer, who was a staple of L.A.'s stand-up comedy scene in the 1980s. "I want to produce a world-class museum dedicated to the study and exhibition of the art, history and science of comedy."

Green is running the museum fundraising efforts through his non-profit organization, the Laughter Foundation, which he started to help provide health care to local comedians. The foundation also provides emergency money — called the Heckler Fund — for comedians

who need help paying rent, and sends volunteer clowns to perform at children's hospitals.

Green said he has the support of many local comedians for the museum. According to him, there is no museum dedicated to the art of comedy.

Once he raises enough money to begin planning, he hopes to spend about six months scouting locations and presenting the idea to potential investors. Even though he lives in Los Angeles, he would like to locate the museum in San Francisco, which he calls the birthplace of American stand-up.

He acknowledged that his goal seems ambitious.

"You put an idea out there and then you've got to get it under the right noses; then it becomes real," he said.

"There is an element of 'What the heck is he doing?' But I ignore that stuff. I'm a soldier of comedy."

— Natalie Jarvey

## Going for Broker in Video Game

Farmers Insurance adds virtual property to Facebook's Cityville.

Farmers Insurance Group's decision to put its products in Facebook's most popular game earned the company a lot of fans, but not sales leads for its agents.

The L.A.-based insurer on Oct. 27 entered Cityville, a multiplayer game that simulates city planning and development. In the game, each player decides what buildings to put in their ideal city.

Farmers arranged a product placement — called an "activation" — so that players may choose to build a University of Farmers, a fictional school shown in TV commercials. Players earn extra game points for hosting the school in their city.

Farmers previously had a presence in other Facebook games, including Farmville, Café World and Mafia Wars.

All the games are owned by Zynga of San Francisco. But Cityville has surpassed them all in terms of number of players.

Marc Zeitlin, vice president of e-business at Farmers, headquartered in the Mid-Wilshire area, declined to state how many

people had downloaded the University of Farmers building because the game is still going, but it numbers in the multiple millions.

"It is the most successful activation in social games ever," Zeitlin said of the University of Farmers offering.

But how does getting millions of people to download an image, and tens of millions to see it, sell insurance?

Michael Glazer, chief executive of social media ad agency **Back at You** in Encino, said the Cityville promotion gives Farmers brand awareness. But the game doesn't provide a concrete action for participants

to buy insurance or even contact an agent for a quote.

"It's a great idea to get people to interact with the brand and the building, but the real next step is to close the loop," Glazer said. "If players could earn extra credit points for con-



Online: Cityville Farmers building.

tacting an agent, that would make it more tangible."

But Facebook game rules don't allow such a connection, Zeitlin said.

Instead, Zeitlin said he measures the success in terms of impressions. Online surveys show that the images have changed the image of Farmers in consumers' minds.

"Is Farmers seen as a more cool brand?" he said. "The answer is yes."

Data also show that most of the players for Cityville are stay-at-home moms, a perfect target audience for an insurance company, Zeitlin said.

— Joel Russell

## Jamming In Hot Peppers

Jenkins Jellies hopes its Hell Fire product proves a hot item.

When actress Hillary Danner first began making jellies out of the hot peppers she grew in her Highland Park backyard, she was skeptical.

"To me, it sounded horrible," Danner said. "I didn't know about pepper jellies."

But now, three years and countless tastings and food shows later, she has perfected the recipe and transformed what was once a hobby into **Jenkins Jellies**, a small business with a following that's



spreading.

The fledgling business has only one product: Hell Fire Pepper Jelly, which despite its name does not include any fruit.

The gluten-free vegan condiment gained popularity after receiving endorsements from celebrity chef Mario Batali and from Danner's cousin, actress Gwyneth Paltrow.

"One morning I woke up and my (e-mail) inbox was full of notifications of payment from all over the world," Danner said. That was a little more than a year ago. She thought, "I guess I better get serious!"

She went from making small batches of 30 or 40 jars of the jelly at a time in her kitchen to planning for her first 10,000-jar

batch at a co-packing facility, which is to be produced this week at a plant in Garden Grove.

The first jars to hit store shelves did so recently in New York, where eight grocery stores agreed to carry the spread of sweet and spicy peppers. One Dean & DeLuca store in Northern California carries her jelly, and she has lined up a national distributor who will focus on the West Coast.

Still, as a business, Jenkins Jellies has yet to break even.

Her recipe calls for seven kinds of peppers, but now she's trying to go one step further and put some real fruit in her jelly. Some of her exotic flavor ideas so far include cranberry-citrus pepper jelly and pineapple pepper jelly.

"I'm definitely under pressure to not be a one-hit wonder," said Danner.

— Bethany Firmhaber

## Auditor Marches to His Own Drum

When **Serge Louchnikov** isn't crunching numbers as an auditor, he's been learning how to protect the country ... in a crunch.



Louchnikov

Louchnikov, a senior internal auditor at the downtown L.A. office of Ernst & Young, took eight months off work this year to train as an officer in the Army National Guard.

For Louchnikov, who served in the Marine Corps after high school, joining the National Guard was a way to continue to serve the country while pursuing a career.

"I had an internal call to duty," Louchnikov

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CHARLES CRUMPLEY

said. "I decided the National Guard would be the perfect balance to also have a civilian and business career."

While in training, Louchnikov, 30, attended a two-month program called Ranger School. There, he was put through rigorous combat simulations, going days with little food or sleep.

He returned to Ernst & Young in September and will now spend about five days each month serving with the 1-160th Infantry Battalion (L).

But he has also found that Ranger School has helped him at work.

"I've added a few tools to my kit as far as get-

ting things accomplished," he said. "I'm definitely very intense when I work on my audits. Everything gets tackled very aggressively and vigorously, and nothing gets left behind."

### Locker Room Talk

When **Jane Pak** traveled to China a couple of weeks ago, she said she half-expected the Chinese people would ask aspirational questions. After all, China is often cited as the country that wants to be an economic powerhouse like the United States.

When she arrived, Pak said, "The greater from our hotel asked where we were from. When we answered, 'Los Angeles,' his response was, 'Los Angeles! Hey, Kobe Bryant!'"

"I responded, 'Yes, Kobe Bryant lives in L.A., but we're a pretty big city.' To which he responded, 'Yes, I know — you also have David Beckham!'"



Pak

ESPN of life."

Staff reporter Natalie Jarvey contributed to this column. Page 3 is compiled by Editor Charles Crumpley. He can be reached at [ccrumpley@labusinessjournal.com](mailto:ccrumpley@labusinessjournal.com).

Pak, 34, who is the chief executive of the National Association of Women Business Owners in Los Angeles, said it occurred to her that people tend to think of you "not for what you are, but for what they see ... and to this young man, we're just one big locker room in the