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Concerts/Events | Article published Friday, April 18, 2003

Comedy club enlists in nationwide effort

By [MIKE KELLY](#)

BLADE STAFF WRITER

Equipped with nothing but microphones and an arsenal of jokes, a comedy coalition of stand-up comics will take to stages across the country Monday night as clubs open their doors for free shows in support of American troops stationed overseas.

The shows are part of an effort called "Standup for the Troops," which was started a few weeks ago in Minneapolis. Included in the effort locally is Connxtions Comedy Club, on Heatherdowns Boulevard.

Appearing at Connxtions Monday night will be a lineup that includes Chrissy Burns, P.J. Butlind, Mark Knope, Ken Leslie, and Dennis Sheehe.

"Standup for the Troops" was the idea of Minneapolis comedian Craig Allen, whose family has strong ties to the military. "My dad, my aunts, uncles, and cousins have all served," Allen said. "Right now, my little brother, Keith, is stationed on the USS Winston Churchill and my sister is at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"I wanted to do Standup for the Troops on a local level in the Twin Cities, to do something to show my support for the military and my family, but word spread fast and before I knew it we had become a nationwide event."

Another comic, Wild Bill Bauer, helped Allen spread the word. A Vietnam veteran, Bauer assisted in contacting clubs and comics across the country. Dozens of clubs from Florida to California have been enlisted in the cause.

"We're doing this for the military, we're doing this for the friends and families they had to leave behind, and the causes we're supporting will benefit troops long after this is over," Bauer said.

Though the comedians and the clubs involved with Standup for the Troops are donating their time and services, cash donations will be accepted after the shows, with all proceeds going to the USO, which provides entertainment and moral support for military personnel, and to the VFW's Operation Uplink, which provides free calling cards to military personnel to stay in touch with their families at home.

Ed Pattay, manager of Connxtions, said he hopes to attract "a couple hundred people" to Monday night's performances. "In addition to the comics, the staff here is all donating their time too that night, and it would be great if we could fill the place up," he added.

Allen said he hopes the night's comedy brings out audiences regardless of their political affiliations. "We're not 'pro-war' or 'anti-peace,'" he explained. "We're just comedians and comedy clubs who love our country and want to do something nice to show our support for the troops."

Connxtions is located at 5319 Heatherdowns Blvd. Monday's special show begins at 8 p.m., with seating at 7 p.m. Information: 419-867-9041.