

Stand-up Guy

Jim Breuer (aka Goat Boy) takes his family-friendly comedy on the road



By **SUSAN BLOOM**
Photo by **JERRY MCCREA**

On a rare day at home in Chester, comedian Jim Breuer sips a cup of coffee on the deck as he surveys his property, a king overlooking the castle grounds. But the meditative moment is short-lived as he suddenly sprints to his favorite stress-buster, the trampoline. "It's fun and great exercise," he says in mid-jump.

Breuer, 45, has certainly earned a rest, but he's not about to relax for long. This is a guy who is on the road 200 days a year, performing about 300 stand-up gigs across the country. Then there's his weekly "Raw Dog" radio show on SiriusXM.

"I'm always looking ahead," says the husband and father of three girls. "Like, 'what's next?'"

Well, actually, that would be the recently taped stand-up special "Midlife Madness" and the cartoon sitcom that's in development.

It's hard to keep Jim Breuer down on the trampoline of life.

Growing up on Long Island, Breuer recalls an idyllic childhood as a self-proclaimed "King of the Block," a "funny, loud kid" and neighborhood ringleader who spent endless hours playing with friends in the street. Around sixth grade, he says, "I listened to a Steve Martin album for the first time and thought it was the greatest thing I'd ever heard. I was like, 'You can talk and be funny and make people laugh for a living? I can do that!'"

Influenced by comic heavyweights such as George Carlin, Rodney Dangerfield, Roseanne Barr and Eddie Murphy, Breuer wowed high school audiences with his antics and spot-on impressions and ultimately headed for New York City to pursue a career in comedy and acting. He landed a series of small parts on TV shows, including "Welcome Freshmen" and "Uptown Comedy Club."

"Call it confidence, but I just knew that no one was going to beat me at what I do," he says.

In 1995, Breuer's unique style caught the attention of Lorne Michaels and led to a four-year stint on "Saturday Night Live." He garnered fame for his iconic half-man, half-livestock "Goat Boy" character and dead-on impression of Joe Pesci.

"Doing 'SNL' was a phenomenal experience," he says. "I'm cracking up guys like Tom Hanks, Joe Pesci and Alec Baldwin, and hanging out with rock bands I grew up with and they're all telling me how funny I am."

In 1998, fellow comedian Dave Chappelle hand-picked Breuer to play a lead in his stoner comedy "Half Baked," a film that flopped in the theaters but elevated



The Ballad of Conor Oberst

NYC **MUSIC** | When **Conor Oberst** took the Dylan part on a recorded cover of the Traveling Wilburys' "Handle With Care," it was a bit of an in-joke for his fans. Early in his career, Oberst had to face down Dylan comparisons. As it's turned out, the Nebraska singer-songwriter isn't the next anybody or anything. He's the first Conor Oberst: a stylist with a huge sentimental streak and an idiosyncratic approach to the confessional song. His quavering voice — one that makes him sound perpetually on the verge of tears — has been copied by thousands of earnest emo-pop singers. But none of his imitators is able to command and direct emotions as confidently as Oberst. He'll headline Carnegie Hall, a fabled stage on which he's earned the right to sing, on Nov. 21, at 8 p.m. on the Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage. Tickets are **\$30 to \$44**. Visit carnegiehall.org. — Tris McCall



TONY GENICOLA

WHILE YOU'RE VISITING | Since 1940, Murray's has been providing the West Village with one of the best cheese selections available anywhere. Just a few blocks down from its flagship location, Murray's has finally undertaken its first restaurant venture with **Murray's Cheese Bar** (264 Bleeker St.). Everything you'd expect from a restaurant this cheesy is available, but with an attention to detail you'd expect from people who revere cheese. Of course, you can get grilled

cheese with tomato soup. The mac and cheese stands out by adding cave-aged Gruyère to the mix. Don't miss the Midwest-favorite fried cheese curds, a far cry from frozen mozzarella sticks. If you're looking for a place to sit down with a glass of wine and a couple of fine cheeses, you'd be hard pressed to find a better selection than what's offered here. **\$18** gets you a sampling of five of the best cheeses you'll ever taste. Call (646) 476-8882 or visit murrayscheesebar.com. — Brian Stitt

A Different Rocky Comes to Town

PHILLY **MUSIC** | Named after legendary rapper Rakim and raised in Harlem and Elmwood Park 24-year-old **A\$AP Rocky** was born into hip-hop. Last year, the young emcee set the internet on fire with a pair of singles — "Pe\$o" and "Purple Swag" — that matched East Coast swagger with the primeval trunk-rattling force of Dirty South bottom-end, and borrowed liberally from California provocateurs Odd Future, too. The lineup of A\$AP Rocky's first headlining tour has a similarly broad scope: He's enlisted thoughtful Los Angeles rapper Schoolboy Q and Danny Brown, the haywire, scalpel-sharp spirit of inner city Detroit, as support acts. (His own A\$AP Mob, which he's been assembling from friends and collaborators for the past five years, will also perform). They're touring to support "LongLiveA\$AP," the rapper's debut full-length, which hits retailers on Halloween. Youthful they may be, but don't call them callow: A\$AP Rocky was the most assured act on the Beach Party hip-hop stage at this year's Bamboozle Festival. Nov. 18 at the Electric Factory at 8 p.m. Tickets are **\$25** in advance. Visit ticketmaster.com. — T.M.



WHILE YOU'RE VISITING | If it's November, it must be stone crab claw season. Lasting through early May, the claws are prized for their firm consistency and sweet flavor, as well as their sustainability (one claw is harvested, with the crab returned to the water to regenerate). John Stritzinger, the chef at **Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steak House**

(1426 Chestnut St.), flies the claws in fresh (never frozen) from the Keys during the season, offering them as an appetizer, an entrée or an add-on to other steak and seafood dishes. Claws are cracked fresh-to-order and served with a traditional Dijon sauce and hot towels for finger-picking clean-up. Call (215)-246-0533 or visit delfriscos.com. — Beth D'Addono

Breuer's career.

Radio followed, with a successful turn on WNEW-FM's "Opie & Anthony Show" and the launch of his own "Breuer Unleashed" comedy show on SiriusXM Radio's Raw Dog channel, on which he has hosted Bill Cosby, Chris Rock and Jerry Seinfeld as well as rockers Roger Daltrey, Metallica and Eddie Money.

One of the highlights of his career, he says, has been his appearances on "The Howard Stern Show, also on SiriusXM Radio. He's been a guest more than a dozen times in the past five years.

"I was nervous the first time I went on, but after a while, it was as if we'd always known each other," Breuer says. "Making Howard laugh and having him as a fan is something I consider a monster achievement. He's a great guy and has done so much to resurrect my public awareness."

Breuer has been married for 19 years to Dee, who was originally from Bergen County. They have three daughters: Gabby, 13, Kelsey, 10, and Dorianne, 7. The family settled in Chester in 1999 after becoming acquainted with the town during a local craft show.

"I don't ever want to leave," Breuer says. "I want my family and roots to be here."

Despite his hectic travel schedule, Breuer says he relishes his time at home, cheering on his daughters in sports and organizing Wiffle ball tournaments and block parties for neighbors.

He's also close to his father, Jim Sr., who he used to take on the road with him to comedy shows before the 89-year-old World War II veteran became too ill to travel.

"My dad is better than any history class I could have taken," Breuer says. "He taught me so much without even trying, about how to overcome obstacles, be positive and live by example."

It's the model for the latest chapter in Breuer's career, which is now dedicated to family-friendly stand-up comedy, material that's safe enough for his kids to hear.

"I'm in a good place," he says. And, living with a house full of women, "I'm king of the block ... still!" @