

Ray Romano Loves His Job On Television Show

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Stand-Up Comedian Brings His Act To Jamestown For One Show Tonight As Part Of Lucy Celebration

By VICTORIA R. SPAGNOLI

Tonight is one of the many nights each year when the bright lights of big city entertainment shine on Jamestown.

Ray Romano, star of the television show *Everybody Loves Raymond*, will perform his stand-up comedy show at the Reg Lenna Civic Center. The show begins at 6:30 p.m. today.

The show is one of 20 Romano has lined up over the next couple weeks, the actor and comedian said this week.

"I was always a fan of stand up," he said, explaining he got his first chance doing it when someone told him about audition night at The Improv in New York City.

"I thought that would be neat and I

came up with four minutes of pretty lame material and I tried it. I went up on stage and I kind of got a laugh of two," Romano said. "That's where you get the bug, when you get your first laugh."

Romano said he went back again the following week, but the result was not so good and he stepped away from the bright lights.

When "you don't do as well, then you realize how hard it's going to be," he said. "I actually gave it up for a year or two. I just kind of got scared."

But that one night at the Improv "planted the seed."

"I knew I wanted to try that again when I got the guts," he said.

And when he got the guts, he went back. "A few years later I attempted it again and this time I stuck it out. I was still horrible — in the beginning you're always horrible — but I stuck it out," Romano said.

It takes about three or four years of trying it in order to find how good you really are, the comic said.

Apparently, Romano was very good because now, after several years of doing stand-up, he has his own television show.

Everybody Loves Raymond is based on Romano's real life, along with everyone who works on the show.

"All the characters are based on my life, but then of course we have to write shows — we've written 47

shows already — and we have a staff of writers and everybody takes them out of their own lives. But every show will have a little nugget of my life or somebody's life," he said. "If that's not the case, we just take a situation and try to write it like it would happen in reality."

Was television Romano's goal when he first started stand-up?

"No, I mean originally I did stand-up and wanted to be a great stand-up (comic). I wanted people to know me as a stand-up. I never thought of stepping into a sitcom until after about eight or nine years of stand-up."

See ROMANO on Page 3