



ELLIE BOGUE

## Class act

Terry Owens brings family-friendly magic

Terry Owens was seven years old when his parents bought him his first magic set, and they likely had no idea the impact the gift would have on their young son's future. Only a few years later, Owens took his first official step into a life of performing.

"It was show and tell day at school, and I had talked to my teacher about doing some magic for my show and tell," said Owens. "I performed a trick for my class, and I really began performing in fourth grade, and I've been doing it ever since."

Looking back, Owens realizes how important magic was to him growing up and how beneficial it can be for many children as they find their place in the world.

"It really helps give kids confidence. I wasn't sports-oriented when I was a kid, so magic has been a great gift in my life."

Owens and his brother began putting together shows, performing at carnivals to raise money for the annual Muscular Dystrophy Association's telethon. Along

the way he found himself performing in a variety of venues, typically in front of adult audiences. To round out his presentation, he began working comedy into his routines.

"Stand-up comedians hate comedy-magicians," he said. "They think we have an unfair advantage because we have props and aren't just standing there on the stage. But we still have to write our own material, and the comedy tie-in just seemed to work for me. I had always used being funny to get out of trouble with my mom when I was a kid, so it wasn't that hard to use that skill in my magic!"

Although his Total Family Ministries provides programs for children as an alternative to vacation Bible school, Owens continues to perform in front of mostly adult audiences. In venues as diverse as nursing homes, corporate meetings, fundraising events, private functions, the Firehouse Theatre and in shows he

donates to raise money for MDA, Owens is proud of his family-friendly approach to performing. While he may adapt his routine a bit for different audiences, he knows he never has to worry about offending anyone.

In a world where the spectacle is often expected, Owens provides something a little more subtle.

"I usually start by asking people if they like big illusions, and then I say 'Well, I don't do those, but I have this piece of rope, though — let's go!'"

Even as the world seems to get a bit more cynical and jaded, Owens appreciates the opportunity to provide something everyone needs: a bit of magic.

"I love making people happy," he said. "For a half hour or an hour, I can help people forget about their problems and concentrate on having fun. I think everyone really wishes there was a little thing called magic. They want to believe." ■