

# Hooking up with the Cable Guy

By Nick Thomas  
Special to the Advertiser

If laughter is the best medicine, then Larry the Cable Guy may have just the right prescription when he brings his unique style of redneck humor to Montgomery on Friday.

While his show may not be for everyone, he is one of the hottest comedians in the country today and, according to *Forbes Magazine*, pocketed a cool \$18 million in 2011-2012.

"Now that's funny right there," Larry might have characteristically chuckled two decades ago had someone then predicted his future success. At the time, Larry — whose real name is Dan Whitney — was just an occasional call-in guest on a Tampa radio morning show.

"When I started doing this, it was just for fun. I never intended it for a career," said Whitney from his home in Nebraska.

He moved to Florida as a teenager and quickly adopted the regional way of life, including a Southern twang which he began highly exaggerating in his act. "I love the South and lived there for 33 years, so you could consider me a Southerner. But I recently returned to Nebraska and bought a farm."

He's also no stranger to the River Region.

"I went to college in Georgia, and my first girlfriend was from Montgomery," said Whitney. "So I visited many times. I've also done some quail hunting there."

Whitney is a master of the one-liner, writes his own material, and can be brilliantly witty:

*"I've got a buddy of mine who called me up all upset because he slept with his third cousin. I'm like, good Lord, if it upsets you that much, quit countin' them."*

He can also be rather corny. "I love the crazy, goofy stuff. But I also want people to think 'hey, that was a really well thought out joke.'"

While some of his material is downright crude and politically incorrect, you'll rarely hear him use offensive four-letter words.

"I'm one of those acts you either really like or you don't," he said. He believes a lot of his critics' disapproval is "political." And that makes him "madder than a mosquito in a mannequin factory."

"There are comedians that I personally can't stand, but if they're funny, I can still appreciate why they have a fan following. They work hard just like me and I'm not going to rail on them just because of what they believe. There are all different styles of comedians and comedy out

there — something for everyone."

A clue to which side of the political fence Whitney leans is his daughter, named after his favorite president: Reagan.

"He wasn't perfect, but he brought pride back to our country," said Whitney. "And he had a great sense of humor."

Joke writing is a never-ending process because Whitney goes through a lot of material.

"Some comedians are storytellers. They might have five stories and take 20 minutes to tell them," he explains. "If I write twelve jokes, that's about two minutes of material for me!"

One such story teller is Bill Engvall, who will also be appearing in Montgomery with Whitney. But the two won't be working as a duo.

"Bill does his show first, then I go next. I get the raw deal because Bill goes home before I'm off stage!" he said.

Whitney's

laid back, folksy Southern style may seem to come easy on stage, but he experienced a rough spell a few years ago with performance anxiety.

"It just happened overnight and I became scared I would forget my lines," he admitted. "It became so bad, I didn't want to perform and touring was no longer fun."

But he quickly talked himself out of it.

"When performers get to the pinnacle of their careers, they can put a lot of pressure on themselves to make each show better than the last and that can lead to anxiety," he said. "So I just relaxed, and convinced myself to be positive. The audience was there to laugh and as long as I could make them, I was being successful. Now, I don't even think about it."

As he continues to share his humor across America, Whitney also shares his success. He once wrote a check for \$5 million to a hospital, and continues to donate millions to various charities including his Git-R-Done

Foundation.

He's also very generous when sharing the credit for his success.

"I couldn't have been successful without a great fan base," he says. "I really appreciate their support over the years."

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