

Rick Carino: still getting the last laugh

By Lauren Bishop
Record-Journal staff

MERIDEN — Longtime Platt High School coach Tom Ryan once told student Rick Carino that if Carino beat him in a one-on-one basketball game he could play on the basketball team — but if Carino lost, he would have to join the wrestling team.

Carino lost 11-10, something he doesn't regret.

"I ended up wrestling and it was a good move," said Carino, a 1989 graduate who captained the team and won a state championship at 171 pounds in 1988. Carino even coached the team for a year when his younger brother was a senior and now, 20 years after leaving Platt, he is still contributing to the team.

A stand-up comedian, Carino is reuniting with three former teammates, Doug Stevens, Bryan McCarty and Karl Baumgart, to raise money for the Alberta Baumgart Memorial Award Foundation.

The foundation is named after Karl Baumgart's mother and will award a scholarship to a Platt wrestler. Alberta Baumgart died of cancer after a five-



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Rick Carino, a former state champion wrestler at Platt, is using his comedy act to fund a scholarship.

year battle.

Carino will perform with fellow comedians Vince McElhone, Ashley Strand and Pat Oates at Ryder's on Main, 467 W. Main St., on Aug. 22 at 8:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at the bar.

"We try to at least do a dozen fundraisers to benefit the community (each year)," said Lynn Ryder, the bar's co-owner. One hundred to 160 people usually attend the shows and all ticket sales ben-

efit the charity.

Carino was a fan of comedy as a child, but it was not until after returning from nine years in the Navy that he decided to see where comedy could take him. He began with a show in Southington, which he admits was a flop.

"I don't know what it was, but it wasn't funny," Carino said Wednesday.

He taped the following show and changed his routine after reviewing his performance:

Fast facts

What: Comedy night featuring Rick Carino to raise money for the Alberta Baumgart Memorial Award Foundation

When: 8:30 p.m. Aug. 22

Where: Ryder's on Main, 467 W. Main St., Meriden

Tickets: \$15, available at Ryder's

Now he pokes fun at himself and talks about his life experiences.

"It's like my revenge against my parents. ... My father gets torn apart," he said.

Carino prefers to perform in restaurants and for charities rather than at comedy clubs.

He has raised thousands of dollars for the Meriden Humane Society in the last two years and hopes to raise around \$2,000 at the show in August.

Carino also works at Laticrete International Inc. and hosts a bar trivia competition at C.J. Sparrow Pub & Eatery in

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□ Last laugh

Cheshire on Tuesday nights.

On top of it all, he is completing his final year at Post University for a degree in business management and is founding Comedy Ark, a non-profit organization that will use comedy to raise money for animal charities.

"It's hard to describe, but it's a good feeling being up there making people laugh because whatever you're saying is stuff you created," Carino said.

lbishop@record-journal.com
(203) 317-2208