

## The Forecast for the Forecasters Is Dismal

**L**AST week, Alan Greenspan proved that a forecast of the future is not a prediction of the future. In his testimony to the House Committee on Education and the Labor Force, the former Federal Reserve chairman admitted that he had no idea when the economy would recover from the recession. He said that he had no idea when the economy would recover from the recession. He said that he had no idea when the economy would recover from the recession.

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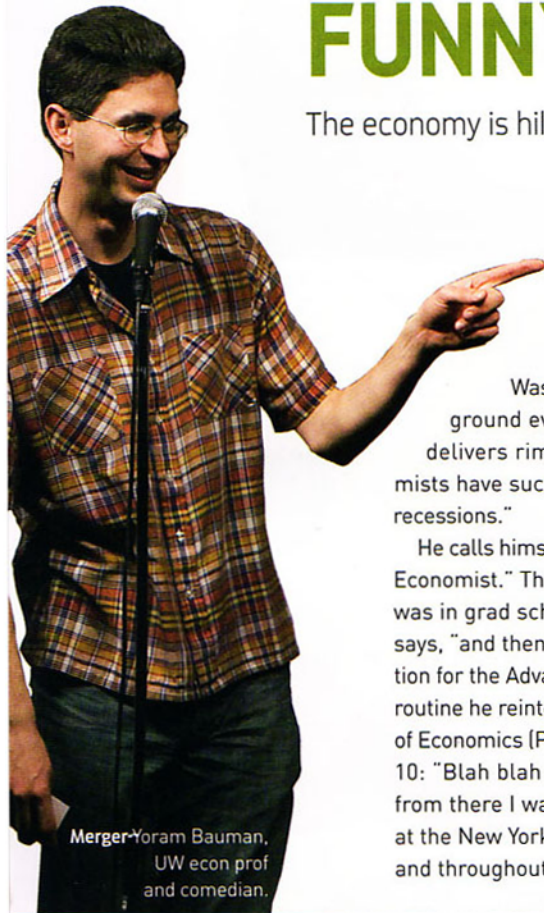
## The New York Times

No disrespect to Mr. Greenspan, but neither he nor the similarly numerate members of his professional fraternity have a particularly good record of forecasting recessions. As Yoram K. Bauman, an economist who teaches at the University of Washington and performs stand-up comedy, summed up an often-used line: "Macroeconomists have successfully predicted nine of the last five recessions."

# SEATTLE METROPOLITAN

## FUNNY MONEY

The economy is hilarious. Really.



Merger-Yoram Bauman, UW econ prof and comedian.

**S**top us if you've heard this one before: An economist walks into a comedy club... Wait, come back, this is a good one. Yoram Bauman, a bona fide PhD-holding econ professor at the University of Washington, walks into the Comedy Underground every Tuesday night, goes onstage, and delivers rimshot-worthy lines like "Macroeconomists have successfully predicted nine of the last five recessions."

He calls himself "The World's First and Only Stand-Up Economist." The shtick started in 2004, when Bauman was in grad school. "I parodied an econ textbook," he says, "and then performed it at the American Association for the Advancement of Science conference." In the routine he reinterpreted Mankiw's famous 10 Principles of Economics (Principle 3: "People are stupid"; Principle 10: "Blah blah blah"). "People actually laughed, and from there I was hooked." Since then he's performed at the New York Improv, Boston's Comedy Connection, and throughout the Northwest. He describes his audi-

ence as smart. "When I make fun of libertarians, I don't have to clarify that they aren't the people who check out your books."

Most of Bauman's jokes roast his chosen profession. (The difference between micro- and macroeconomics? "Microeconomists are people who are wrong about specific things. Macroeconomists are wrong about things in general.") But one of his best riffs involves bumper stickers. During a recent set at the Metropolitan Club he explains how his "Bring the Troops Home" sticker got him in trouble in conservative Eastern Washington. He says he tried another bumper sticker: "Leave the Troops There." The crowd explodes with laughter. Feigning confusion about why that sticker didn't win him friends in Walla Walla either, he says he affixed yet another on his bumper: "I Don't Know About the Troops." The audience howls.

Bauman insists he actually does support the troops, though, and admits he'd be a terrible soldier. Pointing at his spindly arms ("human veal!") he concedes that the only thing the military might find appealing about him is that he's not openly homosexual. "But if they reinstate the draft, ladies and gentlemen, that is going to change. It's going to change in snap." He snaps his fingers à la RuPaul. "It's not just going to be me, though, because that's the military's policy, right, if you're out you can't get in... So if they reinstate the draft, gay is going to be the new Canada." —Courtney Nash



## Seattle Post-Intelligencer

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**COMEDY for the cause**

**Do-gooders and good humor mix well on Non-Profit Nights, and that's no joke**

**What's the best cure for an ailing comedy night? Isn't it obvious? Laughter.**

**A good crowd also helps.**

**In a one-two punch that reinvigorated Comedy Underground's Tuesday nights, stand-up economist Yoram Bauman delivered a punch-line perfect pitch: invite local non-profits to use the venue and its comics as a different kind of fund-raiser. In return, the venue and local comics would get a reliably packed house of receptive customers on a normally sedate weekday night.**

**Since March, the concept of Non-Profit Comedy Night has brought in a steady stream of laughter every week – with the exception of some events unfortunate enough to coincide with the year's whacked-out weather. It's not the biggest moneymaker – the most any group has made is \$1,200 and that was the Youth Tutoring Program – but the events raised \$14,000 for non-profits in 2006.**

**They're booked solid through most of this year already.**

**"It's so stressful and heavy all week at work, so the idea you can laugh for a night means we're on a**

**high for a week after," said Hari Kon-dabolu, a regular comic on the Non-Profit night's rotation and organizer at the Hate Free Zone, which had a night at Comedy Underground in September. "Tuesdays used to be dead."**

**But just because the non-profits lean left and the comics skew to politics, it doesn't mean comics hold back.**

**"I warn them, this is not a PC show. It's a free speech zone," Bauman said. "You can talk about things you can't talk about anywhere else."**

**On a typical night, comics tackled**

**SEE COMEDY, E3**

## Do-gooders and good humor mix well on Non-Profit Nights, and that's no joke

BY ATHIMA CHANSANCHAI  
P-I reporter

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On a typical night, comics tackled

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# Non-Profit COMEDY

**Yoram Bauman:** My favorite joke is the one about how I got threatened for having a "Bring the Troops Home" bumper sticker on my car and tried to fix the situation by getting a new bumper sticker that read "Leave the Troops There." I like that joke because it highlights the two choices we really have, and because it pokes holes in the belief that "Bring the Troops Home" is somehow unpatriotic.

The challenge with that joke – and it's the same challenge people face during "serious" discussions about the war – is how to speak out against the war without coming across as being against the troops. Can you imagine doing that joke at a benefit for Veterans of Modern Warfare, a group that represents Gulf War veterans? I was terrified. But I did it. And I'm proud to say that veterans have come up to me after shows and told me how much they liked that material. The idea that "Bring the Troops Home" is unpatriotic is just ridiculous – almost as ridiculous as driving a gas-guzzling Hummer with a "Support the Troops" bumper sticker.



Yoram Bauman devised the comedy nights as a way to raise money for local non-profits.