

[Home](#)[CEO Hotline](#)[Viewpoint](#)[Classified Ads](#)[Archives](#)[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

- ▶ [Safety](#)
- ▶ [Pressroom](#) (web)
- ▶ [Ask the CEO](#)
- ▶ [CEO Forum](#)
- ▶ [Employee Recognition](#)
- ▶ [Employee Activities](#)
- ▶ [Metro Projects](#)
- ▶ [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)
- ▶ [Archives](#)
- ▶ [Events Calendar](#)
- ▶ [Research Center/Library](#)
- ▶ [Metro Classifieds](#)

Metro Info

- ▶ [30/10 Initiative](#)
- ▶ [Policies](#)
- ▶ [Training](#)
- ▶ [Help Desk](#)
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SGV Administration and Financial Services Manager Paula Faust says she enjoys making people laugh.

SGV Manager Paula Faust Enjoys Comic Gig, But Still Loves Day Job

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

(Dec. 22, 2009) It takes a minute for Paula Faust to recount how she morphed from Metro Administration and Financial Services Manager for the San Gabriel Valley into a part-time stand-up comic.

Growing up poking fun at her four siblings and 12 years of Catholic school balanced a normal, functional childhood with "no divorce, no beatings. Nobody left anybody. There were no drugs. Nobody even broke an arm," she remembers.

But, as a grown-up, Faust says she would watch comedians on TV, occasionally blurt out to husband Steve, "I swear I'm funnier than that person and they're up there making money doing that."

Then one day it happened. Her husband of 25 years surprised her by enrolling Faust in a comedy class.

Instructor Steve (another Steve) Klasky taught Faust that comedy is serious business – a skill that has to be rehearsed and fine-tuned. After nailing down the technique, Faust began writing and performing at places like the Improv. Last year, she was asked to perform at the California Transit Association in Monterey.



Nudged by her husband into a comedy class, Paula Faust launched her stand-up comic gig around 1994. Faust uses family humor and situational observations in her comedy.

The Real Reward

"There's nothing more gratifying to me than making people laugh," she says, noting that she's been working at it since 1994 and that most comedians have to love their craft because it's so hard to make a good living at it.

The inspiration for her material usually springs from her children or life's strange quirks.

"Most of the time as someone is talking or presenting, often in my head, during the pauses, I'll find the funny," she says jumping into a quick bit about the long-anticipated return of that fast-food legend: McDonald's iconic McRib sandwich.

"I so wish I was doing a gig tonight because I'd be like – 'the McRib is back. I don't know where it was, but it's back. It's doing a world tour, I think.' "

But, at times, she does mix-and-match her sources of material. At the CTA conference, she spoofed the fact that her kids have never really understood what she does for a living.

"In transit, unless you drive the bus, fix a bus, or drive a train, my kids are like: 'Mom, what exactly do you do?' "

"I do what I know. When I go out, I perform with a lot of single women that do a lot of material about being single and dating. That is not my life at all," Faust says, adding that she never targets her husband in jokes, and never talks about the people she works with.

Faust also makes it a point to keep her



Talent runs in the family. Faust's son, Alex has a band that has performed at Union Station. Below, daughter Casey, also enjoys the stage life performing in high school musicals, and at a recent Metro Veteran's Day celebration.



comedy clean. Her elderly dad might be listening and "I would never do a joke that I wouldn't want my father to hear," she said.

One myth about comedy, she said, is that many believe comedians make up material on the fly, but most good routines go through several rewrites before making it to the stage.

"I perform with a lot of the same comedians in the Southern, California area. They work on a lot of the same material, just as I do, night after night, to get the joke just right," she said.

Faust not only sometimes zeros-in on her three children - Alex, a musician; Casey, an artistic performer just starting college; and Michelle, a high school gymnast - as potential material, she also uses them as critics. The same holds true for her Metro co-workers who get jokes tried out on them, even when they might not know it.

Faust says she also enjoys collaborating with her sister and son, and works to poke fun at the media stereotypes of perfect soccer moms and always-in-control career women.

"I find it hilarious when I try to picture myself in those roles...I don't quite fit any of that," she says, noting that she's very happy with her Metro career, and still has time to raise her children.

Always ready with notebook and pen to pick up ideas for jokes at the dinner table or a meeting, Faust says comedy has become embedded in her brain. "It was either crafting or comedy and I just kept gluing my kids together, so..."

Faust takes comedy gigs that are local, because she prefers to stay close to her children and husband, and also because she says she really enjoys her job at Metro.

"The season of my life right now is transit, it's Metro, and my family," she said.

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