

Daily Herald

Susan Minra 2

Time out! Thursday 2

Bridge 3

dh dailyherald.com

# Neighbor

Comics — Page 3



## Show takes a look at the boomer childhood

BY JILL BLASKA

Daily Herald Correspondent

OK, be honest.

Did you ever embezzle money during a childhood game of Monopoly? Sneak one of mom's gold "candies" that tasted like soup? Endure the horror of a long, hot family road trip?

You are not alone.

While it may not have been so funny then, it is hilarious now.

Saturday night, Pat Hazell brings the comedy of our collective past to the Schaumburg Prairie Center, in his one-man comedy show, "The Wonder Bread Years."

Hazell, 44, is a former "Seinfeld" writer who has appeared on "The Tonight Show," "Seinfeld," "Comic Strip Live" and "MTV Half Hour Comedy Hour." He calls his show a "grand salute to baby boomers and pop culture."

"The show is a common journey into the attic," Hazell said. "It's not really about what city you grew up in or what age you are. There is a common denominator in life of trick-or-treating, going through your stocking on Christmas morning and cereal prizes."

Using a homey front porch as his set

### If you go

**What:** "The Wonder Bread Years"

**When:** 8 p.m. Saturday

**Where:** Schaumburg Prairie Center for the Arts, 201 Schaumburg Court, Schaumburg

**Tickets:** \$28-\$30

**Call:** (847) 895-3600

and numerous props, Hazell calls his act a "one-man show-and-tell."

"I bring up all the dangerous toys that were death-defying and the government took off the market," Hazell said. "And someone in the audience goes 'Oh man, I have a scar on my foot from that.'"

While "The Wonder Bread Years" has been a PBS special and is traveling across the country, Hazell, who is originally from Omaha, Neb., says the show's content is very Midwestern friendly.

"It's almost like the movie ' Fargo,' " Hazell said. "Other people think it's all made up."

In the course of two hours, Hazell uses a slide show of his family, to which he says anyone can relate, and some audi-

ence participation. Hazell says the audience never fails to surprise him.

"It cracks me up to hear someone who is 85 say 'What are you talking about? We just played with rocks and we were happy,'" Hazell said.

Though times have changed — green army soldiers have replaced red ones and eBay has replaced trips to the thrift store, Hazell's plethora of memories appeals to more than just baby boomers, and his focus is on our similarities.

"It's like what's behind door No. 3 — here's your experience of being stuffed into jeans that don't bend," Hazell said.

A father of two young boys, Hazell says seeing life through his children's eyes is a constant inspiration for his show.

"It's tracing a path through a day in the life of a 7- or 8-year-old," Hazell said. "It's about exploring our sense of wonder, how we lost it and how we get it back."

Saturday's performance is Hazell's first at Prairie Center, though he has performed in the surrounding area. Based in Austin, Texas, Hazell, his wife and two young sons recently relocated from Mandeville, La., after Hurricane Katrina.

"The show is pure escapism," Hazell said. "I use it as a way to juxtapose the



COURTESY OF "THE WONDER BREAD YEARS"  
Paul Hazell brings his comedic salute to baby boomers and pop culture, a one-man show called "The Wonder Bread Years," to Schaumburg's Prairie Center for the Arts Saturday.

nightly news and the war overseas. There just isn't enough of that going around I don't think."