

# The Class Clown

Dana Goldberg is comedy's new kid on the block.  
By Alicia Eler | Photography by Tony Donaldson

Ever wondered what it'd be like trying to make 700 lesbians laugh? Just ask stand-up comic Dana Goldberg, who, six years ago at age 26, found herself on stage cracking jokes—for the first time since high school—at the Lesbians for Change comedy event.

"I was so nervous, I could see my heart beat through my shirt," Goldberg says. "But when I hit my first big joke, I knew that was what I wanted to do for the rest of my career."

Born and raised in Albuquerque, N.M., the up-and-coming comic takes inspiration from her own life, poking fun at everything from a hilarious tooth-chipping-in-bed experience with her ex-girlfriend to her Jewish parents' reactions to her career choice. Her comedic path began at a senior talent show in high school, where she performed a five-minute comedy set.

"I was always the class clown...but I didn't touch a stage for years because I had stage fright and didn't want to speak in public," Goldberg says.

"This was a childhood dream and I thought, Why not go for it?"

But Goldberg, who came out to her mom at 18, doesn't want to peg herself as a lesbian comic. "I had to decide when I started comedy if I wanted to be an out comedian—if that was going to pigeonhole me," she says. "I think I have a good ability to break down audiences, whether they're straight or gay. If I'm funny, the fact that I'm a lesbian is very secondary."

And only a few months ago she quit bartending, the day job she calls "comedy with alcohol," which she's been doing for nearly 12 years, to finally pursue comedy full-time. On her way to comedic fame, Goldberg says, she plans to not only break the "big butch lesbian" stereotype but also create her own "type."

"I'm athletic," she explains jokingly. "Can we have a category for athletic? I'm a Chapstick lesbian. Not a lipstick, not a butch. I'm middle of the road. [But] if you saw me walk in heels and a dress, I'd look like a drag queen. So I just don't move." ■



Purple raglan jacket by K-Swiss (Barney's New York and kswiss.com), purple Dementia T-shirt by Obvious Clothing (obvious-clothing.com), silver dog tag by Ari Soffer, Monterey Justin boot jeans by Pierce Jeans. Stylist: Edgar Revilla. Hair and makeup: Andrea Kerns. Photo assistant: Josephine.

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**Sept. 24, 2001: *The Ellen Show* premieres.** Ellen plays a lesbian named (wait for it...) Ellen. Poor ratings lead to the show's cancellation after only three months.

**October 2001: Ellen talks!** Five years after Ellen comes out on the cover of *Time*, contributing writer Laurie K. Schenden gets the coveted first **curve** interview.

**Nov. 4, 2001: Ellen and the swan dress.** Ellen hosts the *53rd Annual Emmy Awards*, following quickly on the heels of Sept. 11, and receives a standing ovation at the close of the ceremony.

**June 2005: Ellen the survivor.** Ellen publicly reveals her stepfather's sexual abuse in *Allure*, in an effort to help teenage girls who may be suffering similar abuse.

**Sept. 18, 2005: The Emmys—round two.** Ellen hosts the *57th Annual Emmy Awards* to mixed reviews.



**Dec. 2004: Dyke drama is big in '04.** Ellen and Portia de Rossi begin their romance at a party following the VH1 Big in '04 ceremony, both splitting with their respective partners the following day.

**Feb. 25, 2007: Move over, Billy Crystal.** Ellen hosts the *79th Annual Academy Awards*, becoming the first openly gay or lesbian person to do so. Despite generally negative reviews Ellen receives an Emmy nod.

**Oct. 16, 2007: Iggy-gate.** In her opening monologue, Ellen bursts into tears while describing a dog adoption gone wrong, leading overzealous fans to call in and make threats to the adoption agency.

**May 30, 2003: Hello, Dory!** Ellen gives voice to "Dory" in the Oscar-winning film *Finding Nemo*, a part that director Andrew Stanton wrote with her in mind.



**Sept. 8, 2003: Watch your back, Oprah!** *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* premieres. To date, the show has earned Ellen 15 Daytime Emmy Awards.

**September 2008: Here come the brides!** Ellen weds Portia de Rossi after the lifting of the ban on same-sex marriage in California.



**November 2008: Crowning glory.** Ellen is named Funniest Lesbian Comic in America by droves of admiring **curve** fans.