



Laughter a Chain Reaction for Juggling Duo *mcall.com*

By Dave Howell – 11.2005

Jon Wee and Owen Morse understand that people have to juggle many important things in life — work, family, chainsaws. Well, maybe not chainsaws. But Wee and Morse do balance all three as The Passing Zone, a juggling duo that performs in a benefit for Dream Come True Sunday at Lehigh University's Zoellner Arts Center.

In separate phone conversations from their homes in California, Wee and Morse say that they may be jugglers, but their humor is a bit more adult. The fact that they are pictured holding chain saws in publicity photos might give that away.

Actually the "chain saw ballet," which has the duo dressed in tights, is part of a spectacular show that will include flaming torches and "people juggling," in which three volunteers from the audience will substitute for the usual clubs and cigar boxes. Morse brags about the duo's new "Boomerang Rubber Band" routine, which uses a single rubber band.

There will be plenty of humor, too. "It's a comedy more than a juggling show," says Wee. "People often come up to us and say, 'I had no idea it would be this funny.'" Morse says that the duo banter back and forth, and spoof TV commercials using objects like Chia Pets and the Thighmaster.

The duo has opened for many comedians, including Bob Newhart, Bill Cosby, and Rita Rudner, and has appeared at the Montreal Comedy Festival.

For many years The Passing Zone only appeared at private events, says Wee, "mostly different companies, big meetings and awards ceremonies." Typically companies hire the juggling duo to illustrate business principles, like the value of teamwork.

"A few years ago," says Wee, "we decided we wanted to get in front of the public more. We were not getting as much television and press coverage." Morse says: "People would ask us, 'Where can we see you guys? I'd have to say, 'Nowhere, unless your company hires us.'"

Wee met Morse in 1986 and began performing with him professionally in 1988. It is a career that has including appearances on "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson," "Live With Regis & Kathie Lee" and the Miss America Pageant. The duo holds five Guinness World Records, including one for passing 11 clubs (shaped like bowling pins) between them.

Morse holds Guinness sports records for "juggling," which is running when juggling three balls. He did a hundred meters in 11 minutes and 92 seconds, and 400 meters in 57 minutes and four seconds. Morse, Wee, and two other men hold the one-mile relay record: three minutes and 57 seconds.

Morse explains the appeal of juggling: "Everybody has tried to do it at one time or another. Unlike magic, which is secretive and hidden, it's pretty much right out there. And we present it in a fun way."