

# THE SANTA MONICA STAR

Volume VIII Number 5

May 2008

## Late Night with John Kerwin—the ‘Talk’ of Santa Monica

By Rosalie Gray

Before going to a recent taping, I confess I'd never heard of John Kerwin, host of the aptly named, *The John Kerwin Show*. Now, I'm an ardent fan! What the show lacks in frills, it makes up in enthusiasm!

In its sixth year, *The John Kerwin Show* is a half-hour late-night talk show that tapes once a month in front of a live studio audience at the Santa Monica Time Warner studio. Despite a shoe-string budget and volunteer crew, it delivers on par with any of the major network talk shows—opening monologue, celebrity interviews, musical talent and witty comedy sketches.

"The day of the 'shoot' I wake up happy," says the youthful looking 35-year-old John, when we met for coffee a few days after the taping. Chatting easily about his lifelong obsession of being a talk show host, he has had a career in stand-up comedy, sharing the stage with the likes of Ray Romano and Denis Leary. "I grew up in a



*John Kerwin interviews recent guest Ed Asner. Other guests have included Elliott Gould, Eric Roberts, Sean Young, David Carradine, Kevin Sorbo, Karen Black, director, and Henry Jaglom.*

*Photo by Bradley Laurent*

'rough' neighborhood in Queens, New York, and watched a lot of television. I've dreamed of becoming a talk show host since the third grade when I used to do imitations of Johnny Carson. Now I'm interviewing the people I grew up watching.

"Don Margolin is my Ed McMahon,"

he says of the show's announcer. Don is a retired pilot who has been performing on television, in film, and on the stage for many years. During the opening monologue the two playfully banter back and forth. Every month Don flies his own plane from Santa Barbara to attend the rehearsal and taping. "Can you imagine, flying to Los Angeles to tape the show? Our last announcer rode the bus!" John adds with a laugh.

"The show's a real team effort," explains John of the show's crew of 32 volunteers. "A group of dedicated professionals work the camera, lighting, graphics, makeup, set, etc. And since I store the set at my apartment between tapings, every month a team of PAs (production assistants) helps me move it from my apartment to the studio

for each show.

The show's production staff includes producer, Rob Baker; director, Mark Katz; music director, Nicholas Burns; and announcer, Don Margolin.

John continues, "I'm living my dream in a very competitive field. We want the show to move up, and while we're waiting, we're making the show better." When asked, John replies without hesitation, "We want to move into Conan O' Brien's Late Night slot when Jay Leno hands over NBC's *The Tonight Show* to Conan in 2009."

The next *John Kerwin Show* airs May 17. It's on Time Warner, Saturdays at 8 p.m. (Check local listings.) Past shows can be seen on YouTube or the web site, [www.thejohnkerwinshow.com](http://www.thejohnkerwinshow.com).