

## For Tampa comics, charity is no joke

By Susan Thurston, Times Staff Writer  
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From left: Nick Hoff, **Law Smith**, Kevin Richards and Brendan T. Gleason are on the Pink Ribbon Comedy Tour to raise money to fight breast cancer.



[Handout photos]

**Law Smith** and Brendan T. Gleason didn't know they were really funny until they dared each other to do standup at the Tampa Improv. When the audience laughed, their careers began.

Several years later, the two comics from Tampa, along with Nick Hoff and Kevin Richards, are on a 70-show Pink Ribbon Comedy Tour to raise money to fight breast cancer. This weekend, the tour stops in Tampa for several shows at Side Splitters.

"I've done so many bad things in Tampa, this might make up for it," joked **Smith**, who graduated from **Jesuit High School** in 2002.

Thirty percent of the tour's ticket sales, or a minimum of \$10,000, will go to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure, an organization near and dear to them. While brainstorming ideas for the tour last year, Richards' mother, Renee, decided to go for a screening and was diagnosed with breast cancer. Now, after undergoing treatment, she's in remission.

The foursome started the tour in January in Los Angeles and plan to cover 25 states before ending April 14. They're traveling in an 1994 RV decked out with the tour's logo and motto: "Laughter is the breast medicine." Each comic will perform for 20 to 25 minutes, with most of the content rated PG-13.

**Smith** and Gleason, who both live in Los Angeles, look forward to performing in front of family and friends in Tampa, despite the added pressure. It's like telling a joke during Thanksgiving dinner, **Smith** said. What happens if it flops?

**Smith** grew up along Bayshore Boulevard and has never missed a Gasparilla — or milk punch at the Tampa Yacht and Country Club. This year, he rode on Ye Mystic Krewe of Gasparilla's ship as a guest of his dad, **Larry Smith**, a standout Robinson High School running back who played for the Los Angeles Rams and Washington Redskins.

Gleason, 30, graduated from Plant High in 1997 and attended Florida State University to be a sports broadcaster.

"I was a seventh-year sophomore but kind of gave up," he said.

He moved to Los Angeles five years ago but comes back to Tampa whenever he can. "I like to go to La Teresita and get six meals for five bucks."

Eventually, both hope to move back to the Tampa area. "I would probably live in Ybor," Smith said, "but I'd have to get a gun."