



**SMOTHERS COME TO TOWN** -- Famed duo Tom & Dick Smothers will perform at Elizabethtown College this Saturday at 8:30 p.m.

# Smothers Take Brother Act To Elizabethtown College

By Larry Portzline  
Associate Editor

*P#9 10/14/92*

**T**ommy Smothers can't help it. He was a class clown in school and the self-appointed "goofball" of the Smothers family, so it's no wonder that the first thing he does in a telephone interview with a reporter is crack wise.

"The Smothers Brothers have been around a long time," begins Tommy, speaking last Friday from his hotel room in Detroit.

"January starts our 35th year in show business—but my brother still thinks it was just going to be a summer job."

...It's his innocent, understated delivery that gets you every time.

Although slightly more serious in conversation than he is on stage, Tommy Smothers, 55, still peppers his speech with the somewhat breathless confusion he portrays so well while performing.

It's really who he is, he explains, and he wouldn't change it for anything.

"As brothers, Dickie and I are defined personalities,"

Tommy notes. "We're totally different from one another, and that's why the act works—because people see that we're not pretending to be who we are."

In real life, as well as on the job, Tom plays the comic to Dick's ever-suffering straight-man, he says:

"Whether he's on stage or off stage, Dick's still a little pragmatic and everything has to make sense—and it's irritating a little bit. But it works on stage and we've worked out our relationship around it. I was always the goofball and a little bit vague on facts and figures."

That relationship, whether fact or fiction, has taken the

Please See "Smothers Bros.," Section A, Page 6

"January starts our 35th year in show business—but my brother still thinks it was just going to be a summer job."

Tommy Smothers

# Smothers Brothers

Continued from Page One

Smothers Brothers from the young comedy folk duo that began at San Jose State University to one of the most enduring, most respected acts in show business history.

The Smothers will bring their brotherly repertoire to Elizabethtown College in a special concert this Saturday, October 17 at 8:30 p.m. in Thompson Gymnasium. On Sunday night, the brothers will perform again at the Strand-Capitol Theatre in York.

Although the pair was known to poke fun at the government with their political satire during the peak of their career in the late 1960s—highlighted by their ill-fated, yet highly popular "Comedy Hour" on CBS—these days the Smothers try to steer clear of hurt feelings.

"We don't do much topical humor now," voices Tom. "I think it's difficult

nowadays for political satirists to pull that off. People are so cynical, and when you have a cynical audience and you're doing satire—which is cynicism in itself—you'll get groans instead of the laugh...

"We're not trying to avoid controversy, but we're certainly aware that we want our show to be funny and make people feel good when they leave, because the world's in big enough trouble right now."

The highlight of the brothers' hour-long show, which is backed by a small musical combo, is the increasingly popular "Yo-yo Man."

A routine that Tom (Yo-yo Man himself) and Dick (now 53 and "the voice of Yo") developed over a period of 13 years, Yo-yo Man made his network debut during the Smothers Brothers' second variety series on CBS in 1988-89.

Amazingly, this not-so-simple sketch, which features Tom's stunts with the toy, has resulted in skyrocketing yo-yo sales all over the country.

"Yo-yo sales went up about 1,700 percent after we started doing that," Tommy claims. "In 1988, only Duncan was making yo-yos, and now there are 10 different manufacturers."

Asked if their current tour is taking them nationwide, Tom goes for the laugh once again by sighing dejectedly, "Our whole life is a national tour."

"It's a little harder now," he continues, explaining that they recently played throughout the southern United States and in Honolulu, Hawaii.

"We like the performing part, but the traveling part kills you. We always say we're being paid for the travel, not for the perform-

ing... For some reason we get hot every once in a while."

Tom says he attributes the longevity of the act to the genuine love the brothers feel for one another, as well as the fact that they have always been involved in highly publicized activities outside the arena of show business.

Dick, for instance, is an expert horseman and skier who also raced cars for a time. Tom's passion for golf has earned him the chance to play in numerous pro-am tournaments across the country.

In addition to these accomplishments, the pair created the thriving Smothers Brothers wine company in California during a hiatus from performing in the 1970s.

Next on their busy agenda, according to Tom, is a sitcom for television that is currently in develop-

ment, and a re-packaging of their original "Comedy Hour" shows into half-hour segments for "E" Entertainment Television.

"Show business is a strange thing," he notes philosophically. "There's a lot of serendipity involved. When you think nothing's happening—boom, a show can come up, a film can come up. So you just keep the knife sharp and stay in shape..."

"We were always on the cutting edge. No, actually, I always said we were on the *trailing* edge.

"We've got one more good hit ahead of us, I think."

Elizabethtown College's student/alumni band will present a show at 7:30 p.m., prior to the Smothers Brothers' performance.

Tickets for the program are available by calling 361-1403 during business hours.