

Speaks At Fairleigh Dickinson

Jersey Tales: Jean Shepherd Style

By ROBERT SCOTT

MADISON — Why is New Jersey funny?

"Jersey is extremely exciting to me. When I come over the George Washington Bridge I can feel a pulse beat. Two Guys...that's the epitome of Jersey."

That doesn't answer the question. But it does define the sparkle in Jean Shepherd's eyes.

"I can't explain it," Shepherd says later after 2½ hours of tales of Jersey, the adventures of Flick and Schwartz, and on-going commentary on society at Fairleigh-Dickinson University Sunday night.

A lot of comics and humorists tell Jersey jokes. Shepherd makes a career of it, along with his boyhood tales of growing up in South Chicago, Hammond, Indiana, places where the sky is hazardous to your health.

"There are a lot of theories about it," he continued. Finally, Shepherd sums up that Jersey is as funny as Brooklyn used to be.

Shepherd is by his own definition, a humorist, as opposed to a comic; an improvisational performer, as opposed to an ad libber, a professional who's "in command at all times."

"I guess kids think I just come in and talk," said Shepherd. When asked how long last night's performance took to prepare, he re-

plied, "probably, all my life."

Dressed in a blue denim leisure suit, Shepherd, with glasses tinted just right, is perhaps just tired.

But he also seems a cool, controlled contrast to the animated



Jean Shepherd

...career of N.J. jokes

performer who moments before was striding in large loping movements, flaring his arms to make a point, wrinkling his nose while digging his hands deep into his

pockets to become little Jeannie who wanted a Red Rider BB gun and almost shot his eye out in the end. (You might call the extended story a Shepherd morality play.)

The audience Sunday, largely college age, with a fair sprinkling older, is a contrast to what Shepherd says is his normal audience. "Seventy five per cent of my readers and listeners who are probably under 13."

Kids, Shepherd said, don't ask if he ever thought of changing an ending to a story. Kids, he said, also understand his humor better than adults do.

Although, perhaps it is difficult to understand that children would better understand his attack on phoniness in media. It seems be-

yond kid-level when he declares the media teach us "Life is a Robert Redford movie," making us feel inferior to the movies where people "pretend they are something they are not, written by a writer who never experienced it either."

For those familiar with Shepherd's nightly appearance on WOR radio, he comments that "radio is just a hobby with me." His "most important performing is done onstage."

What makes Shepherd laugh? "Life in general." As a humorist, he said, he doesn't go to see humorists or comics work. He says there are no good young humorists, he does not listen to radio and has never heard — he says — the Barry Farber show.

Broadway Will Cheer Bing For First Time In 45 Years

By STANLEY JOHNSON

NEW YORK (AP) — Bing Crosby opens on Broadway tonight for the first time in 45 years, one day after a cheering audience refused to let him off the stage where the New York Philharmonic performs.

Crosby, 72, did 40 minutes of encores last night for an audience of 2,500 who paid up to \$250 a ticket at Avery Fisher Hall to benefit Fordham Prep, a Roman Catholic boys' school.

"It was a great evening wasn't it?" said Tricia Nixon Cox, daughter of the former president, who

What acoustics! What a thrill to appear in it!"

Avery Fisher has just undergone a \$6 million rebuilding to correct its formerly horrible sound qualities.

When Crosby and his family, who appeared with him along with singer Rosemary Clooney, and