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NEWS

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For Immediate Release:

"THE SIMPSONS" WRITER MIKE REISS TO LECTURE AT EIU

CHARLESTON – Emmy Award-winning comedy writer Mike Reiss will present an entertaining look at his craft when he comes to the campus of Eastern Illinois University's this week.

Reiss, who has been putting his comedic stamp on the 12-year-old satirical project, "The Simpsons," will present a lecture titled, "How to Write For Television and Other Bad Ideas," at 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 14, in Eastern's Grand Ballroom. Admission is \$3 for the general public and free to Eastern students with PantherCard ID.

Having worked in the entertainment business for some time, Reiss will have plenty of stories to discuss. He got his foot in the door when he started writing for the popular magazine, "National Lampoon," in the early eighties. This led to other endeavors, including "It's Gary Shandling's Show" and "Alf," starring everyone's favorite alien (or currently, everyone's favorite telemarketer, however one might look at it).

He even endured a remarkably long stay writing for Johnny Carson. When he first got that job, he was told that writers were routinely fired after three months. He stayed 18 months before getting his pink slip.

Throughout the years and the Simpsons' many, many seasons, Reiss and his co-writers have taken advantage of the story lines to vent frustrations from their own lives. For example,

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Eastern Illinois University emphasizes distinguished teaching in the liberal arts, sciences and selected professions. A traditional, residential state university of recognized quality, Eastern enrolls more than 10,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs. The university, located in Charleston, also serves the region through a variety of non-credit and off-site degree programs, as well as cultural and recreational opportunities. Eastern's pursuit of excellence attracts well-qualified students of an increasingly diverse population and a teaching faculty active in research and public service who utilize the latest technology.

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"THE SIMPSONS" WRITER

Krusty the Clown often endures the same battles with his TV executives that Reiss and his co-writers experience.

On Thursday, the long-time writer will be telling these and other stories from the trade. He also plans to show clips from the show that viewers haven't seen on TV.

In addition to "The Simpsons," for which he has won three Emmys and a Peabody Award, Reiss co-created "The Critic," a short-lived animated series starring Jon Lovitz. And, perhaps to avoid all TV executives and producers, Reiss more recently developed two on-line cartoon series, "Hard-Drinkin' Lincoln" and "Queer Duck."

Other pieces of work include a caveman detective story, "Cro-Magnon P.I.," which won an Edgar Award as Best First Mystery, and a children's book, "How Murray Saved Christmas."

His lectures on comedy and writing have been presented at Columbia University, The Friar's Club, Mensa and the Smithsonian Institute.

Reiss' visit to Eastern is being sponsored by The University Board, Eastern's student-run entertainment programming board.