

HOLLYWOOD

POWER PRIVILEGE DIGNITY

'NEW AGE'
Hollywood Executives
Usher In An Era
Of Team Player &
Anti-Boys Club Mentality



Story Suzanne Takowsky



Meet Jon Smith

Managing Partner of Hoplite Entertainment

What a terrific chat Jon Smith and I had talking 'Hollywood' in the Grand Havana Room, in Beverly Hills over a yummy salad. No extended menu needed for this straight shooter who knows exactly what he wants. Jon is a Managing Partner at Hoplite Entertainment, a Los Angeles-based company providing content and contact information to more than 62,000 entertainment companies worldwide, and representation for approximately 140,000 actors, directors and producers. To operate a company this size requires a team on the same page working toward the same goal. And, as Jon explains is exactly why he named the company HOPLITE... "like ancient Greek warriors, our strength is in our unity."

At 14, Jon got his first job working in a pizzeria to prove to himself he could earn money. His father worked hard, but struggled finding stable employment. His mother helped make ends meet working two sometimes three jobs while raising four children. Jon's dad wanted him to do real estate or be a construction worker; his mom told him to follow his heart, and find something he liked. During his freshman year in high school it seemed soccer, football and boxing would dominate his curriculum. However, entering a new semester he found out his mother signed him up for a drama class. The last thing he wanted to do was stand up in front of a room of kids and talk. He told the teacher he didn't want to take the class, and asked to be dropped. This wise woman (Mickey Griffith) said... "Why don't you go sit down and try my class." He hated it until the day he stood up and did a catchy monologue. Everyone clapped. The acknowledgment was different than anything he'd ever experienced. A star was born. Today, he credits his mom and Mickey for his showbiz career.

ST: You've taken many roads. One was stand-up comedy. What does it feel like to be on a stage hoping people will like you and laugh?

JON: "I had a grandfather who was a big storyteller. I grew up listening to him talk about the 1930s, 40s, 50s. That's where I got my nostalgic love for history. My mom says when I was little I used to pretend I was different people and tell stories to family and friends, and they liked it. I got into improv thinking people would like my stories, but it was different, and it can be horrible. One time my friend and I were on the stage doing a routine and 10 minutes into a 20-minute skit, the audience didn't like anything. I don't know how to explain the feeling, but it feels like your heart sinks to the bottom of your feet. You want to say, "I'm sorry" and leave the room as fast as you can. I have great respect for comedians. It's a difficult job living out of a suitcase, playing different cities every night, and making little money unless of course you become very successful. Improv taught me the skills I use today because in my