



Photo: Caley Taylor '96

catherine lawrence morse '77 *always on the funny side*

It's the way she punctuates a sentence — with deep chuckles. Or her story-telling style — punch line-rich, as in "I come from a family that, in today's terms, would be considered functional." Catherine Lawrence has always had a funny way about her. In Grade 11, she worked her first crowd, toasting dads at Havergal's inaugural father-daughter dinner.

Later on, she sailed from Panama to Fiji retracing Francis Drake's journey in a program called Operation Drake. Laughter mattered much when sharing a 132-foot brigantine with 22 strangers — "You need a sense of humour," she says. It's funny, then, that she would join a most sober profession — commercial law. But during her eight years in the legal departments of John Labatt Limited and Labatt Ontario Breweries, her funny bone came in handy. "I do remember during a rather tense meeting, the fire alarm went off. Naturally, I began hamming it up on the stairs — "Let's get our group out first!" The tension evaporated.

Catherine loved Labatt, but...after she and husband Jerome had their third child, now 9 (sister is 15 and brother is 14) "I realized I was living the movie Baby Boom, arriving at work with patches of sour milk on my blouse." To de-stress, she traveled to Bhutan alone. An airport sign read 'Welcome. No Admittance.' "I knew I had come to the right place."

Back in Toronto, Catherine would take her first stand-up comedy class, an event that propelled her into performing. Three years ago, she founded Survival of the Funniest, a company promoting laughter as a survival skill. In speaking engagements, workshops and fundraisers, Catherine illustrates the transformative powers of humour. This 'recipe for rubber chicken soup,' as she calls it, is tethered to the fundamentals of life — finding the right path, finding your passion and striking a balance between family and that great job. It has to feel just right for you.

—**MARYAM SANATI '88**