

The Times

Revisit the six milestones in a woman's life

By [Scott Tady](#) May 1, 2011

CHIPPEWA TWP. As Mother's Day approaches, now's the time we reflect on the sacrifices made by dear ol' mom. Some of them are downright funny. Funny enough to fuel "The Six Ages of Woman," a one-woman stage show from Mary Faktor, an actress and alum of Chicago's famed The Second City improv and sketch comedy troupe. Faktor's show, which visits Blackhawk High School on Saturday, portrays six milestones in the lives of many women. "You know, like, 'I'm never going to yell at my kids' and 'My kids are never going to eat sugar,'" Faktor said. "Four kids later, you're bribing them with Ho-Hos." Faktor plays a character, Vickie, whose life unfolds over 50 years via six phone conversations with best friends. "So the audience is eavesdropping by watching these phone calls," Faktor said. Spectators see Vickie, the teenager, endure her first romantic crush. She grows up and gets married. Then becomes a first-time mother. Then a second-time mom. The fifth "age" is the toughest, according to Faktor, "when you are in your 40s or 50s and dealing with unappreciative teenagers and balancing career, aging parents, your own midlife crisis, marriage, divorce, death or health issues. The age where you so often realize your own mortality." Life often perks up for the sixth age, grandmotherhood. "I so often hear, 'OMG, you just did my life!' or 'Have you been hiding in my closet all these years?'" said Faktor, a Cleveland resident with two grown children and five grandkids, whose acting career included a role as a housewife in the 2003 Cleveland-set movie "American Splendor" starring Paul Giamatti. "Women relate to the universal humor of Vickie's life," Faktor said. "What mother among us hasn't had her kids bug her while she's on the phone, or had days when she didn't have time to shower?" Faktor's website claims her performance earns standing ovations 95 percent of the time, with audiences ranging from 50 senior citizens in a church basement to 2,000 Shriners in a convention center. Figuring it would be a refreshing departure from hoagie or candy bar sales, Blackhawk School District's Patterson PTO staff member, Renee Hupp booked the show as a fundraiser, with blessings from the PTO board. "I'm adamant about selecting fundraisers which are innovative, fresh and something of a calculated risk," PTO president Michael Alberico said. "A renowned one-woman comedy stage show on Mother's Day weekend in a high school auditorium meets those criteria." Alberico admits, however, "We're now at the point where natural stress and angst are setting in about whether or not we novices have effectively marketed and publicized this thing so that enough folks will attend to make it worthwhile." To make the night more enticing, the PTO is hosting a silent auction, with items including a hot-air balloon ride for two, and a family pass to the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh. "The Six Ages of Woman" is rated PG-13, with parents advised to not bring small children. The show typically begins and ends with a message of self-growth from Faktor, who recently returned from a two-week trip to Bali, Indonesia, where she and her husband, Mike, taught as volunteers at four orphanages. A substitute host on the former "Today in Cleveland," which aired on that city's NBC affiliate, Faktor summed up her one-woman stage show: "It's a great gals' night out and couples' date night," Faktor said. "Guys, bring your wives, moms and mother-in-laws and make some points to use next time you're in the doghouse. Anyone who's ever had kids will have a blast. "Wear something comfy, put your troubles on hold for two hours and come laugh and have fun with us," she said. "If you want, have a few glasses of wine first. The more you drink, the funnier I get."