

‘Sunny’ Still Keeps Its Fresh And Funny

BY ELLEN GRAY
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LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE, Calif. — The forecast for July 31 called for “mostly” sunny, but as the cast and crew of “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia” began a day of shooting on Season 8, above at least one neighborhood in this small, affluent city north of Los Angeles the sky was a clear, uncompromising blue.

And on the ground below, there was trash piled everywhere. Inside a brown van parked in the driveway of a home that could double for a Chestnut Hill mansion, “Sunny” stars Rob McElhenney, Danny DeVito, Kaitlin Olson, Glenn Howerton and Charlie Day filmed a scene as crew members rocked the van from outside.

Down the street, a turquoise trash truck awaited its close-up. And the attention of one well-connected toddler.

“Axel’s obsessed with trash trucks,” explained McElhenney of his and Olson’s oldest son, who turned 2 on Sept. 1. (His brother, Leo, was born April 5.)

And so his father came up with an episode about a Philly garbage strike so Axel could see a trash truck?

“Specifically so we could have a trash truck on set and he could spend at least three or four hours with it,” said McElhenney, who created the show about friends who run a bar in South Philly. He and fellow executive producers Day and Howerton continue to write for it.

“When he gets here, you’ll see his reaction to this trash truck. It’s going to blow his mind.”

In the meantime, it’s back to the van for McElhenney, where Day has spent part of the morning hurtling out the rear doors, on each take jumping or falling a little differently as the crew ad-justed pads below, trying to keep them out of the shot while protecting the actor.

“Hopefully, I don’t break my rib, the way I did in Season 4,” said Day, referring to the “A Very Sunny Christmas” special, where “they were blowing fake snow on us — it was hard to actually see — and I jumped as I high as I could ... backwards and I curled up in a ball and I missed the pad and just landed on the floor. And cracked a rib.”

“Charlie, just so you know, this is the softer part,” said a crew member, pointing to a section of the pad.

So he’s a little more careful these days?

He laughed. “Yeah, I want to at least make sure I land on the pad,” he said, adding that he does “something risky and stupid every season. And the older I get, the more stupid it seems.”

Willful stupidity remains at the hilarious heart of “It’s Always Sunny,” which returns Thursday with “Pop-Pop: The Final Solution,” an episode about Dee (Olson) and Dennis (Howerton) and their dying, Nazi grandfather that demonstrates once again that his characters, as McElhenney likes to put it, are “never learning anything or growing or changing.”

But there’s nothing stupid, or haphazard, about the making of the show, which is shot more efficiently than most, with five of the season’s 10 episodes in production at a time.

When McElhenney decided, for Season 7, that his character, Mac, should gain 50 pounds — to buck the sitcom convention that TV characters, unlike the rest of us, tend to get more attractive over time — he didn’t settle for a fat suit. But he did consult a nutritionist to pack on the pounds as healthily as possible.

Most of the extra weight’s now gone, but McElhenney’s no less conscious of the need to differentiate “Sunny” from other long-running comedies.

There’s more at work in “The Gang Recycles Their Trash,” the episode for which the “Sunny” crew had temporarily trashed a lovely neighborhood, than a treat for his son.

“We come into the first scene and we’re talking about a plan to make money that sounds very (familiar) to us and we realize it’s something we’ve already done, it’s something we’ve already tried,” McElhenney said.

“And we realize that’s very common in the eighth season of a

televisionWeek

Local Listings For The Week Of October 13-19, 2012

SATURDAY PRIMETIME/LATE NIGHT																		OCTOBER 13, 2012					
	3:00	3:30	4:00	4:30	5:00	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	1:00	1:30	
BROADCAST STATIONS																							
PBS KUSD 2 8 (2)	Cook's Country	The Victory Garden	The Prairie	Hometime (N) 66	Classic Gospel Tribute to Gospel singer George Younce.		The Lawrence Welk Show Songs include "Dearie."		Guy Lombardo	As Time Goes By 66	Keeping Up	Last of the Summer Wine	The Red Green Show	The Red Green Show	No Cover, No Minimum	Austin City Limits The folk group Bon Iver perform. (N)	Front Row Center Randy Bachman and Fred Turner reunite.	Globe Trekker St. Lucia, Martinique and Montserrat.					
KTIV 4 4 (4)	College Football Stanford at Notre Dame. (N) 66						News 4	Insider	Revolution 66	Chicago Fire "Pilot"			Law & Order: SVU	News 4	Saturday Night Live (N) 66	Extra (N) 66	1st Look	House					
NBC KDLT 5 5 (5)	College Football South Dakota at Missouri State. (N) (Live)	College Football Stanford at Notre Dame. (Joined in Progress) (N) (In Stereo Live) 66					KDLT News (N) 66	College Football Concordia at Sioux Falls. (N) (Live)					The Big Bang Theory	KDLT News (N) 66	Saturday Night Live Christina Applegate: Passion Pit. (N) (In Stereo) 66	The Simpsons 66	The Simpsons 66	According to Jim 66	(Off Air)				
KCAU 6 9 (9)	College Football Regional Coverage. (N) (Live) 66						NASCAR	NASCAR Racing Sprint Cup: Bank of America 500. (N) (Live)						News	CSI: Miami 66	Private Practice	Pain?	Castle					
CBS KELO 11 3 (11)	College Football Alabama at Missouri. (N) (Live) 66						News	Home Ideas	NCIS: Los Angeles "Honor" (In Stereo) (DVS)	Hawaii Five-0 A missing bus full of school children.	48 Hours "Collision Course" A car crash kills young veteran.		News	Entertainment Tonight (N) (In Stereo) 66	CSI: Miami The team fights to save a neighborhood.	Leverage The team tries to save a church.	Paid Program						
ABC KSFY 13 7 (13)	College Football Regional Coverage. Oregon State at BYU or West Virginia at Texas Tech or Illinois at Michigan. (N) (Live) 66						NASCAR Sprint Cup Se	NASCAR Racing Sprint Cup: Bank of America 500. From Charlotte Motor Speedway in Charlotte, N.C. (N) (Live)					KSFY News	Paid Program	Burn Notice "Identity" Con artist. 66	Criminal Minds "Corazon" Bizarre, ritualistic murders. 66	Paid Program						
KMGZ 12 13 (6)	College Football Alabama at Missouri. (N) (Live) 66						Jeopardy	Wheel	NCIS: Los Angeles	Hawaii Five-0 66	48 Hours (N) 66	Law & Order 66	Cold Case 66	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid						
FOX KTTW 21 9 (7)	College Football Utah at UCLA. (N Subject to Blackout) (In Stereo Live) 66						FOX College Saturday (N)	College Football USC at Washington. (N Subject to Blackout) (In Stereo Live) 66				To Be Announced	Touch "Gyre, Part 1" Martin and Abigail join forces.	30 Secs. on to Fame	Friends 66	Friends 66	Every- body-New-mond	TMZ (N) 66					
KLKN	College Football Regional Coverage. (N) (Live) 66						NASCAR	NASCAR Racing Sprint Cup: Bank of America 500. (N) (Live)					News	Entertainment 'Night	Castle 66	Bloopers	Bloopers						
KOLN	College Football Alabama at Missouri. (N) (Live) 66						News	Wheel	NCIS: Los Angeles	Hawaii Five-0 66	48 Hours (N) 66	News	Burn Notice 66	30 Rock	30 Rock	30 Rock	Office	Paid	Cold Case 66				
KPTH	College Football Utah at UCLA. (In Stereo Live) 66						FOX	College Football USC at Washington. (N Subject to Blackout) (In Stereo Live) 66				TBA	Touch 66	30S	30 Rock	Office	Friends	Friends					
KSCB 97	Phillips BGEA	Gospel	Gospel	Jesus	Travel				K. Hagin	Seoulour	In Touch	P. Stone	Gospel	Hillson	End	Sound	Ramp	MX TV	Acquire				
KSIN 99 (12)	Quilting Sew It All	Sewing	Antiques Roadshow	Classic Gospel	Lom		Lawrence Welk	Doc Martin 66	TimeBy	Keep Up	Served?	Wine	Yes, Min. Red...	Doctors Who 66	(Off Air)								
KXNE 8 (8)	Globe Trekker	Burt Wolf	Steves	This Old House Hr	Lawrence Welk				Masterpiece Classic			Outnumbr	Ballykissangel 66	Austin City Limits	(Off Air)								
PAY CHANNELS																							
HBO 17 (161)	*** "One Day" (2011, Romance) Anne Hathaway, Jim Sturgess. (In Stereo) 66			*** "The Adjustment Bureau" (2011) Matt Damon, Emily Blunt. (In Stereo) 66			*** "The Descendants" (2011, Drama) George Clooney, Premiere. (In Stereo) 66			Boxing Nonito Donaire vs. Toshiaki Nishioka, Junior Featherweights. (N) 66			Boardwalk Empire "Blue Bell Boy" 66			*** "The Descendants" (2011, Drama) George Clooney. (In Stereo) 66							
HBO2	*** "Hop" (2011) (In Stereo)			*** "Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close" (2011)			Treme "Sainits"			The Newsroom			True Blood 66			Real/Bill Maher							
MAX 426	*** "Love & Other Drugs" (2010) 66			*** "Mobsters" (1991) Christian Slater, Patrick Dempsey. (In Stereo) 66			*** "The Hangover Part II" (2011) Bradley Cooper. 66			Strike Back (In Stereo) 66			*** "Transit" (2012) Jim Caviezel. (In Stereo) 66			Strike Back (In Stereo) 66							
MAX2	*** "Seven"			*** "Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang" (2005)			*** "X2: X-Men United" (2003) Patrick Stewart.			*** "Crazy, Stupid, Love." (2011) 66			Life-Top			*** "Along Came Polly" 66							
SHOW 18 (435)	Loosies "I Don't Know How"			Dexter 66			Homeland 66			*** "Apollo 18" (2011) 66			*** "I Am Number Four" (2011) 66			Homeland 66							
SHOW2	Bookies *** "DeadHeads" (2011) 66			*** "Timeline" (2003) Paul Walker.			*** "50/50" (2011) 66			*** "Our Idiot Brother"			*** "The English Patient" (1996) Ralph Fiennes. (In Stereo)			Dexter 66							
TMC	*** "According-Spen"			*** "A Simple Twist of Fate" (1994)			*** "The Others" (2001) (In Stereo)			"The Inheritance" (2010) 66			"Dark Fields" (2009) David Carradine.			"The Inheritance" (2010) 66							
CABLE STATIONS																							
A&E 57 (41)	*** "The Shawshank Redemption" (1994) Tim Robbins. 66			Storage			Storage			Storage			Storage			Storage							
AMC 41 (54)	The Walking Dead			The Walking Dead 66			The Walking Dead			The Walking Dead			The Walking Dead			The Walking Dead							
ANPL 19 (43)	Too Cute! 66			Too Cute! 66			Too Cute! 66			Too Cute! (In Stereo)			Pit Bulls-Parole			Pit Bulls-Parole							
BRAVO 25 (55)	Real Housewives			Housewives/NYC			Housewives/NJ			Housewives/NJ			*** "National Treasure: Book of Secrets" (2007)			*** "National Treasure: Book of Secrets" (2007)							
CMTV 38 (77)	Yes, Dear			Yes, Dear			Reba			Reba			Bayou			Redneck Rehab (N) 66							
CNBC 53 (42)	Cook			Paid			WEN Hair			Paid			Suzie Oraman Show			Debt/Part							
CNN 33 (49)	NewsW			Gupta			CNN Newsroom (N)			The Situation Room			CNN Newsroom (N)			Latin America							
COM 45 (61)	Bev. Cop			*** "Austin Powers in Goldmember"			*** "Dumb & Dumber" (1994) Jim Carrey. 66			*** "Hot Tub Time Machine" (2010)			"Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story" 66			*** "Beverly Hills Cop" (1984) 66							
CSPAN 49 (17)	Washington This Week			Common			Washington This Week																
DISC 34 (44)	Dual Survival 66			Dual Survival 66			Dual Survival 66			Outlaw Empires			Last Frontier			Outlaw Empires							
DISN 64 (36)	Good			Good			Austin			Shake It			Good			Good							
DISXD 65 (163)	Kickin' It			Kickin' It			Kings			Suite Life			Kings			Suite Life							
EITV 51 (62)	Kardashian			Kardashian			Kardashian			Kardashian			Kardashian			Kardashian							
ENC 486	"The Thomas Crown Affair"			"Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse"			Titanic: Blood			Titanic			Titanic			Titanic							
ESPN 28 (24)	College Football			Score			Football Scoreboard			College Football South Carolina at LSU. (N) (Live)			SportsCenter (N)			SportsCenter (N)							
ESPN2 29 (25)	ESPN Goal Line (N) (Live)			College Football Boston College at Florida State. (N) (Live)			Score			College Football Tennessee at Mississippi State. (N) (Live)			Football Final			Baseball Tonight (N)							
EWNTN 74 (65)	Web of Faith 2.0			Sunday Night Prime			Living			Marriage			Mother Angelica			Catholicism 66							
FAM 62 (40)	*** "The Last Song" (2010, Drama) Miley Cyrus.			*** "Step Up" (2006, Musical) Channing Tatum.			UFC 153: Silva vs. Bonnar - Prelims (N) 66			*** "What Happens in Vegas" (2008) Cameron Diaz.			BrandX			Biased							
FX 23 (56)	Two Men			Two Men			*** "Iron Man" (2008) Robert Downey Jr., Terrence Howard.</td>																