

A Bonus Section for Our Virginia, Maryland, D.C., & Delaware Readers

Mid-Atlantic LIVING

PEOPLE & PLACES

Marc Rosenberg, Baltimore's
Lemonade Shaking Guy,
Oriole Park at Camden Yards
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PHOTOGRAPHS: BLAKE SIMS



All Shook Up

A citrus-hawking wild man parlays his zaniness into a crowd-pleasing act as Baltimore's frenetic Lemonade Shaking Guy.

above: Ballpark fame led to other gigs for Marc Rosenberg, including appearances at Baltimore's Power Plant Live! entertainment complex.

right: Marc fetches a fresh supply of lemonade and bolts back to the stands.

below: Cranking up the physical humor, Marc resembles a bizarre windup toy with his manic shaking techniques.

Think of Marc Rosenberg as a human windup toy. His back could sprout a giant crank key, and few people would be surprised. The man just never slows down. He also never tires of talking, at full volume and in a perpetually hoarse rasp, about lemonade.

"Lemmonade here!" he shouts to baseball fans at Oriole Park. "Get your lem-lem-lemonaaaade!" he barks, his voice hitting several octaves. "You *know* you want some!" he

teases, hoisting his slushy load, eyes peeled for patrons.

Then a thirsty 10-year-old in a Cal Ripken jersey waves him down with a \$5 bill. Marc sets his tray on a step and tugs the kid into the aisle. They dance a makeshift jitterbug, slap a high five, and shout "Wahoo." Finally, drawing perplexed onlookers' attention away from the ball game, Marc executes one of his signature moves. He shakes.

He shakes everything—feet, knees,

legs, hips, torso, hands, elbows, shoulders, head, pants, shirt, hat. He shakes his apron, its pockets spilling drink straws, and his fanny pack, jingling with change. He shakes, in particular, the awestruck young customer's clear plastic cup of ice-cold lemonade.

"I didn't used to be this way," Marc admits during a brief break while restocking his drink tray. "Then one day a strange thing happens to me, and I start a new life." That day, six years ago, he morphed into the Lemonade Shaking Guy, a bizarre persona he has since ridden to an odd slice of fame.

How'd *That* Get Started?

His Lemonade Shaking Guy shtick evolved over time, but its origins



above, left: High fives come with every cup. **top, right:** Put a lid on it, kid: A baseball fan pitches in to help Marc shake some lemonade. **above, right:** Marc coaxes a young customer into a quick aisle dance. "I make people earn their lemonade," he teases.



**"Get your lem-lem-lemonaaaade!
You know you want some!"**

Marc Rosenberg

lie in a single, sweaty, remarkable moment several years ago.

"In July 1997, a friend of mine running a lemonade concession at Camden Yards during Orioles games asks me to help him out of a jam when some employees bail on him," Marc recalls, speaking in his trademark present tense. "I say, 'Sure,' thinking I'll work behind some kind of counter or cart. I get here, and he says, 'Here's your tray;

you're working the upper decks.' He hands me a big button with \$3.50 written on it and this metal rack thing full of cups of lemonade. I say, 'Wha?' but I give it a shot, 'cuz he's a friend."

Out of shape for his then 32 years, Marc drags himself to the nosebleed section, quietly repeats a lame pitch in a dull monotone and, in vendors' terms, basically turns invisible.

"I didn't used to be this way. Then one day a strange thing happens to me, and I start a new life."

Marc Rosenberg

"It absolutely wears me out," he says. "By the end of that first night my legs hurt, my arms hurt, my back hurts, every muscle in my body aches from doing all those stairs. I make zero money, maybe \$4 or \$5 in tips. I'm like, 'This stinks,' but I promise my buddy that I'll give it a few days."

Three days later, he's assigned to a better section, down low just beyond the third base dugout, a realm of fewer steps, fatter wallets, less shade, and powerful thirsts. He hustles. He

sells. He finds a voice he didn't know about. He feels a new energy from all the exercise he's getting.

That's when his curious transformation begins.

"It's a Saturday afternoon game, temperature up around 98 degrees, no breeze," he says. "I'm working like a dog, sweating like a pig, and getting frustrated. About 20 people at once want lemonade, and they're not being very patient with me. They're all yelling. So I lose it. I slam down my tray, and I yell back, 'Just wait a minute!' and 'Hold your horses!' and 'You'll get your lemonade; just gimme a minute here!'"

"Right then, for no reason I can think of, I absolutely freak out. I start shaking all over, contorting my body, my eyes rolling around, my arms pumping, really going nuts. It gets quiet around me, and then someone says, 'Dude, what are you on, man?' I look at the cup in my hands, and I shoot back, 'What am I on? I'm on lem-lem-lemonaaade, of course!'"

Aghast but entertained, the people love it. Suddenly, everyone wants lemonade shaken up by this manic little man.

Next Thing You Know

Before long, Marc's getting more time on the scoreboard's giant video screen than the official team

mascot. The camera zooms in on his lemonade-shaking antics between innings. His ever-broadening repertoire of whirling dervish, pumping piston, tornado victim, and Energizer bunny movements produces dropped jaws, cheesy grins, hysterical laughter, and concerned stares in turn.

It also attracts a regular following, better tips, and, to his surprise, some interesting offers.

"One day this guy pulls me aside and asks me if I will perform at his son's bar mitzvah party," Marc says, still a little astonished about it years later. "I say, 'Wha?'"

and he says, 'Just show up and do what you do, just be the lemonade shaking guy.' That's where I get the name. Next thing you know, I'm performing at birthday parties, business conventions, sales meetings, all kinds of places."

Local television channels and radio stations broadcast feature segments about him. CBS's *The Early Show* runs footage of him shimmying and shaking as the credits roll. During occasional Bacardi-sponsored appearances as a bartender at Baltimore's Power Plant Live! entertainment complex, he mixes lemonade and Bacardi.

Staying Hoarse

His frenetic alter ego might grow into a full-time career some day,

"I'll have plenty of time to sit around when I'm 80. My motto for now is 'Go! Go! Go!'"

Marc Rosenberg

why shake the lemonade?

Truth be told, there's no real reason to shake the lemonade that Marc hawks. Left undisturbed, the sugar settles and the citrus pulp floats, eventually, but lugging it into the stands typically provides plenty of agitation. "What I do is purely for entertainment value," Marc says. "When you buy a drink from the Lemonade Shaking Guy, you don't just get shaken lemonade, you get the guy too, see?"

but Marc keeps his day job. He's a dispatcher for a same-day delivery service, talking constantly to a swarm of couriers.

"Being hoarse comes with the territory," he says. "I'm on the phone all the time at one job, then projecting to a crowd at ball games, and if I'm hired for a party I might work a third gig in one day. My voice never gets a chance to rest. The way I see it, though, I'll have plenty of time to sit around when I'm 80. My motto for now is 'Go! Go! Go!'"

Some of his high-strung energy he inherited from his father, a ballroom dancing instructor. "As a child I'd watch him do all these great Latin dance moves, and I'd learn a lot, but I'm such a ball of energy I'd always get three or four steps ahead and end up tripping over people. Now I channel that energy into shaking lemonade and working the crowd."

Another night, at another Orioles game, Marc totes his 10th tray of drinks into the stands. He tells a preteen in a birthday party group to "Fire me up!" with a high five that triggers an explosion of shaking. He gets two young women rolling with laughter by pretending to stumble and spill drinks into their laps. A man slips him a hefty tip to embarrass his wife by making her repeat a tongue twister. He shakes for the thousandth time today, curling over the tray like a human blender, bursting open like a performance artist butterfly, and showering fans with a confetti of straws.

"Anywhere I go—the ballpark, private parties, nightclubs—I try to bring positive energy," he says. "I try to make people believe there's no better place to be than right here, right now." JOE RADA

For a glimpse of Marc Rosenberg's particular brand of insanity, visit www.lemonadeshakingguy.com. Call (410) 654-9525, or e-mail lemonade104@netzero.net.