

■ DIFFERENCES

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equal representation a "tough road."

"There are still schools that are mainly male or female," she said. "There was a time when there were virtually no women teaching in biology or chemistry — very, very few — but their number has increased."

Boyd suggested that the females' future in the sciences would be determined largely by the choices of today's students.

"It makes a difference in what women students choose to major in and how they choose their career paths. The same is true of minorities," she said. "Of course, our hope is that

some of these women students will decide that academic careers are what they're interested in."

As a member of a group called Professional Women on Campus, Boyd was among the first to suggest that USC compile statistics as a means to address gender inequality in the 1980s.

"That organization decided that one way to address salary inequity, plus the fact that there were far fewer women faculty members than men faculty members on campus, was to collect and publicize data, so that people could see exactly what was going on," Boyd said. Two decades later, USC can look back on its progress.

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■ FAN

Continued from page 1

from Carolina Coliseum to the Colonial Center has revealed a more benevolent athletic department.

"I think Carolina has the most loyal fans in the country, and it is really unfortunate that our athletic department hasn't

done fan appreciation stuff like this in the past," Culppepper said. "And I think it is pretty cool that stuff like this is becoming a tradition."

The Colonial Center opens at 6:30 p.m., and the game begins at 8 p.m.

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■ EQUIPPED

Continued from page 1

from MIX CD funding will go back to Marketing Scholars projects.

The CDs will change every week and feature a specific charity or cause every month. Next week's kick-off will raise money for tsunami relief by

mentioning the charity on the CD and then placing donation boxes in the shuttles.

After the first week, the MIX will also feature sound bytes from all candidates for Student Government executive offices, which will play until the election.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocknews@gwm.sc.edu

Iran's Mr. Bean tries to bring laughs to troubled land

By ALI AKBAR DAREINI
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TEHRAN, Iran — Comic Hamid Reza Mahisefat only has to walk out on stage to get his audience up on their feet and roaring, anticipating a few moments' diversion from the anxieties of daily life in a country tense from political infighting and economic hard times.

Mahisefat's rubbery face, relaxed style and humor based on gentle observations of human foibles have made him Iran's most popular comedian even though he has never gotten exposure from state-controlled television or radio.

State broadcasters find his style too informal and some of his jokes too risqué, but many Iranians embrace him as their Mr. Bean, the British comic character.

His secret may be that he stays away from politics and treads carefully when it comes to religion, two areas that have mixed explosively in Iran.

Iran is a theocracy where hard-line politicians have for years been deadlocked with reformists who want more democracy

and an easing of social restrictions. The sometimes violent political stalemate has been accompanied by economic stagnation.

In a country where young women are discouraged from exchanging jokes or even laughing with men who are not their relatives, Mahisefat says moderation is the secret of his success.

Mahisefat gets \$1,000 or more for a 30-minute show for a private company or wedding party. That is about three times the monthly pay of a government clerk, but he says he usually does only a few shows a month.

"I have a small home. I do make ends meet, but I'm not a millionaire," he says. Mahisefat believes the ruling establishment should thank him because his shows depict a good image of Iran.

"The authorities know my intention is nothing but to bring smiles to faces ... they should even be happy because I'm working to reduce social tensions," he says.

The comic has performed for free for the poor and the disabled and says he also has appeared at Evin, a prison north of Tehran notorious as the home of political prisoners.

In a rare foray into political humor, he jokes in an interview that he may end up at Evin someday as a prisoner himself.

In 2001, hard-line religious vigilantes disrupted Mahisefat's show in the northeastern city of Mashhad. The issue wasn't his material. The hard-liners were offended that any kind of entertainment would be staged in a holy city that holds the tomb of a revered Shiite Muslim cleric.

Yet, in a rare verdict against such actions, a normally hard-line court convicted two of the vigilantes of "disrupting social order" and ordered them lashed.

"I never disrespect people's beliefs or Islamic sentiments," Mahisefat says.

His press releases include a saying from Islam's Prophet Muhammad: "A sign of those going to paradise is that they smile all the time." He also quotes Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law and a revered figure among Shiites, the majority in Iran: "After health, laughter is God's greatest blessing."

In a recent show for employees of a

power company, the audience of more than 2,000 ranged from young, beardless men in T-shirts and girls wearing makeup and loose, colorful scarves to men with long beards and women draped head-to-toe in black. All laughed uncontrollably at a string of jokes on the quirks of humans.

In one, a small boy eating ice cream asks his mother, "Do you love me?" "Of course, my dear son," she replies. "Will you listen to me?" he asks. "Definitely, my dear," the mom says. "Then, divorce my dad and marry the ice cream maker next door."

Iranian sociologist Kamran Ganji says the destruction and grief of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war are lingering traumas for the country and Mahisefat helps heal those wounds.

"We have a young population, and they need to be happy. Dogmatism has denied the people happiness and Mahisefat is the best remedy," Ganji says.

Mahisefat says he has not cried for years and believes laughter is the remedy for personal sadness and social tensions.

"I wish to live only as long as I can bring laughter to the people," he says.

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