

You can't help but laugh when seasoned comics dare you to stifle that smile

By Ashley Mallo
Staff Writer

The posters plastered around campus practically screamed: "WANTED! Anyone with a weak sense of humor... Anyone with a weak kidney... WE CAN MAKE YOU LAUGH." The two-hour comedy show that came to Olivet on Nov. 2 seemed to do just that. Students who were hesitant to attend might have thought that headlining comedians Jimmy Meritt and Joe Anderson were novices at their craft, but they now lay to rest any such doubts, because these comics obviously know and love what they do.

Meritt has been in the comedy business for eight years and has opened for Last Comic Standing's Ralphie May, *Saturday Night Live*'s Kevin Nealon, the cast of ABC's *Whose Line Is It Anyway*, and VH1's Doug Benson. Anderson is also a known comedic personality, having won a MTV stand-up comedy competition, and performed for two years with the famed Second City theatre.

Alongside that, Anderson has also landed a commercial gig for Big Boy and has recently released some of his own songs on iTunes such as "Siamese Twins AKA Jeff & What's His Face," and his parodies of Daniel Powter's "Bad Day," and The Verve Pipe's "The Freshman."

For the five years, these two men have been traveling around the country together, putting on "We Can Make You Laugh." The challenge is simple: Sit in the prop electric chair and keep a straight face for two minutes while keeping eye contact with either Meritt or Anderson as they do outrageous bits of comedy to



Robert Baker/ECHO

We Can Make You Laugh performer Joe Anderson (left) sings for contestant freshman Ben Aldrich.

make contestants crack up. Only two out of the eight people who sat in that chair walked away with the prize of \$25, but everyone who participated got a T-shirt. The number of people who failed the challenge was abnormal, according to Meritt. He said, "We normally get about half the people."

One of Meritt's stand-up pieces was about Starbucks' coffee cup mottos. "[The cup said] 'No man is ever as tall as when he kneels down to help another,' and then at the bottom there was that little disclaimer," said Meritt. Anderson, who has a knack for making up funny

songs, used an audience member to gain inspiration for a ballad called "Our Love, it's somewhere between feet and faces."

"I thought it was really funny, I enjoyed it thoroughly," said sophomore Tyler VanSyckle. "It was hysterical," said sophomore Sierra Clark. "My favorite part was when Jimmy (Meritt) was ranting his naughty jokes."

After the opening stand-up acts, the comedians started to get the crowd more involved. They had their own property appraisal, just like *Antiques Road Show*, and even started to play a healthy game of Fluffy Bunny. (To play, each contes-

tant puts one marshmallow in his or her mouth and says "Fluffy Bunny." The process is then repeated until the phrase can no longer be heard through the ever-growing mouthful of marshmallows.) The three contestants for Fluffy Bunny lined up and just as they were about to start, Meritt said, "It appears we don't have the marshmallows... What we are gonna do is have each of you tell us how many marshmallows you could have fit in your mouth if we actually had the marshmallows... and be honest." VanSyckle was a contestant for this match-up. "I've played this game before and I know I can do it with eight," said VanSyckle. The winner of this marshmallow-less version of Fluffy Bunny ended being junior Libby Lydy with nine and a half. "Everyone thinks we are gonna bring out the marshmallows after they say their number and see if they can really do it, but we never have the marshmallows," said Meritt. Once VanSyckle learned this, he said, "That's cheap!"

At the end of the night, after six of the eight contestants had lost the battle to hold back their laughter, students wanted to know what Meritt and Anderson do with the money. "Whatever money we don't give away at the show, we donate to IJM (International Justice Mission). They are a well-known organization that fights human trafficking," said Anderson. "They came to my church, and they had a great line 'A lot of people ask why do bad things happen, what's the plan? We are the plan.'" For the past couple years they have been donating to IJM and are able to give roughly \$2,000 a year.

Fraternity has fun, provides service by raking leaves at Congregational Church

By Jim Sullivan
Staff Writer

October 27 was a windy day in Olivet, but members of Phi Alpha Pi Fraternity gathered to rake leaves. The wind made the task challenging, yet they persisted in raking the leaves around the grounds of the Olivet Congregational Church that afternoon.

"Yeah, it's been a pretty good challenge with the wind," said junior Jesse Holmes, "but we're determined; we don't

give up that easily."

About nine members of the fraternity raked leaves and bagged them up for the church. "Part of the Compact is social responsibility," said sophomore Shan Pileri, "and I got to spend time with my frat brothers. It's a blast and a chance to help out the community."

The fraternity had volunteered to rake leaves for the church on Service Day, but senior Michael Baker said, "A lot of the leaves hadn't fallen yet [on

Service Day]".

Church Pastor Jack Brown said, "They volunteered over the last three years with projects for both the church and the community. We've had a good rapport with them and they follow through."

The raking was done just in time for the church to look spiffy for a "Leading from the Wilderness" conference which took place Oct. 28-30. The conference addressed challenges and opportunities

in the post-modern world, and included speakers from all over the Midwest.

Brown said, "This is very timely for us." According to Brown, Phi Alpha Pi has also helped with interior work for the church as well.

As they approached a last pile of leaves, one fraternity member allowed his brothers to bury him in the pile. As for the challenge of trying to rake leaves on a windy day, Pileri said, "We just have fun with it."