

ENTERTAINMENT

Mystery game boasts clues, cash

By Ming Rodrigues
Emerald Contributor

Need something to take your mind off the exam blues tonight? How about playing detective in a murder mystery game instead of doing your usual round of parties?

"Skullduggery by Night" is a game where you follow clues to figure out a murder.

With a tongue-and-mind bender of a Gothic theme like "Verses of Villainous Vicissitude," written by senior Larry Hoffman and junior Neal Skorpen, the games' who-dunnit plot promises to be quite a challenge to all dorm participants.

A resident assistant at Thornton dormitory, Hoffman said the idea to organize an activity that would get students involved in something other than the ordinary party scene was what prompted the game.

"Instead of the typical dorm party where people just sit around drinking and talking, we thought a murder mystery game would be more of a novel and stimulating way to have some fun," said Hoffman, who started planning games of interactive nature in high school when he was a member of a group called Students Against Drugs.

This is the fourth such game on campus and the sixth one done by Hoffman, who has written games that range from a spoof on nursery rhymes to one based on the novel *Spellbinder*. This time around, Hoffman and Skorpen have teamed up to write "Skullduggery By Night" as part of their final project for a Gothic literature course.

The game goes like this: Groups of five people start off at 15-minute intervals armed with a set of riddles they have to break in order to find each of 13 locations. At each location, there will be people in costume acting out a scene from the game plot, and participants have to interpret the act to find the clues that solve the mystery.

Along the way, if a group should find themselves stumped, they can use fake money given to them at the start of the game to buy more clues.

Rovers, who will be patrolling the areas of campus where the game will be held, will give away the clues. And if a group is short of money, they can sing, dance or act in return for a clue.

It'll take anywhere from two to three hours to get through the whole game, and the group that solves the mystery closest to the anticipated time wins. Groups can also opt to use fake money to buy or take away time. But since the perfect time is kept a secret, choosing to change the time is a gamble.

Those interested can sign up at the Hamilton or Carson area desks or the EMU Main Desk. The cost is \$15 per team, and it's important for all participants to attend a pre-game briefing at 4 p.m. tonight in the Bean East conference room.

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— Larry Hoffman,
co-author of "Skullduggery By Night"

The game, open to all students, will start at 5 p.m. and run through to 11 p.m. Spaces are limited, and participants are advised to dress warmly. Cash prizes will be awarded, at the end of the night, to the top groups.

"At \$3 per person, you get more value out of the game than watching a movie for the same price," Hoffman said. "It's a great way to have fun."

For more information, contact Hoffman at 346-8605.



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