

# 'Towards Zero' rates towards perfect ten

By D. Dietrich  
Of The Print

When Theater Director Jack Shields said the students at Clackamas Community College would benefit from the instruction of a guest director for the winter term play, he was understating the fact. Proof of this arrived in the form of a thoroughly enjoyable and refreshing, not to mention professional production of Agatha Christie's "Toward Zero."

which opened to a close to full house Thursday night in the McLoughlin Theater.

Whether the majority of praise should be aimed at Merrill Lynn Taylor, who is the guest director and pride of the theater department this term, or the complimentary pie should be sliced more evenly, in any case the end result is a splendid evening of suspense, drama, comedy and satire.

The set-up for the murder-mystery plot is as typical as "the butler did it." A group of people are gathered at the central figure's house, in this case the manor of Lady Tressilian. Lady Tressilian is old and rather crotchety but more in the vein of speaking her mind than with any intentional malice. Patricia Lawrence gave a splendid performance as Tressilian and managed to make her more than just a one-sided necessity to the plot.

Assembled at Tressilian's home at Gull's Point in Salt Creek, Cornwall are Mathew Treves, a friend of Tressilian's, Thomas Royde and Neville Strange, two slightly middle-aged men who both spent childhood summers at the Tressilian manor when Mr. Tressilian was still alive and who also share a history of jealousies and hate, Kay Strange, who is Neville's wife, as well as Audrey Strange, who is Neville's ex-wife. Popping in and out of the manor is the handsomely debonair Ted Latimer, who is a close (he'd prefer closer) friend of the current Mrs. Strange. A fixed household character is Mary Aldin, Tressilian's faithfully devoted



Superintendent Battle (Roy Osborne) and sidekick Inspector Leach (Joe Schenck) discuss possible suspects in the murder of Lady Tressilian.

caretaker who naturally has no life of her own to speak of.

Tensions fill the air from the beginning of the first act as loves lost and found are brought into the picture. Dona Miller as the sophisticated Audrey is the center of affections from both Neville (who wants her back) and Thomas (who wishes he'd had the guts to ask her to marry him before Neville had). Naturally Kay has little appreciation for Audrey's finer upbringing, especially when compared to her own, plus the fact that her husband constantly dotes on Audrey's every whim. Audrey couldn't care less about Neville's infatuation and is enamored by Thomas (getting this down?).

Swiftly moving along to the brutal murder of Lady Tressilian by means of a golf iron, there seems to be no apparent motive. Unlike the untold number of mysteries where everyone, including sweet old ladies, have a reason to club someone to death, this macabre murder appears senseless.

To solve the mystery, enter Superintendent Battle and his faithful sidekick Inspector Leach. Battle is not a stereotype of the bumbling police chief but rather a slow-paced, occasionally patronizing seeker-of-justice. Roy Osborne gives a colorful character to Battle, filled with idiosyncrasies and mannerisms. Christie wrote only two novels with Battle in the investigation, which seems a shame because it is refreshing not to have the loud-mouthed fool as a constant agitation.

"Towards Zero" is one of Christie's lesser-known and performed plays, but certainly not by any fault of the story. Although the play is complete with all the structural characteristics, there are surprising twists which challenge even the most proficient mystery solvers in the audience. The cast is uniformly excellent throughout the the play, with only a little stiffness in the role of Neville by Clark Casperson, but such observation could be interpreted as part of the prudish character. Top honors must go to Joshua-Robbin Collins in the hysterical and applause-capturing style of Latimer. Neil Hass as Royde and Jim Nicodemus as Treves give very believable and stabilizing performances as compared to more varied yet never weak acting by Marlyce Sherrie Baird as Kay and Linda Kuntz as the endearing Mary.

"Towards Zero" will run March 15 and 16 at 8 p.m. with a performance at 2:30 on Sunday, March 17. The company will then take the production to the Coaster Theater at Cannon Beach for shows on March 28, 29, and 30 at 8 p.m. General admission is \$3, \$2 for students and senior citizens with reservations are admitted free.



Marionettes by Jeff Silvia

Photo by Joel Miller

## Pauling hosts alumni artwork

A collection of artwork by former Clackamas Community College student, Jeff Silvia, is currently on display in the Pauling Center gallery area and will remain until March 23.

Originally from Massachusetts, Silvia has studied fine arts in Belgium at Academi van Krust and traveled through Europe studying art and culture. He earned an associate of arts degree at Clackamas in 1982 and will graduate with a bachelor of fine arts from the University of Oregon this spring.

The collection of Silvia's works on display include paintings, both oil and watercolor, bronze, ceramic and wood sculptures, marionettes, dry point, aqua tint, and etchings.

An open house will be held for Silvia's showing on March 16 from 4-6 p.m.

## Scholarships

**SCHOLARSHIPS WITH DEADLINES OF MARCH 31, APRIL 1, 2 or 5**

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST SECTION/American Water Works Assoc.** One \$500 scholarship for students interested in the Public Water Supply field.

**ALBERT E. JONES Memorial/Fire Science.** Two full-tuition scholarships for the 1985-86 academic year for students majoring in Fire Science.

**OREGON ASSOC. OF PUBLIC Accountants.** 10 awards valued at \$500 to \$1000 are made each year for students majoring in Accounting.

**EASTERN OREGON STATE College Presidential Merit Award.** A tuition waiver for attendance at EOSC only. Valued at \$250-\$500.

**AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE Blind/Floyd Qualls Memorial.** 16 scholarships valued at \$1000 to \$2500 for students who are Legally Blind.

**INDIAN HEALTH CARE Improvement.** Several programs are

available for Indians in Health Care programs. The dollar amount is unspecified.

**OREGON CITY BUSINESS And Professional Women's Club.** One full-tuition scholarship for two terms of the 1984-85 academic year (Winter 85 and Spring 85). Second year Females Apply Now.

**SCHOLARSHIPS WITH DEADLINES OF APRIL 12 and 15:**

**HOWARD P. STEPHENSON Internship - Oregon Columbia Chapter/International Assoc. of Business Communicators.** One \$750 award plus summer employment in a publications office for a Journalism or Communications student.

**UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND-Multnomah School of Engineering.** Several awards of \$1,750 are made each year to transferring Engineering students.

**YMCA OF COLUMBIA-Willamette.** \$250 to \$1000 is available each year for students showing YMCA affiliation.

