

# 'Get a Clue' provides mystery, comedy, suspense



Photo by Cori Kargel

Cast members (back, l.-r.) Bill Barry, Alan Ryman, Christina Knapp, Duane Hall and (front) Tamara Bredemus, David Seitz

## Cori Kargel

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"Get a Clue Murder Mysteries" was in top form at the Eastmoreland Golf Course Restaurant on the evening of Nov. 17. The murder mystery troupe performed a show full of drama, tragedy, intrigue, adventure, betrayal, suspense and - clowns!

That's right. The latest murder mystery presented by the Portland-area acting company is set during the graduation ceremonies of the 1995 graduating class of the fictional Warren Watson's Fine School of Clowning. During the ceremonies, which Watson himself hosts, two people are mysteriously murdered.

The first victim is Wizzo, the clown who graduated first in his class of three. (There were 102 clowns originally enrolled in Watson's school; however, all but three of them died "accidentally" whilst learning their art). In the middle of Wizzo's graduation performance, an unknown person disguised as a clown shoots and kills him. At this point, a private investigator attending the ceremonies, James O'Bond, initiates an investigation of the murder.

For a while, things are calm as O'Bond questions various

people, including Watson; Binky and Blotto, the other two graduates; Spencer Flashgate, a talent agent looking to hire a clown; Rachel Moss, Wizzo's beautiful, newly-widowed, shallow, gold-digging, socialite wife; and various audience members. During this time, the audience is served the first course of their meal.

As the questioning continues, in staggers Spencer Flashgate, the talent agent, with a knife in his chest. A partial note, beginning: "O'Bond, I know who did it," is found in his hand. O'Bond again interrogates his suspects, then leaves the room to make a phone call. As he leaves, he admonishes everyone not to leave. Thus, of course, as soon as he is out the door, all the suspects leave.

At this time, all audience members are given "clue sheets" and allowed six minutes to find clues, record them and turn them in. During this time, the audience finishes their main course and dessert.

Once time is up, O'Bond re-enters the room and proceeds to review each submitted clue sheet to the audience. "Who's Guilty" sheets are then passed out, filled out and collected. The person with the correct answers to both

"who's guilty" questions and the "why" question, is recognized and given a reward. The same is done for the person with the most creative answer.

This is just the barebones, cut-and-dried description of a highly-involved, well-performed, thoroughly enjoyable, interactive entertainment experience. It is nigh unto impossible to pack several hours, dozens of clues and hundreds of laughs into one newspaper article.

"Get a Clue Murder Mysteries" was co-founded by Christina Knapp (Rachel Moss) and Alan Ryman (Warren Watson). The two previously worked together for another murder mystery company. They founded "Get a Clue" with the intention of changing the things they didn't like and improving upon the things they did like about interactive murder mysteries. They also try to incorporate the audience more than many other companies.

Interactive murder mysteries are gaining popularity, and "Get a Clue" is no different. With few exceptions, the audience was appreciative of the performance.

"It was my first time to come to one," said audience member Ann Rangos. "It was just incredibly playful and fun."

"I really thoroughly enjoyed it...It was a nice diversion on a yucky night," commented Terri Lahr, another audience member.

Participants liked the combination of interactive entertainment and a well-made dinner (courtesy of the Eastmoreland Restaurant).

"I thought it was fun," said audience member Bernadette Rodakowski. "I like the meal. My meal was good."

The audience isn't the only group of people that appreciates the lively, improvisational style of the performances.

"It's really fun to improv. with a set group of people," said

Tamara Bredemus (Binky). "You get to know them."

"It's a lot free-er because it's improvised," commented Bill Barry (O'Bond). "It's a looser script style...No method here."

"I needed something to do Friday nights," quipped David Seitz (Spencer Flashgate).

The interactive, audience-incorporating style of the show is a refreshing, interesting change from being a disassociated observer of movies, television or traditional theater.

"We just want people to have something different," Knapp said. "You always have the same-old, same-old."

Ryman compared the performance style to Virtual Reality. "You get dinner, and we don't use power. You don't have to reboot."

Come January, "Get a Clue" will be changing its format. The company plans to station itself in an old Victorian house-cum-cafe.

The shows themselves will start out more subtly, then get wild when something obvious, such as a death or disappearance, occurs.

Knapp commented on the increased surprise factor the new format will allow.

"You would know it's a murder mystery, but maybe your guest wouldn't," she said. "Once

people see someone has died, they're gonna know it's not real-hopefully."

Along with its new accommodations, the company will also be performing a new show, as Nov. 17 was one of the last performances of "A Mime is a Terrible Thing to Waste."

The new format and show of "Get a Clue" looks to be as entertaining and skillfully-presented as the company's current performances.

With the added draw of a Victorian-housed cafe as a background to the show, "Get a Clue" could easily become a Portland-area favorite for an evening of unusual and intriguing entertainment.

In addition, the company is intent on continuing to improve upon many aspects of its presentation, including audience participation and the quality of the provided dinner.

"Get a Clue" is highly recommended to anyone who wants to experience something a little different from the accepted entertainment norms available.

Bredemus summed up the recommendations best: "It's really fun, and everyone should come and bring two friends."

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## Public Safety stresses need to watch after each other

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her car and that it would be safe.

She returned in time to see a white male in his early 20's drive off with her 1990 cherry red Nissan Pathfinder. Her purse, containing money and credit cards, was also lying in the front seat.

"For a fleeting moment, I thought it was a trick being pulled by a staff member," said Baker. "Your car disappears in five seconds. It was a very odd sensation watching your car leave the parking lot," she added.

Baker stated that as soon as "911" was dialed the police immediately had five squad cars out looking for it. Since it vanished so quickly she thought it may have been taken by some one who lives close by with a garage to pull into.

The name of the investigating police officer who took the report was Steele, which Baker thought was a cute name in that kind of situation.

As of Monday afternoon, Baker said she still had not heard

anything at this point as to whether or not it had been found.

"Someone saw it as a crime of opportunity," said Staff Sergeant Dexheimer of CCC Public Safety, who was also looking into the theft.

"It's what we call the five second crime: five seconds and it's gone," he added.

Chief of Public Safety Jim Wiseman thought the car could be sold for parts, which in some cases could be of more value than the complete automobile.

"Some shops are good at changing the VIN (vehicle identification number) number, and forging registration. Some are moved to other states. There is a real good market for it in other states like Idaho, Montana and Colorado," he said.

"Anytime you have an area where people are and cars are parked, you're going to have crime. It draws people like a magnet," said Wiseman.

The North Clackamas Aquatic Park and the Oregon Institute of Technology are in the same area as the Harmony Center and close by is Clackamas

Town Center. There are several large open area parking lots near the buildings.

"There are...apartments with teens from one parent families that gather at the basketball courts at the end of the parking lot. You have a lot of extra time on teens' hands at night," Wiseman said. "This area has the second highest crime grid in Clackamas County."

Broken glass from car break-ins littered the parking lot, proving his point.

"You leave a camera or a walkman in the car, they smash the window and run. You're just as defenseless with a car alarm; alarm goes off but so what," he added.

"We're trying to save people from themselves. You can try to get as much info out as possible on how to protect yourself but it doesn't always work," commented Wiseman.

"We still need to watch after each other, which is what it is all about. You can replace a camera but you can't replace a human being."

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