

Student one-acts spotlight budding Clackamas talent

JOSH LEE KWAI
Staff Writer

Students of the theater are showcasing their talents in all aspects of production next week as they produce, direct and act in a variety of short plays.

There will be four pieces in all. The students will perform three a day Dec 2-4. The overwhelming majority of the one-acts this term are comedies.

"The Good Doctor is not a character, it's the emotion of laughter," said Sigfried Seeliger, director of Thornton Wilder's "The Good Doctor." Wilder's play shows "slices of life from Russia during the turn of the century. It makes a remark that pain is beautiful," Seeliger said.

"Specimen" is about how mankind is tortured and tormented constantly, to no avail, about preconceived notions of what is good and what is evil," said Mike O'Connor about his piece, which he writes and directs. He said he wrote it one night while thinking about a one-act he saw last year.

The play centers on a man who is awake late at night when he hears a voice. The voice, O'Connor says, may be a representation for society. He stresses, however, that the play is a comedy and centers on the main character's reactions to what the voice tells him.

"I wanted to do something between a man and woman," says Maggie Chapin of her directorial debut—"something the audience could relate to."

Chapin is organizing production of two short pieces, "Checkers" by Dale Doerman and "Sure Thing" by David Ives. "Checkers" covers dialogue between an elderly couple that has been married for years, and the humor that this brings. "Sure Thing" is what might happen if two people met and they were able to start over whenever things went wrong.

"They're both a lot of fun to watch and do," explains Chapin "You can really relate them to yourself or to somebody you else you know."

"Ninety years of Christmas dinners in the Bayard household" is how Jonathon Ems describes his interesting piece, and only non-drama, "The Long Christmas Dinner" by Thornton Wilder. It is a surrealistic comedy that Ems says is more spiritual than entertaining.

The story covers 90 years of dinners but there are no scene changes. This presents a unique problem for the actors, says Ems. "Some of them have to age on stage, with no use of make-up or anything; the only thing they have is body language." The play also takes a look at how culture changes and how it affects family over the 90 year time period.

Everyone is invited to attend the one-acts at no cost. Times for the plays will be near the lunch hour; look in the McLoughlin Hall Theater for details.

Davis' inspiring poetry comes to Clackamas

JEREMY STALLWOOD
Staff Writer

A cold, blustery day with the wind blowing strong and the rain falling hard set the perfect tone for a poetry reading last Wednesday. Courtney Davis, author of *Details of Flesh*, was greeted by an audience of well over 50 people in the Skylight Dining Room.

Davis' poetry was inspired by events that took place while working as a nurse practitioner.

"Nursing represents the intense place where caring and hurting meet," Davis said as she introduced her first poem, "Blood Clot." Davis' first experience in a hospital was not as a nurse, but as a patient being treated for a severe blood clot.

Davis shared her theory that poems were born from two places. Some poems "fall out of heaven" as a gift, others take work and sweat—perhaps hundreds of revisions later, there is finally a completed draft.

Davis went on to read "Smoke We Make Pictures Of," in which she explained that a clock in a mirror makes her think of time going backwards. The poem gracefully takes the listener back in time, each line of poetry reminiscent of the author's life.

After taking this trip to the past, Davis read a poem called "Barking Dog," which is about her real life experience with a lady in a hospital who would bark like a dog. This was followed by "Timeline," which was inspired by "informing moments" during the Vietnam War.

"Flashback" and "Suffering" kept the audience captivated. In "Suffering," Davis told the story about her experiences working in an Intensive Care Unit and observing "every kind of suffering imaginable." Davis provided the audience with gruesome visualizations of accident victims, flat-line situations, and the agonies of losing a loved one. "Beaten women, abused children, love lost", she read. Memorable was the



TIMOTHY BELL / Clackamas Print

Courtney Davis recites her poetry in the Skylight Dining room, bringing a diverse range of themes to unique life.

imagery of marrow being sucked out of the bones and "walking everywhere hollow."

In "To the Mother of The Burned Children," Davis tells a story about a burning house and a mother bringing her children to safety.

A rhythmic poem called "Body Flute" shared a view of the patient being the instrument of the nurse and the doctor. Davis evoked haunting images and showed the bond between patient and nurse with the powerful line, "That which you allow no one/ you allow me."

Davis explained how she uses literature as a tool to sensualize the act of care giving and care receiving. Literature gives a narrative of illness and wellness, loss and suffering.

"That, and personal experience, makes a poem," she said.

"What the Nurse Likes" was a powerful poem stating that the narrator likes being the one to give bad news because

she knows she is good at it. She is not afraid to cry along with the grieving family and not afraid to admit "I am also afraid."

Davis read a poem about her fascination with shy men and lifting hair to listen to their breath. She liked saying "You must take this test" and "I am not embarrassed by grief."

"I like how dying patients become beautiful," she reads. First they are living, then they become vacant.

A well-earned applause erupted after Davis finished the last poem and thanked everyone. She invited the audience to come and speak to her about caregiving and writing, while she signed books.

"She had me captured with every poem she read, especially 'Barking Dog'," said Tim Schell, writing instructor at the college. "There have been poets in the past that I have gone to where not every poem they read captured me, but not this one."

Mike Kepler's 27 Clackamas years come to a close

BRAD ZIMMERMAN
Co-Editor-in-Chief

After teaching for 27 years, English Instructor Mike Kepler is retiring at the end of Fall term.

"There was a new fiscal formula that came into play," Kepler said. "I was originally going to go for the 'age 57-30 years of service' but my investment account did so well I figured into another formula, and now I can get out two years earlier."

"I've been standing and delivering for 31 years, and it's time to let someone else do the job. When Tom Richards told me he was taking off, it convinced me. Perfect timing."

Kepler started his teaching career as a teaching assistant at Portland State University for a year, from 1969 to 1970. Then in the 1970-71 school year, Kepler taught part time at Mount Hood Community College Clackamas and PSU. In 1972 Kepler became a full time English instructor at Clackamas.

Over the past 27 years, Kepler has taught a wide variety of English sub-

jects which, according to Kepler, have included everything in the composition sequence, most of the Introduction to Literature classes and the World Literature sequence.

Kepler was also able to "invent" several classes.

"In the 70's and early 80's I taught an English 199 class, where we could invent courses," he said. "I invented four classes. One was Oregon Literature. One was a class for high-school dropouts who were coming back for their GED's."

"And then, in the early 80's, under the English 199 auspices I invented a Visions and Values sequence of two classes. It was cross-generic film, plays, novels and non-fiction. It was pretty successful."

"I wish I'd had the chance to teach more generic courses. But, the resources that were available after lots of ballot measures failed meant we had to keep tightening our belt, tightening our belt. So everything that was an elective major was looked at as a frill. I wish we would have been able to hang onto a greater capacity to invent elec-

tive courses."

Kepler said that he liked fiction and poetry classes the most.

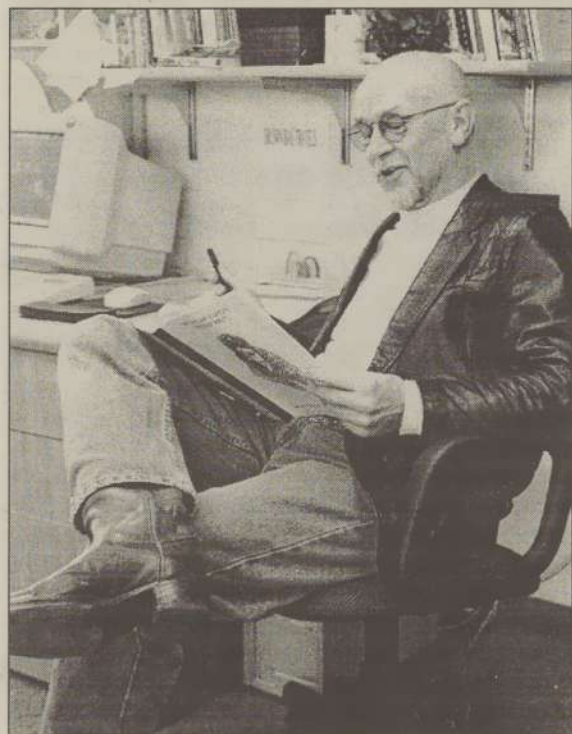
Kepler didn't think he's going to be back teaching again. He said he will be helping out with the Associated Writers' Programs conference, though, when it comes to Portland in March.

Kepler said he was glad he spent his years at Clackamas and not at a university.

"I preferred it here. It's less political. The politicians and scholars and writers are at universities. They have very little connection with students. It's minimal. Many of them are teaching only one or two classes a year. The rest of the time they're expected to create or research."

"I got into it [teaching] because I was a teacher. These [community colleges] are the teaching institutions," said Kepler.

Once Kepler is officially into retirement, he says he plans to take up golf, start reading more, possibly take some art classes and "do a little bit of blue highways traveling."



ALEX MAHAN / Clackamas Print

Mike Kepler, long-time instructor, professing Pagan and master of wry humor, is calling an end to his Clackamas career.