

American Beauty stuns with symbolism, strong acting

ANGIE DASCHEL

A&E Editor

Funny and heartbreaking, tragic and beautiful, *American Beauty* is the amazingly-told story of a modern family falling apart at the seams. Everything appears normal on the outside, but all is not well when one takes a closer look into the American suburbs.

Kevin Spacey (*The Usual Suspects*) plays Lester, a self-described loser who suddenly develops an itch to burst out of his old routine, to reinvent himself. Some may call this a mid-life crisis, but Spacey brings new meaning to the term. Surrounded by a sarcastic wife with a need for perfection (Annette Bening), and a spoiled, self-righteous brat of a daughter (Thora Birch), there is no question why Lester needs to find new meaning in his life.

The catalyst for this change in Lester is his lust for his daughter's friend, a stuck-up, arrogant blonde who knows that every man wants her—including Lester, who suddenly embarks on a self-improvement routine of working out, drinking health shakes and, basically, breaking out of his mold. He begins to actually live again.

On the other hand, Lester's wife Carolyn is beginning to re-



alize her life is not exactly as she planned it, either. As a real-estate agent, mother and wife, she has failed; the only thing she has kept up is her rose garden. Flawless red roses are used in almost every scene, on a table, outside, even on clothing. This universal symbol of love, passion and desire is used so well that roses become more than just a prop; they are interwoven perfectly with the actors and their emotions.

Rich in symbolism and gorgeously-arranged scenes, *American Beauty* is truly a

masterpiece, and the master is Spacey. His character goes from the depths of boredom and despair to true happiness, and Spacey delivers all this with ease and believability. Even though Bening is truly awesome in her portrayal of a wife caught up in her need for success and status, this movie belongs to Spacey. Known for his incredible acting ability, Spacey may be the only actor who could have pulled off such a wonderful, touching, darkly-comic movie as *American Beauty*.

Readers revel in romance

SALENA DE LA CRUZ

Sports Co-Editor

I'll tell ye' about an author like no other. Jude Deveraux will bring tears to ye' eyes and warm ye' heart.

Deveraux novels involve many acts o' kindness and love. The author brings us an ornery type o' villain who will make you hate the bloody antagonist to the very depths of ye' soul.

Deveraux forms a bond with her readers, using history and romance to tell her stories, which all revolve around the Montgomery Clan, in Scotland, beginning the late 1700's, and continuing through the centuries.

This prolific writer begins succeeding novels with characters from the last, but each of her novels is a different story of the Montgomery Clansmen and their families. Deveraux uses actual history to enrich her plots and inform her backgrounds.

Some of my fa-

vorite Jude Deveraux titles are "The Dutchess", "The Awakening," "The Velvet Promise," "The Velvet Song" and "The Blessing."

Deveraux awakens the romantic in us all. She brings you into her writing while allowing you to laugh at the way she tells the story. I for one was amazed at the way she wrote the conversations the characters had using the Scottish accent in her writing.

Jude Deveraux is an author readers can get to know and love. Her telling of the story is a comfort we romantics can have when those long, lonely nights come a callin'.

So, curl up with a good historical romance novel by Jude Deveraux—read the love lost and found, and smile, cry and rage with her characters. At the end, I'm betting you'll begin to believe (with Virgil and me) that, indeed, "Love Conquers All."



Fall play: House of Blue Leaves

HEIDI SAUSSER

Staff Writer

The House of Blue Leaves, a dark comedy written by Jon Guare, will be presented as the fall play at Clackamas. Set in New York, *The House of Blue Leaves* is about the Pope's first visit to Queens.

The play will be presented in the McLoughlin Hall theater at 8 p.m. Nov. 11-13 and 18-20; and at 2:30 p.m. Nov. 14 and 21. Admission is \$3 for students, \$6 for the general public, and free to senior citizens with reservations.

The Stage Managers/Assistant Directors are Tyler Currey and Jamie Anderson. Currey is also an acting cast member, along with Jayson Shanafelt, Amanda Jensen, Michaela Foeller, Erin Adkisson, Mark Jwayad, Nicole Beeler, Megan Hunt, Emily Falkenstein, Eric Moler and John Antcliffe. Amber Dodgson is in charge of the crew.

David Smith-English, director of the play, and all the actors and actresses, strongly encourage people of all ages to attend *The House of Blue Leaves*.

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Passing Through
a concert of contemporary dance
by Wendy Hambridge

Conduit, 918 SW Yamhill Suite 401
Portland, Oregon
Oct. 15-17, 22-24
8:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday
7:30 p.m. Sunday
Reservations and info: 249-0246

Taps: The Civil War in Word and Song
a historical musical by William and Carla Coleman
End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, 1726 Washington St.
Oct. 8-10, 15-17
8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 5:30 p.m. Sunday
Reservations and info: 557-8542 ext. 104

Blood Wedding
Spanish tragedy of poetry and music
Miracle Theater, 425 SE 6th Ave., Portland, Oregon
Sept. 24-Oct. 23
7 p.m. Thursday, 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday
Reservations and info: 236-7253

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