

THE ARTS

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An 'Election' where everyone is the winner

Seaside High School's fall play comes at a timely moment

By KATHERINE LACAZE
FOR EO MEDIA GROUP

In the middle of a contentious election cycle, a group of Seaside High School students are exploring this keystone of America's democracy through a satirical lens with their production of "The Election," aimed at providing the community some much needed comedic relief.

"You'll laugh, you'll cringe, you'll laugh some more," senior Bekah Cox said. "It should be fun for everyone, and they will be able to relate to it on some level."

In the play, which opens Friday, Nov. 4, Cox's character, Christy Martin, is a preppy, polished know-it-all who decides to run for student body president against Mark Davenport, a completely unprepared fellow student who only wanted to pad his resume for college applications and expected an uncontested victory. Their contentious race is sparked by the fictional school's student body president resigning in disgrace, à la Richard Nixon. Several of the play's themes are applicable to the real world of politics at every level of government.

Cox, a veteran of the high school's drama program, described her character as "almost Hillary Clinton, but not quite," adding her fellow cast mates often joked she would need to find a pantsuit to wear for her costume.

"Christy is very good about saying things to appeal to the audience and making Mark look bad, and Mark is so out of his element," senior Emma Duttler said.

"Mark is the butt of the joke always," Cox agreed. "He has to resort to calling Christy a liar."

Audience members also can expect to find allusions to the Watergate scandal, the "birther" conspiracy, words getting twisted out of context and antagonistic candidate debates.

"Anything that has come up in politics is pretty much in this," Dutcher said. "It's ridiculous."

Meanwhile, her character, Kyli, the student broadcasting system reporter, is always hovering nearby, covering the outrageous process and milking its entertainment value to please her viewers, Dutcher said.

"It's definitely timely because there are a lot of parallels to what's happening right now, and you definitely see a lot of current candidates and past presidents in this show," Cox said.

Director Lenore Morrisson specifically chose "The Election," because of its comedic take on the contemporary political scene and relevance to the upcoming 2016 presidential election, scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 8.

"All elections are sort of the same, right?" Morrisson said. "They say they're going to run a clean campaign, and pretty soon someone's running an ad, saying, 'He's a puppy killer.' It's just kind of ridiculous."

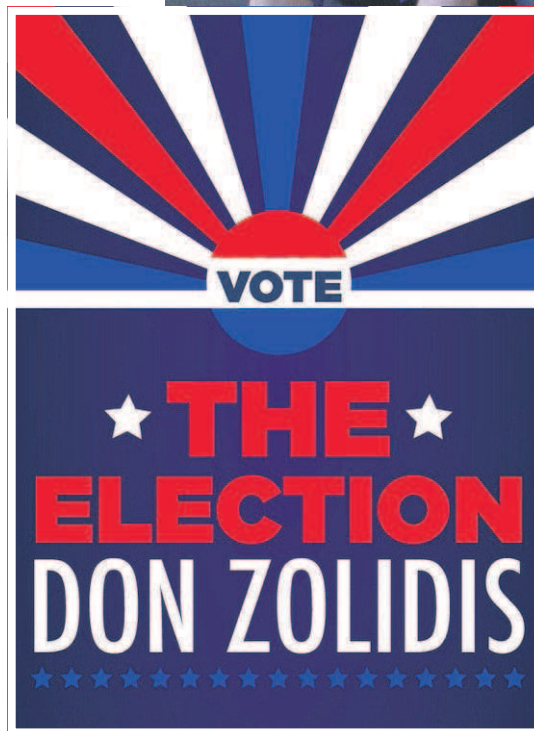
Morrisson said she believed the students would appreciate the play's relevance and enjoy presenting the satire, and so far, they have. Junior Jacob

Brien, who plays Mark's geeky but lovable sidekick, Karl Merriweather, said the best part of what is his inaugural theater experience is "making people laugh." While he is disdainful of politics in



PHOTO BY KATHERINE LACAZE

The cast and crew for Seaside High School's fall play "The Election" are preparing to open Nov. 4.



general — "it's just unpleasant," he explained — he finds the play to be an optimal opportunity to express his diverse humor and have fun with other cast members. He expects it will be an equally enjoy-

able experience for the audience.

While there isn't much of an educational component to the play — audience members won't leave with a better understanding of the electoral college — the play will afford a little comedic relief at the expense of the election process, outrageous political figures and how the media can fuel the fire.

"Politics are scary," Dutcher said, adding she would encourage everyone in the community to "come have a laugh with us poking fun at politics."

Brien agreed.

"If you're someone who gets really into politics and you watch it a lot, and it kind of stresses you a little bit, watching the play may ease it up and take some of that weight off your back — just to put it back on when you go watch it again," he said.

In addition to Cox, Dutcher

and Brien, students Emil Matlock and Jack Stapleton round out the core cast playing Mark Davenport and Gary McMaster, respectively. They are supported by fellow players Dakota Young, Cat Walgren, Phoenix Miller, Annie Stafford, Max McNeill, Nolan Milliren, Gretchen Hoekstre, Michael Matthews, Stephanie Anderson, Gwen Farrar and Alan Brockman. The tech crew consists of Daniel Contier, Will Kautz and Jessica Almaguer. Kelsey Crider is the lead costumer, and Craig Shepherd is in charge of the set production and design.

The play will be performed at 7 p.m. Nov. 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12 at Seaside High School. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for general admission and \$3 for students with their ASB card.

For more information, call the school at 503-738-5586.