

“It’s full of deceit, and no one knows who’s telling the truth to anyone at any given time,” Neuwirth said. “I don’t want to say that it’s a play for our times, but it definitely fits our moment in certain ways.”

Director Jean White-Rice said the characters are playing a game of chess against one another. “Each of them is trying to outthink the others.”

The unusual sense of role-playing extends to the play’s casting.

“My real-life wife is playing my mistress,” said Aaron Harris, seen most recently in the Coaster’s 2017 production of “9 to 5: The Musical.” “Not only that, but I’m doing my first on-stage kissing with both Heather and Jessica, while being a deceitful bastard to both of them at different times. It’s a bit of a challenge.”

“I see a lot of counseling in your future,” Neuwirth laughed.

First-time director

This production represents both a new chapter and a final bow for one of the Coaster’s most stalwart participants.

Jean White-Rice has been part of the Coaster family since 1998, when she made her first onstage appearance in “On Golden Pond.” Since then, she has worked everywhere from backstage to the lighting booth, served a term as president of the Coaster’s board of directors, and established herself as one of the theater’s most recognizable performers.

“I’ve done at least one play a season since I started, from tiny supporting roles to leads,” she said. “One year, I was in six out of seven productions!”

With such a range of experience, it was only a matter of time before White-Rice took on the only role she hadn’t yet played: “Fit to Kill” is her directorial debut.


“I’ve worked with a lot of really good directors, and I’ve been able to take a little bit from all of them and put it to work for myself,” she said. “I have to say it’s a lot different from being an actor. I get to see the form as opposed to just walking it, which is kind of cool. And it helps that my first play is small — there’s only three characters, and, except for one scene, only two of them are on stage at a time. So I don’t have to deal with a lot of actors and a lot of movement; I can concentrate on the performances. Which helps, because — well, they’re all such unlikable characters! They all want to kill each other! I have to find some way for the audience to come along with them.”

Swan song

White-Rice’s first turn at the helm doubles as her swan song. “Fit to Kill” will be her last stand with the Coaster Theatre before she moves to Indiana this summer.

“Jean’s been awesome to work with,” Aaron Harris said. “We’ve really been working hard to make her proud, especially since this is her last show with us.”

“Until we fly her back here to do another one,” Coaster Executive Director Patrick Lathrop added.

“You heard him,” White-Rice laughed. “It’s on the record! They’re flying me back!” 



Jessica Harris, left, and Heather Neuwirth

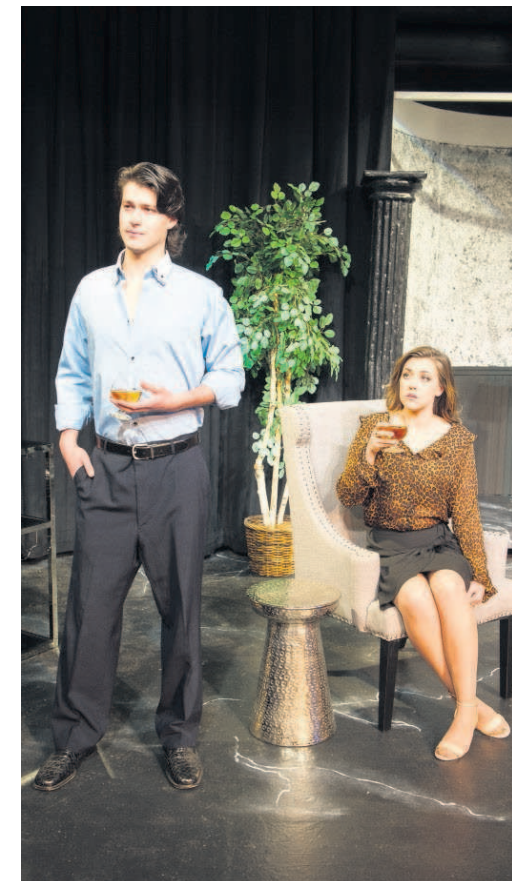
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Actors Aaron Harris and Heather Neuwirth



“Fit to Kill” stars Aaron Harris and Heather Neuwirth



Coaster Theatre actors Aaron Harris and Jessica Harris