

Commitment, involvement characterize drama class

Every Tuesday and Thursday night, at a time when most Heppner High School students are studying or pursuing interest far removed from schoolwork, nine students enrolled in Jane Rawlins' drama workshop class are making things happen in the school cafeteria.

Mrs. Rawlins said the twice a week, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., time slot is being tested for the first time by the administration to avoid scheduling conflicts. Many students interested in drama are also taking a full load of college-oriented academic courses plus being involved in sports and other activities.

Enthusiastic about the quality of student the class has attracted this semester, Mrs. Rawlins commented, "The kids who would take a night class are very committed and involved." She added that for many, drama is the eighth credit course on a full schedule.

The entire class—plus four persons not enrolled—are presently hard at work polishing performances for the fall production of "Arsenic and Old Lace", scheduled for Friday, Nov. 18 and Monday, Nov. 21.

The popular comedy was chosen after much discussion by the students because it is expected to be enjoyed by a wide audience.

"It's a challenge, too," Mrs. Rawlins said. "It's not easy for a high school girl to portray an old lady or a mild-mannered boy to play a slick criminal. The kids are having a lot of fun with it."

As an introduction to drama this semester, the students played games designed to develop team work and confidence in each other. A favorite was the making of a human



"machine" out of bodies, each student "cog" using their own sounds and motions to contribute to a total machine affect.

The class also prepped for public performance by developing imaginative skills, portraying different emotions and situations in pantomime skits. After their two performances of "Arsenic and Old Lace," the drama students have several ambitious projects in mind before the semester ends in mid-January.

The class is planning to make audio-visual tapes hoping to actually broadcast programs over cable television channel 13—Heppner's open channel. The students aren't quite sure what format or kind of television programs they will put on, but watch for announcements of their efforts in the future.

Mrs. Rawlins said her students also want to put on some kind of children-oriented presentation for the elementary school, possibly a puppet show. The class is also

Jane Rawlins, drama instructor, directs the action during a recent rehearsal of the upcoming HHS production of "Arsenic and Old Lace".



From the top

Cathy Wolff (l), stage manager, fills in at rehearsal for Linda Bier, playing "Martha" opposite "Abbie" portrayed by Alice Abrams.

planning to work on some one-act plays before the end of the semester.

Although Jane Rawlins has been an English teacher at Heppner High School for the past 20 years, and has long been a theater enthusiast, she only began her drama instruction last year.

Mrs. Rawlins is a 1938 graduate of Heppner High School and taught for three years in Roseburg and one after graduating for the University of Oregon. She interrupted her career to marry Bill Rawlins, a rancher on Eight Mile, and raise four children before becoming an English instructor in Heppner.

Experience in directing class plays as class advisor plus some acting background, aided Mrs. Rawlins when she stepped into her new role of drama instructor last year. She encourages everyone to come to "Arsenic and Old Lace" and promises that it will be well worth the time spent.

Arsenic and Old Lace

"Play it for laughs"

When you come to think about it, a story of two spinster sisters, living alone in New York City and murdering people with a dose of elderberry wine laced with arsenic, could be tragic. But play it for laughs and throw in one nephew in the classic villain tradition and another who thinks he's Teddy Roosevelt, and the sisters take on a different role.

"Arsenic and Old Lace" was originally written by Joseph Kesselring as a melodrama until the mood at rehearsals for the show's 1941 New York opening shifted to farce. It has kept audiences in stitches ever since and is one of the funniest plays written about murder.

The drama class at Heppner High School has chosen "Arsenic" for its fall production with two performances scheduled for Friday, Nov. 18, and Monday, Nov. 21. Both performances will begin at 8 p.m.

The story revolves around the sweetly homicidal mania of Martha and Abbie, the mild old-maid Brewster sisters of Brooklyn. They comfort the local police on cold nights, they're charitable, they're lovable and they're amusingly deadly.

Acting with the best humanitarian motives, the lethal spinsters welcome lonely, friendless old gentlemen into their home, ply them with elderberry wine spiked with arsenic, and cart the bodies off to the cellar.

But the insanity in the Brewster house is by no means limited to the parlor

activities of Martha and Abbie. Nephew Teddy Roosevelt Brewster, who lives with his aunts, is pleasantly cracked. He digs the Panama Canal in the basement and constantly charges up the stairs blowing a bugle for the taking of San Juan Hill. Teddy's canal serves as the perfect resting place for Martha and Abbie's "victim".

Nephew Mortimer, a drama critic who loves the minister's daughter next door, is the only one around with enough sense to realize what's going on. About the time he discovers what his aunts are up to, nephew Jonathan arrives.

Jonathan is a sinister character who travels with his personal facelifter and plastic surgeon to avoid detection by the police. Not to be outdone, Jonathan is also in the business of accumulating corpses.

The police finally account for Jonathan but Mortimer arranges to have his aunts secured in a private "home". When the attendant arrives to take them away, Martha and Abbie suggest he have a drink before they leave. They break out the elderberry potion as the curtain falls.

The 13-member cast of "Arsenic" has been rehearsing for the past five weeks under the direction of Jane Rawlins. Mrs. Rawlins, who is starting her second year of drama direction at the high school, says "Arsenic" is

basically a comedy, "with a little something extra added".

"I think the Heppner audiences enjoy comedies and this is something they can just sit back and enjoy," Mrs. Rawlins said.

Leading the cast will be Alice Abrams, in the role of Abbie and Linda Bier as Martha. Mark Piper is cast as Teddy, Bob Miller plays Mortimer and Debby Klaus takes the role of Elaine, Mortimer's fiancée.

Glenn Diehl will perform as Jonathan—the role played by Boris Karloff in the original 1941 production. Jeff Fortenberry will be Jonathan's sidekick surgeon and Ron Ward plays a double role as Dr. Harper and Mr. Witherpoon. Scott Groshens appears as Sgt. O'Hara and Scott McEwen plays Officer Klein.

Three teachers will also perform in the play with Gordon Munck as Lt. Rooney, Tom Day as Gibbs and Jim Ackley taking the role of Officer Brophy.

Behind the scenes, Mrs. Rawlins is assisted by Bob Miller, in charge of lighting; Joan Warren, costumes; Kathy Wolff, stage manager and Claudia Huston, in charge of props.

Tickets, priced at \$2 for adults, \$1 for students and \$5 for families can be purchased in advance at the high school main office or at the door on the nights of the performances.

Christmas toys needed

It's time to start looking through your children's overloaded toy boxes for dolls, trucks, games, stuffed animals, or just about any toy which can be contributed to add to this year's annual Christmas baskets.

Work on toy repair has already started by the Juvenile Advisory Council under the direction of Carolyn Holt. Maxine Gray is dressing the dolls as she has in past years.

Toy donations can be dropped off at the Heppner Neighborhood Center on West Willow Street.

Belton
WHEN A HEARING
AID WILL HELP

JOE SINGLETON

414 S.E. Dorian St.
Pendleton, OR 97801
Phone (503) 276-3266

A WHOLE NEW WAY TO BUY A TRUCK



FULL SELECTION OF PICK-UPS and TRUCKS

1977 GMC 1/2 TON \$4549.

\$87.98 48 Months

Less TRADE IN \$1250.
Balance to Finance \$3299.
Finance Charge, Deferred Payment \$924.04
APR 12.68% \$5,473.04

Stock No. P-236

FINANCE MANAGER
ON DUTY AT ALL TIMES TO HELP
WITH PARTIAL OR COMPLETE
FINANCING

1973 CORVETTE 4 speed, mags, 454 V-8, T-top, silver AMERICA'S TRUE SPORTS CAR \$5990	1976 DATSUN 280 Z 4 speed, air conditioning, mags, fuel injection Z is for ZOOM! \$5990	1971 INTERNATIONAL PICK-UP V-8, auto, power steering, canopy, mags SUPER CLEAN! \$1890	1968 PONTIAC STATION WAGON V-8, auto, power steering GOOD TRANSPORTATION! \$290
--	--	--	---

sundown

PONTIAC

BUICK·GMC

**OPEN
7 DAYS**

255 S. Hwy. 395
Hermiston
(Formerly Columbia Motors)

Mon. - Fri.
8:30-8:00

SATURDAY-SUNDAY
OPEN TIL 8:00

567-6115

ATTENTION MASONS

Annual Past Masters & Old Timers Nite
Heppner Lodge No. 69 AF & AM
Tuesday, November 15th.
Oyster Feed starting at 6:30 P.M.
Stated Communication at 8:00 P.M.

Don Gilliam, Secretary

For Class help
call 676-9228