

Across
CampusFaculty
Forum

Faculty Forum presents Dr. Lynn Hoggard, Coordinator of Humanities and Professor of English and Foreign Languages, at 7 p.m. in Clark Student Center Shawnee Theater. She will present "The Abbey Program: Study Abroad as a Vision Quest."

Having spent the spring semester of 2006 teaching in France, Hoggard will explore the issues and questions with the university and community audience in the hope of answering the underlying question: "Why should our students study abroad?"

For more information, call 397-4155 or 397-4145.

Foreign Film

Continuing Education and Ruth Morrow present "A Brief Vacation" for the Foreign Film Series at 7 p.m. at the Kemp Center for the Arts. Italian director Vittorio De Sica offers this uplifting tale of a woman who travels on a long journey to find peace and romance.

Clara is an exhausted woman who works long hours in a local factory. One day she collapses at work, only to discover she has severe lung problems. Sent to a sanitarium in the mountains, Clara discovers what it means to find true companionship and love.

Admission is free; donations are welcome. For more information, call 397-4756.

Speak Up—
Speak Out!

Disability Support Services and First Step, Inc., of Wichita Falls present the Sixth Annual Speak Up—Speak Out! conference. Community experts, faculty members and area professionals will present sessions ranging from cybersex addiction, violence among athletes, substance abuse and assault to human trafficking and many more topics.

For more information, call 397-4120 or 397-4140.

Artist-Lecture
Series

Artist-Lecture series presents award-winning director Wes Craven on April 13 at 7 p.m. in Akin Auditorium. After employment as a college humanities teacher and a taxi driver, Craven became a sound editor for a post-production company in New York.

He went on to direct such movies as "The Hills Have Eyes" and "A Nightmare on Elm Street."

Craven holds a master's degree in writing and philosophy from John Hopkins University.

A ticket purchased for the postponed Oct. 23 appearance will be honored. A limited number of standing room only tickets will be available two weeks prior to the event.

For ticket information, call 397-4223 or 397-4291.

Evil dolls fail to terrorize in 'Dead Silence'



Mary Shaw shows viewers what can happen if they forget to use a daily moisturizer.

JASON KIMBRO
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

DIRECTOR JAMES WAN HAS RECENTLY FOUND SOME FAME BY DIRECTING THE FIRST AND PRODUCING THE SEQUELS TO THE RECENT SPLASH OF GORE KNOWN AS "SAW." KNOWING THIS, ONE WOULD EXPECT TO COME INTO HIS NEWEST FILM, "DEAD SILENCE," EXPECTING ALL SORTS OF BLOOD AND GUTS.

WAN DECIDED TO SET THE BUCKETS OF BLOOD ASIDE THIS TIME AROUND AND GO FOR CLASSIC ATTEMPTS AT CHILLS AND SCREAM-INDUCING THRILLS. UNFORTUNATELY THIS FAILS MISERABLY, BUT THE FILM ISN'T A COMPLETE LOSS.

"DEAD SILENCE" TAKES US INTO THE WORD OF VENTRILOQUISM AND EARNESTLY TRIES TO EXPLOIT THE CREEPINESS THAT SEEMS TO BEFALL THE WORD OF THE WOODEN DUMMY.

WAN APPARENTLY HAS A THING FOR DOLLS SINCE ONE IS FAIRLY PREVALENT IN HIS "SAW" FLICKS, BUT THIS ATTEMPT GOES FOR A SORT OF BE-ALL-END-ALL OF KILLER DOLL MOVIES. THIS FILM DEFINITELY LACKS ANY TRUE MOMENTS OF

remembrance and will soon be forgotten.

Jamie Ashen (continuing up-and-comer Ryan Kwanten) is enjoying a nice city life with his wife Lisa (Laura Regan of "They"). On one romantic evening they get a ring at the door but when they answer all they find is a package at their feet wrapped in a plain brown wrapper.

Inside is a ventriloquist dummy. They crack a joke or two and bring up a scary poem about a woman named Mary Shaw from their hometown and toss the doll aside. Jamie decides to go pick up some Chinese takeout. While gone, Lisa is mysteriously attacked.

Jamie returns home to find blood all over the hallway floor. He then hears his wife call him into the room just to find her with her lower jaw yanked down to her tatas and her tongue missing.

The police are called and Jamie is automatically their number one suspect. Detective Jim Lipton (Donnie Wahlberg) is put on the

case and automatically begins to question Jamie's innocence. Jamie tries to explain that it had to have something to do with the strange creepy doll they received just moments before her brutal death.

Upon the doll, Jamie finds evidence of it once belonging to the infamous Mary Shaw from their hometown of Raven's Fair. Thus he returns home to find out what exactly is going on before the cops decide to arrest him for a murder he didn't commit.

The town keeps to themselves when it comes to the story of Mary Shaw. Most won't even mention her name in fear of the deadly curse that has ravaged their town since her death many years ago.

Jamie meets up with his estranged father (Bob Gunton) who has little to offer in the way of help, at first.

His father is now wheelchair bound since having a stroke and claims to be changed man, far from the ogre of a parent he was before.

He is married to a young, beautiful blonde named Ella (Amber Valletta) who now takes very good care of the wealthy old man.

As Jamie continues to investigate, gaining a little insight from the old funeral director and his dementia-ridden wife, he discovers that he is being followed by detective Lipton.

All the while he gets visions of the wicked doll that marked his world with death. Lies are told, secrets are kept, and many things just aren't what they seem in the once quaint little town of Raven's Fair. Soon Jamie stumbles upon a deadly secret that has been killing entire families within and around the community for generations.

For an R-rated modern horror flick, this film was surprisingly dull. There were a complete lack of actual deaths within the film and the bits of gore that were presented were upon the screen far too quickly, going for a more subtle style of horrific filmmaking.

I kept waiting for something to happen but the film basically relied on the idea that something definitely could happen at any time with silly little plays on the mind, such as scary music to complete silence to the inevitable jumpy occurrence, a basic formula for horror films since the days of Vincent Price.

The atmosphere of this film was a bit on the gothic side with small-town flavor, yet was completely ruined by the use of sepia tones with an emphasis on the color red. Whenever something red was on the screen, such as Jamie's typical muscle car, the rest of the screen seemed black and white. Supposedly attempting to add to the "American Gothic"-sense of small-town horror stories it basically causes annoyance and optical irritation.

Performances were a bit stiff. Wahlberg will never achieve what his brother Mark has been able to grasp in the realms of fame due to the fact that he always seems to pick the most annoying characters around. If the character isn't annoying, then the portrayal of them by Wahlberg is (i.e., Duddits from "Dreamcatcher").

The only one who seems to be on top of his game as he always is and unfortunately always overlooked is Bob Gunton, most famously known as the prison warden in "Shawshank Redemption."

The story is a simple one, thus we are given a simple plot. One of the film's redeeming qualities is the completely unexpected, albeit silly, twist at the very end of the film.

The creators of this flick were apparently hoping for a franchise from this, but with such low box office revenue, if any sequel is made expect it to be straight-to-video. Horror films these days have either been nothing but attempts at shocking audiences or PG-13 plops and flops that wanted to make a buck or two.

Either way you look at it, this is a business and all we can do is hope that they someday find a decent in-between like good horror flicks of the past 30 years have been able to achieve.

By the way, if you're in the mood for a purely enjoyable, funny, gory and intensely amusing horror film, then check out "Feast." Otherwise it would probably be best not to waste your time or money on "Dead Silence."

GEICO caveman signed for new TV sitcom

McCLATCHY TRIBUNE

The GEICO caveman is one of the first memorable TV ad characters of the 21st century.

That's why someone should pick up a crude wooden club and pound some sense into whoever at ABC greenlighted a pilot for a deriva-

tive sitcom about three cavemen in modern-day Atlanta.

On the scale of great ideas, this one isn't quite as promising as, say, fire.

Now just to be clear, I'm not suggesting someone should literally clobber an ABC executive. That's a cartoon image, exaggerated to get your attention. And so is the GEICO caveman. He's not Fred Flintstone, a regular guy who happens to live in the Stone Age. He's a cartoon, someone we meet for 30 or 60 seconds,

exactly enough time for us to savor the hilarious contrast between our stereotype of grunting, "Alley Oop"-type cavemen and this guy in a stylish, modern outfit speaking well-reasoned English.

Spending more time with an ad character is like deciding that since the Exxon attendant is good at filling 'er up, we should stay at the gas station for dinner.

Good ads are tightly focused. They tell one joke well, and part of their appeal is what they don't spell

out. The caveman ads throw insurance agents, PR people, shrinks, billboards and high-end restaurant menus in front of us, and let us overlay what we already know about them.

A sitcom, in contrast, spells out many of those details because it must fill 30 minutes.

To be blunt, more is less.

Another specific problem lies in this caveman's attitude, which falls somewhere between sullen and angry.

Fine for 60 seconds. For 30 minutes, not so good. Will he turn accusatory in a singles bar? Will he explain the sophistication of cave wall paintings to a co-worker in the financial services game?

We don't know. All we know is that since GEICO has leased the character, ABC can do what it wants with him and his friends.

And maybe ABC's writers will deliver something brilliant. Maybe they'll find a way to turn "Jurassic Park" upside down - characters from an ancient world navigating the modern world - and have a sitcom tumble out.

Frankly, I think our better hope lies in the fact that only a tiny percentage of commissioned pilots ever become TV shows.

If this one quietly expires, maybe both the GEICO caveman and Fred Flintstone can leave with their dignity intact.

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