

[stageleft]

BY: SUSAN ZEDELLA

Every year about this time, the mid-January blues start to set in. Caused by post-holiday feelings of guilt and overindulgence, it's a time often exacerbated by gloomy gray days and sky-high heating bills. Symptoms may include the overwhelming desire to hibernate and not leave the house for reasons other than necessity. The sure-fire cure? Take one Guerilla Theatre production, and call me in the morning.

Wilmington's Guerilla Theatre Company is opening its 2008 season with a show that will surely make anyone chuckle away those yucky winter woes. "Not Another Murder Mystery" will be a hilarious night of laughs, especially for those who enjoy parodies such as *Epic Movie*, and the *Scary Movie* series. Written and directed by Wilmington resident Steve Caverno, the show presents a mockery of the traditional dinner theater performance.

"It's a zany murder mystery farce," Caverno explained. "It all began with the character of Curtis Foot, who is kind of a cartoon character."

Foot is a wealthy millionaire who owns a shoe company and whose home provides the setting for the wacky mystery. While Foot is too vain to reveal the date of his real birthday, he lures people to his million-dollar mansion one night with the guise of a birthday celebration. To heighten the allure, he promises the introduction of a new product, the Squeakless Sneaker, and the door prize of a free car to all of the attendees. When a raging thunderstorm begins, thus trapping all of the guests and fulfilling the stereotypical murder

# Not Another Murder Mystery:

## Guerilla finds scandal in a new home



COURTESY RICHARD DAVIS

**MYSTERY UNVEILED:** Guerilla Theatre finds a new home on Grace Street and introduces a not-so-typical Murder Mystery event on January 24th-27th, 31st and February 1st-2nd.

mystery setting, bodies start dropping like flies.

The cast consists of stock characters: a butler, a maid and ... a witch doctor? "It's like a Scooby Doo episode," Guerilla founder and actor Richard Davis said. "The only thing we're missing is a dog." Davis and Caverno have collaborated to create the complete set themselves. Caverno—who discovered the Guerillas about two years ago, after moving to Wilmington from Clearwater, Florida—has performed in past productions of "Henry V" and "Hamlet." However, this will mark Caverno's directorial debut with the local theater company.

"It's been a dream come true to see the words on the page and the characters come to life," he said. "Every rehearsal [I am surprised by] how zany it is."

The premiere of "Not Another Murder Mys-

tery" will also mark the opening of the Guerilla's new performance space, the Brown Coat Pub and Theatre, located at 111 Grace Street. While half of the building will remain sealed off until the theatre's official grand opening in February, it will be functioning as a "skeleton facility." Featuring cushy, comfortable seating and a 23-foot ceiling in the traditional proscenium space, it's an area that welcomes various forms of artistic expres-

sion, such as stand-up comedy and independent movie showings. With so many events planned for the space, the Brown Coat will be buzzing with activity at all times.

"It will be a constant living organism," Davis stated. "There are so many artists out there that want to produce their art but can't because it is cost prohibitive. Maybe we can encourage more artists to come to us. Hopefully we can provide an option."

Although Davis is psyched to have a new space to showcase the scale of local performance art, he emphasizes that the purpose of Guerilla remains the same: "We firmly believe that if you have the right actors, you can do theatre anywhere. The reliance is not on set or costumes; it is on the performers."

Caverno gives "Not Another Murder Mystery" a PG-13 rating for mild sex and murder jokes. Although Davis stated, "This is probably the most family-oriented show we have ever done." The new theatre space also provides a family-friendly venue, as the pub will remain separate from the performance space. In addition, non-alcoholic drinks and refreshments, such as candy and popcorn, will be available.

"Not Another Murder Mystery" will take place on January 24th-27th, 31st, and February 1st-2nd at the Brown Coat Pub and Theatre. Tickets are \$12 and may be purchased through the new company Web site, guerillatheatre.com.

### LOCAL THESPIAN BENEFIT

In addition to marking the opening of the new space, the performance on the 24th will also be a special charity opening night to benefit local actor and comedian Anita Trivette. The 24-year-old Wilmington resident recently suffered a heart attack, wherein doctors diagnosed her with cardiomyopathy (enlargement of the heart muscle), congestive heart failure (the heart can't pump enough blood to meet the body's needs) and arterial fibrillation (a fast irregular heart beat). Thus, Trivette will need a heart transplant and \$20,000 to go toward the \$360,000 operation before she can even proceed. On Thursday, January 24th, Guerilla Theatre will donate 50 percent of its box office tax to The Anita Trivette Heart Transplant Fund. A representative of that fund will also be in attendance and will be accepting donations that night. For folks who can't attend, please send donations to:

The Anita Trivette Heart Transplant Fund  
P.O. Box 16688, Wilmington N.C., 28408 or  
use PayPal at [www.myspace.com/comicallyimpairedbenefit](http://www.myspace.com/comicallyimpairedbenefit).