

Grand weekend accents mystery

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ish in Graden City, and Wegzyn, a dentist practicing in Graden City, will be married this summer.

"THIS IS THE ideal getaway weekend," she said. "You're transformed to the different time period. You don't have time to recall things back home. You're finding bodies, and trying to figure out the clues. It's a real neat experience."

"You have to think on your feet," she said, of playing a character in the script. "I had to study quite a bit. You go to the library about a month ahead and read ads, from 1936-39, and look at covers from different magazines."

They're planning to return to "Murder at the Grand" in May and the one coming up in October, again set in the 1920s.

She's starting to look for costumes, usually rented from Cinderella's Attic in Dearborn, which has period clothing, or the Hollywood Costume Shop, also in Dearborn. She gets ideas from fashion books in the library.

USUALLY, ATS Travel buys out the entire Grand Hotel for the mystery weekend, filling 240 rooms each time. But this year, because it's the

hotel's 100th anniversary, only 160 rooms will be available for the May weekend.

Eddie Jaye said the October weekend will take place during a Roaring '20s party at Pickfair Mansion.

"I write them. They're formalized. I know how much information I have to feed them," he said. He produces and directs the mystery weekend, using professional actors from the Detroit area.

Each team must make a three-minute presentation, in song, poetry or verse, explaining how they determined the murdered. Winning team members each get a framed certificate that reads, "I solved the 'Murder at the Grand.'" Another award is given for the cleverest clue.

Wayne (Ed Bilzick) has a master's degree in mass communication from Wayne State University in Detroit. He also performs as a standup comic and ventriloquist, with Carlin Crow, specializing in corporate shows.

One of the most amusing episodes of "Murder at the Grand" occurred when one team of players admitted they were stumped, then identified themselves. In real life, they were a 20-year homicide detective from the Warren Police department and his group, all police officers.



Barbara Michals

St. Dunstan's show is really outstanding

Performances of the St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook production of "Talley's Folly" continue Friday-Saturday at the playhouse in Bloomfield Hills. For ticket information, call the box office at 644-5527 anytime.

Dazzling performances by the two-member cast, top-notch direction and a wonderful set mark the current production of "Talley's Folly" by St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook.

This is a polished, very professional rendering of Lanford Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama. Introduced as "a waltz . . . a no-holds-barred romantic story," the play is a funny, warm and tender tale of two seemingly mismatched people struggling toward love.

Wilson asserts that people are like eggs, afraid that if they hang up against one another too hard they will crack their shells and never be any good again.

Matt Friedman (Keith Lepard) is a big-city accountant, a bearded intel-

lectual of 42 with a German-Jewish accent and Socialist leanings. He seeks to woo a very reluctant Sally Talley (Nancy Brassett), at 31 considered an eccentric spinster in her very conservative small town. As Matt strives to break through Sally's protective shell, pieces of his own painful past are glimpsed as well.

LEPARD IS ONSTAGE the entire 97 minutes of the play, which is performed without intermission, and Brassett is on nearly as long. Both handle their demanding roles with great aplomb.

Skilfully, Lepard alternates between charming, coaxing and outright bullying the enigmatic Sally. He uses his lively eyes and expressive hands to good effect. His accent is natural, never overpowering, and he switches with ease to other imitative voices.

Brassett can be convincingly shy, demure and wistful one moment, kicking in rage or exploding with hurt the next. Her soft Missouri drawl sounds as if she were born



Nancy Brassett is Sally Talley and Keith Lepard is Matt Friedman in St. Dunstan's production of the Broadway hit "Talley's Folly."

with it. Perplexed at Matt's dodging of direct questions, Brassett makes Sally's fearful retreat seem very understandable.

Director Edgar A. Guest III has achieved a flawless production. The performances are moving, the timing and staging perfect. The lighting is excellent, as is Alister Mackintosh's set. The decaying Victorian bathhouse known to the town as "Talley's Folly" is a wonderful mixture of broken lovers and lattice-

work and years of assorted clutter. Barbara Michals teaches high school English and journalism in Southfield. A theater critic for the last 13 years, she is an inveterate playgoer who regularly catches up on all the New York productions.

Co-stars are delightfully paired in Neil Simon comedy

Performances of "The Prisoner of Second Avenue" continue at 8:30 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays through May 2 at Will-O-Way Repertory and Apprentice Theatre in Birmingham. For ticket information, call the box office at 644-4418.

Dale Bishop as Mel and Eileen Weiss as his wife, Edna, make fine sparring partners in the Will-O-Way production of the comedy "The Prisoner of Second Avenue."

With high-energy intelligence, they're well-suited to Neil Simon's distinctive brand of comic repartee. Mel comes unhinged when the frustrations of modern urban living gang up on him. For starters, he comes home to confront an air conditioner gone berserk, noisy neighbors, barking dogs and a garbage strike — everyday nuisances of life in the big city.

Two weeks later, he gets fired and burglars march into his apartment and steal the TV set, the hi-fi and all



Cathie Breidenbach

his clothes. They even make off with the only bottle of Scotch. It's the last straw for poor Mel. He goes over the edge.

WEISS PLAYS EDNA with a hilarious range of facial expressions as she tries to cope with her deranged husband. Mel's brother (Ron Hutchings) and three sisters (Sally Dubats, Francine Hachem and Nicki Hamel) meet at the Edison apartment for a conference on what to do about Mel. The eccentric, outspoken sisters show fine comic timing.

Brother Harry and the apartment don't fare as well. Harry fudges lines and his timing lags. The slapped-together set fails to match the acting which, for the most part, is excellent.

The Edisons' apartment, furnished in mediocre eclectic, seems more like a temporary room for graduate students rather than the longtime home of a Manhattan advertising executive who supposedly makes good money, or did until he got canned.

Weiss plays Edna with a hilarious range of facial expressions as she tries to cope with her deranged husband.

needs paint, and two frumpy green throw pillows make war with everything else in the room.

Despite the uninspired set, director Celia Merrill Turner brings out the volatile comic humanity in the popular Neil Simon characters.

Cathie Breidenbach of West Bloomfield has always loved theater. A former high-school English teacher, she works in public

relations, advertising and as a freelance writer.

work and years of assorted clutter.



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