



**SHELBY** (Sally Schutte), a diabetic, rejects an offer of juice after a fainting spell in the beauty shop. Coming to her aid are (from left) are Truvy (Gwyn Chappell), M'Lynn (Sara Butterfield) and Clairee (Katie Harris).

**SHOW OPENS FRIDAY AT WEST HIGH**

**'Steel Magnolias' Lovingly Portrays Life Within A Small, Southern Town**

BY SUSAN USHER

Sherrill Jolly laughs as she teases and picks a blonde wig into a bouffant hairdo that should suit its wearer to a T.

At one side of the stage Sally Schutte, ringlets falling in a froth around her shoulders, holds court in a platform rocker that will eventually be replaced with a beauty shop chair.

On a droopy sofa just sitting in for the dryers, Sara Butterfield worries that her face doesn't look old enough and casts dubious eyes on a shawl intended to round out her costume.

"Remember, we're going to age you," Jolly reassures her.

When Danette Hillard lets her long blonde tresses fall across her shoulders, the others rush to tell her to pull back her hair so the tacky T-shirt under her dress shows up better.

It's Monday evening and in, count them, four days, Jolly and a cast of six West Brunswick High School drama students will be warming hearts with the school drama department's spring show, "Steel Magnolias."

They'll be ready, but in the meantime there's lots to be done: lines to be polished, sets to be painted, props to be rounded up and serious decisions to be made, such as whether popcorn will be available during intermission.

But back to the show. First presented in 1987, "Steel Magnolias" was written by Robert Harling. It

**Want To Go?**

"Steel Magnolias" will be presented Saturday and Sunday, March 26 and 27, at 8 p.m. in the multipurpose room at West Brunswick High School on N.C. 130 West of Shallotte.

Refreshments will be offered for sale during a 10-minute intermission in the two-hour, two-act play.

Admission is \$2 for students and \$3 for all others. Seating is limited.

was later made into a movie for which Julie Roberts won an Academy Award.

Set entirely in a beauty shop (unlike the movie), the play lovingly introduces the audience to life in Chinquapin, La., a small, Southern town where everybody knows everyone else's business, through good times and bad.

The tone is set when Clairee explains to Annelle, a newcomer to town, "We like being nice to each other. There's not much else to do in this town."

"Steel Magnolias" focuses on the interaction of six women all forced by circumstances to re-examine and redefine their roles. Almost every scene revolves in some way around Shelby, a debutante and diabetic played by Sally Schutte.

As the play opens, Shelby (and

everyone else in town) is preparing for her marriage to a young lawyer. As the action of the play spans the next two years, the women in the beauty shop follow the progress of her pregnancy and then her illness. Shelby is still the center of attention in the final scene, which follows her death.

Ms. Jolly thinks "Steel Magnolias" was a good choice for the drama department's spring show. After previous productions involving anywhere from eight (The Odd Couple) to 30-plus (Bye, Bye Birdie) cast members, she was looking forward to doing a small, intimate play.

"It makes it easier to learn acting techniques and its easier to cast and produce," she said.

In addition to Sally Schutte, the all-girl cast includes Gwyn Chappell as Truvy, a hair salon owner who's never lost a customer to a competing shop, and Danette Hillard as her new assistant, Annelle, who has troubles of her own. Sara Butterfield plays M'Lynn, who must balance her urge to protect her daughter with Shelby's need for independence.

Katie Harris is Clairee, former cheerleader and former "first lady" of Chinquapin who suddenly finds herself a widow and "third wheel." Minde Vince plays Ouiser, slightly eccentric neighbor of Shelby and her mother.

"I think most people can find someone in the show to relate to," said Jolly. "I think it's something the community could enjoy."



**MOTHER OF THE BRIDE M'LYNN** (Sara Butterfield) comes to the family's defense as her eccentric neighbor Ouiser (Minde Vince) complains about missing magnolia blossoms, gunfire and other goings-on next door. Taking it all in (center) is Annelle (Danette Hillard), a newcomer with troubles of her own.

**BCC Reports 15 Percent Increase In Spring Term Student Enrollment**

Spring quarter registration at Brunswick Community College is up 15 percent from a year ago.

BCC Dean of Student Services Beth McLean said that at the close of registration 820 students were enrolled for classes, compared to 713 during spring term 1992.

Lynn Morgan, registrar, indicated the increase is due in part to the success of a variety of classes offered at the BCC's Industrial Education Center in Leland and at worksites such as Carolina Power & Light Co. in Southport and DuPont in Leland.

Technical programs with notable increases include business computer programming and business administration. Allied health program courses in phlebotomy

and medical record technology, funded through a Kate B. Reynolds Trust grant, are continuing with full classes.

While waiting for several other new allied health programs to begin, a number of students are enrolled in the general education program, taking some of the related courses they will need. If funding sources become available, said Public Information Officer Anne Marie Bellamy, those programs will start in fall 1994.

Overall BCC has 417 students enrolled in technical courses, 239 students in general education courses, and 164 in vocational. These statistics include 12 high school students who are dually enrolled, taking college courses while completing their high school education.

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