

# Beating Black Friday Chaos

Crystal Pickard, Contributing Writer

The holiday season seems to be creeping up earlier and earlier with each passing year. Retailers are no longer waiting until November but are now getting consumers in the holiday spirit as early as October with "winter wonderland" displays featuring the colors red and green color. Raleigh's own Crabtree Mall had garlands and ornaments cascading from the ceilings in October. But we all know that the holiday shopping kickoff begins on that infamous day after Thanksgiving: Black Friday.

If you are a savvy shopper, you may already have a Black Friday system, but if you need a little help getting ready to face the exciting extravaganza of special sales and door busters, here are a few tips to get you in the gift giving mood.

1. Map out your day: Plan ahead by making a list of stores where you can find the latest coveted items for your loved ones. Organize the list chronologically, noting times of specials such as early bird or door buster promotions, as well as by location. Making fewer trips not only saves you time, it also decreases the amount of fuel and other resources used, making your shopping a bit more eco-friendly.

2. Wear comfy shoes: You can still look fashionable while wearing casual shoes. Try out your new riding boots or favorite flats. When you are rushing around on your feet all day, you'll be glad you left the heels at home.

3. Give yourself a reward: With all

your sale savings you can afford to buy a little treat for yourself, not to mention that lower prices means you can snag designer looks for less. If you plan on using fitting rooms, wear clothing that is easy to slip on and off, like a sweater dress, to limit changing time. Always look presentable when you shop for yourself, though, because you will feel better while deciding on what looks best on you.

4. Stop for lunch: Do not get so caught up in the commotion that you forget to eat! Take a breather and refocus over a quick bite, and make sure to take along a water bottle for the day. You will have more energy and focus if you are hydrated.

5. Park further away: Malls and shopping centers have massive crowds on Black Friday. Avoid frustrating fights over front row parking. Instead, try looking a little further from the door than usual - sure, you'll be exhausted after you're done shopping, but it'll be worth it! And try to avoid the "valet parking" trap - is it really worth \$8?

After making your list and checking it twice, and buying presents for everyone, unwind with relaxing holiday music and a gift wrapping party. The smell of fresh baked warm cookies would also help set the holiday mood. Remember, organization and planning are half the battle of surviving Black Friday and the holiday shopping season. Following these few easy tips will make your holiday shopping a less stressful and more festive experience.

# Fences: A Year of Rebirth

Emily Gamiel, Staff Writer

Located on the inside of Chapel Hill's Playmakers Repertory Company lobby, August Wilson's name is printed alongside names of other notable and famous playwrights. However, Playmakers' has never produced one of August Wilson's plays; until now, that is.

Five years after his passing, August Wilson is yet again gaining fame and popularity with his writing. Wilson, a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, won two Pulitzer Prize awards; one in 1987 for *Fences*, and yet another in 1990 for *The Piano Lesson*, a play that was recently hosted locally by Raleigh Local Theatre from October 8, 2010 through October 24, 2010. *Fences*, a rebirth of the 1987 Pulitzer Prize winning play is currently touring the country. The masterpiece can be found on Broadway in New York City, as well as around the country at various venues, including Chapel Hill's own Playmakers. The play based on African American struggles during the 20th century began on Halloween night and will run through November 14, 2010. After receiving rave reviews from Roy C. Dicks from *The News and Observer* on November 2, only days after the opening night, local theatre goers have flocked to the production. The story, set in 1957, follows Troy Mazson, an African American garbage collector struggling to excel in a culture preferential to the Caucasian race. After struggles and attempts to "make it big" in America as a baseball

player, Mazson's hopes and dreams are crushed when he realizes that equality in this country is far from abundant and the only way his dream could be pursued was if his skin color was a few shades lighter. He forms prejudices based on preceding circumstances and is ultimately held back in the workforce. So, when his sons Lyons and Cory set high expectations for their futures, Troy forms a negative attitude towards these dreams considering his own hardships he experienced as a black man. In addition to the already dramatic plot of the production, a woman who is not Troy's wife is introduced, putting an interesting twist on things. The role of Troy Mazson, acted by TV and film actor Charlie Robinson, is intimidating but is well executed in this play. Dicks review in *The N&O* made it clear that he believed that Robinson captured what famous author, August Wilson, would have wanted.

This interpretation of *Fences* is directed by Seret Scott, a talented woman who is familiar with August Wilson's plays. Assisting her in truthfully depicting the entirety of the story is Jan Chambers' design of the scenery as well as the stage. The accuracy of Chambers' scenery accompanied by Scott's superb directing talents create a production that is a must see. The selection of *Fences* as August Wilson's introductory play at Playmakers proved via ticket sales to be a successful choice. The play is expected to make its debut in Raleigh during the month of February.

# Playing with Theater: *Playhouse Creatures*

Kristen Gallagher, Staff Writer



photo courtesy of Meredith Theatre Dept

performed in America will be written by women.

Director Cathy Rodgers noted that several years ago, Dr. Sarah English, a Meredith English professor, introduced her to Playhouse Creatures, and she loved it immediately. The play identifies and accentuates women's roles and the accurate portrayal of life in the "wicked stage in the theatre of Restoration England." Though the

play brings to life fictional characters, it also features non-fictional women as well. In the mid-seventeenth century, it appeared as though England was ready for a new kind of entertainment; thus, women were introduced to the stage. "Breeches roles" became popular with the men of the time, as it gave them an excuse to see the previously-covered legs of female characters. Eventually leading to a social norm of female objectification, the focus on female sexuality caused many actresses to be treated poorly and forced into tasks beyond their power to change. Rodgers noted that actresses were essentially "treated as no better than prostitutes."

Meredith's rendition features students Spencer Powell as Nell Gwynn, Natasha Bress as Doll Common, Lauren Moore as Mrs. Farley, Krian Subramaniam as Mrs. Betterton, and Marilyn Gormon as Mrs. Marshall. Lauren Moore, Julie-Kate Cooper, who is a part of the Ensemble and an understudy for Mrs. Betterton and Doll, and Cathy Rodgers all offered unique insights about their involvement in the play. Lauren commented, "It's really the story of how women first began to act on stage. They may not have been the most talented or revered, but the story focuses more on their roles in society, their personal roles, and their relationship to men. It tells of their trials and tribulations—and it can be funny and heart-breaking at the same time." Julie-Kate also noted that the play is especially relevant

to Meredith as it focuses on issues that actresses still deal with today: "It can be applied today—about how we're judged for our bodies and not our craft."

Playhouse Creatures will show November 10-13 at 8:00pm in the Studio Theater in Jones Hall along with a concluding performance on Sunday, November 14th at 3:00pm. The show is open to the public and tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 students/seniors, and free for Meredith students, faculty & staff.

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