

Movie challenges entertainment norm

By Lindsey Gulya
Reporter

Toast hurling through the air, showers of rice, flying rolls of toilet paper, clouds of confetti, and scantily-clad people. No, it's not some wild bachelor's party; it's the "Rocky Horror Picture Show."

For those of you unfamiliar with this movie, the "Rocky Horror Picture Show" is a classic movie made in the 70's that has developed a tremendous cult following over the years. Some find it shocking, risqué, and even a bit appalling, but to most it's just a lot of fun. The weirdness of this movie has been embraced by generations of people with a taste for the freaky. Just about everyone that truly loves the movie knows every song by heart and sings along with the vigor of a drunken sailor. It's a campy, kooky flick that most people either love or hate. I'm in love.

If you've never been to a theater to see the "Rocky Horror Picture Show," your "virgin" experience may be a bit shocking. Although I had seen the movie about a dozen times at home, I

had never undergone the theater experience, so I decided that this year I would give it a whirl. I stuck close to home and went to the early show at the Carolina

Theater, where they show "Rocky Horror" at least once on Halloween night. On arrival, I got a taste of the atmosphere after standing outside the theater for just a few minutes. People of all assorted ages were dressed as characters from the movie. There were a half-dozen people dressed as Dr. Frankenfurter, the campy transvestite character who spends half of the movie frolicking in fishnet stockings, garter belts, and a tiny bustier. Some people were a little modest and didn't look quite as flamboyant as the real Frankenfurter, but others went 'all out' to the point that more skin was showing than in a bucket of KFC. This is probably why some people shy away from the whole affair, but for me it made the whole night a lot more entertaining. The beauty of the

experience is seeing the die-hard fans who don't care how goofy they look, just as long as they have fun.

The best thing about seeing "Rocky Horror" in the theater is the fact that not only do you get to see the film on a huge screen, but you also get to see actors playing out the movie simultaneously on the stage below. This year the actors were a bit disappointing because they had to look up at the screen

every five seconds to see what they were supposed to be doing, but hey, it's not like they're professionals or anything. I have heard from friends that in other cities like Raleigh or Charlotte, where they do the show monthly or even every weekend, the actors are really experienced and do hilarious improv stuff, like using a tricycle on-stage for a motorcycle.

Another amusing part of the theater experience is the audience participation. In the theater, experienced spectators bring all the

necessary provisions: rice, newspapers, rolls of toilet paper, toast, confetti, and witty remarks. At various parts in the movie the audience members let loose the crazy props onto everyone else. (A warning to "Rocky Horror" virgins- the rice thrown during the wedding scene has an obnoxious habit of working its way into your clothes; I found myself dripping grains of rice hours after the movie had ended). Hard-core fans have read the script and periodically shout things in response to movie lines, so don't be surprised if you hear some really odd things screamed during the movie like "For those of you on acid, this is imaginary toast! For those of you on imaginary toast, this is acid!"

The "Rocky Horror Picture Show" is definitely not for everyone, but it's worth the \$5 or \$8 (depending on when the tickets are bought). Regardless of whether you end up loving it or hating it, going to see "Rocky Horror" is an experience you won't soon forget. So if you're tired of the same old boring Halloween, time-warp on down to the Carolina Theater next year. I know it's where I'll be.

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Vouchers disastrous to public schools

By Jenny Ballen
Reporter

You may have thought that North Carolina's politicians couldn't be any stupider... They can. Right now, the General Assembly faces an issue that threatens the welfare of the entire public school system.

School vouchers are federally funded grants given to individuals. Families would receive money from the government to send their children to private schools. Ideally, federally funded vouchers would enable four million families to send their children to a moderately priced private school. But in reality, the voucher program would disable the public school system and offer private educations only to a small percentage of students.

The plan would allow a minority of students to get a presumably better education while leaving the public schools in the dust with depleted funds and resources. The program wouldn't be effective for a few reasons: First, the public schools would not be able to compete with the private schools and would undoubtedly fall behind. Also, the private schools, which would pick and choose which students attend the school would select only the brightest and best students, leaving the other children in the public schools on long waiting lists. In addition, how can the

state guarantee that the new private schools that would spring up to take advantage of this new market would provide a good education for the students? Last of all, the test results in previous trial voucher programs have been ambiguous.

The money that the state would need to finance school vouchers won't come from thin air: billions of dollars would be pulled from the public school system. The students would attend new private schools at the cost of the public schools. Supporters believe that the voucher program would force the public schools to compete with the private ones and therefore improve. Where would public schools get the money to do that? The private schools would absorb all the excellent teachers who would get higher pay and the public school classrooms would get bigger as the number of teachers working for the public schools got smaller.

Under the program, the private and parochial schools could choose which students could attend the school. It does not take much to realize that the private schools would not accept students with below average skills. Do elite, world renowned colleges and universities become prestigious because they accept lower than average students? Of course not. Why would a private school enroll anyone who was not among the brightest and best? Only the smartest children would go to the private schools while everyone else floundered around in the failing public schools. This would create a two-tiered education system where the brightest and richest students receive the best education and the regular students don't get the opportunity to excel.

The sheer number of students on the waiting lists to get into private schools is going to attract a new market. New private schools would spring up to take advantage of the money pouring in through vouchers. We cannot guarantee that all of the new schools will be providing the best education possible. For all we know, the new schools could be corrupt institutions not really concerned in education, but in the money they are receiving from vouchers.

The trial voucher programs operating in Wisconsin and Washington, DC have had unimpressive results; students tested have neither improved nor regressed. If the State of North Carolina is going to spend so much money on this plan, the results should be stupendous and not ambiguous.

There is nothing we need less in North Carolina than an education plan that would spend billions of tax dollars on ambiguous test results and destitute public schools.

Richard Petty misses checkered flag in political race

By Ben Blackwood
Staff Writer

Election day has come and gone, with few surprises. Only one race left me truly bitter, and that was the failure of this state's citizens to band together and vote for the only candidate who truly represents the people: Richard Petty. As many of you may know, the King was defeated by Elaine Marshall in the race for Secretary of State in this great state of North Carolina.

"Who cares?" you might ask.
"You should," I would then reply. "Richard Petty is without a doubt the most qualified candidate for any office in history. First of all, he has graduated from a prestigious institution of higher education (Randleman Senior High School). Secondly, he has extensive training in business (a six-week training course). Finally, he is a master of skills which are integral to the position of Secretary of State (driving a stock car and doing TV spots for Food Lion)."


At this point you might remain unconvinced, and pester me further by asking "Didn't Richard Petty recently get a citation for bumping a slow driver on the highway?"

"Ha!" I would scoff. "That only supports my argument better! It's a metaphor, simpleton. The people of this state are that slow driver, and Richard Petty is just the bumper we need to accelerate us in the right direction. He did it to prove a point!" Then, I would laugh.

"Hmm" you might say. "Don't you think Elaine Marshall is more qualified?"

"You're not listening, are you?" I would moan. "This is a woman who has never had to pull on the steering wheel as she spins around the track at Rockingham or Talladega. This is a woman who probably doesn't even change the oil in her car, let alone rebuild a transmission. This is a woman who has spent her life in law school and in the courtroom as a practicing attorney. What does she know about holding a legislative position?"

"Everything," you might say.



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