

Workshop theatre

raises the curtain
for communityAnita Ashley, Clint Poston and Giulia Dalbec as Miss Hannigan, Rooster Hannigan and Lily St. Regis in a July performance of "Annie." Special to THE GAMECOCKColumbia acting troupe begins
new season of non-profit funSarah Moran
FOR THE GAMECOCK

Columbia's Workshop Theatre might appear to be a typical community theater, featuring local actors and touring companies performing a mix of classic and less-known selections. Appearances can be deceiving. Workshop Theatre is in fact one of a growing number of businesses to retain a community focus, concentrating not only on solid theatrical output but also on community betterment.

"It is one of the best-kept secrets in Columbia. We have one of the best theaters, and we wish more students would come take advantage of it," said Nancy Brooks, executive director.

Columbia is home to a number of theaters offering a wide range of performances. Many are for-profit ventures, where money from productions goes to investors, actors or the theater. Workshop Theatre operates much like one of these theaters, putting on shows such as July's "Annie" and the upcoming musical "Purlie!" However, it is a non-profit theater, meaning that no owner reaps the benefits of ticket sales. It is funded partly by the South Carolina Arts Commission, as well as the Cultural Council of Richland and Lexington Counties.

Non-profit status means that Workshop Theatre encourages and depends on community involvement. Most of the plays' cast and crew are community members who volunteer their time. The Theatre also holds events more commonly seen in other community venues than in a typical theater. For example, a church-style picnic is planned for the opening night of "Purlie!"

Further, the theater helps support organizations dedicated to helping the community. Brooks said theater members know the difficulty of getting donations and help other organizations when they can. Previously, the Theatre held a special

performance of "Annie" to benefit PETS, Inc. They raised more than \$5,000 for the organization, devoted to the rescue, rehabilitation, adoption and neutering of animals. Similarly, the Theatre and the Make-a-Wish foundation joined forces to grant 7-year-old cancer patient Katie Johnson's wish to appear on stage in a play. She was featured as an orphan in a performance of "Annie" shortly before her death.

"She was adorable, and everyone fell in love with her," Brooks said. "We weren't trying to distinguish ourselves from others, just to be a good community citizen."

Workshop Theatre is not alone in its community focus. Many theaters encourage community involvement and many organizations work to benefit the community, including the Trustus and Town theaters. Workshop Theatre is, however, somewhat unusual in that it has retained a community focus for the 30-plus years of its existence, whereas many community organizations are more recent. Ventures focused on community improvement are becoming increasingly common. For-profit businesses, motivated by things such as a religion, stockholders or the need to improve corporate image, increasingly contribute to community causes. In fact, this practice has become so commonplace that services to facilitate corporate philanthropy have sprung up.

However, some doubt whether for-profit companies have good motivations.

"I don't think these businesses care as much about the people as maintaining their own corporate image," said Michael Baumann, a first-year journalism student. For those concerned with purity of motives, non-profits like Workshop Theatre continue to offer a less-suspicious option for community improvement.

Workshop Theatre's next production is "Purlie!", to be held Sept. 16-Oct. 1. Other, upcoming

Tyrone McFarlan as Coalhouse Walker in September 2003's "Ragtime." Special to THE GAMECOCK

productions include "The Tale of the Allergist's Wife," "Sordid Lives" and "Amadeus."

Brooks encourages students to attend the shows. "We have some of the best quality entertainment around, comparable to movies."

She added that the Theatre's refreshments are less expensive than those of many movie theaters, and the Theatre, located at 1136 Bull St., is

within walking distance of campus. It also holds preview shows — dress rehearsals open to the public for which students pay a reduced price. Ticket information is available online at www.workshoptheatre.com or by calling 803-799-6551.

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Hello, my
name is:James Lech,
first-year
pharmacy
studentChelsey Moore
FOR THE GAMECOCK

WHAT IS YOUR FULL NAME?

"James Nicholas Lech."

WHAT IS YOUR MAJOR?

"Pharmacy."

WHAT YEAR ARE YOU?

"Freshman."

DO YOU BELIEVE IN LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT?

"I believe in attraction at first sight, not so much love."

WHAT DID YOU EAT FOR YOUR LUNCH YESTERDAY?

"Charlie T's buffalo wings."

IF YOU COULD GO BACK AND BE ANY AGE AGAIN, WHAT AGE WOULD YOU BE AND WHY?

"Freshman in high school when my mom died, to be with her and make things different."

IF YOU COULD CHANGE YOUR NAME, WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IT TO?

"Just Lech. One name."

IF YOU COULD HAVE AN ACCENT WHAT WOULD IT BE?

"French or really strong British."

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PLACE TO GO FOR A LATE-NIGHT/EARLY-MORNING SNACK?

"Waffle House."

WHICH CAME FIRST, THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG?

"The chicken."

Career center
offers resume,
job assistance
for studentsUSC's Career Center
can help you prepare
for post-college lifeNicole Burns
FOR THE GAMECOCK

USC's Career Center is sponsoring a series of events called September Success for Seniors, designed to help seniors prepare for graduate school and launch job efforts. The end of September is usually the start of graduate school preparation, as well as when many employers begin searching for full-time employees.

Students can visit the Career Center on the sixth floor of the Close/Hipp Building or find them online at www.sc.edu/career.

In addition to other events, this month the Career Center is holding a seminar titled "Key ways for enhancing your professional style" and an etiquette dinner. The seminar will be presented by Ann Marie Sabath, president of At Ease, Inc., and will take place at 4:30 p.m. Thursday in the Lumpkin Auditorium of the Close/Hipp Building. The etiquette dinner will be held Sept. 28 at 6 p.m. in the Capstone Campus Room in Capstone House. Karen Thompson, a nationally certified business etiquette consultant, will be