

STUDENT LIFE

Roadhouse Theatre delivers zany fun

By Lori DeFabio
student life editor

If you're interested in edgy and strange shows, there is an attraction in Erie that you would enjoy: the Roadhouse Theatre.

The Roadhouse Theatre opened in 1988 by Scott McClelland, an off-Broadway actor and a native of Erie, and his wife, Kim. The Roadhouse has been showing everything from edgy and strange productions to Shakespeare plays and is a host for concerts and benefits.

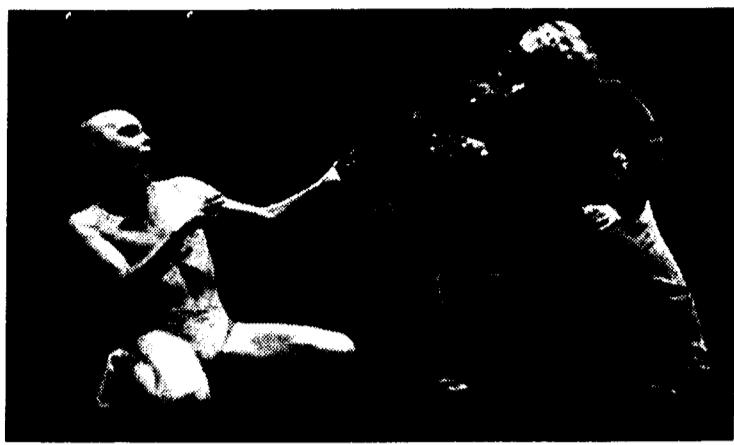
The Roadhouse was chosen in 2002 as "One of the Best" in the Erie Choice Awards for Comedy, according to the Erie Times-News.

The Roadhouse Theatre is a 200+ seat venue that is famous for its "very bizarre, off the wall shows that you rarely see performed," according to Dr. James Kurre, associate professor of Economics and the president of the Roadhouse's Board of Directors.

The Roadhouse Theatre produces off-Broadway comedies, including "Picasso at the Lapin Agile" by Steve Martin and many adaptations from films and books - some of the more famous include "Reservoir Dogs," a film by Quentin Tarantino and "Night of the Living Dead."

"Scott McClelland got the rights from Quentin Tarantino and did Reservoir Dogs live on stage. No one else had ever done that before," said Kurre.

Currently showing at the Roadhouse Theatre is "BatBoy: The Musical," a comedy/horror about a half-bat/half-boy who is found living in a cave and is taken



GOERIE.COM/ROADHOUSE

"BatBoy: The Musical" will be showing at the Roadhouse Theatre until Feb. 26.

to the town's veterinarian to be put to sleep. He is instead accepted as a member of the veterinarian's family. BatBoy and the veterinarian's teenage daughter fall in love and run away together and are happy until the two are found and secrets of BatBoy's origin are revealed.

Beginning Feb. 12, the Roadhouse is having an "Edible Film Festival," showing "three great food movies" with chefs preparing the actual meals. "Big Night" will be showing on Feb. 12 with an Italian feast prepared by Chef Matthew Sarbak of Matthew's Trattoria. "Babette's Feast" will be showing on March 19 with a French meal created by Chef Pierre Zsa Zsa and "Eat Drink Man Woman" will be showing on May 7 with a Mandarin meal prepared by Chef Tony Lee of the Golden Wok. Admission to these productions is \$30 at the door or \$20 in advance, \$50 for VIP seating or \$50 for all three films if purchased in advance.

The back of the theatre holds a

50+ seat coffee house in a "funky setting" that is open before and after the shows.

The atmosphere of the coffee house is very unusual. "There is art all over the walls," said Kurre. "One wall has a Jimmy Hendrix LP and the other wall has stuff from Star Trek. There is also a sculpture made from hands; it's hard to explain."

Tickets to shows at the Roadhouse are \$10 for general seating, \$12 for rised seating, \$15 for VIP tables and students can gain admission for \$5 when showing a student ID. The Roadhouse is always looking for volunteers to help usher, collect tickets and clean up after the show and volunteers are allowed to watch the shows for free.

The Roadhouse Theatre is located at 145 West 11th Street. Tickets can be purchased by calling the Roadhouse box office at (814) 456-5656.

For more information about the Roadhouse Theatre or to sign up to be on the mailing list, contact Dr. Kurre at k12@psu.edu.

Ask ASCII: Is using my credit card online safe?

By Logan Stack
staff writer

Dear ASCII,

How do I know if it's safe to give my credit card information to a web site I want to buy something from?

- Cautious

Dear Cautious,

The short answer is that you don't. But then, you also don't know if it's safe to give your credit card to the waitress at a restaurant either. She could steal the information more easily than some one working for a secure web site.

Still, there are a couple of things to look for when giving out credit card information on line. First, make sure the web site is secure. A secure web site has the prefix https:// instead of http://. The "s" means the connection between your computer and the web site is very hard to spy on, making it extremely difficult for an eavesdropper to get the information. (The "s" means the web site likely has a 128-bit encryption, so it would take years for the average hacker to get into it.)

In addition to the "s" in the prefix, many web browsers, like Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator, will display a little picture of a lock somewhere at the bottom of the browser window when you're on a secure page. The latest version of Mozilla web browser highlights the web address in yellow to alert you that the page is secure.

Unfortunately, a scam artist could run a secure site. Anyone can set one up for a couple hundred dollars, then pretend to sell the sure-bet-chocolate-milkshake-diet and that one-day-ab-enhancer-cream. You surrender your credit card number in the hopes of getting the quick fix you've always wanted but just couldn't afford before finding this web site. Then, the fix fails to arrive, but your credit card is maxed out. To check out the site's credibility, you can use Google or sites like resellerratings.com to see if the company has a good reputation or is a known scammer.

Just because the address of the site looks reasonable, that doesn't mean it is. If you're at a site called www.pncbanking.com, it may not be affiliated with PNC. Anyone can buy domain names, and they're

not expensive either (probably cheaper than that ab cream). PNC could sue whoever bought the domain and set up a site to look like theirs, but what usually happens is that whoever set up the site disappears whenever lawsuits start getting mentioned. That's because a site can be registered to an address like 123 Ab Cream Lane with an e-mail like abcream6969@hotmail.com, so that when someone searches for the web site owner, they'll have vanished faster than weight loss on a milkshake diet.

In this sort of scam they usually are trying to get your banking or financial information. It's called "Phishing" (pronounced "fishing" because the web owner is the angler hoping to reel in suckers). Your bank isn't performing a security audit. Really. Never. It probably doesn't even have your e-mail address. It doesn't want you to tell anyone your account information. Don't do it, grandma! (That's what I loudly urged my grandmother when she asked me about it last week.)

If you think your bank really does want information from you, call the bank or go there yourself to hand it over. If you find out the bank isn't seeking anything from you, forward the e-mail to them.

In addition to watching out for bad web sites, carefully check your credit card bill. Sometimes people who steal credit card information don't make big charges to the card. They may just make a \$20 charge every month and hope you don't notice it. If you find charges you didn't make, alert the bank that issued your card immediately. Often they won't make you pay the fraudulent charges and they'll send you a new card.

In a world of milkshake diets, it's best to be cautious, as your signature suggests you are. Look for the "s" in the prefix and check the reputation of the web site where you want to buy something, just be sure it's not the Internet equivalent of that guy selling watches out of his coat. In the end, you're safer giving the credit card number than cash to the watch hawk. Just like the fraudulent web site owner, you won't be able to find the watch man when yours fails. But if you buy the timepiece with a credit card and it doesn't arrive, MasterCard will likely take the hit in the end.

Do you have a computer question for ASCII? Send it in! E-mail lws118@psu.edu with "Ask ASCII" in the subject line.

'Battle Royale' entertaining, different from book

Review by Aaron J. Amendola
staff writer

You're stranded on an island and given a bag with three bottles of water, a loaf of bread, a map and a random weapon. The objective is to kill or be killed. The targets: your classmates. Could you kill your best friend?

As part of a new law passed in Japan, a randomly selected class of high school students are transported to a deserted island and forced to do just that. For all intents and purposes, the reasons are meaningless; the only thing anyone is worried about is getting out alive.

Thus are the circumstances of America's greatest guilty pleasure import: "Battle Royale". Director Kinji Fukusaka, while not fully adhering to the intended nature of the book of the same name written by Koushun Takami, crafts a well-rounded tale of death and destruction when trust is obliterated and the rules are tossed out the window.

The film follows three main protagonists in the class of students. Through their encounters with the rest of the classmates,

we get little vignettes of how others perceive the situation they're thrown into and how people react.

One group of girls decide to stake out an abandoned lighthouse and refuse to kill anyone, while another group is intent on trying to stop the operators of the game no matter what the cost.

Keeping in with the realist ideas the film tries to portray, there are a fair share of students who betray trusts and alliances and do whatever they can to do, including killing their good friends.

While Takami's original story was a thoughtful political commentary about the senselessness of battle and wartime paranoia, Fukusaka's translation abandons most of the meaning and serves up the violence like it's a five-star dinner, layered with blood and gore. Gratuitous violence aplenty, the film has forty students to work with. At a running time of 114 minutes, that's about one death every three minutes.

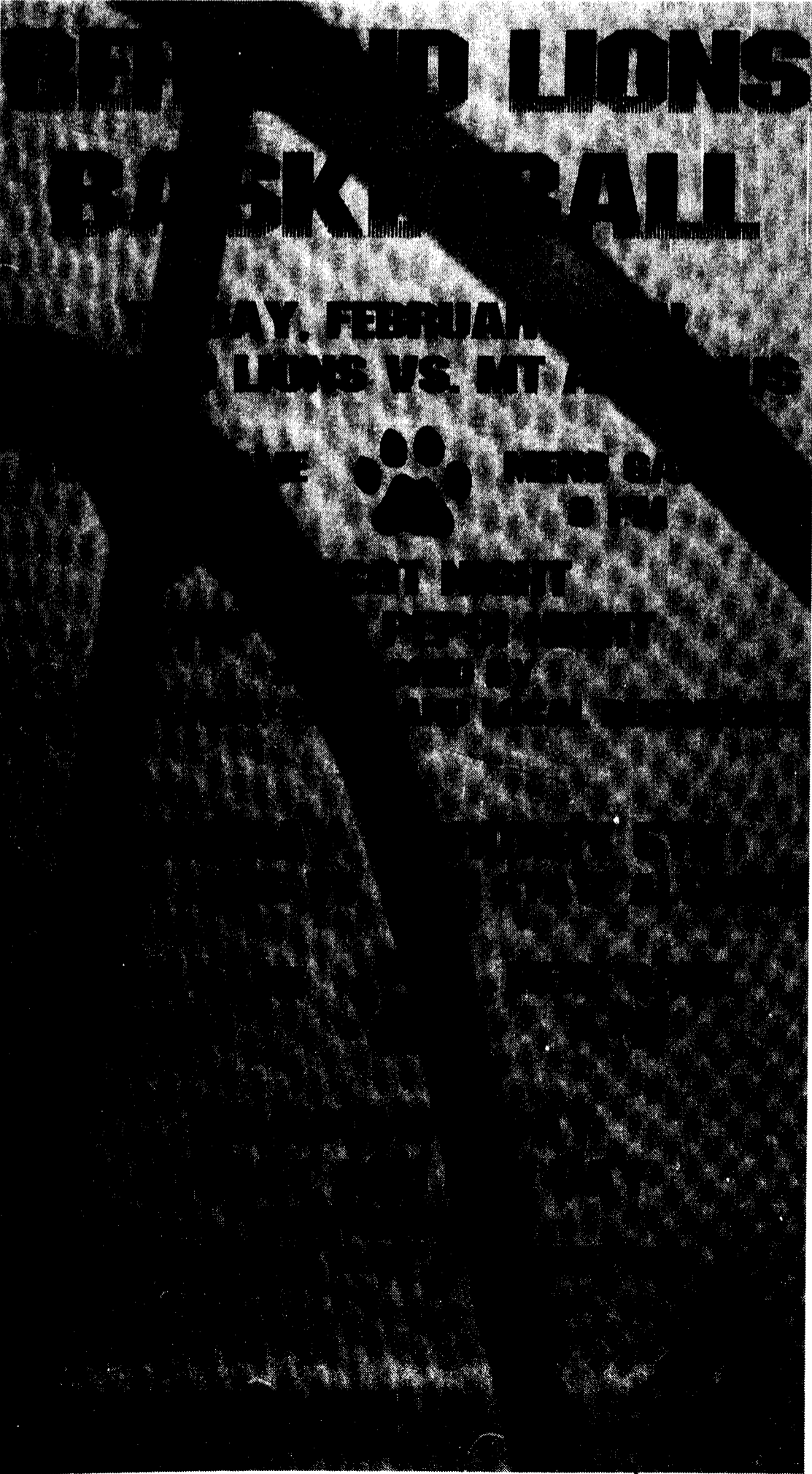
While fans of the book may be disappointed with the translation, no one can argue that the film is entertaining to watch.

Though much of the story's sub-plots and character development have been deconstructed from the original work, the film succeeds mainly as an above-average action flick.

If you think about it, to work out unique deaths for forty unique characters is quite a feat. With the arsenal given to the students (which include a katana, a sub-machine gun, tazers and even a sickle), the creativity really is amazing.

More to the original point of the story though, is how Fukusaka creates just enough character development for the audience to latch onto specific students and have us care for them. Who could have been throwaway characters in American-made action flicks are made into fully-fledged admirable people we can connect with in "Battle Royale."

Moreover, the film succeeds on many levels. Whether you want to just see a popcorn action movie with a ton of violence or a brief character study on what happens during the hells of war, "Battle Royale" works.



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