

ENTERTAINMENT

The real Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is here at UPEI English Prof leads double life as director

BY STACY DUNN

WELL, HE IS HERE FOR THE semester, anyway. His name is professor Terry Pratt. While he teaches the English Linguistics course this year, he is preparing to direct the U.P.E.I. Theatre Society spring production, Mr. Pickwick.

Mr. Pickwick is based on Charles Dickens' widely popular first novel, The Pickwick Papers, which is about the misadventures of the main character, Mr. Pickwick, and the people around him. This soap opera-ish story was first enacted in Toronto a few years ago. Professor Pratt, an avid theatregoer, says that when he saw the play, he felt the U.P.E.I. Theatre Society could do as good a job of putting on Mr. Pickwick as the Toronto troupe did.

From this idea, Pratt discussed the possibility with the Theatre Society, which he worked with before as an actor, director and producer. The society agreed to perform the nineteenth-century social farce, which includes several horse and buggy scenes, a duel, and an ice skating scene. Pratt says that making these scenes look realistic will be challenging, but he thinks that the audience will enjoy the ingenuity with which he and the crew will enact the scenes.

One creative plan Pratt has already is for the staging of the play. He plans a theatre-in-the-round in which the audience is surrounding the stage. Pratt says that he thinks the traditional center stage can be static and talky-- and besides, the Toronto production was staged in the round. Also, Pratt feels that theatre-in-the-round causes

the audience to see one another's reaction to the play and, in effect, creates an experience in sharing the same thing. This effect will be created on the second floor of the Barn in March.

Professor Pratt is impressed with the number of people who have shown interest in putting Mr. Pickwick on. The committee which is responsible for the university's 25th anniversary donated funds, over forty people auditioned before Christmas, several committed to volunteer behind the scenes, and some university professors, including President Eliot, agreed to appear in small roles. Pratt admits that much work is still ahead and more volunteers are needed for backstage. If anyone is interested in helping out, they can contact Professor Pratt at 566-0677 or 675-3672.

Pratt is no stranger to extensive theatre productions such as Mr. Pickwick. He was involved in the Theatre Society's first musical, Beggar's Opera, as its producer in 1976. In 1979, when the society became official, with a committee of students and faculty to oversee everything, Pratt directed its first play, a comedy called She Stoops to Conquer. In the 80's, he participated in a few more Theatre Society productions either as director or actor. Pratt adds that he would like to act again, preferably in smaller venues such as the Victoria and Georgetown Playhouses. He modestly says that he is an "O.K. actor," and whatever his contribution to the Island theatre community, he sees his involvement as a hobby.

From our computer corner...

Software Review: "Marvel Screen Posters" by Berkeley Systems

BY BRUCE DAVISON

"ENTERTAINMENT" IS THE CATEGORY that Berkeley Systems assigns to its truly unique "After Dark" line of quirky screen savers -- both entertainment and utility. For the uninitiated, screen savers are computer programs that prevent images from being burned into monitors after prolonged periods of no change occurring on the monitor's display. A screen saver displays and alternates pictures on the screen (or simply blanks it out). Berkeley Systems is



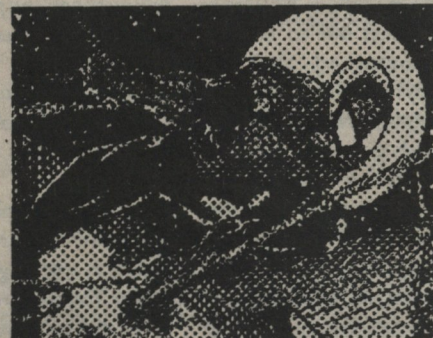
best known for its very successful "After Dark" screen savers and has adopted the quirky winged toaster character (no, really, it flies...) screen saver from the company's flagship program as its mascot. Since 1989 the company has launched a series of screen savers that people can run under MS-DOS or Windows or on a Macintosh. These have recently included Star Trek and Disney screen savers.

Marvel Screen Posters, for Microsoft Windows or Macintosh, is Berkeley's latest

offering and contains 35 original pictures of Marvel superheroes such as Spider-Man, the Hulk, Silver Surfer, and the X-Men as well as covers and pages from actual comics. The program does two things -- it can act as a screen saver by showing any or all of these graphics as slides in an order you can specify after a user-definable period of computer inactivity. The program can also set up any of these graphics as a background "wallpaper" visible in Windows while it's running. I tested a promotional copy of the Windows version that Berkeley Systems sent to the X-Press. It was, well, nifty. . .

Marvel Screen Posters will not change your life. It does provide a way to personalize a computer -- a tool with which many of us seem to be spending far too much quality time. The graphics are neat, but not spell-binding. It's also important to remember that Windows 3.1 comes with built-in screen savers and MacIntoshes have done so for a number of years. Marvel Screen Posters is a very optional accessory. It personalizes your computer, and if it's a tool that you spend a lot of hours in front of, then I think personalizing your computer with something that suits your tastes is a great idea, if you can spare the money. After playing around with Marvel Screen Posters for a while I was left with the impression that it would have been a great gift for certain high ranking X-Press staff who happen to be comic buffs. Incidentally, Marvel Screen Savers lists for \$20 (U.S.).

Marvel Screen Posters for Microsoft Windows requires a 386 computer or better, 4 Mb of RAM, and Windows 3.0 or 3.1. The MacIntosh version requires at least 2 Mb of RAM.



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