

Knoxville returns to slapstick roots

By Vincent Civitillo
Features Editor

Let's face it—the kind of humor presented in MTV's *Jackass* is not an acquired taste.

Audiences either fell in love with the show right away or never at all.

Such is the same with *Jackass: The Movie*, which is filled with the same type of humor, in the same format, with only an extended run-time and raunchier material differentiating it from the TV-show.

It's been about a year since Johnny Knoxville hung up his flame-retardant jacket and gorilla costume, airing the last episode of *Jackass* in an attempt to find a mainstream career in Hollywood. However, after only securing minor, unmemorable roles, Knoxville returns with Steve-O, Wee-Man and the rest of the *Jackass* crew to bring their lack of common sense to the big screen.

For those not familiar with the gang's antics, insane skateboarders get together and perform random acts of self-inflicted pain. Skits from the movie include fun with live alligators, firecrackers, bottle rockets, things going into and coming out of people's rear ends and guys getting beaten up by very angry women.

Again, those who disliked the show



Photo by Ben Zo

Bam Margera, Wee-Man, Steve-O, Johnny Knoxville and the rest of the *Jackass* wrecking crew ride a shopping cart through an artificial mine-field in *Jackass: The Movie*. After ending the series in its prime to find a "serious" career in Hollywood, Knoxville returns to the series that made him a star to relive his fifteen minutes of fame.

will find themselves filing out of the theater sometime around the point where one of the guys accidentally defecates himself. However, *Jackass* fans, or slapstick humor fans in general, will find many of the skits genuinely funny.

The film's highlights include a scene where heavyweight boxer "Butterbean" decimates Knoxville in a department store brawl, a cameo by Tony Hawk,

bowling with Wee-Man and all of Bam Margera's acts of torture against his father.

Jackass: The Movie's only real problem is its format. Organized as a series of skits, there is no plot, which means that the film's conclusion comes by surprise right in the middle of the action, and humor, leaving those enjoying themselves clamoring for more.

Designed as an edgier, 80-minute version of the MTV television show, fans will find that *Jackass: The Movie* is exactly what they have been asking for since the show went off the air.

On the other hand, those who don't see the humor in someone getting unexpectedly kicked in the crotch will likely find the film to be too disgusting to enjoy.

Jersey Devil film falls short of horror genre standards

By David Maccar
Opinion Editor

There are a few standards that make a great horror movie: suspense, good acting, a plausible and interesting plot, a scary monster, and (debatably) realistic special effects. Sadly, *13th Child, Legend of the Jersey Devil* meets none of those standards.

Going into a film like this one feels optimistic, especially for those from South Jersey. Ten minutes into the film, a nasty feeling begins creeping up your spine that this is not going to be another *Alien* or even another *Blair Witch Project*. The traditional story of the Jersey Devil being the 13th child of the Leeds family is completely abandoned by this film in favor another backstory about the spirit of a Leni Lenape shaman, who was his mother's 13th child, who was persecuted and executed by the British and sent his spirit to haunt the Pine Barrens of Southern New Jersey, punishing the descendants of the British.

If that isn't painful enough, the Jersey Devil is reduced to being a puppet of a creepy doctor fellow named Dr. Woody Shrouds (Cliff Robertson) who commands the Jersey Devil to do his bidding, who he affectionately named Bruno, as if it was a Pumpkinhead sequel. Ok, wait. Let's examine that for a moment and just dwell on it. The Jersey Devil's name is Bruno! It's enough to make you grind your teeth flat. If The Jersey Devil does, in fact, exist he might sue the makers of 13th Child for defamation of character.

You might think that if someone doesn't know the story of the Jersey Devil, then they won't be disappointed and could still enjoy the film. Sadly, the

fictional back-story is the best part of the entire story.

The plot involved a young assistant district attorney named Kathryn (Michelle Maryk) from Trenton who is sent to the Pine Barrens to investigate a series of strange murders that have been taking place, the most recent being that of an escaped convict whose torso was identified by tattoos.

The film never offers an explanation as to why a District Attorney from the state capital and two park rangers, who make every single horror movie mistake from *Scream*, are investigating possible serial killings rather than the FBI. Kathryn then talks to Dr. Woody Shrouds about a claw she found near the torso. Also, the small morgue somewhere in the Pines where Kathryn and the rangers take the torso, is endowed with some new technology that apparently can completely analyze the DNA of the claw, three times, in about ten minutes.

The story quickly degenerates into a "run from the monster, hide, get found by the monster, and run some more" kind of horror movie. And the fact that *13th Child* was shot on digital video causes the visuals to be muddled and flat if the film is not viewed in a theater with a digital projector, of which there aren't many.

The story offered is choppy and this in accentuated by black bars that flash across the bottom of the screen at every single scene change telling the audience where the new scene is taking place.

All in all, this film is a great example of a "could have been." If the acting had not been nauseating, if the story hadn't been written by chimps with typewrit-



Photo courtesy of Painted Zebra Productions

Cliff Robertson stars as Dr. Woody Shrouds in *13th Child, Legend of the Jersey Devil*. However, although given the Halloween season, viewers may be inclined to fork over hard-earned money to see a movie featuring the urban legend of a local demon, the movie is a cheesy emulation of such movies as *The Blair Witch Project* and *Alien*. Even with great potential though, the film flops short of all expectations.

ers, if the Jersey Devil didn't look like a guy in a suit, and if he wasn't named Bruno, then this movie could have been great. But, alas, it isn't. Save your eight bucks.

Luedeke performs on Rider's SNL stage

By David Maccar
Opinion Editor

Last Saturday night the Fine Arts studio theater became NBC studios for an evening when the drama fraternity, Alpha Psi Omega put on their version of Saturday Night Live (SNL) with host Bart Luedeke, President of Rider University. The performance was a fundraising event for much-needed renovations to the studio theater, which is the classroom setting for much of the work done in Rider's theater program.

The performance was done in traditional SNL format with a house band playing music between sketches. Many aspects of life at Rider were cleverly satirized, especially the bumbling escapades of security which were depicted in several COPS-esque skits. The writing of the sketches, which was done by the performers, was just as good, if not better, than much of the current writing on SNL.

Just seeing Luedeke in a version of SNL's famous Celebrity Jeopardy skit along with an average Rider student and two Security officers was well worth the \$5 admission price. Not to mention the wonderful sketch where Luedeke interviewed candidates for his job which included impersonations of Ms. Anne (Anne Keith from Daly's), Dean Anthony Campbell, President George W. Bush, and, of course, Rider Security.

All in all, it was a very entertaining evening that exemplified the incredible creative talent of Rider students.