

U-Rock theater troupe gets new director, new name

By Shelly Birkelo
Gazette Staff

Carolyn Haycraft has been hired as the new theater director and lecturer for the communication and theater arts department at UW-Rock County.

She replaces Mark Weinberg, who left to pursue new theater interests.

Along with the 2002-03 season and a new leader comes a new name. U-Rock Players has been renamed University Theatre. A UW-Rock County news release says including the word university in the title gives the community a better understanding of the theater group and what audiences can expect when they come to shows.

A Madison resident, Haycraft teaches and directs plays there.

She grew up in Australia and received her bachelor's degree at a small university in a suburb of Sydney. Haycraft was one of the first students to graduate from Nepean University with a bachelor's degree in performing arts, which was the first degree program in theater in Australia at the time. When Haycraft was 23, she was selected for a

student work abroad program and spent two years in Toronto, performing and studying theater.

Later, Haycraft moved to New York City to study acting and improvisation for the stage. She studied at the Neighborhood Playhouse, The Ensemble Studio Theatre and the New Actor's Workshop.

During this time Haycraft was one of the founding members of the Australian and New Zealand Artist's Alliance, a nonprofit organization based in New York City. ANZAA focused on promoting artists and literature from down under. She served on its board of directors, while producing and performing in numerous productions.

Haycraft also was a reporter for WBAI radio in New York City, promoting the work of smaller theaters and young theater artists.

She moved to the Midwest to work as an actor at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater and recently graduated from UW-Madison with a master's degree in directing.

The University Theatre season begins Oct. 17 with "Picnic."