The wives of the baseball fanatics lament their husbands’ obsession with ‘Sixth Month out of Every Year.’ The scene required that exchange student Preston be scantily-costumed and dance provocatively.

As the first production of William & Mary’s Theatre Program, Damn Yankees captivated on the political fervor of the 2008 Presidential Election. However, despite the well-received political jokes, the themes of love and commitment and the fun of presenting “the American past-time” in a musical production meant the most to the cast of Damn Yankees.

Directed by Dr. Laurie Wolf and Musically directed by Gary Green, Damn Yankees played for two consecutive weekends in mid-October. Before each show began, a screen featuring old newsreels of famous events in national baseball history ran for the waiting audience to enjoy. This special feature of the production prepared the audience for the 1955 setting of the musical.

Although Dr. Wolf mentioned the political nature of the show in her Director’s Note, the audience was taken by surprise when the jokes referencing Alaskan Governor Sarah Palin, the Republican Party Vice-President nominee.

Mrs. Welch, played by Melissa Bailey, was often the character to make these pointed remarks. Her comments insinuated a parallel between Mrs. Welch and Governor Palin. “Most of my ‘Sarah Palin’ dialogue were ad-libs where I had no specific lines,” Bailey said. “While most of these ad-libs were happily to a comic effect, that was not their only purpose. The character of Welch was written as a man, which would be the natural choice for a person of such power and wealth in 1955. Mrs. Welch, therefore, is a woman in what is typically a man’s world and triumph of love and family over his obsession with baseball was the ultimate moral of the story.

The character of Old Joe Boyd was played by senior Joey Thomas. Thomas believed that what Joe learned can serve as a reminder to us all of what is truly valuable in life. “I think the important thing to take away from the show is that all of our earthly trappings, our obsessions, our possessions, careers, and goals all ultimately pale in comparison to the value of love,” Thomas said. “Many things in life will try to tempt us away from finding and maintaining a functional relationship with one special person, but there is nothing more human or more beautiful than two souls so tightly bound that they speak to one another.”

Although it seemed otherwise, baseball proved to take second-place. “It takes Young Joe most of the play to realize that there are actually some things more important than baseball. His love, love and home,” Dr. Wolf said.

So, in lieu of the applause to such comic baseball numbers as ‘The Game’ and ‘Heart’ and the appreciation of the timely political ad-libs, the audience was reminded of the bigger things in life in Damn Yankees.