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LOCAL NEWS

Crossing Broadway in disguise

Trio of actors stake out Broadway dressed as seniors testing Boulder's generosity

By Ryan Morgan

Camera Staff Writer

The three old women hobbled slowly across Broadway at Pearl Street Thursday morning. One of them, nearly bent in half with age, made it across.

The other two panicked and shuffled back to the curb before the light changed.

When the walk sign started counting down again, they gratefully accepted a man's offer to escort them across.

"We're trying to do some shopping, but it's very hard," Mabel said, straightening her shawl.

The woman to her left nodded her white-haired head in agreement.

"How are you supposed to get across all that way in just 22 seconds?" she complained.

Then Mabel shared a tip about their shopping habits.

"We were going to go to Banana Republic, because they said they sold tops there that would stop traffic," she said. "That would work."

Passersby regarded the three elderly women a little tentatively — especially since one "Mabel" sported a hard-to-ignore 5 o'clock shadow.

Mabel, Mabel and Mabel were the un-elderly Linda Klein, Barbara Gehring and Matthew Taylor, the three principals of ACE Comedy, a Denver-based troupe featuring an American (Klein), a Canadian (Gehring) and an Englishman (Taylor, he of the stubble).

They were filming a small piece for Across America, a newsmagazine program featured on the HDNet network, a cable channel filmed completely in the high-definition television format.

Gehring said the helpful — if puzzled — responses the trio drew during their three hours crossing back and forth on Broadway made them feel they were doing a good job of inhabiting their elderly characters.

And Boulder residents revealed themselves as caring, she said.

"When people feel that they don't know if we're really old, they don't know what we're doing, but they approach us and are kind to us, it's huge," she said. "It's a compliment to the people of Boulder."

But staying in character for three hours as a nearly hunch-backed old woman has its drawbacks, Gehring said.

"Our backs were killing us," she said, laughing. "Absolutely killing us. We need to put it in some contract that when we do the old biddies, we get a massage afterward."

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SAMMY DALLAL / Daily Camera

Matthew Taylor, left, and Linda Klein help Barbara Gehring cross Broadway at Pearl Street on Thursday. The three are members of ACE Comedy troupe. The trio dressed as old ladies and tried to cross Broadway to see what reaction they received from area residents as part of a spot they were filming for HDNet network.