

Change of life leads Raton banker to 'Murder'

By Tim Keller
Special to The Chronicle-News

RATON — For as long as he can remember, Rick Trice's "bucket list" was topped by two goals: immersing himself in a professional theater company, and riding a motorcycle across the U.S. in the annual veterans' Run for the Wall event. Finally, he decided that this was his year.

After 37 years in banking, Trice retired last month from his position as senior vice president and senior loan officer at International Bank. He walked off the job and onto his 2007 Yamaha V-Star 1300 motorcycle, riding 6,400 miles from Raton to the West Coast, then to Washington, D.C., where his wife Linda Trice joined him. They rode home together to Raton.

Immersion in professional theater awaited him in the Shuler Theater's annual summer professional repertory theater season. Since setting his feet back on Raton soil, he's been working 12-hour days preparing two plays — both of which premier within the next few days.

Trice is directing the comedy "Murder at the Howard Johnson's" that opens the season Friday and Saturday night. Next week he stars as Noah — yes, that Noah — in the musical comedy "Two by Two" that opens July 4 and 5.

"Bill Fegan's been wanting us to do 'Murder' for a long time," Trice says. "He says its line about guns drew the longest laughter in his 50 years at the Shuler. Apparently there was an NRA contingent in the audience."

Trice describes the play's romantic love triangle as "Lucy and Ethyl meet the Marx Brothers in a comedy that revolves around jealousy, betrayal and attempted murder." In fact, there's more than one attempted murder, and this in a play with only three characters.

Trice's daughter Jillian Trice Solano joins Raton's Billy Donati and Los



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Rick Trice, seated, directs a comically contentious cast of Billy Donati, Perry Self and Jillian Trice Solano in this weekend's Shuler Theater production of "Murder at the Howard Johnson's."

Angeles actor Perry Self as a wife and her husband and her lover, all of whom meet at a Howard Johnson's Motor Court three times over the course of a year. The bedroom farce premiered on Broadway in 1979.

Rick Trice directed his first Shuler Theater show — "Paint Your Wagon" — exactly 30 years ago, and this is the third time he's directed his daughter, going back to her star turn as Annie in "Annie Get Your Gun" while she was still a student at Raton High School.

With his day job behind him, he's been able to direct

one play while simultaneously taking the lead role in another. As Noah, Trice takes the role Danny Kaye created in the successful 1970 Broadway run of "Two by Two."

Alternately inspirational and hilarious, the musical tells the story of Noah who, on his 600th birthday, receives a message from God directing him to build an ark and gather two of every animal before a coming flood.

In a miracle, Noah gets to be young again to finish building the ark. With music by Richard Rogers performed live at the Shuler by pianist Carol Simmons,

the cast of eight has fun with such songs as "I Feel Like I'm 90 Again."

Trice began his preparations during the spring, but the company has only come together to rehearse and build the shows during the past two weeks.

Trice says, "The actors have already aced their parts. That's the joy of working with such talented and professional actors. And they're not afraid to take chances."

Looking toward Friday night's opening of "Murder at the Howard Johnson's," he says, "I've never been so comfortable and ready to open a show." Then he adds,

"This is one of the funniest shows I've seen at the Shuler. There are lines that have made me laugh to tears even on the 12th reading."

If these long days and nights are what retirement is like, it's OK with him. "I've been too busy to think about it. It's all fun."

The Shuler Theater's summer repertory season opens Friday at 7:30 p.m. and continues through Aug. 11. "Murder at the Howard Johnson's" runs June 28-29 and July 6, 7, 11 and 12. "Two by Two" runs July 4, 5, 13, 14, 20 and 21.

"Steel Magnolias" runs July 18, 19, 27, 28, and Aug.

2, 3. "Clue — The Musical" runs July 25, 26 and Aug. 1. "Schoolhouse Rock Live!" runs Aug. 9-11.

The curtain goes up each night at 7:30 p.m. except a special 6 p.m. show on the 4th of July to allow the audience to enjoy Raton's annual fireworks show after opening night of "Two by Two."

Each show has one Sunday matinee that begins at 2:30 p.m. Adult tickets are \$15, seniors \$13, and children \$5. Special ticket books are available with 10 tickets for \$100. Tickets and information are available at the Shuler Theater, (575) 445-4746.

Fort Carson to lose combat unit in major restructuring of Army

Associated Press

FORT CARSON, Colo. — Fort Carson is losing one of its large combat units with about 3,800 soldiers.

Officials said Tuesday a Fort Carson combat brigade team will be inactivated, one of 12 being cut at 12 installations in the U.S. and Europe.

The cuts are expected to be completed by 2017.

It wasn't immediately clear if the restructuring would result in any other units being moved to or from Fort Carson.

Officials provided details of the plans on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

Fort Carson officials said the move was to be addressed in a speech later

Tuesday. No statement was planned until then.

Fort Carson will still be a major Army post, with three other combat brigade teams, an artillery brigade, a sustainment brigade and a new combat infantry brigade.

Still, the loss of a brigade is a blow to the economy and prestige of nearby Colorado Springs. It breaks a yearslong string of growth at Fort Carson, whose units served multiple deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Most brigades have between 3,500 and 3,800 soldiers.

The cuts would leave the Army with 33 active-duty combat brigades as it executes a longtime plan to cut the size of the service by

80,000.

Rep. Doug Lamborn said Tuesday the post will still grow by about 1,800 soldiers as part of the Army reorganization.

Lamborn, a Republican whose district includes much of Fort Carson, says about 3,000 of those soldiers will be absorbed by the three remaining brigades as the Army makes them larger.

Fort Carson is also getting a new combat aviation brigade, which will further offset the loss of the 3rd Brigade.

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