

COMMUNITY

ENDEAVOR TO SAVE SKATELAND

Sidewalk Bake Sale set for Saturday

Brick City Roller Girl's offer fundraising efforts



Steve Block / The Chronicle-News

Jamie Primmer of the Brick City Roller Girls Derby Team is hosting a bake sale outside of Skateland from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. on Saturday, June 30, to raise funds to save the popular skating rink.

By Steve Block
The Chronicle-News

Many of the folks who loved to go whirling around the track at Skateland Roller Rink have come together to host a Saturday bake sale to raise money to rescue the popular recreation destination. The bake sale will be held on the sidewalk in front of Skateland, which is located at 454 W. Main St. from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. on Saturday May 30.

Avid skater Jamie Primmer is hoping to raise \$2,500 through the bake sale to keep the doors open at Skateland at least through the end of June. Primmer has enlisted the aid of many of her fellow skaters in the effort to raise money to keep the rink open. Several of the girls involved in the effort are members of the Brick City Roller Girls roller derby team, Primmer included. "I'm trying to raise \$2,500 to save it," Primmer said. "I'm on the gofundme.com website, I'm doing some stuff on Facebook and I'm hosting a bake sale on Saturday."

She said she's gotten support in her effort from many Skateland fans, along with former Skateland co-proprietors Tomy and Ray Rocha. The skating rink is an important part of Primmer's recreational life.

"I love it there. It means the world to me," she said. "The kids there, teaching them how to skate, and I also work there and live there."

The \$2,500 figure she hopes to raise would cover the building's rent, the utilities, all of the equipment, insurance, concessions, advertising and trash removal.

"That \$2,500 would take us through the end of June. I'm hoping that, with the kids out of school, and with all the advertising and all the different ideas I have that we can keep it open. I have no doubt that it's going to stay open. I'm positive."

A skating session at Skateland costs \$2.50 if you have your own skates, and \$5 if you don't, making a trip to the roller rink one of the least expensive recreational opportunities in town.

"It's cheaper than a lot of other activities and it's fun. You're up and moving, and it's rewarding for everyone involved. It's fun for the whole family and it's affordable."

She said she would like to sell both monthly and annual memberships to Skateland, though she doesn't have a price structure in place yet. She also hopes to have plenty of coupons for a couple of hours of enjoyment at Skateland. Skating dance classes will be offered to stimulate interest in the sport and teach students some skating skills. Private lessons and private parties are other options on the table for Skateland.

Anyone interested in Skateland's activities, or who would like to donate to the bake sale, can call Primmer at 303-907-2931.

SHULER'S EXCITING FULL SUMMER SEASON

Company of actors to descend on Raton

By Tim Keller
Correspondent
The Chronicle-News

RATON – Decades from now the annals of Raton's cultural history may bear a page about the day a troupe of professional actors stepped off the train to spend an entire summer in downtown Raton, producing a season of plays at the Shuler Theater.

When the westbound Southwest Chief from Chicago pulls into Raton Depot before 11 o'clock Tuesday morning (6/2), a few fans and supporters will welcome the company of actors. For many of the actors, it will be their first experience of the mountain West. Guiding them will be Ian McCabe, actor and producing partner of Two Pigs Productions (TPP), who's returning for his third summer season of acting at the Shuler.

McCabe's partner in acting and TPP, Nora Leahy, will be among those greeting the dozen or more actors as they step off the train Tuesday. Leahy arrived from Indiana this week. After an adventurous season of repertory theater with McCabe and Leahy last summer, the



had 150 submissions to join the summer company. We auditioned 70 in Chicago, then 30 more in Bloomington, Indiana."

"Part of the attraction is the draw of Raton," McCabe adds. "A summer out west was very romantic to some of the actors."

"They're an enthusiastic group," Leahy says. "We finished casting the second week of April and then sent out contracts and scripts. We've been working on housing, sizes and costumes." Each production has a different director and they're in regular communication with the actors for their productions. The actors are learning their lines; in fact, their fellow Amtrak passengers may get more than they paid for if the actors start rehearsing scenes during the overnight ride from Chicago.

Each company member is a theater professional with a long list of credits, and each is paid a professional wage. Ticket sales this summer are expected to cover only about 20% of the season's costs, with the region's generous theater fans and foundations making contributions to cover the rest.

McCabe and Leahy have been preparing their new company members for spending a summer in Raton. "They're mostly flatlanders," McCabe says. "We've been talking to them about the altitude, how they'll have to take it easy during a transition time. It'll affect their breathing and singing and delivery of lines. We've told them that they'll probably need to use a lot of lotion and chapstick."

Most of the company will live in second-floor apartments along Historic First Street, a few steps from the depot. "We've given them the hours for Enchanted Grounds," McCabe says, knowing the actors will hit the popular downtown espresso bar both early and late.

McCabe and Leahy were joined in last year's company by actors Tamara Todres and Blake White, both of whom return this year. Todres will be on stage for every production. White will act in "Midsummer Night's Dream" and direct McCabe and Leahy in "Boeing Boeing."

First-timers in Raton include actors Bussy Gower, Darren Hill, and Cassie Thompson. Like Todres, they'll appear in every production. Stage manager Emily Sjoerdsma will also spend the entire summer in Raton, as will local crewmember Kate Little.

Other company members include "Into the Woods" musical director Nathan Beary Blustein and that production's fea-



Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

Clockwise from above, producing partners Nora Leahy and Ian McCabe in last summer's Shuler production of "The Turn of the Screw," are an exciting pair to watch. Actor Ian McCabe took a liking to Raton when he starred in three plays during the 2010 summer repertory season at the Shuler Theater. Last summer's Shuler Theater production of "The Importance of Being Earnest" featured four visiting actors that return this season to produce three more plays—"Into the Woods," "Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Boeing Boeing"—plus a variety show and a children's theater production of "The Jungle Book." From left are Nora Leahy, Ian McCabe, Blake White and Tamara Todres. Actress Nora Leahy returns this week for her second summer season at Raton's Shuler Theater.

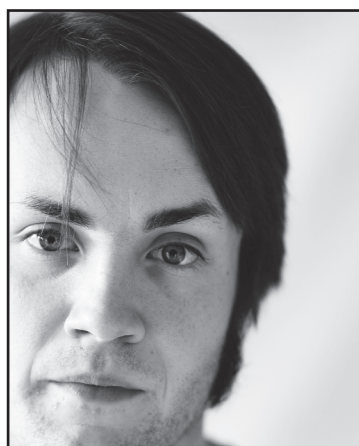


Santa Fe School for the Performing Arts and the Shuler Theater contracted with TPP to provide this season's full slate of summer theater at the Shuler.

The season will open June 19-20 with "Variety of Errors," combining all of the company's actors with several Raton locals in a night of improvisation and comedy that sounds a lot like Saturday Night Live. A big musical production of "Into the Woods" follows June 25 through July 5. William Shakespeare's beloved comedy "Midsummer Night's Dream" takes the stage July 9-19, followed by the zany comedy "Boeing Boeing."

A children's theater camp will offer area kids three 30-hour weeks of work and play, culminating in an August 7-8 production of "The Jungle Book."

Some of the 18-member TPP theater company will spend 11 weeks in Raton while others will have shorter stays as they work in one or two productions. Leahy's excited. "It's the largest season we've done and the most ambitious," she says. "We



tured Witch, Eileen Jennings. Daniel Lendzian will direct "Midsummer Night's Dream." Actors Mike Danovich, Nicholas Pappas, Stephen Peebles and Jim Stark join the others in one or two casts each. Tony Penna and Colin Shay have been hard at work designing sets and lighting.

Two Pigs Productions has extensive notes and photos available at its own website and, especially, its Facebook page. Included are cast photos and biographies, production notes and impressive posters for each of this summer's Shuler Theater plays.

Schedules, information, and tickets are available at the Shuler Theater, 131 N. 2nd St., 575-445-4746. Individual tickets will be \$20 for adults, \$15 seniors, \$5 children. Special ticket books are available with five tickets for \$87.50 or ten tickets for \$175.

Greeting the troupe of actors as they step off the westbound Southwest Chief at Raton Depot Tuesday morning—that's free.

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