

RATON



Photos by Tim Keller

Top left: Branson archaeologist and artist Willard Louden pointed out petroglyphs along the tour route last year. Top right: Last year's Dry Cimarron Scenic Byways Tour stopped by Folsom Falls Ranch to visit Fred Balmer and Bob.



Annual Folsom tours on tap next two weekends

By TIM KELLER
The Chronicle-News

Beginning with a visit by a remarkably authentic mountain man outside the Folsom Museum and proceeding to Folsom Falls and up the historic Dry Cimarron Valley, last year's Dry Cimarron Tour provided participants with a rich and fascinating glimpse at northeastern New Mexico's past...and present.

Folsom Museum, in association with New Mexico Heritage Preservation Month,

has announced the details of its annual tours, the Dry Cimarron Scenic Byway Tour as well as a pair of half-day tours to the Folsom archaeological site where evidence of some of the earliest people in North America was discovered a century ago. Both tours begin at the Folsom Museum.

The Folsom Archaeological Tour arrives first, on Saturday, May 16, with two tours to the site, which crosses a private ranch and can only be seen by the public on this tour. The morning tour

departs the museum promptly at 8:00 a.m.; the afternoon tour departs at 1:00 pm. A chuck wagon lunch will be served at the Folsom Museum between the two tours; donations will be accepted to support the Folsom Museum.

Participants will form carpools at the museum to keep the number of 4wd vehicles crossing the land to a minimum. There is a short hike, about a quarter mile, to the "Folsom man" site, where participants will hear from a state archaeologist who is an

expert on the history and findings at the site. Assistance can be provided for anyone unable to make the hike.

The following Saturday, May 23, will find another tour group meeting at Folsom Museum at 8:00 a.m. After viewing the Folsom Museum exhibits, the tour will head out the Dry Cimarron canyon past Folsom Falls, stopping at Folsom Falls Ranch, then up Tollgate Canyon near the Colorado border. There will be many stops along the way for guides to point out interesting

places and tell fascinating stories from the past. Participants may drive their own vehicles on the well-maintained gravel road or join a carpool at the museum.

The Dry Cimarron tour continues east to the Brown Ranch, started by Mike Devoy, then to another historic ranch, the Cross L, where lunch will be served to all. After lunch the tour continues eastward to the site of many petroglyphs. Where the Dry Cimarron meets Treveister Canyon, tour guides will

demonstrate the area's unique geology. The tour ends there, by mid-afternoon, and participants will drive back toward Folsom or Branson on their own, though some might enjoy continuing east past Wedding Cake mountain to Kenton, Oklahoma.

For further information or reservations for the May 16 or May 23 tours, contact Abbie Reaves at abbie_reaves@bacavalley.com or 575-278-3665, or the Folsom Museum at 575-278-2122.

EMS fundraiser brings a day of fun to Cimino Park Saturday

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insurance assistance program. Each person signing up will receive a \$10 gift card from Safeway and be eligible for a \$100 Safeway gift card drawing after the event.

Noon brings bike safety inspections and a bike rodeo. State park ranger Floyd Duran presents his program on water safety at 1 p.m. with an emphasis on boat safety at Trinidad Lake and general safety practices at the dam.

The entire event is sponsored by Las Animas County's rural EMS services, joined together in the EMS Coalition, to raise money for scholarships to further the training and education of deserving local EMTs. This year's two \$500 scholarships will be presented to Lynn Reynolds and Bobby Nichols in a ceremony in Cimino Park at 1 p.m. Both intend to pursue higher training and ratings than their current EMT-B classifications, increasing their skills and experience to bring additional resources to the service of Las Animas County.

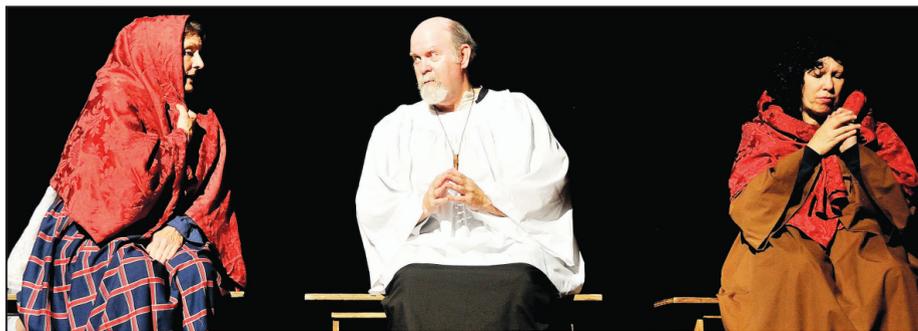
Reynolds is a lieutenant with Fisher's Peak EMS and a part-time instructor at TSJC. Nichols, also a Fisher's Peak EMT, is currently enrolled at a firefighter academy; he plans to continue his EMS training all the way to Paramedic status.

The scholarships, and the entire event, are named for Michelle Minion, a founder of the LA County EMS Coalition. She was a physician assistant (PA) in Trinidad for many years and a volunteer EMT at Fisher's Peak. She recognized the need for emergency medical services in the outlying regions of the county: her dream of coordinated emergency care throughout the county is now a reality with services provided from Branson, Hoehne, Spanish Peaks, Bon Carbo, Cokedale, Fisher's Peak, and Stonewall fire protection districts. Michelle Minion, fondly remembered, passed on in 2006.

Many find the arrival of spring a good motivation to get out and start exercising, shedding some of those winter pounds and building fitness for

a busy outdoor summer. Runners and walkers alike will exercise for fun and prizes Saturday morning. The first 50 entrants, beginning at 7:00, will receive a race T-shirt. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place medals will be awarded in male and female divisions of age groups 14-and-under, 15 to 19, and then each decade of 20s, 30s, 40s, 50, and 60s, then one for 70s and up. In addition, the fastest 5K runners will compete for cash prizes with the 1st place male and female each receiving \$100, 2nd place male and female winning \$75 each, and 3rd place each winning \$50.

The LA County EMS Coalition hopes to have another big turnout for the fun all day Saturday. Further information is available from Dominic Verquer, Quick Response Team Coordinator for the Trinidad Ambulance District, at 719-846-6886 or dverquer@trinidadambulance.com.



Photos by Tim Keller

Man of La Mancha brings delight to Shuler audiences

By TIM KELLER
The Chronicle-News

The Raton Choral Society's new production of Dale Wasserman's classic musical play "Man of La Mancha" proved a charming success for Shuler Theater audiences over the weekend.

With impressive lead performances by Clint Henson, Brenda Ferri, and Rick Trice, the cast brought both humor and pathos to their performances throughout the two-hour play, with the songs adding their own layers of enjoyment. A live trio, including music director Bill Crary, provided effective and unobtrusive accompaniment. Stage director Gail Dixon-Willden again demonstrated that, since she moved to town just one year ago, Raton has gained an impressive and valuable talent.

The play takes place in the dank dungeon of a prison during the Spanish Inquisition 400 years ago. Miguel de Cervantes, the real-life author of "Don Quixote", lands in the dungeon with his manservant for offending the Inquisition. Surrounded

by cutthroats, Cervantes defends himself by spinning his elaborate and fanciful yarn, the tale of Don Quixote of La Mancha.

Quixote is actually a gaunt and delusional old man who has simply read too many books. (When Cervantes identifies himself as a poet to fellow prisoner The Duke, played by Mark Jansen, the latter asks, "Are they throwing people in prison for that now?" Quixote says no; The Duke says "Too bad.") Quixote sets off into the grand world as a knight errant to right all wrongs. Never mind that actual knights haven't existed for hundreds of years, and perhaps never here in Spain.

Quixote enlists the aid of portly and loyal Sancho Panza as his squire. He becomes enchanted with the coarse woman Aldonza, whom he insists on calling Dulcinea - sweetness. As with everything else, Quixote sees Dulcinea only through his delusions. However, he sees the world and acts in it as we all might if we - and the world - were more to our liking. So, though the play is remarkably smutty and rough

at times, the central character's honor, courage, and idealism lift the hearts of other characters - and of the audience. That Quixote is insane is just part of the fun.

This is community theater, gathered from the best resources and budget locally available. (The Shuler was far from full Saturday night, which was a shame.) As such,

Raton has much to be proud of. The quality of acting, singing, sets, and lighting all deserve special praise.

One weak spot was costuming, a common problem in Raton's community productions. Contemporary shoes, slacks, and glasses, polyester fabrics, a bright green beret, The Duke's serape and leather hat, Anselmo's very modern cutaway steel-string guitar - the costuming would threaten to diminish the play if this production weren't so entertaining, effectively overcoming its own imperfections. Besides, good costuming requires research, knowledge, talent, time, and money - hard to achieve in a small town that does-

Top left: Sancho Panza and Dulcinea get a laugh over the difference between a missive and letter. Top right: Rick Trice and Brenda Ferri/Clint Henson waxes rhapsodic as Don Quixote while Brenda Ferri looks on as Dulcinea.

Bottom: Playing the Padre, John Martin consoles Rebecca Clark and Sue Martin as the three sing "We're Only Thinking of Him."

n't fill its theater for every performance. Raton should count itself lucky to have more than its fair share of theatrical talent.

Clint Henson's Cervantes/Quixote carried the show. Henson continues to grow as an actor; here he was comfortable, fun, and funny. Most impressive was his humor, drawn with perfect timing through pratfalls, well-delivered lines, and woeful countenance. Rick Trice has now achieved such skills as an actor that he disappears into his character: his Sancho Panza was a delight, simultaneously tender, inspiring, and humorous. Like Henson, his ability to find and deliver the laughs in lines is impressive. Brenda Ferri brought an appropriate ferociousness to Aldonza, then slowly shed it in layers to reveal Quixote's warm and lovely Dulcinea.

Of the supporting roles, John

Martin's Padre stood out. His acting, singing, and even costumes were convincing and enjoyable. Raton has a growing number of young actors, too, who brought their growing skills to this production.

The simple but very effective set design and props added much to the play, with special praise owed to Quixote's comically-bent sword, the horse and mule, and the masks for the latter, made by Carol Crary. The lighting design, too, by Dixon-Willden and Bill Donati, was magnificent, convincingly creating the story's many varied locales. Wasserman's classic script deserves mention for its seamless transitions between scenes, effectively produced here by Dixon-Willden and her able team of actors and technical staff.

Despite its length, at 2 hours without an intermission, the play never drags, sufficiently

maintaining its high level of entertainment to stop real time for awhile. The many well-known songs are part of the fun, ably sung by a cast that reminds us that this is a production of The Raton Choral Society. "The Impossible Dream" is the best-known song, but "Only Thinking of Him" and "Golden Helmet of Mambrino" shined brightest here with wonderful staging and grand vocal arrangements - sublime.

There are two remaining opportunities to see this production of "Man of La Mancha," next Friday and Saturday nights at 7:30 pm at the Shuler Theater in downtown Raton. Tickets are general admission, available at the door for \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors, and \$4 for students. It's a bargain. Information and tickets are also available from the Shuler box office at (575) 445-4746.