

Weekend Raton dance recital to celebrate freedom

By Tim Keller
Special to The Chronicle-News

RATON — With "Raton School of Dance Celebrates Freedom," the 40-year-old dance school brings its 22nd annual public recital to the Shuler Theater stage for two shows this weekend.

The school's 43 dancers — girls from Raton, Des Moines, Capulin and Springer — have moved their rehearsals across the street from the Raton School of Dance to practice on the Shuler stage for their performances Saturday night and Sunday afternoon.

Dance school director Kathy Honeyfield explains that most of today's girls are from elementary or middle schools.

"When I first took over in 1989, we had a lot of high school students. With the inception of girls' sports and more opportunities for cheer and dance, our number of older students has dropped." She offers one tap class for adults and high school students.

The weekend recital will feature music to celebrate American freedom, including television theme songs from Westerns like "Rawhide," "Bonanza" and "The Big Country," as well as classics like "Yankee Doodle" and "This Land Is Your Land."

Participating dancers include McKayla Blake, Claire Durant, Madisson Lester, Brianna Marquez, Montana Martinez, Sarah Meadows, Jayd Sappington, Laynee Segura, and Taityn Valdez in the 9- to 12-year-old ballet-tap group. Marquez is completing her ninth year with the dance school, Segura her seventh.

The 7- and 8-year-old ballet-tap performance will showcase Sara Clinesmith, Zoe Elliott, Natasha Gonzales, Brittany Gutierrez, Rachel Liana, Analayah Lucero, Mattie McGowen, Deanna Sanchez, Haili Romero, Islaya Romero, Shelby Tafoya, and Sarah Warder.

The 5- and 6-year-old ballet-tap group includes Jadin Bueno, Jezlyn Coca, Kaylie Doyon, Sydney Elliott, Abigail Frey, Brook Gonzales, Daneka Martinez, Angelina Montoya, Rebecca Morris, Allyson Romero, Emilia Rose, Isabel Sintas, Secily Sisneros, Marissa Smith, Albenita Trujillo-Vigil, and Tyleigh Valdez.

The 4-year-olds in baby ballet are Tennyson Armacost, Anntanella Gutierrez, Jennifer Mattorano, Kaitlyn Russell,



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Above, Kathy Honeyfield's senior ballet tap class rehearses last week on the Shuler Theater stage. From left are Laynee Segura, Jayd Sappington, Brianna Marquez, Taityn Valdez, McKayla Blake (hidden), Claire Durant, Sarah Meadows and Montana Martinez.

At left, Raton School of Dance director Kathy Honeyfield coaches her young dancers in a rehearsal on the Shuler Theater stage.

Raeleigh Serna, and Avah Trujillo.

An acrobatics group includes veterans Hannah Rose, Sarah Warder, and Brittany Gutierrez, joined by Allyson Romero, Rebecca Morris, Miya Trujillo, Jadin Bueno, Shelby Tafoya, Rachel Liang, Analayah Lucero,

and Deanna Sanchez.

Tina Warder assisted Honeyfield in teaching the groups this year. Other teachers have included Angela Long and Kelli Gabrielle. Kathy Spargo, Vanna Tapia, Carol Unger, Paula Grantham, Julie Osborn, Cindy Berry, and Jena Love have assisted

the teachers and students.

Mark Honeyfield will run the music and curtains this weekend while Tim Bird runs lights, back for his 21st show. Kent Wilkins is the company videographer. Julian Warder takes over the box office: before her passing at age 87 last November,

Lena Musso ran the box office for 20 years.

Until Kathy Honeyfield became director of the dance school in 1989, Karen Gehres ran the school after taking over for retiring founder Jane Rogers.

Saturday night's performances begin at 7:30.

The Sunday matinee begins at 2:30 p.m. The Shuler Theater shows cost \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors from age 65 and juniors 12 and under.

Tickets are available at the door or in advance at the Shuler Theater in late afternoons, or call Kathy Honeyfield at (575) 445-8108.

Museum seeks to set record straight on Molly Brown

By Colleen Slevin
Associated Press

DENVER — Thousands of miles from the ocean, a museum tells the story of a woman made famous by the Titanic. No, her name was not Rose, and a movie about her life, "The Unsinkable Molly Brown," starring Debbie Reynolds as a plucky lifeboat survivor, was a hit decades before Kate Winslet's doomed romance in "Titanic."

Molly Brown was a real person, but the movie created a myth that the museum, located in Brown's Denver home, attempts to dispel.

Born in 1867 to Irish immigrants in Hannibal, Mo., Brown struck it rich, with her husband, from a Colorado gold mine years

before she boarded the Titanic, and in later years, she fought for women's suffrage and labor rights.

No one called her Molly during her lifetime — her name was Margaret — and biographer Kristen Iversen, author of "Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth," writes that there's no proof she ever referred to herself as "unsinkable." The nickname seems to have originated with a Denver gossip columnist who may have been mad that Brown gave her account of the Titanic disaster to a newspaper in Newport, R.I., where she also spent time. Iversen says two books written in the 1930s created the image of Brown as a gun-packing, wisecracking former saloon

girl, accounts that became the basis of the Broadway play and later the 1964 musical starring Reynolds. Molly Brown also appears in James Cameron's "Titanic," portrayed by Kathy Bates.

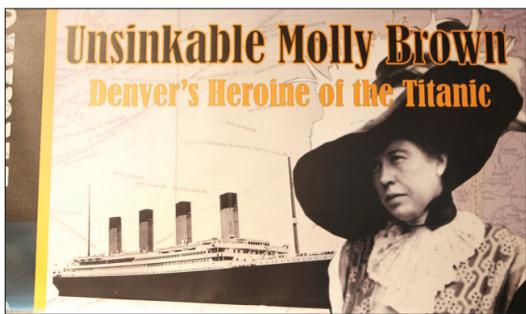
Brown eventually separated from her husband and, unlike on screen, they never reunited. That gave her the freedom to indulge in travel, and in 1912, she headed to Egypt with John Jacob Astor and his wife. She cut the trip short to visit her ailing grandson back in the U.S., and set sail on the Titanic from France, where the ship made one stop to pick up passengers and provisions.

Brown wrote that she was watching from a deck

after the Titanic hit the iceberg and was thrown into lifeboat No. 6. She rowed all night with its mostly female crew until the rescue ship Carpathia arrived.

Before the disaster, Brown was well known in the Mile High City for her charity and social reform work, such as fundraising to build Immaculate Conception Cathedral and mountain camps for poor children and orphans. After the sinking, she gained fame for raising money from rich Titanic survivors to help poorer passengers, making sure they had a place to go when they got to New York.

The museum, a few blocks from the state Capitol, is offering Titanic-



Associated Press

Photo shows a banner on display in the Molly Brown House Museum in Denver. A few blocks from Colorado's state Capitol is a museum dedicated to a woman eclipsed by legend following the sinking of the Titanic.

themed tours this year and some recent visitors sang songs from the musical on the front porch as they waited to begin. At the end, they were surprised to learn that Brown, despite having just an eighth-grade education,

spoke several languages — which came in handy with the Titanic's international collection of passengers — and had planned to take another trip on the Titanic, in part to take advantage of its well-stocked library.

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