

Miracle cure, anyone?

Interpreter Mike Follin returns to Baker City as Dr. Balthasar

By Lisa Britton

Go! Magazine

BAKER CITY — The slick-talking salesman known as Dr. Balthasar is coming back to town with his miracle cure for whatever ails you.

That's right — a cure for anything.

And if you believe that ...

Mike Follin, who worked as an education interpreter for the Ohio Historical Society, has portrayed Dr. Balthasar for 40 years. He's brought his show to Baker City since 1993 when he first performed at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.

He returns this week as Dr. Balthasar, and an additional character he's never performed in Baker City.

The first new show is Friday, Aug. 5. Follin, as Sean O'Shaughnessy, will share his story "Saints Preserve Us! The Irish in America." The show starts at 6 p.m. at Crossroads Carnegie Art Center, 2020 Auburn Ave.

In character, Follin takes his audience back to the 1800s as he tells the story of Sean leaving Ireland during the

1840s potato famine with his young bride, Mary.

"Learn about their difficult and sad journey across the Atlantic and the reality of coming to America, the land with the door of golden opportunity — arriving in New York City only to find the doors of opportunity shut tight," Follin said. "Hear how Sean traveled to Ohio and made a new beginning and life for himself and his wife."

For his weekend performances, Follin will bring back Dr. Balthasar's Traveling Medicine Show to "peddle elixirs and gossip — just like any good doctor along the Oregon Trail." Catch his Dr. Balthasar show at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 6, and Sunday, Aug. 7, in Geiser-Pollman Park.

Follin said when he developed the character of Dr. Balthasar, he did research for about six months and chose the name "Balthasar" from a Cincinnati newspaper printed in the 1820s.

"I wanted to pick a name that was equivalent to a medicine man," he said.

THE CENTER

The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center is closed for renovations, but a temporary Oregon Trail ex-



Travel Baker County/Contributed Photo

Mike Follin will perform as Dr. Balthasar Aug. 6-7 at Geiser-Pollman Park in Baker City.

hibit is on display at the Baker Heritage Museum, 2480 Grove St. (across Grove Street from the park).

The museum is open 10 a.m.-4 p.m.,

Monday through Saturday, and noon-4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$9 adults, \$8 seniors, \$5 ages 6-12 and free for 5 and younger.

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