

BIG BUTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS



Krystal applying make-up on Tim...

My Visit with Tim Behrens

By- Krystal Irwin

I recently went to go see "Scrambled McManus", a comedy play written by Patrick F. McManus and starring Tim Behrens.

The only props on stage were six stools, four pieces of clothing, and one actor. "Scrambled McManus" is a one-man show. The play was a mix of comedy acts taken from stories written by Mr. McManus, including one of my favorites, "The Grasshopper Trap". This story is definitely better to see in person than read in a book. The story is about young Pat McManus (played by Tim), and his best friend, Crazy Eddie Muldoon (also played by Tim) who come up with an outrageous scheme to catch grasshoppers to sell. Rancid Crabtree (an appropriately named older man, and what do you know, another character played by Tim!) Gets in on this plan and ends up volunteering to try out the trap. Sitting out on the front of an old truck holding the "net" made of a gunnysack, a barrel hoop, and a broomstick, Rancid lets Pat and Crazy Eddie (both around 12 years old) drive him through a ditch to catch grasshoppers. Not only is he splattered with grasshoppers, Rancid ends up getting thrown from the truck and as Pat later says, "lands comfortably in a brier patch." Tim plays these characters wonderfully.

Another act that had me in stitches is about young Pat and crazy Eddie building a cannon made of sewer pipes, baby carriage wheels, two-by-four wood planks, and a can full of gunpowder. They take it out to the golf course and end up blowing themselves into a nearby tool shed. An officer (the father of whom the now-smoldering baby carriage wheels belongs) hears the explosion and comes over to them to ask if they knew anything about it. The kids respond, "Uh, no." The officer then asks, "Then why are you smoking?" Crazy Eddie responds "gosh officer, if you had been here a few seconds earlier you could have seen us on fire!" And on goes the play. It was so humorous and I was constantly wiping tears of laughter away from my eyes.

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If I could use just two words to describe Tim Behrens, they would be "comical" and "talented". Thanks to Cory Hamann, President of the Big Butte Historical Society, I was able to interview Mr. Behrens for a school project. When I spoke to him, he said that he had grown up in an acting family. His mom, Amzie Stickland, still guest stars on popular TV shows, and his dad, Frank Behrens, was a famous radio actor, and later became a comedy writer. As a young person, Tim tried to avoid acting "like the plague". He ironically wound up becoming an actor while trying to steer clear of it.

Tim was a very serious person in middle school. He kept to himself most of the time and liked to bury his nose in books. As soon as he hit high school, though, Tim opened up and became a very comical person. His friends told him he had too much energy and suggested he try out for a play. Tim ended up getting the lead part in the play and grew to like acting. One of his college teachers was a man named Patrick McManus, who later began writing plays for Tim to perform all over the United States.

Mr. Behrens has toured Patrick McManus's four plays all over the U.S. and Canada. Since 1992, Mr. Behrens has performed in front of 160,000 people about 450 times. Married to Leslie Ann Grove and living in Spokane, Washington, Mr. Behrens' advice to anyone who wishes to pursue drama as a career is, "Make a Living. Do what you love and the money will follow."

I recommend that everyone see at least one of Patrick F. McManus' plays or read one of his many books. I guarantee they will enjoy it.

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