

Latest Celt play radiates and resonates

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Family dysfunction crescendoes over a science project in the latest stage production at McNary High School.

The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds by Paul Zindel runs Friday, March 18, and Saturday, March 19, at the Celtic's Ken Collins Theatre. Curtain time is 7:30 p.m. for both shows. Tickets are \$5 and available online at mcnarytheatre.weebly.com or at the door.

The play has three leads and two smaller roles. Annie Purkey plays Tillie Hunsdorfer, the second of two daughters, who is struggling to break free of the traps laid around her by her sister, Ruth (played by senior Jaida Watson), and

mother, Beatrice (played by senior Morgan Hoag).

Purkey read the script before trying out for a role in the play, but it hadn't prepared her for what happened during the audition.

"It felt so different and I realized how wonderful the character is and how there is so much inside of her," Purkey said. "Even in the hardest and darkest situations, she has this hope that she holds onto for the entire show. She chooses to see life so differently compared to how her sister and mother view it."

Beatrice is constantly trying to sabotage Tillie's attempts to see beyond the confines of their desperate existence caring for an elderly woman. Ruth, who has been

diagnosed with epilepsy and suffers seizures, plays her own part in the turmoil.

Like Purkey, Watson found passion for her character through the auditioning process.

"She acts like she doesn't care what people think about her, but she cares so much. She wants her mother to accept her and people at school to not think she's crazy because she's epileptic," Watson said.

Ruth's true feelings about Tillie emerge slowly over the course of the play.

Beatrice is a nasty piece of work, but Hoag has found motivation in everything she does and says.

"She lives in the past and chooses to see the past differently than what was actually happening at the time," Hoag said. "She got married too young, her father died and she ended up alone with two daughters taking care of an old lady she doesn't know in a beat-up house. She takes all of

it out on everyone."

At times, finding ways to react to Beatrice as instructed by the script has been a struggle for Watson.

"She's so harsh. There are times when I think she's just being flat out mean and my normal reaction would be to call her on it. It leaves you feeling a little glum after we do a run through and I have to find a place to just be quiet for a while," Watson said.

The play is far from lighthearted, but Purkey, Watson and Hoag were so dedicated to the script that all three had their lines memorized on the first day of rehearsals. It left them time to develop even greater insight into their respective characters.

"People, when they first see the show, are going to think Beatrice is a horrible mother and Tillie is a perfect girl and everything around her is horrible. But you have to think about what led up to it all the way back to when Beatrice was born and Ruth first had



KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

McNary junior Annie Purkey stars as Tillie Hunsdorfer in the Celtic production of *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*.

her seizures," Hoag said.

Seeing past the tribulation, difficult as it might be, has its own rewards.

"It's a good show if you're looking for a something that

can connect you to the deeper part of yourself. It will mean a lot of heartbreak along the way, but the characters are so beautiful," Purkey said.

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Boy killed while crossing River Road

An 8-year-old Salem boy was killed last Friday evening while attempting to cross River Road North on the 3900 block.

Just past 7 p.m. March 11, Keizer Police Department officers responded to a 9-1-1 report of an automobile versus pedestrian crash in the northbound lanes of River Road North.

When officers arrived on scene, they confirmed Jaren James Nash, 8, had been struck

by a northbound 2006 Ford Explorer driven by 31-year-old William Andrew Wetzler of Salem.

Paramedics responded to the scene and took Nash to Salem Hospital with life-threatening injuries. Nash was then flown by Life Flight the Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, where he was pronounced as deceased shortly after arriving.

According to police, the preliminary investigation

showed Nash was accompanied by his mother, Devon Rutherford of Keizer, while attempting to cross from west to east when he was hit in the northbound lanes. It was dark and the road was wet at the time of the incident. Wetzler stayed on scene and cooperated with authorities.

Deputy chief Jeff Kuhns with the KPD said Rutherford was not hit. Kuhns couldn't confirm what color clothing the mother and son

were wearing.

The portion of the road where the mother and son were crossing does not have a crosswalk. The Oregon State Police assisted the KPD with the crash scene reconstruction. The incident remains under investigation. Anyone who witnessed the incident is asked to contact KPD Sergeant Dan Kelley at 503-390-3713 ext. 3479.

Nash attended Schirle Elementary in Salem. Officials with the Salem-Keizer School District were notified.

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