



JOHN R. BRUNING/for the Itemizer-Observer
Dylan Lewis as Horton the Elephant holds the freshly hatched elephant bird in "Seussical the Musical."

'SEUSSICAL' PACKS IN FUN

Musical weaves Dr. Seuss' stories, morals into good time for everyone

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Anything's possible in the magical world of "Seussical the Musical," now showing at Central High School.

The musical features characters from multiple Dr. Seuss books, including Horton and the Whos, Mayzie the Amazing and Gertrude, the bird with a one-feathered tail.

Morals are sprinkled throughout the show like glitter, which may be one reason it was so difficult for Dylan Lewis, who plays Horton the Elephant, to name just one.

"I'm trying to describe it in my brain," he said. While his character says repeatedly, "A person's a person no matter how small," plenty of other lessons can be learned from Horton.

Horton is gullible and good-hearted, Lewis said.

Still time

What: Central High School Performing Arts presents, "Seussical the Musical."

When: 7 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Matinee at 2 p.m. on Saturday.

Where: CHS auditorium, 1500 Monmouth St., Independence.

Admission: \$8 adults; \$5 students; \$3 special student pricing on Thursday.

For more information: chsperformingarts.org, or 503-606-2228.

"He's a nice guy," he said. "He ends up getting the girl in the end."

But he gets so focused on his responsibilities — caring for Whoville on a speck of dust and egg-sitting for Mayzie, played by Jadie Van Volkinburg — that he doesn't see the affection from his next-door neighbor, Gertrude, played by Hannah Boyack.

"Seussical" brings out the best in the young actors onstage, giving Boyack a

chance to show off her brilliant comedic timing and allowing Jacob Eschette, who plays Cat in the Hat, a chance to have a lot of fun both onstage and off.

"Cat in the Hat is very mischievous," Eschette said. "When I think of a cat, I always think of self-interest before everything else. The cat is very self-interested. He enjoys telling a story and controlling everything."

Eschette, who has been frequently cast as the "bad guy"

throughout his high school career, has enjoyed the break of playing a character that just wants to have fun.

"Literally, all the Cat does in the whole show is just have fun with everything he does," Eschette said.

Abby Miller, the Sour Kangaroo, is no stranger to the stage. She's been working with Central High School Performing Arts since fifth grade. This is her first speaking role, and she rocks the house.

"The Sour Kangaroo is very sassy, and she's not really open to anyone else's opinion," Miller said. "If she thinks something's not right, she will do whatever it takes to keep people on her side."

In fact, until the very end, she has the entire forest of birds and monkeys convinced Horton has lost his marbles.

"It works out pretty well until she gets proven wrong by the Whos," Miller said.

Central board considers bond

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — The Central School Board approved appointing citizens to a bond exploration committee to determine if the district will put a bond on the November 2016 ballot.

The bond would pay for improvements to facilities. Early estimates to complete all the projects on the facilities plan is \$16 million to \$20 million.

Superintendent Buzz Brazeau said he met with a subcommittee of the school board, Steve Moser and Donn Wahl, to discuss the needs of the district.

Independence Elementary School needs to have air conditioning, Brazeau said, as well as old modular buildings that need replacing.

He said the subcommittee proposed building an additional wing onto IES that would hold six classrooms on both the first and second floor, adding an additional 12 classrooms and absorbing the modular buildings.

Brazeau said if that was completed, some children could be moved back to IES from Ash Creek and Monmouth elementary schools.

Cafeterias and gymnasiums also need to be remodeled or added at MES, Talmadge Middle School and IES, Brazeau said.

Some schools are on three or four lunches, Brazeau said. Buildings that use a cafeteria in the same space as a gym make it challenging to provide physical education classes according to legislation.

"Lastly, as we've grown, we need more fields," he said. "We would ask for development of more fields on 16th Street, along with

parking, concessions and bathrooms."

Wahl said the improvements would "balance the elementary schools even more." With potentially \$4 million available in grant money from the state, he said it is timely to consider a bond.

"What we are contemplating would not impact property taxes," said Steve Love, board chair.

With the runoff of existing bonds, the move up to Class 5A, the grant money from the state and all-day kindergarten, the board needs to look at going for a bond, Love said.

Moser said that while he was on a superintendent tour of the elementary schools, he noticed the floors need to be replaced.

He said that work has been deferred maintenance since "at least 2013."

Business Director Cec Koontz said the rubberized floors used in the elementary schools cost \$12,000 to \$15,000 to replace.

Moser called the move "the next step in the right-sizing of our district."

"It's a win all the way around," he said.

Board member Peggy Clyne said they should consider appointing citizens from different community areas, such as the Independence Airport.

In other business, the board:

- Heard from Model United Nations students about their recent trip to a conference in Seattle.

- Heard from students in the POWER (Purpose, Ownership, Work ethic, Empathy, Respect) program at Central High School about how students are taking ownership of the school by learning how to use the recycling and trash bins properly.



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