



Beth Day | The Times

Five denizens of Korn County rehearse their corny jokes for the upcoming performances of Hoo Haw. They are (front) Mindy Thierolf, Mark Portell, Shelley Rickstrew; (back) Ray Springer, and Carrie Ficke.

Corny classic in its 21st year

Beth Day
The Times

“Do you think my kids are spoiled?”
“No, I think all kids smell that way.”
With corny jokes like that, Hoo Haw is off to its 21st run on the Columbian Stage.
The show is always a mix of corny jokes, silly skits and great music, a combination which leads to its popularity.
“We have a lot of the same and a lot of new stuff,” said Troy Hemphill, director. “We’ve got a lot of new songs and our jokes are new. We have a couple of new people on stage – Jody Weiss, on the piano and Brent Patton permanently in the band.” Also, after a few season hiatus, Christie Horton

is also back in Korn County.
Musical numbers this year will feature the Korn County actors as well as the Pott County Posse band. “We’ve got a wide variety from Hank Williams to Linda Ronstadt to Bonnie Rait,” Hemphill said. “Traditional country, some southern rock, R & B type stuff too. So, I think it’s a good mix of music.”
Hoo Haw still packs the theatre after 21 years – and many of the cast members have been around that long.
“I think it’s a camaraderie with the cast mates and the members of the band,” Hemphill said about the show’s longevity. “I think we’ve developed a little family and a lot of different people have ownership in the show now. So it’s certainly not one person dragging it along. It’s sever-

al people pushing it a long and it’s a group effort. And, it’s a lot of fun to be a big part of the team. Also, we understand the process and we share the responsibilities and get the thing done as a group. So it’s a lot of fun.”
Hemphill also quipped that the pay is something else that keeps the cast coming back. “You get paid the same as you got last year and the year before,” he said, clarifying, “That’s nothing.”
Which brings about the point that all the cast and crew are donating their time and talent to the show, a fundraiser for the Columbian. “Outside of our very, very limited expenses, whatever we earn goes right back to the theatre,” Hemphill said. “We’re

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‘Rock the Plains’ this weekend at Tuttle Creek

Emma Loura
The Mercury

A new music festival, Rock the Plains, is this weekend and the event’s co-founder said tickets are limited. The Country Stampede-inspired event will take place at Tuttle Creek Park.
Tuttle Creek Park is located in Pottawatomie County. “Preparations for this started well over a year ago, reaching out to the park and having everything taken care of that they needed, that we’re respectful of the space and that we are able to put together a top-notch event for everyone who is coming out to it,” said Coleman Younger, a Rock the Plains co-founder.
Younger said the event is “Manhattan-centric,” with local vendors and businesses helping make it possible. Rock the Plains is also working with the same au-



Lewis Marien | The Mercury

From left, Coleman Younger, Brandyn Steen and Richard Jones discuss Rock the Plains during an interview April 23 at the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce.

dio and video professionals who are involved with a similar event called Rock the Coast.
Artists featured in this music festival include the Randy Rogers Band, Aaron Watson, Braxton Keith and Josh Abbott, as well as other artists of the Texan red dirt country genre. Younger said Rock Plains co-founder, Brandyn Steen chose the

artists based on their popularity around Kansas.
“We really wanted to make sure we could capitalize, number one, on artists that we know people in Manhattan and surrounding areas would love to see,” Younger said. “But also, number two, we want artists who are going to put on a very good show.”
Younger said there are

opportunities for meet-and-greets, so they also selected artists who are fan-friendly for VIP patrons who want to meet them.
“It’s coming together really well,” Younger said. “We especially want to make a good impression with the show itself.”
Rock the Plains is capped at 10,000 attendees. Younger said last week he expects a large turnout and there are not many tickets left.
“We still have some tickets available for general admission and I still think for VIP there are a couple as well,” Younger said. “We really want to encourage folks to go and get those now because if you try to get them up there at the gate that’s not going to be an option.”
Younger said visiting the festival’s site at Tuttle Creek Park was a nostalgic experience. He and the event’s

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Grover stresses respect, kindness

Beth Day
The Times

Respect and kindness.
Those are the main attributes new Wamego High School Principal Jodi Grover will be stressing when the doors open to start the school year.
“I hope that when they walk through those doors, both staff and students give me the best they have that day, and do it with respect and kindness,” she said. “We want kids to be respectful, obviously, and sometimes they need to be shown what that means. So that’s my biggest goal.”
And what does she want the staff and students to take away from her pres-



Jodi Grover
WHS Principal

ence?
“I want their biggest takeaway from me is that we can have fun at school while learning,” Grover said. “We all don’t have to

like each other, but we need to learn how to coexist and support one another in our different activities and in our academics.”
Grover comes with a lot of experience to meet this goal. She came to Wamego from Burlington, where she served as the high school principal for the last three years.
“I started my career as a business teacher,” she said. “Then I got my degree in counseling, becoming a counselor for all ages, K-12. But really, I loved the high school and stayed in that.”
After her counseling degree, Grover returned to school to become certified in administration.
“I always knew that was my progression,” she said,

“because I have had great administrators. The ones I really enjoyed working with related well to the kids, and I knew that with a counseling degree it really was a natural progression for me. I could discipline with kindness and be able to talk with students and parents on the hard topics.”
In addition to counseling and teaching, Grover has also served as a Career and Technical Director and Athletic Director, rounding out her high school experience.
She decided to bring that experience to Wamego as a logical next step, mostly based on the district’s reputation.

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Shawn Hornung

Hornung is History Teacher of the Year

Shawn Hornung of Wamego High School was recently named the Kansas State History Teacher of the Year by the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History.
The Gilder Lehrman Institute was founded in 1994 by Richard Gilder and Lewis E. Lehrman, visionaries and lifelong supporters of American history education. The Institute is the leading nonprofit and nonpartisan organization dedicated to K–12 history education while also serving the general public. Its mission is to promote the knowledge and understanding of American history through educational programs and resources.

Started in 2004, the History Teacher of the Year program recognizes excellence in the teaching of history at the K–12 level. Each year, thousands of teachers are nominated by students, parents, fellow teachers, and community members, shining a light on the important work they do.
Each state convenes a committee of history teachers, professors, and other education professionals to review the nominated teachers in their state. Each state winner is awarded \$1,000 and becomes a nominee in the national contest. The national panel of eminent historians, former winners, and master teachers selects one national winner for the \$10,000 award.
Hornung teaches American History and AP American History. He is a National Honor Society sponsor and one of the driving forces behind the WHS NHS Honor Flight program.

Tall Corn celebrated this weekend in Rossville

The annual Rossville Tall Corn Festival is set for Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
Unless otherwise noted, activities are at the Rossville City Park.

FRIDAY SCHEDULE

- 4-8 p.m. – Craft Vendors, Bounce Houses, Food Trucks.
- 4-8 p.m. – Car Show (Main Street).
- 6 p.m. – RJHS & RHS cheer, band and dance performances (football stadium).
- 6 p.m. – Softball tournament starts (baseball diamond).
- 6:30 p.m. – Tall Corn Contest.
- 7:30-9:30 p.m. – RJHS Dance (Community Shelter).
- 9:30 p.m. – Fireworks.

SATURDAY SCHEDULE

- 7-8 a.m. – Tall Corn Pancake Breakfast (Andricks Park).
- 7:30 a.m. – Tall Corn 5K and Mile Fun Run (Grade School Teacher Parking Lot).
- All Day – Sand Volleyball tournament, Beer Garden, Softball Tournament.
- 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. – Craft booths.
- 9:45 a.m. – Biscuits and Gravy/Bottled Water (Main Street).
- 9:45 a.m. – Kids’ Parade (Main Street).
- 10 a.m. – Grand Parade (Main Street), followed by THS Drumline performance (pool parking lot).
- 11:30 a.m. – Corn-on-the-Cob Eating Contest (pool parking lot).
- Noon – Corn Spitting Contest (pool parking lot).
- 11:30 a.m. – Cornhole Tournament (tennis courts).
- 3-6 p.m. – Meal & Bingo (St. Stanislaus Parish Hall).
- 5:30 p.m. – Watermelon Feed.
- 8-11 p.m. – Community Dance: Chance Encounter.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

- 1 p.m. – Horseshoe Tournament.
 - Noon-2 p.m. – Pool Party.
 - 5 p.m. – Closing Prayer and Praise Ice Cream Social.
- For tournament entry details and more information, visit the Rossville Community Development Facebook Page.

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