

Holyoke to celebrate 125th on April 24

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

It's been 125 years in the making, and Holyoke is prepared to celebrate its 125th birthday Wednesday, April 24. This "City of Pride and Progress" has sure come a long way since its incorporation on that date 125 years ago in 1888.

Community members are invited to the quasiquicentennial event Wednesday night at 7:30 p.m. at the HHS auditorium.

Mayor Orville Tonsing will be on hand for a greeting and special introductions. Refreshments will be served, and the plan is to have Holyoke 125th anniversary memorabilia available for purchase.

In honor of the city's birthday, Phillips County Community Players will be presenting "Shawnee Lou, the Prairie's Purest Dressmaker."



Cast members in "Shawnee Lou, the Prairie's Purest Dressmaker" are pictured from left, front row, Dolly Smith, Penny Dockins, Ashley Sullivan and Karin Kramer; and back row, Jacob Vasa, Jerry Brandt, Eric Conklin and Maury Kramer. Not pictured are Anastasia Conklin, Lemoine Ferguson and Tristen Ferguson.□□

—Enterprise photo

The melodrama, which is free of charge, is directed by Penny Dockins with assistant director Eric Conklin.

To the audience's delight, many well-known Holyoke names and places will pop up throughout the play. As the story goes, Shawnee Lou Meusborn, a motherless child, and her incapacitated father run the Burge Hotel, the home to aging actresses Fluffy Furry and Trixie Baxter. Another of their boarders, Chester C. Conklin, a Shakespearean actor, has his evil eye on Shawnee Lou.

When rich, handsome, noble Frank Scheunemann enters the scene, it's love at first sight for Frank and Shawnee Lou. But Mrs. Scheunemann is aghast at the thought of her son making eyes at a seamstress.

Enter yet another villain, C.E. Ginapp, a scurrilous theatrical producer who decides to bilk the dowager of her fortune by convincing her that she could be a great actress and that if she invests in the show, he will make her a star.

After some melodramatic romping and tromping, the situation is saved in the nick of time, and the villains receive their just deserts.

Wednesday's cast of characters includes Anastasia Conklin as Shawnee Lou, Jacob Vasa as Francis Scheunemann, Eric Conklin as Chester C. Conklin, Maury Kramer as C.E. Ginapp, Karin Kramer as Mrs. Scheunemann, Jerry Brandt as Lavern Meusborn, Penny Dockins as Trixie Baxter, Dolly Smith as Fluffy Furry, Lemoine Ferguson as Sherman Brandt, Tristen Ferguson as Billy and Ashley Sullivan as Billy's mother.

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Pat Wiebers will be the melodrama's pianist. Nancy Pillard and Karin Kramer helped with costumes, and Eric Conklin designed the set.

Don't miss out on this chance to celebrate the city's 125th anniversary! While April 24 is Holyoke's official birthday, a grand celebration is planned this summer for June 14-15, including a parade, dance and much, much more!

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