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# 'Culture' Hits The Skids In YHS Comedy

'An Evening Of Culture' Envisions A Local Theater's Hilarious Effort To Stage 'Romeo And Juliet'

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When the lights go up on this fall's Yankton High School (YHS) production next week, it will be the first play that Pam Kallis has directed.

After spending years involved with the design and technical aspects of theater at YHS, she has decided to try her hand at directing this year.

"I have been doing the technical aspect of theater here since 1996. I've costumed every single show at YHS since the fall of that year," Kallis said. "When Bob Beard decided to retire from directing, I thought I'd give it a try."

Her first production will be a play within a play, "An Evening of Culture" by Mark Landon Smith, produced with special arrangement with Baker's Plays, is a story that takes place in Mineola County, which is located "in the middle of nowhere" in the South.

"It's supposed to be about a community theater group from somewhere in the south called the Mineola Society for Cultural Recognition," Kallis said. "The group is putting on 'Romeo and Juliet' and are very enthusiastic and very positive about it, but just are not very good."

The first act of the play occurs about 30 minutes before the curtain is set to go up on the 'Romeo and Juliet' production. However things are not going well. The set is not yet done, there is a dog barking backstage and with the play taking place in a middle school gymnasium, the scoreboard is going off.

"All kinds of things go wrong," Kallis said. "Things continue to go wrong all throughout the production."

She said she wanted to do a comedy this year for a number of reasons.

"It's an election year, so I really wanted to put on a comedy," Kallis said. "I didn't want anything serious, I wanted something that would make people laugh."

Kallis added that this is a family show and there is nothing too offensive and nothing too deep, and that there are many jokes that little kids will laugh at during the play.

Students began rehearsing for the play during the first week of September, and have been practicing five or six days a week since then.

"We have had to work around band competitions and things like that, but the kids have been really great and really flexible with everything," Kallis said.

Tickets for the play are \$5 for adults, \$4 for students and \$3 with a student activities card. The play takes place Oct. 19, 20 and 22 at the Summit Center theater.

"One of the things that really drew me to this show was all the silly things that go on," Kallis said. "There are really inappropriate costumes for the times. Lady Capulet



Yankton High School plays Shakespeare for laughs with the comedy "An Evening of Culture." TOP RIGHT: In the "play within a play," Amber Livingston plays Mildred (who plays Juliet) and Paden Schmidt plays Bubba (who reluctantly plays Romeo); LEFT: Costuming for the "Romeo and Juliet" production takes many forms, as displayed by Lady Capulet (left, played by Alexa Berg as Naomi) and the nurse (played by Payton Terca as Faye); TOP LEFT: The opening chorus for "Romeo and Juliet" is provided by the Skeeter's Hay and Feed girls, from left: Alanna Binder (as Mary Lou); Jackie Paji (as Lucille); Tara Richardson (as Sissy K) and Susie Kinsley (as Sue Ann). To see or purchase images from this event, visit [spotted.yankton.net](http://spotted.yankton.net). (Kelly Hertz/P&D)



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