

THE IOLA REGISTER

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Above from left, Walter Palmisano, Cole Moyer, Kegan Tadlock, Destiny Beal and Alison Fees portray the Otis Family, a group of boorish Americans who have made themselves at home in a haunted mansion, much to the chagrin of the home's spectral spirit, portrayed by Richard Spencer, in the Iola Community Theatre's production of "The Canterville Ghost." REGISTER/RICHARD LUKEN

Production a hauntingly fun yarn

By RICHARD LUKEN
The Iola Register

It's a ghost story, with a twist.

The Iola Community Theatre's production of Oscar Wilde's "The Canterville Ghost" opens Friday evening at the ICT Warehouse.

The frequently spooky, consistently funny, and even a bit touching story runs Friday, Saturday and Feb. 10 and 12 at the ICT Warehouse. Wilde's tale follows the exploits of Sr. Simon Canterville, a ghost who has masterfully haunted his British mansion for more than 300 years.

But what happens when the home's newest occu-



pants — a family of obnoxious Americans — refuses to get on, and even starts to get on the poor old ghost's nerves?

The tables are delightfully turned on Ghost Canterville, played impeccably by ICT veteran Richard Spencer, who has spent the past

several years entertaining play audiences as director.

That Spencer gets to show off his considerable acting chops is a riot, particularly as his frustration soon becomes exasperation and finally desperation. He simply cannot stand knowing anyone — especially oblivious Americans — is immune to his devious schemes.

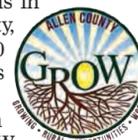
It's almost too much for Sir Simon Canterville to take. So how does the ghost react?

That mystery is solved at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Saturday and again Feb. 10 at 203 S. Jefferson Ave. A special matinee performance is

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Allen County GROW gets grant

An organization dedicated to improving access to affordable, nutritious and safe foods in Allen County, has a \$15,000 arrow in its quiver.



The Allen County GROW (Growing Rural Opportunities Works) Food and Farm Council, has been named one of eight recipients of \$15,000 Project HERO (Healthy Eating: Rural Opportunities) pilot grants.

The grants support community-based strategies to address food access needs in rural areas, such as strengthening local grocery stores.

Allen County GROW has worked in league with Thrive Allen County to ensure the sustainability of Stub's Market in Moran.

David Toland, Thrive CEO, said uses of the grant are still in development.

The planning grants are intended to provide community teams with the resources and technical assistance needed to explore and develop sustainable strategies for increasing access to healthy foods, according to a Sunflower Foundation press release.

"We know that access to a full range of nutritious foods is critical for the health of growing children and their

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Revenues beat expectations; budget fix remains elusive

By JOHN HANNA
The Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Republican legislators are divided over many of GOP Gov. Sam Brownback's proposals to close a shortfall in the Kansas budget by summer, and a few said Wednesday they don't like any of the ideas he's put forward.

The job at least became a little easier Wednesday when the Department of Revenue reporting that Kansas collected \$24 million more in taxes than anticipated in January. It

was the third straight month of better-than-expected tax collections, suggesting a pessimistic fiscal forecast issued in November was on the mark and lessening uncertainty about revenue projections.

But the estimated hole in the current budget still is about \$320 million. Brownback's proposals to close it include scaling back contributions to public employees'

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'Purple Night' is Friday

LE ROY — Southern Coffey County High School's second annual "Purple Night," dedicated to raising money for both Alzheimer's disease awareness and the school's athletic department is set for Friday.

Starting with the junior varsity games at 4 p.m., Freeman and other individuals will be selling raffle tickets, one ticket for \$1 or

six tickets for \$5, for a variety of prizes. Including umbrellas, T-shirts and a blanket.

Speaking at the event once again is Jennifer Freeman,

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Bill Freeman



Aimeé Daniels, Court Appointed Special Advocates director, from left, Liam and Noah Weber, 3, and their mother, Lara Megan Weber, director of The Studio in Yates Center, have organized a talent show Saturday to benefit CASA. REGISTER/RICHARD LUKEN

Saturday showcase to benefit CASA

By SUSAN LYNN
The Iola Register

At first glance, the women's passions seem a study in contrasts.

As an attorney, Aimeé Daniels shuns the spotlight, quietly laboring for children in desperate situations, those who have been removed from their homes because of dangerous domestic circumstances. Daniels is director of CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates, whose job it is to help children in cases of abuse or neglect.



For everything muted about Daniels, is animated in Lara Megan Weber, owner of The Studio, a dance and gymnastics center in Yates Center.

With a mantra of "The show must go on," Weber is a master of showmanship, corraling groups of dancers and tumblers decked out in glitter and tulle.

A mother of five, the youthful Weber seems nonplussed by the task.

So what do somersaults and leaps have in common with victims' rights? Children.

"By putting the spotlight on CASA, I can help show the desperate situations some of

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Quote of the day

"I do not 'get' ideas; ideas get me."
— Robertson Davies, Canadian novelist (1913-1995)



Hi: 37 Lo: 22

CASA: Fundraiser

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these children face," Weber said.

On Saturday night, the second annual Bright Lights-Big Hearts talent showcase and silent auction will donate all proceeds to CASA, which serves the children of the 31st Judicial District — Allen, Neosho, Wilson and Woodson counties.

Doors open at 6 p.m. at the Bowlus Fine Arts Center. Admission is \$15 and tickets can be purchased at the door. Items for a silent auction will be in the lower level and homemade concessions will be in the main foyer.

Last year's affair in Yates Center raised about \$2,700 for CASA. This year's goal is \$4,500.

Daniels currently has 22 advocates to handle a caseload "many times bigger," she said. "I'd love to have 50 advocates."

But Daniels understands the commitment such volunteer work entails. In 2015, there were 219 children removed from their homes in the 31st District and classified as Child In Need of Care cases. Of those 219, CASA was able to help 50 children.

Typically, an individual case, which includes helping children cope with legal proceedings, can take 18 to 20 months.

"Most people aren't aware of the needs of these children be-

cause by necessity their cases are kept confidential," Daniels said. "Most aren't aware of our services, or the need of our services."

Funds for CASA help staff its office and provide services.

THE entertainment Saturday will include magicians, musicians, dancers and acrobats.

Korso the Curious, a magician from Overland Park, will serve as master of ceremonies throughout the evening. Performers will include dance troupe members from Yates Center, Iola and Chanute; IHS band students; Annika Wooten, a Miss Kansas contestant known for her upside-down speed painting; Sabra Aguirre will sing and play the piano while Abigail Weber will dance; and Hali Dawson will inspire as an aerial silk artist.

ALTOGETHER more than 70 performers will be on stage throughout the program.

"The entertainment is going to be incredible," Daniels said. "All the studios are sending their best acts."

For those who can't attend Saturday's showcase, donations to CASA can be sent to: CASA, 1 N. Washington, Allen County Courthouse, Iola, KS 66749. Daniels also can be reached at 365-1448 or by email at casadirector31@yahoo.com.

'Ghost': Cast brings Wilde tale to stage

Continued from A1

scheduled for 2 p.m. Feb. 12. Adult tickets sell for \$17.31. Student tickets sell for \$11.88. Tickets are available at the Bowlus Fine Arts Center and online at iolacommunitytheatre.org.

The Americans, likewise, are a hoot.

Walter Palmisano is brilliant as Hiram Otis, the family's patriarch who initially doesn't believe in ghosts, and is unfazed when he realizes the home may have a spectre or two still inside — as long as it would quit making those annoying noises overnight.

Alison Fees, as Hiram's wife, Lucretia Otis, is equally unruffled upon learning of the ghost. After all, she has plenty of floor cleaner capable of ridding the carpet of its long-lasting blood stain. And surely some tonic would help cure their ill-tempered ghost of whatever stomach ailment prompts him to moan and howl through the night.

Their young sons, Chip and Charlie — played by newcomers Keagan Tadlock, Yates Center, and Cole Moyer, Iola — react as most rambunctious children might. No, they don't recoil in horror. Rather they want to play with, or at the least, play pranks on Canterville's ghost with firecrackers, pop guns or other toys.

But the family's ambivalence is not unanimous.

Destiny Beal is Virginia Otis, the family's daughter, the only house member who feels more



Sam Terhune, left, and Tracy Keagle rehearse a scene from the Iola Community Theatre production of "The Canterville Ghost," which opens Friday. REGISTER/RICHARD LUKEN

than a little curiosity, and finally empathy, for the castle's disgruntled ghost. Beal, of Erie, also is a newcomer to ICT. Here's hoping she remains involved in the local drama scene for years to come. Her inquisitive, charming nature graces the stage, and will certainly entertain the audience.

Meanwhile, River Hess, another young praise-worthy thespian, is the Duke of Cheshire — nicknamed "Buffy" by the Americans — a young Brit who has taken a keen liking to the Americans, especially Virginia.

On stage all too briefly is Sam Terhune, who

shines in his few scenes as Lord Canterville, a descendant of the ghost who agrees to sell the family's mansion to the ghastly Americans, and Mati Tadlock, Yates Center, another newcomer. Tadlock sparkles as Oscar Wilde himself, who opens and closes the play with a pair of short monologues.

Last, but certainly not least, is the performance of Tracy Keagle, as Mrs. Umney, an elderly housekeeper all too familiar with the ghost's behavior.

She is uproariously brilliant, and easily spooked, at both the ghost, and the home's boorish new occupants.

HELPING tie the production together is director Mandy Moyer, with the assistance of Bryan Johnson. Linda Broucker handles the behind-the-scenes duties as stage manager.

They help keep the proceedings running smoothly and seamlessly in the production's 14* scenes. (It's actually one scene shorter, but as the program notes, the unlucky 13th scene is skipped altogether in deference to the ghost.)

The ICT troupe, en masse, deftly captures the play's wit, charm and often funny themes.

A howlingly good time, indeed.

Budget: Lawmakers still struggling to fill budget shortfall

Continued from A1

pensions and liquidating a state investment portfolio so that the funds can back an internal government loan over seven years.

Approving the governor's proposals would allow legislators to avoid immediate cuts in aid to public schools or other spending. But Senate Ways and Means Committee members were especially critical of Brownback's proposal on pensions after a Wednesday hearing.

"I don't like any of

it," said Republican Sen. Dan Kerschen, of Garden Plain.

The shortfall in the current budget is part of projected gaps in spending for existing programs totaling nearly \$1.1 billion through June 2019. The state has struggled to balance its budget since Republican lawmakers slashed personal income taxes in 2012 and 2013 at Brownback's urging in what even some GOP voters came to see as a failed attempt to stimulate the economy.

Some legislators want to rethink those income tax cuts, while Brownback is pushing for higher liquor and cigarette taxes. But lawmakers don't believe they can raise new revenues quickly enough to plug any gaps by June 30, leaving them with the choice of cutting spending immediately or using accounting moves and other short-term fixes to push the problems off.

The proposal to scale back contributions to public pensions — sav-

ing \$86 million before June 30 — galls some legislators because the state committed in 2012 to ratchet up contributions to boost the long-term financial health of the pension system.

"It's irresponsible, in my mind," said Sen. John Skubal, an Overland Park Republican.

Republican lawmakers also were critical of Brownback's proposal to liquidate the state investment portfolio and to loan the funds to the state's main bank account to cover government expenses. They don't think it solves the state's underlying fiscal problems.

Yet a bipartisan consensus is emerging in the House that the internal borrowing is preferable to spending cuts.

"It's possibly the least bad of a bunch of bad alternatives," said House Majority Leader Don Hineman, a Dighton Republican.

Legislators had previously found their efforts to deal with budget problems complicated by the state's inability to hit monthly targets for tax collections. During the 24 months ending in October, tax collections fell short of expectations 21 times.

The new fiscal fore-

cast issued in November by state officials and university economists assumed that the state's economy would remain sluggish well into 2018, with unemployment rising and Kansans' incomes growing less than normal.

The Department of Revenue said Kansas collected \$544 million in taxes in January, or 4.6 percent more than the \$520 million predicted.

"You can lower the barrier so much that eventually you'll trip over it — and we did," said Sen. Laura Kelly, of Topeka, the ranking Democrat on the Ways and Means Committee.

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