



## Let the rumors fly

By TOM FINK

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— Seana Murray is wanting to bring community theater back to Claremore, and she's starting it with a rumor. "Rumors" by Neil Simon will be coming to Claremore next month, the first locally-mounted community theater production to be performed at the Robson Performing Arts Center in Claremore.

The first, but not the last, Murray hopes.

"Several years ago, Claremore had something of its own community theater scene, but it eventually went defunct, and there really hasn't been a unified local theater group for a while now," Murray said. "With that in mind, (Robson PAC executive director) Ruby Quinn asked me if I would be interested in directing a community-produced show, under the PAC's summer season umbrella to rekindle interest in local theater." Having gone to college with Murray, Quinn knew of her college and post-college training in theater, both on stage and behind the scenes.

"Ruby and I have known each other for years — we worked together in Northeastern State University's theater program, we worked together at the Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival, and she knew I was familiar enough with the different facets of the theater to ask me to step into the role of director for 'Rumors,'" Murray said.

Auditions for "Rumors" were held in June, and the cast has been hard at work in preparation for its August debut.

"We've got a great cast, there are so many talented people in this area," Murray said. "It was hard picking the people for the roles, there were so many good ones to choose from, but I can already tell that this group is going to gel and by the time the curtain goes up in August, they'll be like old pros at this."

Cast members for "Rumors" include Pamela Neuok, Richard Cagle, Virginia Holt Szcinskim, Rickey Bitting, Gary L. Driver, Gina Wilson, Grant Driver, Jennifer Kern, Sam Walker, and Lisa Fink.

"One of the reasons we chose 'Rumors' for the PAC's first locally-produced play was because it's not really a 'star' vehicle, with one or two leads and several supporting parts — it's truly an ensemble piece, with everyone's part being equally important, and everyone either sinking or swimming together," she said. "And the fact that it's one of Neil Simon's lesser-known plays was another reason — you really can't go wrong with Neil Simon, and unlike many of his plays which are labeled 'comedy,' this one's labeled a 'farce,' and it's really non-stop laughs all the way through."

Currently, the set for "Rumors," which Murray said is like another character in the play, is under construction.

"Personally, I'm hoping that this (play) sparks an interest in community theater productions (in Claremore) again," she said. "It's a wonderfully funny show that will have people laughing throughout, made possible by local talent — if people want to enjoy these kind of shows again, this could be an example of how much fun these type productions are, whether you're a participant or a spectator."

"Rumors" contains mild adult content and situations, but is suitable for young adults.

Performances of Neil Simon's "Rumors" will be 8 p.m. Friday, Aug. 8 and 8 p.m. Friday, Aug. 9.

Ticket prices will be \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, and \$5 for students. General ticket sales will be announced at a later date.

For more information about showtimes for "Rumors," contact the Robson Performing Arts Center at 699-7390 or visit [www.claremorepac.org](http://www.claremorepac.org).

Synopsis:

In Neil Simon's "Rumors," four couples are at the townhouse of a deputy New York City mayor and his wife to celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary.

The party never begins because the host has shot himself in the head (it's only a flesh wound) and his wife is missing. His lawyer's cover up gets progressively more difficult to sustain as the other guests arrive and nobody can remember who has been told what about whom. Doors slam and humor abounds as the couples get more and more crazed.

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Photos



Seana Murray will direct "Rumors," a farce by Neil Simon, next month at the Robson Performing Arts Center.