

Miracle Makes Merry at Cripple Creek Theater

With all the trimmings of Christmas, the lights of holiday ornaments glistening in fresh snow on the mountains included, the magic of theatre filled Cripple Creek for the opening of *Miracle on Bennett Avenue*.

The newest Thin Air Theatre show at the Butte Theatre brought a full cast of holiday spirits to life, all involved in a make believe, yet somewhat true tale of Cripple Creek's past.

Miracle on Bennett Avenue, an original script for the Butte written by Chris Sorensen, is a re-imagining of the classic Christmas story, *Miracle on 34th Street*.

A combination of professional and community actors tell the story of Vice President-elect Teddy Roosevelt's (Mel Moser) visit to the district (a true part of local history). Arriving first in Victor, where he is delayed for several hours, Roosevelt arrives to greet the good people of Cripple Creek and is injured while taking a tour of a Cripple Creek gold mine, the Wonderland. He stumbles into the hills, his memory lost. His personal secretary Drayton Kreager (Michael Heath) betrays him in an effort to be free of his servitude. He creates a cover up that, of course, puts the blame for Roosevelt's apparent death on the neighboring town of Victor.

Joe Anderson (Mickey Burdick) gets this memory-deprived stranger a job as the Wylie Mercantile Santa Claus. Joe, who works for the "R" dropping wicked Widow Wylie (Morgan Gengo) at Wylie Mercantile, has designs on making a family life with Clara Mayfield (Karen Zondag) and her adopted mute child Susie Snowflake (Mahryn Barron/Lauryn Petrowski).

Throw in a town drunk named Cappy (Cyndi Ridder) and a judge's wife, Mrs. Waverly (Barbara Rains/Steph Hilliard), *The Santa Clause Rag*, and a cast of town's people and children, all played by local actors (Lesa Foster, AJ Burton LaPage, JM Schiller/Michael Gottlieb, Nanc Attaway, Tonya McClean, Shawn Seals/Lexie Molick, Autumn Molick/Nikolas Linenberger), and you have a scene alive with Christmas tunes, great sets and a heart-warming story.

If *Miracle on Bennett Avenue* does not send you into the Christmas holiday with song and laughter in your heart, the cast and crew also hosts a fun-filled Christmas Olio following the show.

This show runs through Dec. 31 at the Butte at 139 E. Bennett Ave.

Show times are: Thursday 7 p.m.; Friday 7 p.m.; Saturday 1 & 7 p.m.; Sunday 1 p.m. Special Dec. 31 show at 7 p.m.

In the spirit of giving, tickets are discounted from regular theater prices: \$11.75 adults/\$9.75 seniors/\$7.75 children. Group Rates Available. Make reservations at 719-235-8944 or butteoperahouse.com.