



FACING MECCA FROM LOGAN: Muslims gather for Friday prayers in [a new Pixel photoessay](#). / Photo by Sarah Ali

Today's word on journalism

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THE FINAL WORD

PETERSBORO, Utah -- Gloom like a Bulwer-Lyttonesque pall hung heavily over the Cache Valley as word came that the WORD had gone.

"As he stared at her ample bosom, he daydreamed of the dual Stromberg carburetors in his vintage Triumph Spitfire. . . . No.

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Nibley's Children's Theater is 24 this year but still 'kids only' on stage

By Ranae Bangerter

April 17, 2006 | NIBLEY -- Special to the city is a production that involves only children performing on an outdoor stage. Now in its 24th year, the Children's Theater has been entertaining audiences with adapted plays to include many children.

"My children were in it for two years, this will be the 24th year," said Sandra Larkin, children's theater director.

The children's theater includes many children from Nibley.

"Last year we had about 125 [children], it jumps quite a bit every year because of the growth," Larkin said. Rehearsals start two weeks before the performances which gives the children eight practices before the show.

"I think it's good for the kids. It gives them a sense of accomplishment," Larkin said. She also said that it gives children some activities to do in the summer instead of sports. "[It] broadens their horizons to see if they like it, to see if they like drama."

The children's theater is also different than most productions because it is performed outside in an amphitheater instead of in a building. They practice in the Old Town Hall and first performed on grass, then a wooden platform, and now a cement stage.

Datwyler said they have performed an original play each year, such as: "Hansel and Gretel," "Alice in Wonderland," "Pirates of Penzance," "12 Dancing Princesses" and a "Utah Celebration." Plays are adapted to include the multiple children and auditions are held for speaking parts.

Datwyler said that she wanted to give children a chance to learn theater. She also believes strongly in letting children learn other things to do.

Both directors agree that the biggest impact of the children's theater is it brings the community together. Datwyler said huge amounts of sewing are involved because all of the costumes are sewn by volunteers. She added it gives the community a sense of pride and the idea that they could feel ownership along with everyone else.

"You sewed that dress ... you put up that scenery," Datwyler said about the community volunteers helping.

Larkin, in her second year as director, runs everything for the production whether it is music, scenery, acting, or organizing the 20-plus parent volunteers. Before Larkin became the director she worked closely with the original director, Datwyler, who is now a resident of Smithfield.

"I was [Datwyler's] assistant for one year to find out how she ran it," Larkin said.

Datwyler is a teacher at White Pine Middle School in Richmond and said her distance from her home to the school was one of the reasons why she moved to Smithfield. She originally began the production as something to do in the summer, when there was no school. But now she is starting a children's theater in Smithfield, where they will have their city celebration in May, which is no longer a summer project for her.

The production this year for Nibley will be an original production, "Peter Pan's Runway Shadow," which will be performed on Thursday and Friday of Heritage Days, June 22 and 23.

"It's the center of the Heritage Days, and makes the community join together" Larkin said.

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