

EventsCalendar

FRI. 1/25

5 to 8 p.m. Open mic, NMSU Barnes & Noble, University and Jordan avenues. Poetry readers and musicians alternate. Organized by David Rodriguez. Free. Call 646-4431.

7 p.m. Live music with Debra Rocks, Amaro Winery, 402 S. Melendres St. No cover. Call 527-5310.

8 p.m. "The Fantasticks," Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St. No Strings Theatre Company performs the longest continually running musical in history, "The Fantasticks." Cost \$10 regular admission, \$9 students and seniors. Call 523-1223.

SAT. 1/26

9 a.m. to noon, Mountain View Market Co-op Farm Volunteer days, Mountain View Market Farm, 2653 Snow Road. Interested in organic farming and local food production? Want to find out more about vermiculture, composting, laying hens, season extension and crop planning in our region? Come and volunteer at the Mountain View Market farm in Mesilla. Free. Call 523-0436 for directions.

9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Las Cruces Farmers & Crafts Market, Downtown Main Street. Wide variety of arts and crafts, food, fresh produce, unique fine art. Free. Email fcmarket@las-cruces.org.

10:30 a.m. Storytellers of Las Cruces, COAS Bookstores, 1101 S. Solano Drive and 317 S. Main St. This week, Douglas Jackson will be the storyteller at the Downtown location and Sonya Weiner will be the storyteller at the Solano location. COAS will give coupons for free books to all children who attend. Free. Call 524-8471.

2 p.m. Friends of Thomas Branigan Memorial Library annual meeting, Branigan Library Roadrunner Room, 200 E. Picacho Ave. Officers will be elected and refreshments will be served. All are welcome to attend. Free. Call 528-9891.

8 p.m. "The Fantasticks," Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St. No Strings Theatre Company performs the longest continually running musical in history, "The Fantasticks." Cost \$10 regular admission, \$9 students and seniors. Call 523-1223.

SUN. 1/27

11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Las Cruces Bridal & Special Events Showcase, Las Cruces Convention Center, 680 E. University Ave. The showcase brings together the best businesses and contacts to

help make your special day perfect. Cost \$5 advance, \$7 at the door. Call 522-1232.

2 to 5 p.m. Bingo event for "Online" the motion picture, The Saratoga Room, 1763 E. University Ave. Bingo fundraiser, silent auction and 50/50 raffle, with all proceeds going to "Online," the motion picture, and Mesilla Valley C.A.S.A. (Court Appointed Special Advocates). Cost \$25. Call 312-8760.

2:30 p.m. "The Fantasticks," Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St. No Strings Theatre Company performs the longest continually running musical in history, "The Fantasticks." Cost \$10 regular admission, \$9 students and seniors. Call 523-1223.

WED. 1/30

9 a.m. to noon, Mountain View Market Co-op Farm Volunteer days, Mountain View Market Farm, 2653 Snow Road. Interested in organic farming and local food production? Want to find out more about vermiculture, composting, laying hens, season extension and crop planning in our region? Come and volunteer at the Mountain View Market farm in Mesilla. Free. Call 523-0436 for directions.

9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Las Cruces Farmers & Crafts Market, Downtown Main Street. Wide variety of arts and crafts, food, fresh produce, unique fine art. Free. Email fcmarket@las-cruces.org.

5:30 p.m. ArtForms Artist Association meeting, Roadrunner Room inside Thomas Branigan Memorial Library, 200 E. Picacho Ave. Patricia Dalbin, Public Art Program coordinator for the City of El Paso Museums and Cultural Affairs Department, will give a presentation on the El Paso Public Art programs and opportunities for artists. Following the presentation there will be a question-and-answer session on For Love of Art Month activities and the Love of Art Month exhibit and fair at the Las Cruces Convention Center. Participants in the exhibit and fair are encouraged to attend. Meeting is open to the public. Free.

THU. 1/31

7 p.m. "The Fantasticks," Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St. No Strings Theatre Company performs the longest continually running musical in history, "The Fantasticks." Cost \$7. Call 523-1223.

FRI. 2/1

5 to 8 p.m. Open mic, NMSU Barnes & Noble, University and

Jordan avenues. Poetry readers and musicians alternate. Organized by David Rodriguez. Free. Call 646-4431.

8 p.m. "The Fantasticks," Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St. No Strings Theatre Company performs the longest continually running musical in history, "The Fantasticks." Cost \$10 regular admission, \$9 students and seniors. Call 523-1223.

SAT. 2/2

9 a.m. to noon, Mountain View Market Co-op Farm Volunteer days, Mountain View Market Farm, 2653 Snow Road. Interested in organic farming and local food production? Want to find out more about vermiculture, composting, laying hens, season extension and crop planning in our region? Come and volunteer at the Mountain View Market farm in Mesilla. Free. Call 523-0436 for directions.

9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Las Cruces Farmers & Crafts Market, Downtown Main Street. Wide variety of arts and crafts, food, fresh produce, unique fine art. Free. Email fcmarket@las-cruces.org.

10:30 a.m. Storytellers of Las Cruces, COAS Bookstores, 1101 S. Solano Drive and 317 S. Main St. This week, Judith Ames will be the storyteller at the Downtown location and Jean Gilbert will be the storyteller at the Solano location. COAS will give coupons for free books to all children who attend. Free. Call 524-8471.

Noon to 1:30 p.m. Love of Lit reading, Branigan Cultural Center, 501 N. Main St. As a part of For Love of Art month, readers will include Ellen Young, Gerry Stork, Joseph Somoza, Dick Thomas, Peter Goodman, Dael Goodman, Frank Varela, Joanne Townsend, LeeAnn Meadows, Tim Staley and Polly Evans. Free. Call 541-2154.

8 p.m. "The Fantasticks," Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St. No Strings Theatre Company performs the longest continually running musical in history, "The Fantasticks." Cost \$10 regular admission, \$9 students and seniors. Call 523-1223.

SUN. 2/3

2:30 p.m. "The Fantasticks," Black Box Theatre, 430 N. Main St. No Strings Theatre Company performs the longest continually running musical in history, "The Fantasticks." Cost \$10 regular admission, \$9 students and seniors. Call 523-1223.



Marissa Bond and Donny Prorise rehearse a scene between Mollie Ralston and Christopher Wren in "The Mousetrap."

Las Cruces Bulletin photo by David Salcido

Spring-loaded suspense Agatha Christie's 'The Mousetrap' baits audiences with a classic whodunit

By David Salcido
Las Cruces Bulletin

There's a mystery afoot and Las Cruces Community Theatre (LCCT) has it. In fact, it's arguably the most famous murder mystery ever written for the stage. It's certainly the longest running, according to The Guinness Book of World Records.

The play in question is Dame Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap," which opened in London in 1952 and just celebrated its 60th anniversary and 25,000th performance in November 2012. As records go, it's a hard one to beat.

Chosen as one of the seven "blockbuster" performances to celebrate LCCT's 50th anniversary, "The Mousetrap" opens Friday, Feb. 1, for an exclusive three-weekend engagement, under the direction of No Strings Theatre Company Artistic Director Ceil Herman. It will be the first time the show has been seen on the LCCT stage since it opened the 1964-65 season to rave reviews.

Will lightning strike twice? Herman believes so. It helps that she's something of a fan of the play herself.

"The Mousetrap" was a blockbuster in a previous production by LCCT," Herman said. "I have seen it twice in London and enjoy the depth of characters in this play, versus other mystery whodunits where the characters are very superficial."

In fact, though the play was written in the middle of the past century, a very different time by any standard, the themes of the play continue to resonate with modern audiences.

To begin with, it was written by one of the progenitors of the drawing room mystery genre and has been imitated more often

than any other stageplay this side of William Shakespeare. For another, it addresses issues that were considered shocking at the time, but sadly continue to plague our society even today.

"I think the issues of child abuse, unfortunately, are very much still with us," Herman said. "In addition, the question of what makes a child become a young adult killer — as in the recent tragedies at Columbine and Sandy Hook — is always an interesting one."

What can audiences expect from this particular production? In addition to a set constructed by LCCT mainstays Larry Chandler and Doug Robey and crisp direction by Herman herself, she admits that the highlight will be "excellent performances from local actors."

In Christie's most popular creation, the story swirls around a group of strangers trapped together at a manor house during a blizzard. As one would expect, they soon discover that one of them may be a murderer. The characters, though they may appear stock by today's standards, were original trademarks of Christie at the time they were written.

Could it be one of the newlyweds, Giles or Mollie Ralston (played with electric chemistry by Rafael Medina and Marissa Bond), whose rampant suspicions fuel the murderer's cat-and-mouse manipulations?

Could it be the spinster with a curious background, Miss Casewell, or the neurotic architect, Christopher Wren (played delightfully by NSTC regulars Katie Hulbert and Donny Prorise)?

How about the retired Army officer Major Metcalf (Gorton Smith) or the odd Italian, Mr. Paravicini (Armando Sarabia), who claims his car overturned in a snow drift?

With imperiously unpleasant Mrs. Boyle (Nikka Ziemer) and by-the-book Detective Sgt. Trotter (Sloan Patton) rounding out the cast, the stage is set for a classic whodunit that has kept audiences guessing for more than six decades, right up until the very last scene.

With all the elements in place, Janet Mazdra, vice president of public relations at LCCT, said this production will present a winning combination for Las Cruces theatergoers.

"When Ceil submitted 'The Mousetrap' for our 50th season, we felt certain that the appeal of Agatha Christie's thriller, the longest-running play in theater history, coupled with Ceil's experience, talent and fan base would be a wonderful addition to our anniversary celebration season," she said.

"Ceil directed her first show at LCCT and discovered her love for directing through opportunities provided at our theater over the years. It only seemed right to have her in the directorial mix here once again. She is a vital part of the thriving theatre community here in Las Cruces and we are proud to welcome her back home for 'The Mousetrap.'"

Details

Agatha Christie's 'The Mousetrap'

When

8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 1, 2, 8, 9, 15 and 16
2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 3, 10 and 17

Where

Las Cruces Community Theatre
313 N. Main St.

Cost

Adults \$10; students/seniors/
military \$9; Children 6 and
younger \$7

Contact
523-1200