



PLANNING UNDERWAY FOR AN UNCONVENTIONAL PROM FOR EMPORIA HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS

By KYRA JUMPER
The Emporia Gazette

Emporia High School juniors and seniors will have a somewhat unconventional prom this year, thanks to the efforts of two very determined teachers.

Tonya Dall, a special education teacher, and Kaitlyn Just, a language arts teacher, were given the OK to plan a prom, but it will not look like the traditional prom students are used to.

"We were very, very determined to have something for them, but we cannot promise that it would be their normal, traditional prom like they all expected," Dall said. "We were going to make sure that they have something because, if you think about it and reflect back to last year, our seniors this year would have graduated high school without having a prom if we did not fight for something. And that is a special memory that everyone should have when they are in high school."



Just and Dall talked ideas on what they could do for prom before presenting their plan to EHS Assistant Principal Trevor Mathews. Mathews then presented the idea to Principal Dathan Fischer.

Some suggestions Dall and Just received were a carnival or a show of some kind. Dall said that they were not thrilled with the idea of throwing a carnival-type prom because they wanted to give the students the opportunity to take pictures in their formal wear. Instead, the pair came up with

another idea: a murder mystery dinner theatre with an enchanted garden theme. The junior class picked the theme at the beginning of the school year because it is an easy and relaxing theme that would be easy to adapt if further restrictions occurred.

"We explored our options with that and we are doing a dinner for the kids this year," Dall said. "We are having a pasta dinner and desert catered for the juniors and seniors that attend. We have hired the KC Improv Company from Kansas City and they are going to come in and do a prom-themed murder mystery."

To limit contact, chaperones will be serving the students' food buffet-style to avoid contamination.

There will be live performances by orchestra teacher Riley Day, instructional coach Jeanna Scheve and junior Hayden Knuth. Dall has contacted additional local musicians to perform, but she is waiting on the final word.

The performances will hap-

pen during the social hour prior to the dinner and murder mystery beginning. Masks and social distancing will be required, and students will have to preregister for prom and sign up for a table.

"If they want to sit with a particular group of friends, then that group needs to come sign up together and get on the same table," she said.

A big change from a traditional prom is there will be no dance this year and students will not be permitted to roam around in the area to ensure social distancing is followed as much as possible. Prom will also be moved from Emporia State, where it is normally held, to 5 - 9 p.m. Saturday, May 1 at the William Allen White Auditorium.

"We worked with our students to make sure that we came up with something that they would enjoy and I know some are very disappointed we are not having a dance," Dall said. "But we are really going

out there and doing our best. We have worked non-stop to find what we can do to at least make up for not having that dance for them. I would like to thank the Hopkins Foundation because without the Hopkins Foundation and their donation to help us bring in the entertainment, we would have really been struggling to find something that would have been memorable for these students."

Prom will still continue the senior awards tradition. Dall shared that glass pieces made by art instructor Grant Charpentier will be used as the awards for the seniors.

"We are also looking for community donations and we have some parents working on getting us some community donations that we can just use as prizes for any junior or senior that is not in attendance at our prom that evening," she said.

Those wishing to donate can reach out to Dall at tonya.dall@usd253.net.

ESU ART STUDENTS CELEBRATED WITH ANNUAL JURIED EXHIBITION, RECEPTION



PHOTOS BY TIM MOHN/GAZETTE



By RYANN BROOKS
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Emporia State art students were celebrated, Tuesday evening, as the Emporia State University Art Department's Annual Juried Student Exhibition opened at the Emporia Arts Center's Trusler Gallery.

The exhibition provides art students with an opportunity to participate in a professionally juried art show. This year's guest juror is photographer Larry Schwarm.

Art Department Chair Roberta Eichenberg said having an outside juror was important because it separates faculty from the judging process.

"We do that so we bring an unbiased approach to it," she said, praising Schwarm's care taken during the judging process. "This is a great selection of all of the concentrations that we offer. ... Larry did a great job of selecting all of the work."

This year, there were three winners chosen as the "Juror's Choice" — the top prize during the exhibition. The winners were Elicia Aceves, Kat Weltha and Mirka Leyva-Gaucin.

Down the block at Trox Gallery and Gifts, another reception was being held — the Salon des Refuses.

Eichenberg said this exhibition artwork that was not selected by the juror, but still merited display.

"We do have some really strong students," she said. "Something we've really been pushing is having them display their work more, and I think that's one thing that's really been helping them to get better. It's different than seeing it at a critique; seeing it in a professional setting is way different than seeing it in a critique in class."

EAC Gallery Coordinator Shayli Gentry said, as an ESU alum, she was excited to be able to host the juried exhibition at the arts center this year. Typically, the art is displayed at one of ESU's galleries, but changes on campus due to COVID-19 caused one of the on-campus galleries to be temporarily converted into a classroom space.

Gentry said she was impressed with the pieces on display and the level of skill demonstrated by the artists.

"I've never seen clay quite like this," she said. "The glassblowing piece, I'm super impressed that we even have those right now — just with how glassblowing is done, it's really amazing that it's still getting to happen."

Gentry said it was exciting to

welcome people back into the gallery for in-person events again and to see their reactions to art as it happens.

"It's very, very exciting," she said. "First Fridays have been more exciting now because we're having more people coming in to the galleries more. Me getting to see those people and the artists getting to see those people just makes it all worth it, because these shows take a lot to put on."

Trox owner Kaila Mock agreed, adding that she looked forward to being able to be able to serving food and drinks.

"I'd love for it to be more of an event and for people to relax and have fun," she said. "With Covid, it's still people just coming in, mill-

ing around and moving on."

Mock said this is her 13th year being involved with ESU's juried student exhibition in some capacity, whether as a student or as a professional in the arts. Prior to opening Trox, Mock worked at the arts center.

"I'm really glad that it worked out that I could host the 'Salon des Refuses' here because I was pretty bummed when I left the arts center that I wasn't going to be able to be a part of it anymore," she said. "It's been really fun watching the show evolve and watching how the students work over the years. You can definitely tell what professors are assigning and how those

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KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE ANNOUNCES A WEB-BASED WRITTEN DRIVER'S LICENSE EXAM OPTION



The Emporia Gazette

The Kansas Department of Revenue's Division of Vehicles announced Tuesday the launch of KnowTo Drive Online — a web-based version of its driver's testing exam.

The exam is powered by Intellectual Technology, Inc.

According to a written release from KDOR, the testing service adds to the department's expanding online services it provides and allows Kansans to take their written driver's license tests "from the comfort of their home."

"The availability of an online written test has been on our list of customer service enhancements and we are happy to finally announce its arrival," said David Harper, Director of the Division of Vehicles. "This testing portal, coupled with our other online services, should greatly decrease the number of customers in the office and considerably reduce the duration of customer visits."

Kansas is the latest state to offer testing through KnowTo Drive Online. ITI also hosts self-service kiosks in 13 states, which help motor vehicle agencies extend services to grocery stores and other places of convenience.

The KnowTo Drive Online testing portal is available 24/7 on the Division of Vehicles' website at <http://ksrevenue.org/vehicles>. Fees are \$10 for the first test and \$8.50 for any re-test.

If preferred, the Kansas Driver's License written version of the test will still be available to be taken in the office.