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West Word Web Exclusives



Thespians to attend theatre fest

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Twenty seven members of the theatre department will attend the annual Theatre Festival at Illinois State University, Friday-Sunday, Jan. 8-10.

An estimated 4,000 Illinois theatre students are expected to attend the event. The festival offers over 115 theatre workshops and 30 plays.

"I am most looking forward to seeing a lot of plays and spending time with a huge group of people who love theatre," senior Sean Buckley said.

Junior Aleksandr Krapivkin views the festival not only as an entertaining event, but also as a learning opportunity.

"You learn something new wherever you go," he said. "Either you go to a show and you learn a new way to perform some theatrical masterpiece and new ways to perform in general, or you go to a clinic and learn something really cool that you never knew you could even do."

One of the more highly anticipated workshops will be conducted by Seth Rudetsky. Rudetsky gained fame as the vocal coach on MTV's 2008 show *Legally Blonde the Musical: The Search for Elle Woods*. He will hold a seminar on how to do a music theatre audition.

"Our kids are going to get to learn from some of the best experts in the state," Sinclair said.

Coincidentally, the all-state play that was chosen for this year's festival is *Urinetown*, a play that the theatre department performed last fall, a circumstance that provides West's thespians a unique opportunity.

"I get to compare myself to another high school actor playing the same part I did in *Urinetown*. It is a learning experience," sophomore Julia Zasso said. "Unlike sports, people in theatre don't really get a lot of exposure to other schools' work."

Senior Scott Sheffield and junior Becca Levy have been chosen to participate in the all-state production of *Urinetown*. Sheffield will be in charge of hanging and focusing lights and moving scenery backstage during the performance, and Levy will be helping with props backstage as well.

"What I really like about [the all-state play] is the opportunity to work with other well-trained technicians," Sheffield said. "It is also great to work with people who are just as dedicated to their work as you are."

"Every year is different when we go to the festival because there [are] different shows and workshops," theatre director Andrew Sinclair said.

