***Peers, others in play to debut at Sun Theatre this weekend***

Patrick Reeves and Zac Franzen have spent plenty of time on stage in school theatrical productions, community plays and in front of speech audiences.

This time, the Gothenburg High School seniors are behind the scenes directing “The Hitchin’ Post” which hits the stage Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. at the Sun Theatre.

It’s a role that’s been an adjustment for both of them.

“I like being on stage, I’m more comfortable on stage,” said Reeves who directs the production. “But it’s interesting to see it from a different point of view.”

Franzen, his assistant, said it’s difficult to watch others on stage when he wants to up there acting too.

“I don’t like it as well,” he said.

Through their involvement in the Sun Theatre Youth Committee, the friends said they got the idea to direct a play.

The committee, Reeves explained, help out at the Sun by showing movies, cleaning the theatre and other things.

“It was Zac’s idea to do a play and Jill and Keri encouraged us,” he said.

Jill Rubenthaler and Keri Dudley manage the theatre and help teach youths in the community about acting and theatre.

The comedy centers around Hurley Squonk’s general store which carries everything and also attracts “some mighty strange folks,” Dudley said.

The boys chose “The Hitchin’ Post” because their oral interpretation of drama group had performed a shortened version of the comedy two years ago in speech and earned a trip to state.

“We were familiar with the script and enjoyed doing it,” Reeves said.

For Reeves, he said learning what a director does has been tough at times.

“Sometimes you get overwhelmed,” Reeves said. “I didn’t think telling people what to do would be so hard to do.”

Franzen said he’s been challenged by allowing the cast to establish their own characters different from what the OID team did.

“Because we had our characters, sometimes it’s hard seeing it done a different way,” he said.

Fortunately, Keri and Jill have helped Reeves and Franzen with their new roles.

Dudley said Reeves has been great with taking responsibility and getting things accomplished.

“I don’t think that either Pat or Zac realized how much more work it is to actually direct than to be on stage,” she said. “I’m extremely proud of them and hope that they will want to direct another play in the future.”

With help from the crew, Kelly France in particular, Dudley said they were able to create a great set.

“He volunteered to help us out with the set construction and he delivered in a big way,” she explained. “We were able to finish the set in one evening instead of two.”

In addition, Dudley said France built a door and window that can be used in future sets.

When the curtain opens Thursday, Friday and Saturday night, Reeves said audience members will be glad they’re there.

“It’s a very hilarious, comical play with new talent,” the director said. “If you come, you’ll have a good time.”

Dudley said six of the eleven actors are new to the Gothenburg Community Playhouse stage and three of the six have never been on any stage before.

Franzen described the production as very entertaining.

“We’ve put a lot of work into it so when show time starts, it’s really going to be worth it.”

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