

STHS theater department going big with first production

By Kathryn Reed

Easing into her new environment isn't exactly Liz Niven's style. Instead of a small production, maybe even one that wouldn't be well attended, Niven is going all out when it comes to breaking in South Tahoe High School's new theater.

"42nd Street" with all of its music and dancing will be the first performance in the theater that is still having finishing touches done to it even with school starting Monday.

"I was looking for a well-known play – something that is a big, exciting blockbuster that would involve a large school population," theater arts instructor Niven told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Most musicals can be as big as you want."



In June the theater at South Tahoe High didn't even have seats.

Photo/LTN

When the school put on "Crazy for You" it had a cast of 60. She will begin casting for "42nd Street" the third week of school.

“It’s an educational program. Part of the education is you have to give people a chance to discover what they love or don’t love,” Niven said of allowing so many to participate. “The only problem with a big cast is finding costumes for everyone. The more people you have, the more shoes you have to find.”

Right now it’s all about finding where everything is and how it works.

While those who attend tonight’s Celebration of Education put on by the Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation from 5-7 may think the Theater Arts & Design Academy is complete, work will practically continue until the first bell rings. (Tonight’s event is free and open to the public.)

The TADA building, as it is better known, looks like a cutting-edge theater production facility – some have called it leading edge.

While this stage outshines others on the South Shore, it is smaller than what was there. This is because by the time all the agencies weighed-in compromises needed to be made. There are even fewer seats.

Still, the enthusiasm in Niven’s voice is unmistakable.

“It has cool side stages. I’m looking forward to trying and playing with those as well,” Niven said.

Niven usually does three plays a year. With teachers and students figuring out how everything works, she will do two this year, with the musical being the first. “42nd Street” will be staged the first two weekends in December.