

One big dysfunctional family stars at Emmerich Theatre



Rocky Hock Playhouse is back at it with a brand new original production for summer. "Jacob: Prince of God" opens July 6 and runs through August 12.

Times and tickets

■ Tuesday 10:30 am/Saturday 5:15 p.m.	
Adults	\$16
Seniors	\$15
Child (5-12)	\$ 9
Group A (10-24)	\$14
Group B (25-44)	\$13
Group C (45+)	\$12
■ Thursday 10:30 a.m./Tuesday-Thursday 2 p.m.	
Adults	\$17
Seniors	\$16
Child (5-12)	\$10
Group A (10-24)	\$15
Group B (25-44)	\$14
Group C (45+)	\$13
■ Saturday 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.	
Adults	\$18
Seniors	\$17
Child (5-12)	\$11
Group A (10-24)	\$16
Group B (25-44)	\$15
Group C (45+)	\$14

Darryl Stallings, left, and Nancy Wyatt offer comic relief during "Jacob: Prince of God".

www.rockyhockplayhouse.com

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

One big dysfunctional family will use its biblical ties to turn all their squabbles into hugs by the end of Rocky Hock Playhouse's latest offering, "Jacob: Prince of God."

The two-hour musical penned by Gloria Emmerich tells the story of the Bible's most famous twins, Jacob and Esau. It also tackles the feuds between the paternal twins and their families.

"Gloria has so captured the essence of the story," Jeff Emmerich, Gloria's

husband and the show's director, said during a rehearsal break at Emmerich Theater last week.

"There's a lot of tension in the story," he added.

Gloria, who also wrote the music and lyrics for the two-act show, said she crafted the script after the summer show was cast. That's her style, to write toward actors' strengths, avoiding their weaknesses.

The show's eight-member cast will provide energy, emotion, and — on occasion — a few laughs, the Emmerichs said.

Playhouse veterans Darryl Stallings and Nancy Wyatt handle the comic re-

lief. Stallings, of Tyner, plays Esau and Guni, while Wyatt, of Richmond, Va., tackles the role of Nehusta.

"He's like his name," Stallings said of Guni. "He's kind of goofy."

Wyatt's character is one of three servant girls lifted from the Bible's Old Testament and dropped into the script. Nehusta and Deborah (pronounced "de-BORE-uh") will narrate the show. Gloria said her Deborah character will age throughout "Jacob."

Jeff will handle the role of Jacob.

"It's a huge role," the Oregon native said. "An enormous role. There's a lot of

emotion built into the story, and the music has helped carry that."

He will also portray Abraham.

Playing Jacob's nemesis, Laban, is Steve Jackson of Elizabeth City. Jackson, acting in his seventh Emmerich show and his first since 2003, agreed that the show will take audiences along a rollercoaster ride of happenings and emotions.

"We've got every range of emotion in that show that people feel every day," Jeff said.

A quick synopsis: Jacob steals Esau's birthright through trickery. Esau plots murderous revenge. Laban

tricks Jacob into marrying the wrong women. Jacob works 20 years to fix that and, through perseverance and resolution with his brother, all works out in the end. Of course it's more complicated than that, and there's the theme that God's mercy can help heal most all wounds.

But for a complete version of what the Emmerichs and their cast have in store, visit the theater at Rocky Hock Playhouse this summer.

"Jacob" opens July 6 and runs through August 12. Shows are held on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. (See box for more ticket info

and show times.)

Joining the Emmerichs, Wyatt, Jackson and Stallings are three other young budding actors. Jessica Stephens (Rebekah/Rachel) is from Columbus, Ohio and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Arts from Clearwater Christian College in Florida. Jason M. Wooldard (Isaac/Hamul/Angel) of Wilson, N.C., is a recent graduate of Roanoke Bible College in Elizabeth City, N.C., where he majored in Bible and Theology. Noreen Hughes (Leah), of Bloomfield, N.J., is a senior at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

Sweaty People

As gym memberships increase nationwide, Chowanians fall in line.

BY EARLINE WHITE
The Chowan Herald

By 10 a.m. many have come and gone. The grey-haired ones working on their midsections, the fair-haired ones on their love handles.

By lunch it's a determined crowd with bulging biceps and toned abs, working to build stamina. After work it's even more of the same.

Between the triangle whose other points are work and home the gym has become our 'third place'.

Gyms figure into the lives of at least 41.3 million Americans who belong to some sort of fitness club. In Chowan County there are a thousand members involved in the various fitness clubs — Classic Fitness, the Chowan County Senior Center, Curves and the Northern Chowan Community Center. And at any hour of the day, someone somewhere is at the gym.

Gyms are places of refuge, escape, self-improvement or degradation. And while membership numbers continue to soar nationwide so does the number of people suffering from diseases linked with obesity.

According to the International Health, Racquet and

Sportsclub Association, in 1987, 17.3 million Americans were members of a health or fitness club. At the same time nearly 20 percent of U.S. adults over the age of 20 were considered obese, according to the National Health and Nutrition Examination survey.

By 2004, health club members had reached almost 40 million. Nearly 32 percent of those over the age of 20 were obese.

The runway models went from sizes 32-28-36 to 32-24-30. Everyone began being plagued by body-image paranoia.

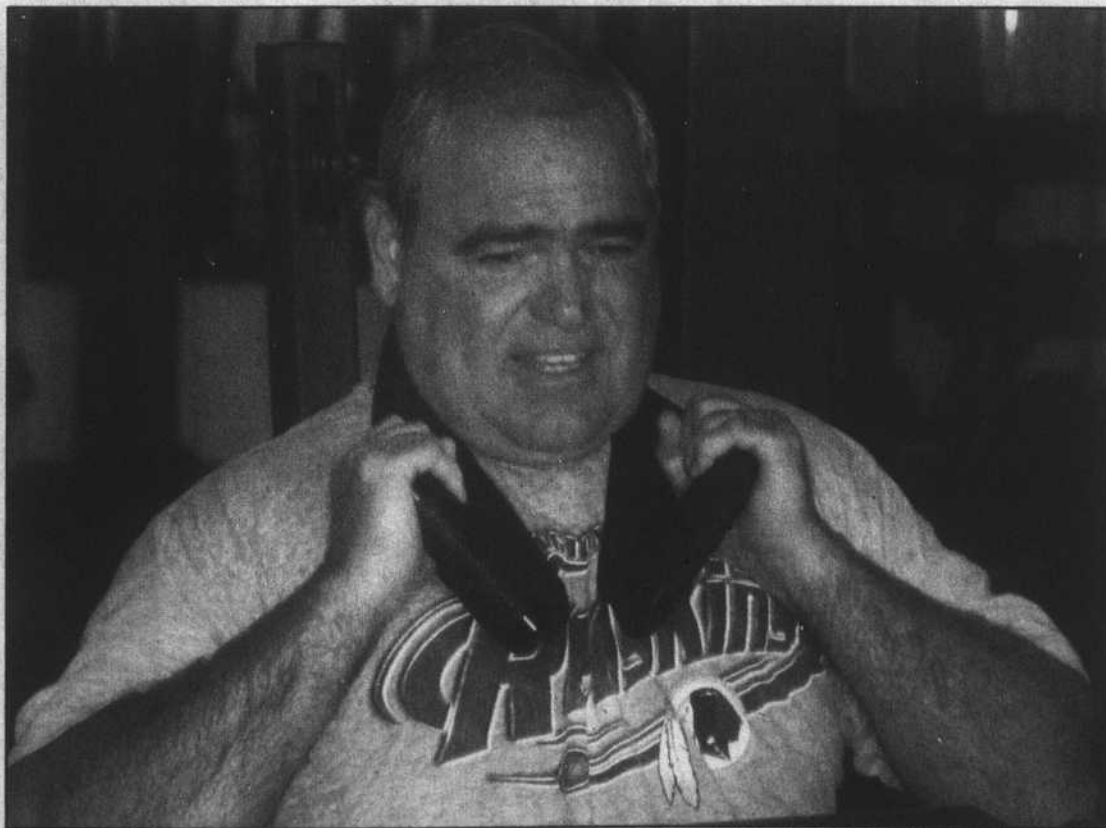
Abigail Riveria, 22, wants to lose 10 pounds this summer so she can fit in that bikini. So far, with a 3 day a week workout regime, she has lost five pounds.

Tony Beamon has lost 25 pounds since January. He simply wanted to lose weight, he said. He credits Jesus as his motivator to stay on track.

Then there are those who are sweating for more than just looks. They are in it for their health.

Dave Barnes, 78, was diagnosed with diabetes in 2000. Three of his five siblings also have diabetes.

Since his diagnosis, Barnes has been an active member at the community center. He and



Earline White/The Chowan Herald

Hunter Jones crunching at the Northern Chowan Community Center. Jones picks working out over lying around all day during retirement. He has lost 25 pounds.

his wife, Minnie, work out 4 times a week for about an hour. He's seen the difference it can make.

"In 2004 I got off my pills. I know it is because I come here," Barnes said.

The hardest part for many is sticking with it. The routines become dull. The smallest of reasons grow into easy justification for putting off working out.

Many have decided that having a workout partner is the way to go.

Cousins Charlotte and Robin Nixon of Rocky Hock joined Curves a fitness center geared specifically toward women- the same day. They work out together 3 to 4

By the numbers

- Northern Chowan Community Center: 1879 members
- Curves: 300 members
- Classic Fitness: 200 members
- Chowan County Senior Center: membership not required; average monthly visitors, 500

days a week and Robin typically brings her teenaged daughter, Sherlynnie.

"We all come together," Sherlynnie said. "It makes it easier and more fun."

Both Charlotte and Robin have rheumatoid arthritis.

"My doctor recommended that I come here for that," Charlotte said.

"And I'm glad I did-it really helps."

Elsewhere

The "Biggest Winner" is named. Another competition begins in two weeks. **Page B3.**