

# Playwright publishes Western adaptation of Shakespeare

By Michelle Marriott  
Citizen staff writer

One Canon City man's passion for theatre has earned him a publishing contract for his adaptation of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."



JOHN AUGUST MERGELMAN

John August Mergelman's passion for the theatre has endured since he was in high school. Just this November Mergelman signed a contract to have his play, "A Midsummer Night's Western," published by Pioneer Drama Service, which is one of the nation's largest full-service play publishing and licensing companies. One of the first high school plays Mergelman performed in was "Give My Regards to Broadway," which was one of the company's scripts.

When his play was being performed as "The Shortest Night of Summer" at Red Rocks Community College in Lakewood as part of the Playwrights Showcase he purchased two tickets and mailed them to the company. After the reading two of the company's representatives introduced themselves to Mergelman and gave them their cards.

Mergelman adapted French adapting the original play without having someone else translate it excluded the play as an option for him. Mergelman's play, "A Midsummer Night's Western," is set in Colorado at the end of the 19th century. He has incorporated Native American folklore into the story and some of Shakespeare's characters, who have undergone name changes to update them to the time period. In Mergelman's adaptation Puck, a servant to Oberon, the fairy king has been replaced by the coyote, which is known as a master trickster in Native American folklore. Iktome, the spider king in Native American folklore takes the place of Oberon, the fairy king. Shakespeare's characters Helena, Lysander and Philostrate have become Helen, Lester and Phyllis in Mergelman's version. Mergelman may have added a western flair to his version but gave it a poetic value writing in iambic heptameter, meaning there are 14 syllables per line. While Shakespeare used 10 syllables in every line Mergelman found 14 made writing simpler, he said.

Mergelman's direction of Steve Kelly. Mergelman expects that sometime in the summer of 2008 Pioneer Drama Services could have his play available for rent.

He has recently finished a rough draft of an adaptation of Romeo and Juliet to a western version. Only in this play the roles of Romeo and Juliet have been switched and the play is no longer a tragedy, he said.

When he isn't writing plays Mergelman works at the Royal Gorge Academy as a Language Arts teacher.

Mergelman is a fourth-generation native of the Gunnison Valley.

He is the son of Rudl Mergelman of Florence and Carol Blackburn of Canon City, a teacher in

the Re-2 School District. Mergelman has a B.A. in Communications from Western State College and an M.A. in Theatre from Central Missouri State University. In 2002, Fremont Civic Theatre presented his musical, Bird Millman, which tells the story of Colorado's international circus star. He also starred in that performance.

For more information about Red Rocks Community College or for the college's latest performance information visit [www.trcc.edu/theatre/index.html](http://www.trcc.edu/theatre/index.html) or call 303-914-6458.

Anyone interested in learning more about Pioneer Drama Services should visit the company's Web site at [www.pioneerdrama.com](http://www.pioneerdrama.com).

The Cañon City Library also has sound and video recordings of the Fremont Civic Theatre's performance of the musical, "Bird Millman."

## PUBLIC NOTICE

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
CANON MINI STORAGE  
700 RAINBOW BLVD.  
CANON CITY, CO 81212  
ON Saturday, December 15, 2007, at 10 a.m. will sell Unit #976, belonging to Melinda Larson  
412 Rudd Ave.  
Canon City, CO 81212  
Partial list of items stored in Unit #976:  
Mattress & box springs, round table, dresser, kids' bike, kids' dresser, TV, box fan, misc boxes & bags.  
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## PUBLIC NOTICE

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
NOTICE AS TO PROPOSED BUDGET  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT AN AMENDED PROPOSED BUDGET HAS BEEN SUBMITTED FOR THE VARIOUS FUNDS OF THE CITY OF FLORENCE FOR THE YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2008 AND ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2008. A COPY OF THE AMENDED PROPOSED BUDGET HAS BEEN FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK AND IS OPEN FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION.  
THE AMENDED PROPOSED BUDGET WILL BE CONSIDERED AT A PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2007 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE FLORENCE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE FLORENCE MUNICIPAL CENTER AT 600 WEST 3RD STREET, FLORENCE, COLORADO.  
ANY ELECTOR WITHIN THE CITY OF FLORENCE MAY AT ANY TIME PRIOR TO FINAL ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET, FILE OR REGISTER HIS COMMENTS OR OBJECTIONS THERETO.  
Sunny Barnes  
Finance Officer  
City of Florence  
Published: December 6, 2007  
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Florence, Colorado

## PUBLIC NOTICE

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
NOTICE OF A PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY  
WARRANTING PUBLIC COMMENT  
NOTICE is hereby given that the following proposed construction activity warrants public comment: Helcim (US) Inc. owns and operates a Portland cement manufacturing facility, known as Portland Cement Plant, located at 5500 Colorado State Highway 120, near Florence, in Fremont County, Colorado. The company has proposed to install and operate a whole the shredder to produce the derived fuel for firing into the cement kiln. This addition is a potential major modification of a major stationary source. With the limitation on the processing rate, and the requirement of emission controls, the actual emissions will be less than the major modification levels. This public comment is being conducted to render the proposed permit and permit conditions federally enforceable, and to assess the addition as a Synthetic Minor Modification of a Major Stationary Source. The Division will receive and consider the written public comments for 30 calendar days after the date of this Notice. Additional information regarding this action can be found at: the Fremont County Clerk's office and on the Division's website at: <http://www.cofpbe.state.co.us/appl/publicnotices.html> or by contacting Rain Seetharam of the Division at 303-692-3198.  
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tion visit [www.trcc.edu/theatre/index.html](http://www.trcc.edu/theatre/index.html) or call 303-914-6458. Anyone interested in learning more about Pioneer Drama Services should visit the company's Web site at [www.pioneerdrama.com](http://www.pioneerdrama.com). The Cañon City Library also has sound and video recordings of the Fremont Civic Theatre's performance of the musical, "Bird Millman."