

# 'Romeo and Juliet' adaptation to be presented

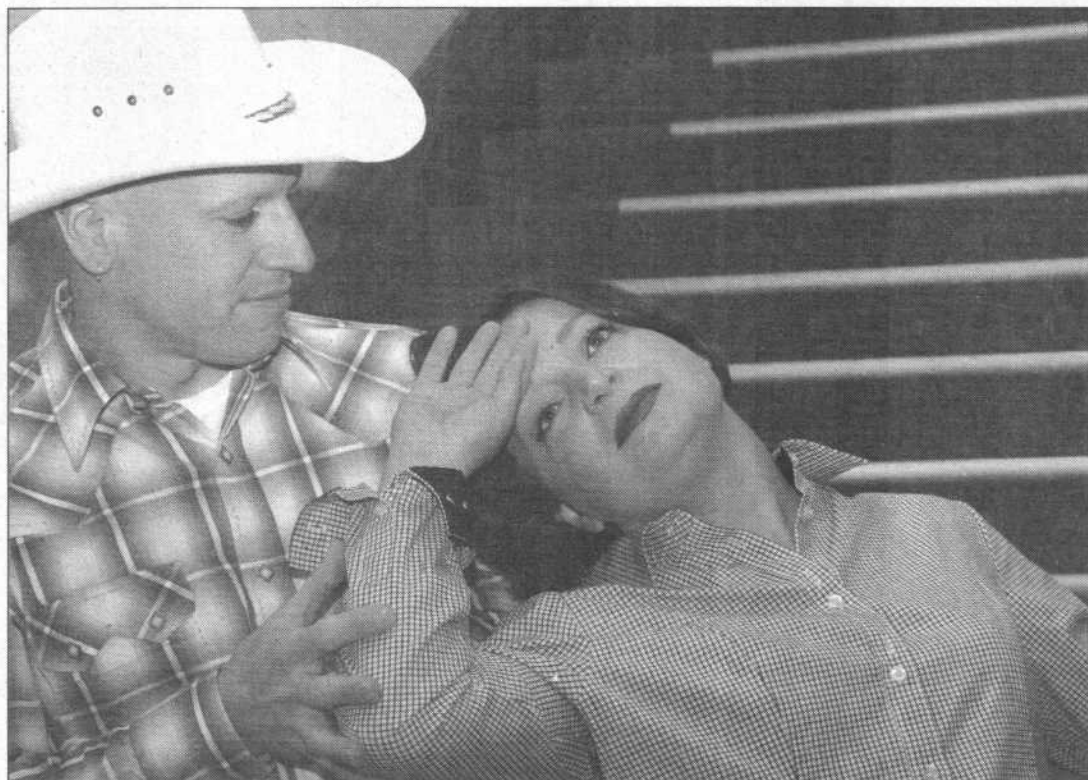
By TRACY HARMON  
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

CANON CITY — What would happen if Romeo and Juliet had lived 300 years later as star-crossed lovers in the Old West?

Local playwright August Mergelman answers that seldom-asked question in his Wild West comedic adaptation of William Shakespeare's famous play. Mergelman's version, "Ramona and Joel," is full of cowboy poetry, set in Victor during the 19th century and comes complete with a ride-off-into-the-sunset happy ending.

"Though Shakespeare's original provides the framework for the plot, there are several other contributing inspirations," Mergelman said. "There is an air of 19th-century melodrama, the emphasis on rhyme much like Baroque playwright Moliere and the storybook presentational style of Thornton Wilder's 'Our Town'."

Mergelman is best remembered locally for penning the musical rendition of "Bird Millman," which focused on a real-life, circus tightrope walker. In addition, his adaptation, "A Midsummer Night's



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/TRACY HARMON

**Keith Dame supports a swooning Cheri Hinz as they rehearse 'Ramona and Joel,' a Western version of 'Romeo and Juliet' to be staged Saturday in Canon City.**

Western," will be presented at Red Rocks Community College in April.

The dramatic reading of "Ramona and Joel," the feud between the Cabots and the Montgomeries, is slated for 7 p.m. Saturday at the Annex Ballroom, 507½ Main Street, above Pizza Madness.

The comedy adaptation stars Carissa Remillard as Ramona. She is a Canon City High School thespian who starred in "Aria da Capo" and "Our Town."

Joel Hamilton will be Ramona's lover, Joel. He starred as Rolf in Fremont Civic Theater's "Sound of Music" and

also starred as Emile in Florence High School's "South Pacific."

Others in the play are veteran performers Juliana Aragon-Fatula, Cheri Hinz, Terry Stultz, Tony Schenk and Warren Babilot.

Cost of tickets is \$5 per person.