

Parsons Rivertime Players Schedule More 'Toby' Shows

It's not too late to catch one of Southeaster America's longest standing traditions. Decatur County's annual Toby Show tent performance will take place again this weekend, and the following weekend beside the Parsons Municipal Building located at 535 Tennessee Avenue South. The four remaining show dates include: October 2nd, 3rd, 9th, and 10th.

The Toby is an American Folk Theatre tradition that began in the late 1800s. By 1929 there were over 700 of these types of shows traveling the Midwest and the Southeast. Now, only one Toby Show remains in the entire country, and it's located here

in Parsons. Parsons' Toby Show has established permanent residence in Decatur County, but maintains the traditional tent venue for their yearly vaudeville style shows.

These shows are put on by the Rivertime Players, a troupe of thespians who take the authenticity of this piece of Americana very seriously. Each year's installment focuses on a pivotal character, Toby, the show's namesake and protagonist, in various comical situations. This year's show is entitled The Good, the Bad & the Toby, and hinges its antics on a highly complicated work environment for Toby. The setting is a ranch in Arizona, where Toby works as a farmhand for a rage-full foreman while surrounded by a love... hexagon of sorts. The ensuing confusion and chaos leads to a stage full of hysterical "Wild West wackiness."

"This is an old show. It's been done a million times by different Tent Rep troupes, and rewritten and renamed half a dozen times. In that tradition, we've rewritten it and renamed it ourselves," said Shane Bridges. Bridges serves as writer, director and plays the title role, Toby, in this year's production. He was also recently inducted into the Toby Hall of Fame.

The tent opens at 6:30p.m. on each show date with the curtain rising at 7:30p.m. inside the 45'X90' venue. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$2 for children under thirteen. For more information you can visit their webiste: Rivertime-players.org or you can call (731) 847-6358.