

The first co-curricular event that I attended at Thompson Valley High School was their theater department's musical: *The Will Roger's Follies*. The performance I attended was on March 3, which was the last night of their four-night line-up. The show focused on the life and career of Will Rogers, a humorist and performer during the early 20th century that was well-known for rope tricks. He grew up in Oklahoma and moved his wife and four kids to Hollywood to become famous. Though he made a lot of money, his wife felt somewhat disgruntled that he was gone so often. Will Rogers had a great sense of humor, knowing how to crack jokes to make his wife smile and get the audience to laugh. The performance also had a lot of fourth wall breaks. The director of the show, Mr. Zeigler, made frequent comments about when major events should occur (marriage happens at the end of the show, not halfway through act one) and how each of the actors should speak during the performance. This dynamic made the performance very witty and enjoyable to watch. The play ended with Will Rogers dying in a plane crash, but it's known since the beginning of the play that this would be his demise. Will Rogers would respond with, "Do I really have to go?" When the play finally ended, the cast played a slideshow of old pictures of Will Rogers. I thought this was a very nice touch at the end because it assured me that the story truly was biographical.

The play was a lot of fun to see. It was even more rewarding to see some of my AVID students in the ensemble and some of my Metals 1 students in the audience. As an art teacher, I think the importance of attending events in the art department builds community. These students are proud of all the hard work they put into the show, and a teacher that attends lets them know that he/she cares. Teachers that attend art events can market them around the school and encourage other students to attend. I know that theater productions offer lots of collaborative opportunities between visual and performing arts. Students in the visual arts can volunteer to help paint sets so the teachers can save money in their budget. Finally, these events build camaraderie between all the teachers in the art department. Because art is such a small, underfunded department in most schools, it's important that the art teachers attend each other's events to show that they value all the hard work that their co-workers put into a performance or exhibition. It also gives teachers ideas on how to design sets and make the most with the money they have. I believe it is possible to put on a great stage performance without having to spend a huge amount of money on props and costumes. Overall, I enjoyed attending the performance and I've learned a lot about how art events strengthen a high school community.