

Rockton Dinner Theatre-goers camp out for tickets

Tickets still available for April performances

MAC CHRISTIE

mchristie@flamboroughreview.com

Tickets for the 41st annual Rockton Dinner Theatre went on sale Saturday morning, but one Hamilton man made sure he had first dibs.

Jim Hollands camped out in his pickup truck at the Rockton Fairgrounds since Wednesday morning, to ensure he got a front-row ticket to the annual production.

"First in line gets first choice of tables," he said. "I like a specific night and I like to be at the front — so I get first pick."

This year's dinner theatre will have a 1950s theme and is entitled Greasy Spoon. It will take place April 5-7 and April 12-14 at the Rockton Fairgrounds. Tickets are \$35 apiece, with \$1 from each ticket sold going to area food banks.

The event, which gets underway with dinner each night at 7 p.m., features an all-you-can-eat roast beef dinner with all the fixings, all-you-can-eat home-cooked pies — and of course, all-you-can-stomach laughter.

Rockton Agricultural Society general manager Don Pede noted all of the show's advance tickets, which were available through Scotiabank, are sold out. He added 70 per cent of the show's tickets were sold on Feb. 3.

Pede noted Hollands was not the only one to camp out — as of 5 a.m., on



Mac Christie/Metroland

Hamilton's Jim Hollands camped out at the Rockton Fairgrounds since Wednesday to get first dibs on tickets for the 41st annual Rockton Dinner Theatre. Hollands has been camping out to get Dinner Theatre tickets for 20 years.

Saturday morning about 40 cars were in the Rockton Fairgrounds parking lot, waiting for the doors to open at 8:30 a.m.

He added the dinner theatre, which seats more than 250 guests per night, goes through 100-120 pies each night for all six nights

"We're anticipating another sold-out year," he said.

A retired elevator mechanic, Hollands said he's been queuing up to get his pick of

the dinner theatre tickets for 20 years.

"When I started out, I would just arrive on Friday night and take whatever place in line," he explained. "I quickly realized you got a better table if you got here earlier, so I started coming on the Thursday."

One thing led to another and Hollands borrowed his friend's motor home and staked out his spot on Wednesday. Then he

bought his own and took the week off work.

Hollands said over the years he's gotten to know a lot of people at the Rockton Agricultural Society. During his stakeout, the RAS members, will visit him, as well as the people who he buys tickets for.

"It's a social thing, more than anything," he said, noting he often spends the time reading. "It's nice to have some quiet time."

The Hamilton Mountain resident noted he's got a heater in his truck to keep warm, as well as a cooler, noting he drives into Cambridge every night to fill a Thermos with coffee for the next morning.

"The dinner theatre is fantastic — it's so much fun," he said. "The food is outstanding — the pies are world class."

"It's just a fantastic evening."

Tickets are still available and can be purchased from Tuesday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the Rockton Agricultural Society at 812 Old Hwy. 8 in Rockton.

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