

Reading between the lines

Nebraska State Fair palm reader wants to hold your hand

By BRET SCHULTE
A&E editor

If you want, she'll tell you how you will die, or predict future love affairs. And sometimes she can even be a help picking lottery numbers.

Such profundities and more come from her tidy trailer parked among funnel cake stands and high school marching bands at the Nebraska State Fair.

Palm reader Mrs. Roberts journeys to the state fair every year to work with fairgoers anxious to discover past mistakes, make present decisions and unlock the future.

"I look at the certain lines in people's palms," she said. "People want to know their futures, what the successes will be.

"If they want me to tell them how they will die, I will tell them."

Although born and raised in Omaha, Mrs. Roberts speaks broken English with an old-country thickness, a speech pattern she attributes to her tightly woven Greek family - also born and raised in Omaha.

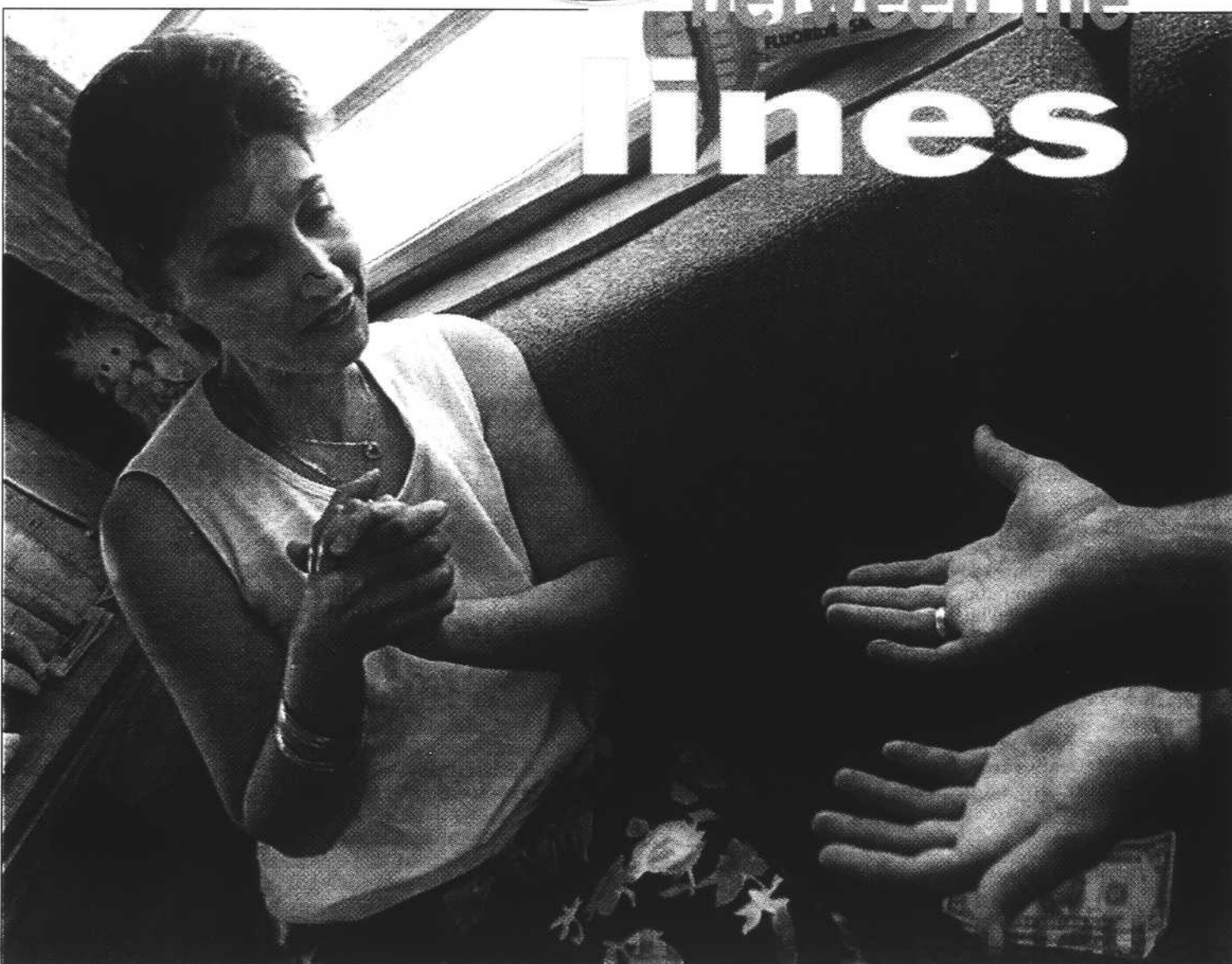
The native accent wasn't the only thing passed on.

Like her mother, grandmother and great-grandmother before, Mrs. Roberts says she was born with the ability to read palms.

"It's something you are gifted with," she rapidly explained. "You see a vision."

Grabbing a slip of paper sitting by the trailer sink, she held it up.

"(I) read it just like you read this pamphlet," she concluded.



MRS. ROBERTS reads the mysterious palms of Bret Schulte, Daily Nebraskan A&E editor, at the Nebraska State Fair on a fateful Thursday afternoon. Roberts, a native of Omaha, has been coming to the fair for the past 14 years to read palms. SANDY SUMMERS/DN

Please see FAIR on 10

Acting troupe builds a better Barn



KEVIN LAWLER, as Vladimir, and Mary Theresa Green, as Estragon, hold up Hughston Walkinshaw, as Lucky, in "Waiting for Godot" at the Blue Barn Theatre in Omaha. DAWN DIETRICH/DN

Tragicomic play 'Godot' premieres this weekend

"Waiting For Godot," by Samuel Beckett, opens this weekend at the new Blue Barn Theatre, 614 S. 11th St., Omaha.

Penned in 1948, "Godot" plays out a tragicomedy about the uncertainty of a life filled with hopeful expectation. The play explores man's inability to find fulfillment through traditional values.

The plot revolves around two tramps who meet each night to wait for the arrival of Godot. Though Beckett emphasizes the importance of Godot's arrival, he never explains who or what

Godot is. "Beckett would never give an answer as to what this play is about," said Kevin Lawlor, the Blue Barn's artistic director. "People will relate on all different levels to this play. If we try to define one level, we're going to rob the audience of that experience."

The show opens tonight and runs through Sept. 20. Performances are Thursdays through Sundays at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for students and seniors. For reservations, call (402) 345-1576.

By LIZA HOLTMEIER
Staff writer

Ten years ago, four new college graduates searched for a place to present contemporary theater.

Now, they are the founders of the Blue Barn Theatre in Omaha and are celebrating their 10th anniversary with a new space and a new season.

This weekend, the Blue Barn presents Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot," the first production in their new theater, which has moved from its tiny venue on 13th Street.

Now located in Omaha's Old Market, at 614 S. 11th St., the 90-seat theater includes a lobby, a tech booth, office space and even gallery space for art exhibits.

The show doubles as a reunion for the four founding members of the Blue Barn - Mary Theresa Green, Nils Haaland, Kevin Lawler and Hughston Walkinshaw.

They first met at a small performing arts conservatory called Purchase College in New York. There, they took part in an intimate training program that grouped students together for their four-year sojourn at the school. The goal of the program was to establish a company of actors that would continue on together after graduation.

No one in the history of the school had ever done that.

The Blue Barn founders decided to give it a try.

"It was a bit like creating our own graduate school. We wanted

to push our own boundaries," Walkinshaw said. "We wanted to do plays that interested us - plays that we might not have been cast in. We were in our early 20s, which is a time for exploring and finding out."

The four began looking for a city in which to locate their new venture. While visiting a sister in Omaha, Lawler received an offer for free performing space at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts.

The four decided to relocate to Omaha, and they presented their first season in 1989.

The space at the Bemis Center was a small venue with low technical requirements - perfect for the kind of project the four had in mind.

"At the beginning, there was no sense that this was going to be a permanent company. It was still more of a lark than an actual business," Walkinshaw said.

In the two years the Blue Barn Theatre worked from the Bemis Center, it presented works quite similar to this year's season. Contemporary American playwrights like Samuel Beckett, Sam Shepard and David Mamet headed the bill, and the Blue Barn established itself as a forum for modern theater classics.

Eventually, the Blue Barn moved on to a small store on South 13th Street. The founders converted this building into a 60-seat black box theater where they performed for six years. A black box theater has audience members

Please see BARN on 10

Dropped Notes

Reverend Horton Heat to preach rock 'n' roll gospel

Turn up the bass, and turn up the treble, because the original Texas rockabilly rebel is back in town to offer up another lesson in debauchery, women and rock 'n' roll.

Friday at 9 p.m. Reverend Horton Heat plays the Royal Grove, 340 W. Cornhusker Highway, rocking the crowd into a state of pure psychobilly madness.

Tickets for the 19-and-over show are \$12 and will kick off with Paw, a group of over-the-top rockers from Lawrence, Kan.

Anyone who's seen a Reverend Horton Heat show is well aware of the group's raw energy channeled through reverberated guitar scratching, standup bass slapping and stampede-style drumming.

So cuff up your jeans, throw some grease in your hair and toast your vodka tonic to the one and only Reverend Horton Heat.



MATT HANEY/DN