

Sebastopol Ballet gets new studio in time for 'Nutcracker'

by Kimberly Kaido-Alvarez Sonoma West Staff Writer kim@sonomawest.com | Posted: Wednesday, November 2, 2011 1:43 pm

After 19 years at the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center, Sebastopol Ballet School now has its very own dance studio.

"It all happened very quickly," said Director Susan Borgeson, who along with others in the organization, often dreamed of having a space dedicated just to dance.

Juggling schedules, especially during the busy rehearsal season before the annual "Nutcracker" performance, was often a challenge for students and teacher alike.

Frequently it was necessary to change class locations or slip into inconvenient time slots in order to get the practice the group needed, but this year those pressures will be alleviated with the new studio.

"It's nice to have our own space. Everybody is very excited," said Borgeson.

Volunteers, especially the parents of the dancers, have pitched in to paint, hang mirrors, install bars and even flooring.

"A spring floor is what you really want for dancers," said Borgeson and this is something that the group has never had until now, at the new studio located on Gravenstein Highway S. near Fir Crest Market.

There is still plenty of work to be done on the studio, however, including the installation of hooks and shelves and other miscellaneous jobs, and the busy group of dancers is welcoming and looking for community help.

Two rooms in the studio have already allowed the school to add more classes.

"We've been able to split a very crowded class," said Borgeson, who has about 80 students ranging in age from 4-years to adult.

A Saturday schedule and guest classes are a few changes that the school plans to implement in the near future, but right now it's all about the "Nutcracker" and having a sole location for rehearsals along with the new spring floor has everyone involved very excited.

There's always good energy, but right now it's even better, said Borgeson of the performing crew.

This year will mark the 20th performance of the "Nutcracker" which is scheduled to take place at the Analy High School Theater on Dec. 16, 17 and 18.

Analy Alumni, Nichele (Carlson) Van Portfleet is this year's Sugar Plum and she will partner with

Aaron Simunovich.

Analay High School Senior, Isabel Fischer and Sebastopol resident Jessica Raynor will share the roles of Rose Queen and Snow Queen in this year's performance and will be dancing with guest artist Noah Kopp of San Francisco.

Tickets to the "Nutcracker" are scheduled to go on sale around the Thanksgiving holiday, and more updates and information about the show and Sebastopol Ballet School can be obtained from their website at www.sebastopolballet.com.