

Theater season in S. Lake launches with laughter

By Kathryn Reed

Small stage, older audience, limited talent pool, not a ton of money. Community theater can be limiting.

But those factors were not noticeable to those who on Friday night attended the debut of the summer theater season at the Boathouse Theatre. "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)" will be staged at the South Shore theater for five more nights.

This is the third season the Valhalla Festival of Arts has put on three plays. Much of it has to do with them being moneymakers. The nearly 160-seat theater was almost sold-out Friday.

"We want interesting, well-written pieces, but we also need something that entertains people," Ginger Nicolay Davis, president of the Tahoe Tallac Association, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "One of the biggest challenges is to pick the right material."



"The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)" is very much a farce that keeps the

audience laughing.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

She is reading a dozen scripts now for next year's season.

When it comes to picking a play, the size of the venue is a huge criterion. A play that features multiple actors won't work. Nor will elaborate sets because of the limited stage area.

Seeing the same actors in play after is play is common in a small town. Because those in the local theater business know each other, they know who can do what. That's why when it comes time to select a play the decision-makers do so knowing who might be able to play which part.

A desire to have a family-friendly play is also part of the mix.

"For next year I'm already reading family-friendly shows that perhaps we could cast kids in as well," Davis said.

This version of Shakespeare was chosen to appeal to younger community members. While there were youngsters in the audience July 5, some of the material is not appropriate for little kids.

It's a fun play with some Tahoe references woven in.

"I think this Shakespeare is really family friendly, but it is PG-13. It is Three Stooges meets Shakespeare," Dave Hamilton said of this comedic play.

Hamilton is in his first season as festival director. But he is intimately familiar with the venue, the people and festival as a whole. He co-wrote the highly popular "Guilty Pleasures", has been on the Tahoe Tallac Association board and is the former theater arts director at Lake Tahoe Community College.

"Everyone of us has a pretty significant background," Hamilton

told *Lake Tahoe News*.

But the actors aren't getting paid.

Valhalla – or any theater company – can't just put on any play they want. They must pay for the rights to the play. Something like "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)" runs about \$1,200 because it's based on a percentage of proceeds. A play from the 1950s or '60 might have a flat fee of about \$500.

And while the 2013 season has just begun, decisions about 2014's shows will be made in a matter of months.

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Valhalla festival plays:

- "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)" July 6-7, July 11-13.
- "Motherhood Out Loud" July 18-21.
- "Better Late" Aug. 1-4.

More info about these shows and the entire festival may be found online.

Letter: Heavenly helps Bread & Broth in multiple ways

To the community,

Members of Heavenly Mountain Resort's information technology department volunteered to crew the June 24 Bread & Broth Adopt A Day dinner. It was sponsored by Heavenly through the Vail Echo Foundation.

"We appreciate the opportunity to help our community!" stated Tyler Morris, IT manager.

Joining Morris were Dave Erickson, IT analyst; Kevin Franzen, PC tech and Aaron Uretsky, IT lead.

In addition to volunteering three hours of their time at the dinner, the Heavenly volunteer crew members brought boxes of macaroni and cheese and top ramen to supplement the produce, bakery and dairy donations from local stores for the "take home" bags distributed to the evening's dinner guests.

They also donated Tupperware containers for leftover packaging

Bread & Broth would like to thank Heavenly Mountain Resort and the Vail Echo Foundation for providing the funding for sponsoring 12 Adopt A Day of Nourishment throughout the year. Their generous donation supports the hot, nutritious and tasty meals that B&B volunteers prepare and serve to over 90 needy members of our community every Monday at St. Theresa Church parish hall. B&B also applauds Heavenly employees for their community spirit and concern for the less fortunate of South Lake Tahoe.

If you would like to support Bread & Broth's program, please contact me at (530) 542.2876 or carolsgerard@aol.com.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Winds whip Bison Fire



Smoke tumbles into the Lake Tahoe Basin on July 5 from the Bison Fire. Photo/LTN

Update 10:25pm

Winds whipped up the Bison Fire on Friday afternoon.

It now stands at about 2,000 acres. And containment has been reduced to 15 percent.

Update 2:50pm:

The Bison Fire is at 1,400 acres and is moving in a north, northeast direction.

It is 20 percent contained.

The fire is burning in a mix of pinion and juniper trees with extreme fire conditions.

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The Bison Fire burning in the Pine Nut Mountains of Douglas County has charred 1,200 acres and is 15 percent contained.

There is no estimated time for containment.

No structures have been lost.

The fire started July 4 by lightning.

The goal is to make an assault on the fire early this morning before the afternoon winds pick up.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Pedestrian hospitalized after being hit by cyclist

Just before the fireworks were to go off in Truckee on July 4 a pedestrian was hit by a bicyclist.

Petra Bakker-Borhani, 24, of Truckee was booked into jail on charges of driving under the influence.

The pedestrian, whose name has not been released, was taken to Tahoe Forest Hospital in Truckee after sustaining major trauma to his head.

Anyone who has information about the incident is asked to call Sgt. Robert Womack at (530) 550.2335.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Pepsi slow to remove

carcinogen from soda

By Allison Aubrey, NPR

In 2011, California created a problem for the soda industry.

The caramel color that Coke and Pepsi used to give colas that distinctive brown hue contained a chemical, 4-methylimidazole – 4-MEI – that is listed as a carcinogen by the state.

And in accordance with California's Proposition 65 law, the levels of 4-MEI found in sodas would have warranted a cancer warning label on every can sold in the state.

So, as I reported last year, Coke and Pepsi both said they would switch to a reformulated caramel color, one that did not contain 4-MEI.

Now, it appears that both companies have managed to complete this transition for sodas sold in California.

But a new analysis by the Center for Environmental Health found that 10 of 10 samples of Pepsi products purchased nationwide during the month of June (in locations outside California) contained levels of 4-MEI that were about four to eight times higher than the safety thresholds set by California. The testing was conducted by Eurofins Analytical laboratory in Metairie, La.

In contrast, nine of the 10 samples of Coke products purchased in locations outside California contained little or no trace of 4-MEI.

"We applaud Coke," wrote Michael Green, executive director of the Center for Environmental Health, in a release announcing the findings.

"Pepsi's delay is inexplicable," Green added. "We urge the company to take swift action."

A Pepsi spokesperson tells NPR that sodas sold throughout the U.S. should complete the transition to the new caramel coloring by February 2014. The company says efforts are also under way to switch the color formulation for sodas distributed globally.

“The FDA and other regulatory agencies around the world, including the European Food Safety Authority and Health Canada, consider our caramel coloring safe for use in foods and beverages,” Pepsi Co. wrote in an email to NPR.

So, are the higher levels of 4-MEI found in sodas using the old formulation a threat to human health? Well, consider the dose.

The FDA issued a statement last year, before the formulation of caramel coloring was changed, stating that a consumer would have to drink more than 1,000 cans of soda a day to reach the doses that have been shown to lead to cancer in rodents.

And the American Beverage Association wrote in a statement last year that “the science simply does not show that 4-MEI in foods or beverages is a threat to human health.”

Cops busy July 4 with ‘normal’ holiday calls

South Lake Tahoe police responded to fewer calls this Fourth of July than years past.

In the 24-hour ending at 6am July 5 city cops arrested seven people.

One driver was arrested on DUI charges and one person was

arrested for misdemeanor domestic violence.

Although officers responded to a number of complaints regarding fireworks, even these types of calls were fewer than in past years.

In Douglas County, 24 people were arrested throughout the day and evening. Charges included burglary, battery, trespassing, larceny, DUI, disorderly conduct and minor consuming alcohol. In addition to the arrests, six people were issued citations for minor consuming, larceny and possession of paraphernalia.

Deputies said the crowds in the Stateline, Round Hill and Zephyr Cove areas of Lake Tahoe were large and that with the exception of a few altercations in the casino area, Nevada Beach and Zephyr Cove Beach, the crowd was relatively well behaved.

Not everyone was thrilled though with the deputies because 11 patrol cars were blocking the lower entrance to the county garage, which is a popular fireworks viewing area. A vehicle blocked the garage at the end of the show, which created a traffic jam.

Lake Tahoe News has a call into DCSO.

The U.S. Forest Service still has no comment on what happened at Ski Beach on the South Shore.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Uneducated boaters a danger

on Calif. waters

By Elyce Kirchner, Kevin Nious and Felipe Escamilla, NBC-Bay Area

In California, boat operators can be as young as 12 years old, have no boater education, no license, and still be legally allowed to operate a boat.

The NBC Bay Area Investigative Unit has also discovered the Golden State is the second worst in the nation in number of boating accidents. And, within the state, the 1,000-mile stretch of the California Delta, which consists of the lands and waterways between the San Francisco Bay and the Sierra mountains, has had the most accidents occur in its waterway since 2007.

In light of the dangers, some groups have been arguing for tougher boating regulations, but have been met with stiff opposition each time.



California does not require a license for any type of watercraft. Photo/LTN file

Lt. Doug Powell of the Contra Costa County sheriff's marine patrol unit has been one of those lobbying for more stringent regulations.

"You wouldn't give a 16-year-old the keys to your car, and

tell them to go out and drive out on the street without any education. It's hard to believe that we are doing that with boats," Powell said, whose unit is responsible for patrolling more than 200 miles of linear coastline along the Delta from Richmond to Discovery Bay.

He believes that boater education should be required in the state. California is one of only five states, including Alaska, Arizona, South Dakota, and Wyoming, with zero boater education.

And many believe that the dearth of education is why California had about 2,775 boating accidents from 2007 to 2012, according to an NBC Bay Area Investigative Unit analysis of U.S. Coast Guard data. To compare, only Florida had more such accidents – more than 3,800 in the same time period. Texas ranked third with about 1,110, and New York and Michigan came in a close fourth and fifth with about 1,000 each.

"Yes, alcohol has been a problem but education is the main reason for accidents in our county," Powell said. He said many tragic accidents could have just been avoided if boaters knew the basic rules of the road. In fact, according to the California Division of Boating and Waterways, the most common causes of collisions are operators not paying attention and lack of education- just a fraction of incidents are fueled by alcohol or drug use.

Jason and Maryann Hale know firsthand what can happen when boaters are neither equipped with adequate skills nor focused on operating a boat. On June 22, 2007, the Hale family was celebrating their son's birthday on Whiskeytown Lake near Lake Shasta. The day of celebration took a tragic turn when a power boat plowed into a boat carrying several of their children, including their 12-year-old daughter, Trevienne.

The operator of the powerboat was "was out doing tricks spinning around and going through the no wake zone," Jason

Hale said. According to vessel accidents reports obtained by NBC Bay Area, not only was the operator not paying attention but he was going 20 to 30 miles an hour; Trevienne's boat was traveling at 5 to 10 miles an hour. The documents show that the boat was speeding in a "no wake" zone, where boats aren't allowed to go faster than 5 miles an hour.

Trevienne was knocked unconscious but was breathing. She was flown to Mercy Medical Center in Redding, where she eventually died.

"It's like Russian roulette with your children and your loved ones out there, if someone doesn't do what they are supposed to do out there," Maryann Hale said. The Hale family is left devastated with the loss of their daughter, frustrated by the few safety requirements, and terrified to return to what once was a favorite leisure spot.

San Francisco Sailing Company owner, Erik Ostrander, is one of the many proponents supporting mandatory boating certifications. He exclusively rents out boats to customers who pass two certification courses, hoping to raise awareness that "the waters in the central bay are the most challenging in the world to sail."

"It is ridiculous. I think it's a mentality of thinking that the only person you are going to hurt is yourself, but they don't realize that these people are colliding with other boats," Ostrander said standing in front of Pier 39.

However, mandating boater education and similarly increasing regulations for waterway safety has been met with great opposition. In 1999, Gov. Gray Davis vetoed a bill that would have required education training for boat operators. Davis in part argued, "There is little evidence that a written test alone will improve the piloting skills of motor boat operators or reduce boating accidents."

Yet, the Investigate Unit found that on average, states that

require boater education on average have a lower rate of fatal accidents than states that do not. For example, New York and Illinois, which have long required boating education, have about three to less than one boating fatality per 100,000 boats over a four-year period. California, however, averaged four fatalities per 100,000 boats in that same period.

A similar bill in California was introduced in 2007, but also failed.

Ed Swakon from the Marine Council, an industry trade organization, believes that boater education is important but should not be a requirement. Swakon also believes that boaters should not be forced to obtain a license to operate.

“It might just be a taxation or revenue source that we don’t think needs to be imposed on the boating community at this time,” Swakon said.

CHP to conduct DUI checkpoint in S. Tahoe

The California Highway Patrol will conduct a sobriety checkpoint on July 6 in South Lake Tahoe.

The two possible locations are Highway 89 north of Highway 50 or Highway 50 between Al Tahoe and Ski Run boulevards.

The checkpoint will be staffed by officers who are trained in the detection of alcohol and/or drug impaired drivers.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.

Fish for free in Calif. on Saturday

California Department of Fish and Wildlife waves the fishing license requirement twice a year.

July 6 is the first day, with Sept. 7 the other.

On the other 363 days, California residents 16 years and older must pay \$14.61 for a daily sport fishing license.

On the free days, bag and size limits are still in effect.

S. Tahoe July 4th fireworks

Fireworks over the South Shore of Lake Tahoe on July 4, 2013.