

3-day music, dance, theater workshop for K-12

The Young Americans, a group of more than 40 college-age performers, will host three days of music, dance, theater, self-esteem, self-worth, and fun in Tahoe Nov. 1-3.

On Nov. 3 at 7:30pm will be a performace featuring the Young Americans and all the kids who participated in the workshops. All this will be held at the South Tahoe Middle School Multipurpose room.

On Nov 1, 2009 at 1pm begins the workshop.

The cost is \$65 dollars and each participant will get a T-shirt.

The last time the Young Americans were in Tahoe more than 160 kids in grades K-12 took part.

Information on signing up is available by calling Lisa or Ashley at (530) 541-3041 or stopping by 2264 Lake Tahoe Blvd., Unit 6, South Lake Tahoe.

The Young Americans website is www.youngamericans.org.

Bette – From ‘Beaches’ to desert



By Susan Wood

LAS VEGAS – She still has it.

Most women can only hope to have their act together in their 60s like the graceful, energetic Divine Miss M.

“Las Vegas, you look divine,” Bette Midler belts out to another near sold-out show on a hot Vegas night. She could have been looking in a mirror.

Her voice is almost as rich as it was in her prime. Her enthusiasm has not diminished from the first time I saw her in 1990 in San Diego – in a much smaller venue.

The superstar singer and actress with four Grammy’s and an Academy Award nomination is at it again at Caesars Palace’s Colosseum in “The Showgirl Must Go On”. She will have put on 400 shows by the time her two-year contract expires in February.

This 4,300-seat mega showroom originally built for Canadian singer Celine Dion is a tribute to what a world-class stage ought to look like.

Midler’s show is part Vaudeville, part concert and a little bit of her trademark raunchy humor. For those who have followed Midler through they years, this show is vintage Midler and never disappoints – except for it only being 90 minutes.

It opens with a video of a tornado blowing through a mountain of Louis Vuitton luggage weighing about 2,200 pounds. She is a storm to be reckoned with.

"I'm exhausted. That's what happens when you do your own singing," Midler admits while sprawled on the floor.

"Thirty years ago, the audiences were on drugs. Now I'm on medication. Twitter, twatter. Everything's going so fast Midler muses.

Midler has been at this song-dance-comedy routine for about four decades. She started her career in a New York bathhouse with pianist-singer Barry Manilow accompanying her. The two teamed up again years later for a collection of songs as a tribute to jazz singer Rosemary Clooney. Ironically, he was playing across the street at the Las Vegas Hilton.

Midler has never forgotten her roots, asking the audience where the gays are. They weren't shy about letting her know they were in the house.

The Hawaii native illustrated her upbringing by pulling out a ukulele during one of her encore performances to sing her trademark number "Friends."

Devoted fans could recite more than one signature song from Midler, who blanketed the 1980s and '90s with hits from her depiction of Janis Joplin in "The Rose" to "Wing Beneath My Wings," a song about friendship from the tear-jerker film "Beaches" with Barbara Hershey.

But the true sense of Midler's distinguishable traits comes out in her onstage characters that have survived an industry prone to an insatiable desire for stars to reinvent themselves. Sophie Tucker, the infamous star of her middle-aged trailer trash jokes, lives beyond campy backyard parties to take center stage at Caesars Palace.

Not many performers would have the cajones to roll out in a wheelchair or come in on a crane hook dressed like the mermaid Delores Delago.

Midler may be aging, but she's still hip and trendy, making occasional references to current events. Amid 132 costume changes (with Midler in six of them), she compares the demise of Fannie Mae to the temptations of the Las Vegas Strip.

Only as Midler could deliver, it was a no-holds-barred evening filled with the "Caesar salad" showgirls, for whom Midler can't resist remarking on their 100 percent natural breasts. In full mermaid fins, the showgirls join Midler in a New York Rockettes-style leg extension.

Midler is able to transcend the times, her characters and the surroundings.

Her philanthropic work extends from a garden in New York to South Lake Tahoe, where she and Bill Harrah financed the first alternative birthing room at Barton Memorial Hospital in the early 1980s. Within the first few years, hospital admissions surpassed 4,000 with 500 babies born annually.

How fitting the showgirl returns to a Harrah's property.

Other things to know:

"The Showgirl Must Go On" plays until February 2010 at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas. Midler et al are scheduled Oct. 14-Nov. 15 and Dec. 30-Jan. 31. Cher and Elton John fill most breaks.

Tickets range from \$117-\$272.

Caesars Palace's Garden of the Gods pools and gardens were remodeled in late summer. The 5-acre project now features a swim-up blackjack table, 18-foot waterfall and added cabanas.

The recently renovated 540-room Forum Tower has already hosted dignitaries and became the inspiration for the 2009 movie "The Hangover," which was set in Las Vegas.

www.bettemidler.com

â€¢ www.caesarspalace.com

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Li'l Smokey's rescue retold in captivating book

Publisher's Note: *California Department of Fish & Game reports Li'l Smokey's signal was picked up via telemetry on Sept. 30 in the same general area where he has been heard from in the past.*

By Susan Wood

CalFire firefighter Adam Deem will carry a story of a lifetime, but it doesn't involve saving a home or human.

The Redding-area forester, who has fought blazes since being a teenager, made national headlines when he saved a bear cub in July 2008 – a season marked as one of the worst for wildfires in California history.

His story and that of bear cub Li'l Smokey are brought to life in the book "Saving Li'l Smokey – A True Story." Deem's rescue and diligence along with the rehabilitative expertise of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care are all part of the book.

The journey of Li'l Smokey from his burned paws to being released back to the wild in early 2009 is chronicled in this children's book. (I enjoyed it so much I'm not sure it really should be categorized as a kids' book.)

Deem and his wife, Celeste, co-wrote the short story.

Illustrations are by art student Ryan Lamb. The art is so good it's as if Lamb was with Deem and Li'l Smokey during the ordeal.

After working 27 consecutive days, Deem recounts his drive up to Shoemaker Bally beyond Whiskeytown Lake near Redding and finding the cub limping with melted paws. Even the most cynical reader can't help but hurry through the pages to discover what happens next.

Page by page, the book is apt to prompt readers of all ages to coo at the heartwarming firsthand account and artwork of the little bear's early defiance-turned-gratefulness. Amid the tragedy of fire, the cub's rescue presents an uplifting turn-of-events in Northern California.

One cute note, Deem must have pondered long and hard about the noise the bear cub made in displeasure. Hint, that's on Page 7.

The self-published book is available at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care (www.ltwc.org). A portion of the proceeds of the book benefit the wildlife rehab center outside South Lake Tahoe. For more on the story, go to www.lilsmokey.net.

**Oktoberfest,
festivals today**

Kokanee



Bryson Rozga,
2, of South
Lake Tahoe
checks out the
pumpkins
Saturday at
the Camp Rich
Oktoberfest.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

With a high of 44 degrees expected today, be sure to bundle up when heading out to Camp Richardson for the annual Oktoberfest or to the Kokanee Festival at Taylor Creek.

Oktoberfest has plenty of beer and food to consume. Artists are ready to sell you some of their work. Hay rides are part of the fun, as is a pumpkin patch and dancing.

Farther north on Highway 89 are the salmon, which are making their annual spawning migration.

Expect traffic delays along Highway 89. Cycling might be a better option to reach your destination. But be forewarned that there's a 50 percent chance of rain-snow showers today.

Landscape photographer releases second book

Sierra Nevada based landscape photographer Elizabeth Carmel is releasing her latest book on Nov. 1 – “The Changing Range of Light – Portraits of the Sierra Nevada.

The book combines Carmel’s landscape photography with important information about how the depicted landscapes are threatened by climate change. This collection of photographs captures both the intimate details and grand panoramas that exist exclusively in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California. The book also includes a selection of poetry by recognized writers.

Climate change scientists Robert Coats and Geoffrey Schladow contribute insights in the book’s introduction and within the text that accompanies the photography.

John Muir coined the phrase Range of Light in the late 1800s.

In this, Carmel’s second book, she explores the Range of Light in the 21st century and honors the important legacies of John Muir and Ansel Adams by highlighting current environmental threats to the region.

“The Changing Range of Light” is distributed by Mountain Press Publishing Company and will be available from all major book retailers including Borders, Barnes and Noble, independent book stores, and online through Amazon.com.

Book launch

Elizabeth & Olof Carmel are partnering with the Truckee Donner Land Trust to host a book launch event at the Carmel Gallery in Truckee on Dec. 5 from 4-6:30pm. The event is open to the public. Signed copies of both of her books will be available

for purchase, with a portion of the proceeds of every sale donated to the Truckee Donner Land Trust. Wine tasting and hors d'oeuvres will be served. Guests coming in from out of town are invited to request a special rate from the historic Truckee Hotel (www.truckeehotel.com) located next to the Carmel Gallery. For more information, call the gallery at (530) 582-0557, or visit www.TheCarmelGallery.com.

AUTHOR / PHOTOGRAPHER BIO

Elizabeth Carmel is a Sierra-based photographer specializing in unique, expressive landscapes and “waterscapes.” Her prints combine dramatic photography, vivid colors, and artistic touches to create new, captivating visions of the natural world. Using ultra-high resolution 39-megapixel digital photography, she is able to capture the subtle details of the natural world and transfer them to prints with stunning clarity and color. Ms. Carmel has spent years exploring and photographing the diverse landscapes of the world, often traveling on foot or skis in wilderness terrain far from roads in order to capture her unique images. Her award winning images are in numerous galleries and private collections throughout the United States. Elizabeth and her husband Olof Carmel, who is also an accomplished photographer, currently own and operate their own photography gallery in the historic mountain town of Truckee, California. For more information log onto www.ElizabethCarmel.com.

Female impersonators rival real stars



Carnival
Cabaret is
nightly at the
Horizon casino
at Stateline.
Photo/Provided
by Dan Gore

By Kathryn Reed

The face of Carnival Cabaret lives on even though his voice has been silenced.

Hunter – his legal and stage name – did such an incredible rendition of Cher that it was hard to know it wasn't her, let alone it was a man in those outrageous costumes. Hunter's image was initially used to advertise Carnival Cabaret when it returned to the Horizon on Labor Day weekend 2008. Hunter died in 2005 from a head injury after a fall during a rehearsal in Southern California.

"Hunter was a special act, a special person," said Dan Gore, producer of the female impersonation show

Carnival Cabaret returned to the Horizon hotel-casino after going dark in 2004. The first nearly four-year stint at Stateline still makes it the longest running show on the South Shore. The casino has extended the current gig indefinitely.

Many people also associate this show with Gypsy (aka James Haake) the 77-year-old grandfather who emcees the event all but Fridays. Even if you don't want to hear the music of Reba McEntire, Dolly Parton, Judy Garland, Barbra Streisand, or

Bette Midler, Gypsy is worth the \$26.95.

His routine is part drag queen, part comedy, part interaction with the audience.

Anyone who has seen Cher live will agree Gypsy rivals her in the number of wardrobe changes. His attire is full of Versace gowns and Jimmy Choo shoes. (That's the same footwear the "Sex and the City" gals wore.) He credits Barbara Parina at Side Street Boutique for keeping him so well attired.

His humor crosses the line a bit, so best to leave the kids at home. Talking about how the seam in nylons hits male body parts is just an example.

Self-deprecation is the norm – such as needing to shop at Home Depot for makeup and saying, "The only reason to dress like this as an old man is for the money."

Gypsy's humor is timely, with some political jokes. In between each of the musical acts Gypsy converses with the audience. Insecure men should not sit near the stage.

"There are endless possibilities. We are always working on something else," Gore said. "We'll be constantly changing."

A recent change is going to seven days a week. Show time is 8pm. To allow cast members to have a night off, the show is always different.

Patrick Ross, who is Streisand and Midler, was in the original cast. He is the guest host on Fridays. Frankie Kein transforms into Liza Minnelli and Marilyn Monroe; Andrew Raymer does Cher and Celine Dion; and Kevin Wiley is McEntire, Parton and Judy Garland.

Gore said his contract with the current management at Horizon gives him more control over the show. Last go-around one of the performers was in transition – that's something Gore won't allow now that he calls all the shots.

With the diversity of impersonations, the show provides a little bit of something for everyone, as evident by a table of four locals who all had different favorites. Some liked Parton strutting in from the back of the room with a buxom out to there, another liked Midler – why pay Vegas prices to see her for real?

The finale will make you think twice about gay men dressing as women, but more important, about accepting each others differences.

For more information, go to www.carnivalcabaret.com.

Douglas Explorers 2nd overall at regional competition



Cadets of Douglas County Sheriff's Office Explorer Post No. 2015 won numerous top honors at a Law Enforcement Explorer Cadet competition in Paso Robles Sept. 24-26.

The 10th Annual Central Coast Law Enforcement Explorer Competition hosted 521 law enforcement explorer cadets from 47 various law enforcement agencies throughout California and Nevada.

The competition was extremely demanding; testing the physical capabilities and operational expertise of competing Explorer Cadets.

The Explorer Cadets competed in a variety of law enforcement

related scenarios, including: Felony Suspect Detainment and Arrest, Vehicle Traffic Enforcement Stops, DUI Investigations, Vehicle Searches, Building Searches, Domestic Violence Investigations, Suspect Interview and Interrogation, Emergency Medical Aid, Patrolling, and a host of other law enforcement related tasks. Additionally, cadets competed in individual and team physical agility tests.

The Douglas County Sheriff's Explorer cadets garnered wins in the following categories:

1st Place: DUI Investigation

1st Place: Emergency Medical Aid

2nd Place: Obstacle Course

3rd Place: Building Searches

4th Place: Felony Stop/Investigation

4th Place: Hazardous Response

The Douglas County Sheriff's Explorer Cadets came in second place overall out of 47 competing teams; an outstanding achievement in light of an extremely competitive field of explorer teams, including teams from LAPD, CHP, and several other large California law enforcement agencies.

In addition to the competition awards won by the DCSO Explorers, DCSO Explorer Sgt. Brian Sanchez was selected as the top cadet, winning a \$2,000 academic scholarship and a new laptop computer.

The competition was the culmination of several months of training conducted with the explorers by DCSO Youth Service Deputies Chris Griffith and Teresa Duffy.

USFS cabins offer a unique twist to Tahoe living



U.S. Forest Service cabins in Tahoe are family treasures.

By Kathryn Reed

In the early 1900s, Congress allowed the U.S. Forest Service to lease cabins in an attempt to get more people to use the National Forests which were then in their infancy.

And use them they did.

The Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit of the USFS oversees 594 Recreation Residence Special Use Permits – which includes Echo Lakes. In California, 6,000 permits have been issued, with 15,000 cabins permitted throughout the country.

“All of the cabins are authorized for use throughout the year. Under the terms and conditions of the permit, it is prohibited to use the cabin as a primary residence,” said Lori Allesio, special uses permit administrator in the basin.

Del Laine's cabin in El Dorado County has been in her family since her parents acquired it in 1934. She spends about five months a year at the 1,000-square-foot dwelling that has two bedrooms, one bath, a little kitchen and small living area.

"Originally the cabins were identified as summer residences and were used that way," Laine said. "Leases are renewable every 20 years. In the past we had year-to-year permits. The 99-year leases never really existed."

When her folks bought the cabin (the Forest Service owns the land), about a dozen cabins existed. Now, 18 of the 24 lots around her have cabins. About a half dozen are used in the winter. At one time winter use was prohibited because no road existed.

Neighbors then and now are a community unto themselves. Women and children would spend summer at the cabins. Men, mostly from the Bay Area, came on weekends.

"First of all, I simply like the touchstone of history, as well as I like the space. The space that I enjoy with neighbors," Laine said of the cabin, which she can't foresee ever not belonging to her family. "I have a lot of privacy and I like the quiet."

Leases may be passed to family and cabins may be sold. The original cabin near Laine is on the sixth generation. Hers is being enjoyed by the fourth generation.

Changes to cabins are allowed, though like everything in the basin, the restrictions have gotten more cumbersome through the years.

"Cabins are prohibited to expand in footprint. Exceptions are provided for accessibility needs," Allessio said. "Policy requires the cabins to be maintained to blend in with the forest environment and "like in kind" materials are required. Most maintenance projects approved by the Forest Service also

require permits from the county building department. These projects include roof, deck and window replacements.”

Outhouses were the norm. Now most cabins have sewer lines. Lahontan Water Quality Control Board made exceptions to all sewage being hauled out of the basin when installing a sewer line posed even more environmental problems, according to Allessio.

Sewage holding tanks at Echo Summit are routinely pumped or people can haul the waste out. Two tracts near Truckee, which are outside the basin, have septic tanks.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is minimally involved with the cabins. Erosion concerns – aka best management practices – come under TRPA’s microscope.

“We have expressed concerns with the Forest Service about gray water discharge from cabins. A lot of improvements have been made over the years,” said Julie Regan, TRPA spokeswoman.

Cabin owners pay the government 5 percent of the appraised value of the lot as rent. According to Allessio, the lot is appraised as though it is vacant. The county or appropriate entity assesses the value of the cabin for tax collection purposes.

Recreation residence tracts within the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit:

Echo Lakes area

Channel Tract – 19 cabins

Hemlock Tract – 28 cabins

Island Tract – 1 cabin

North Shore Tract – 14 cabins

South Shore Tract – 41 cabins

Mermaid Cove Tract – 18 cabins

Fallen Leaf Lake area

Fallen Leaf Lake Tract – 42 cabins

Alpine Falls Tract – 9 cabins

Fallen Leaf Lodge Tract – 22 cabins

Stanford Tract – 10 cabins

Lily Lake Tract – 10 cabins

Fish Hatchery Tract – 3 cabins

Fallen Leaf Park Tract – 1 cabin

Echo Summit area

Echo Road Tract – 42 cabins

Echo Summit Tract – 44 cabins

Angora Lakes area

Lower Angora tract – 12 cabins

Spring Creek area

Spring Creek Tract – 137 cabins

Meyers area

Rainbow Tract – 51 cabins

Upper Truckee Tract – 18 cabins

Bridge Tract – 20 cabins

Emerald Bay area

Emerald Bay Tract – 22 cabins

Tahoe City area

Twin Crags Tract – 14 cabins

Fir Crags Tract – 16 cabins

Free shuttle makes Apple Hill easy to visit

El Dorado Transit will once again operate the free Apple Hill Shuttle, every Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 5pm, Oct. 3-25.

For the second consecutive year, shuttle parking will be available at a second parking lot in Camino. Free shuttle parking will be offered at Schnell School in Placerville and the U.S. Forest Services Placerville Ranger Station, just off Highway 50, on Eight Mile Road in Camino.

The Apple Hill Shuttle is the ideal way to visit some of El Dorado County's most popular orchards, ranches, wineries and family attractions, during the peak of the harvest season, without the headaches of traffic and parking. Visitors get on and off the shuttles as many times as they like at any of 29 designated shuttle stops throughout Apple Hill.

El Dorado Transit will operate five buses and a trolley on a continuous loop, every 15-20 minutes from two satellite parking lots just off Highway 50 in Placerville and Camino. Schnell School is located at 2871 Schnell School Road, 0.1 miles north of Highway 50. The Placerville Ranger Station is located just south of Highway 50 in Camino at 4260 Eight Mile Road.

For more information on the Apple Hill shuttle, call (530) 642.5383 or go to www.eldoradotransit.com.

SLT postal workers rewarded



Employees at the main branch of the SLT post office.

By Kathryn Reed

An injury rate of 76 percent below the average for post offices is one reason the employees of the main office in South Lake Tahoe were honored by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

A slew of dignitaries expressed their appreciation for the hard work of the staff at the Al Tahoe Boulevard facility. About 20 of them were on hand for the festivities Tuesday morning.

Ken Nishiyama Atha, regional administrator with OSHA, said the Voluntary Protection Program that this office is part of helps keep workers' compensation and medical costs down.

VPP is a combined effort of management and employees to make a safe work environment.

As SLT City Manager Dave Jinkens pointed out, safety is not something management can dictate â€” it takes cooperation.

Greg Seely, VPP coordinator of the Western area of the US Postal Service, said the South Tahoe office is in rare company. Fewer than 100 workplaces are at a five star level like the Tahoe post office.

OSHA has had the Voluntary Protection Program since 1982, with the USPS being part of it the last five years.