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# Life in LAMORINDA

## Cal Shakes Volunteers Keep Popular Venue Running Smoothly

By Jennifer Wake

Each summer, as hundreds of theater lovers gather in eager anticipation for the opening of California Shakespeare Theater, behind the scenes a small army of dedicated individuals helps to put it all together. Celebrating its 34th season, Cal Shakes offers a unique interpretation of Shakespeare and the classics in its outdoor venue, and runs with clockwork precision thanks to its artists, actors, designers, and staff – and to its local volunteers.

When Bentley High School senior Mandy Goldstone-Dahlin began volunteering at Cal Shakes three years ago, she did so simply to get community service credit. She continues to volunteer at the Cal Shakes administrative offices (making copies, shrink wrap books and doing other administrative duties) because theater is her passion and she loves being immersed in all aspects of it. “Coming into contact with the professional world of theater in a new way has enriched my interest and love of theater all the more,” she said.

“Our volunteer corps represents a wide demographic,” said Cal Shakes Administrative Project Manager Elizabeth Schrey. “They are mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, friends, co-workers, book club members, young and old. There does not seem to be a limit to the diversity of our volunteers and it is amazing. Volunteers are an extension of our organization.”

This past year, Schrey said many volunteers were new to the



A Cal Shakes actor performs at Theater Square last year

Photo Tod Fierner

theater. “Many of the new volunteers had never been to a production before,” she said. “It’s an introduction to theater for some, a love of theater for others, and others just come because of a love for their community.”

Cal Shakes needs associates to help run the Theater Store, selling merchandise and doing product research, and needs 10 to 15 volunteer ushers at each of its 96 performances over the summer. This year’s playbill includes: Pericles, An Ideal Husband, Uncle Vanya, and Twelfth Night.

One of the biggest benefits for volunteer ushers, says Schrey, is the opportunity to see the shows for free on the nights they usher. Normally, tickets for Cal Shakes range from

\$32 to \$62, depending upon the day of the week and availability, so this benefits people who have a love of theater but cannot afford a chance to see great theater.

Administrative volunteers work in the Berkeley office, which is located in the same building as the rehearsal hall. They can occasionally sneak into watch a rehearsal when possible. And for those interested in helping out, but who don’t want to work outdoors, there are myriad volunteer opportunities at the Cal Shakes Annual Gala event – a black tie affair that raised more than \$300,000 for the organization last year through its live auction, silent auction and donations.

Goldstone-Dahlin recommends volunteering at Cal Shakes

without hesitation. “I love the people; everyone is friendly and warm, and they all share my passion for theater. Getting to chat with the actors has also been a mind-blowing experience – I have seen firsthand what thriving, professional actors are truly like,” she said. “If you have any interest in theater, I guarantee that the people you will meet and the activities you will do will inspire you and brighten your day.”

For more information about volunteer opportunities, or to learn more about California Shakespeare’s Season, Education Program and New Works/New Communities Program, please visit the Cal Shakes Web site at [www.calshakes.org](http://www.calshakes.org).

## SMC Student Parties May Lead to Stricter Ordinance...

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The college plans to increase the number of events having to do with the freshman experience in August, but has no plans to increase the number of events like Gaelstock – one of the largest student events on campus that features live music,

a barbecue, and outdoor activities.

Burns thinks that if they had more frequent events like Gaelstock, students “wouldn’t go so crazy and over intoxicate themselves when those events come around.” The college, however, must take many things into consideration when planning these events.

“It’s a balancing act,” Holtz said. Saint Mary’s is considering developing a newsletter for homes built close to the campus, which would list cultural events open to the public and alert neighbors of upcoming events that might be loud. The newsletter may also include contact numbers which neighbors could call if there was a problem.

Community and Government Relations Director Tim Farley has been working closely with Town of Moraga Planning Director Lori Salamack to discuss the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP), which proposes increased student housing in Moraga as well as the redevelopment of the Moraga Center and the Rheem Valley Shopping Center. New amenities proposed include a sports bar, late night bookstore, cafes, a bed and breakfast, and a community center.

Salamack has given the college a preliminary overview of the plan, and is scheduled to meet with Saint Mary’s representatives next month to further review it, said Farley.

In an assessment commissioned by the Town of Moraga regarding the MCSP, Economic & Planning Systems (EPS) –

which specializes in land use policy – stated the need for more amenities geared toward college students.

“Unlike most college towns, Moraga has not identified with the needs of the Saint Mary’s College student population and incorporated uses that would encourage students to live in the town as well as spend time there on weekends,” the EPS report stated. “With no bars, dance clubs, or live music venues in town, students have to leave town for similar gathering places.”

Through the revitalization, the Town of Moraga hopes to provide reasons for Saint Mary’s students and Moraga residents to spend more time (and more money) in the town they call home.

The process, however, takes time.

“I think what people in Moraga have to realize is that without more on-campus housing, they are going to have more and more kids in the community,” Burns said. “They have to wake up and figure this out. Current amenities on campus are nowhere to be found. We have nothing to do. They need to realize it before no one wants to come here anymore.”

“We have continued for the past three years to increase college campus events,” said Saint Mary’s College spokesperson Debra Holtz. “We think they are positive, and many are open to the public. We want to be a resource to the community and want to create a vibrant campus community for students.”

## First Friday at the Moraga Art Gallery ...

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She has worked, exhibited and sold her pottery for many years and was a Middle School and High School Art Teacher in area schools. She will follow her demonstration by a hands-on session for those participants who wish to do so. Older children who have an interest in clay are welcome.

Following the demonstration, wine and light refreshments will be served.

Since the first Friday in July falls on the Fourth, we will not meet then. On the First Friday in August, which happens to be August 1st, Natalia Udaltsova will discuss her work as a painter. Painting and drawing have always been fun for her.

They have been relaxing and therapeutic given all the possibilities of self-expression offered through line, color and images. She will give a slide-show presentation and do a short live portrait sketch.

The Moraga Art Gallery is located in the Rheem Shopping Center next to Longs. We are open Tuesday through Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. As a cooperative of nineteen artists, we work in a range of mediums including painting, drawing, pottery, photography, glass, and jewelry.



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