MUSINGS OF A DISTRACTIBLE MIND
BY HOPE H. OZER

Are you as overwhelmed as I am with the noise of the news bombarding us daily? I assure you that there is some good news in the world! It’s about those who go above and beyond for the sheer joy of contributing to the community. They make our world a better place. They do not expect or seek recognition. They are rarely if ever honored.

In the world of theatre, actors receive recognition with curtain calls, applause, hoots and hollers. The orchestra, however, is acknowledged merely by a motion from the cast in the direction of the orchestra pit. Musicians are rarely seen or acknowledged beyond that. Not so at Valley Youth Theatre!

At its recent VTital Affair gala, in addition to presenting the 2016 VTitality Awards (Valley Youth Theatre Applauds Leadership Impacting Today’s Youth) to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona (organization) and Kari Yakowski (individual) for their devotion in making a difference in the lives of children for many years – three orchestra members were visibly stunned to be called into the bright lights of the stage to accept awards for their long time devotion to VYT. Although VYT’s orchestra is comprised predominantly of young people, these three adults have been dedicated volunteers since the turn of the century – each having played in more than 20 productions! Resident Musical Director Mark Fearey clearly took enormous pleasure in presenting engraved crystal “Star Awards” to musicians Cassi Bussma, Suzanne Johnsen and Jesse Winters.

Not only musically gifted, but one who thinks fast on his feet, Jesse later told me, “When I was seated in seat 1 row 1, I figured I’d better be ready to give a speech. So, I started taking notes on my phone until the lights went down. I only had enough time to jot down a few key phrases, and I had to ‘wing it’ for most of the speech.” Fortunately, his daughter Jesse Marie recorded her dad on her iPhone – thus we have a transcript! Gotta love technology! It is truly my pleasure to share his thoughts with you. Sorta says it all:

“Well, I had to quickly come up with a speech so I had to consult with Ivanik’s speech writer:

“Four score and 7 years ago I played my first VYT show, West Side Story. Little did I know it was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

“We have nothing to fear except fear itself, but we always have Hope...Ozer. Hope, thank you for all the years you’ve made it happen at Valley Youth Theatre. We surely could not have done it without you.

“Yay, though I walk through the valley of youth, I shall fear no Cooper. Truly, Bobb and Karol Cooper have put on some of the most amazing shows that I have ever been privileged to be a part of and we are all lucky that we have Valley Youth Theatre here in Phoenix, Arizona.

“Last, I must say I am very grateful to be considered a friend of Mark Fearey, who is a consummate pianist and the best musician I have ever met. I have been very lucky to have played under his direction, and I am very grateful to have been a part of all these shows. “Thank you very much, Mark, Bobb, and all the sponsors who make this happen, and to all the great kids who have enriched my life.”

Valley Youth Theatre Resident Musical Director Mark Fearey praises Star Award recipients Suzanne Johnsen, Cassi Bussma and Jesse Winters.

PS. The VTital Affair netted over $180,000 to support the non-profit theatre and its extraordinary offerings for the coming season. Charlotte’s Web opens October 7. Visit www.vyt.com for tickets. I’ll see you at the theatre!

Hope H. Ozer is founder and Publisher Emeritus of CITYTimes and Chair Emeritus of Valley Youth Theatre.

Welcome New Advertisers

- August Reno Architects, LLC
- Bartlett Lake Marina
- Continental Divide Knives
- Cowbells Western Interiors
- Crescent Crown Distributing c/o Steve Brown
- Cushy Care Pet Sitting
- De Trading Post
- Dominion Group Properties
- Donnewright Electric
- Edible Arrangements
- EmbroidMe North Phoenix
- Eye Care North
- Gina Kulp, Sonoran Properties
- High Spirits Flutes
- IKA Services
- LaSala Medical, LLC dba Sunset Clinic
- Lesley R. Vann, Russ Lyon Sotheby’s International Realty
- Merrill Gardens at Anthem
- Morris Hall PLLC
- O.M. Design Group, LLC
- Ovens of Patagonia
- Papa Johns
- Phoenix Metro Chamber
- Platinum Wellness
- Prescott Area Artists’ Studio Tour
- Rich Fischer Art Studio
- Sulphur Springs Valley Electric
- The Arboretum at Flagstaff
- WHAM Art Association

Welcome Back Advertisers

- A Couple of Green Thumbs, LLC
- American Federal Rare Coin & Bullion, Inc.
- Anthem RV
- AZ Titles & Registrations
- Barro’s Pizza
- Bearnson & Caldwell
- Beckham Dental
- Big Bronco
- Black Mountain Baptist Church
- Black Mountain Coffee Shop
- Brisam’s Grill Bar & Patio
- Brugo’s Pizza Co.
- Carefree Floors
- Carefree Shell
- CarefreeSmile
- Cave Creek Farrier Supply & Saddlery
- Cave Creek Guitar
- Cave Creek Museum
- Cave Creek Olive Oil Company
- Cave Creek Wicked
- Cold Beers & Cheeseburgers
- Dairy Queen
- Debra Ortega Traders
- Desert Dog Spa
- Desert Foothills Library
- Desert Foothills Theater
- Desert Storage
- Desert Treasures
- Easy Street Galleria
- Ethania Gems & Jewelry
- Flat Tire Bike Shop
- Foothills Academy Charter School, Inc.
- Foothills Community Foundation
- Foothills Food Bank
- Fountain Hills - Oktoberfest
- Frazee Water Well Drilling, LLC
- Fulton Rizzo Team
- Gustafson & Associates, LLC
- Happy Feet Nails & Spa 2
- Harold’s Cave Creek Corral
- High Desert Creations, Kathi Turner
- Indigo Crow Restaurant & Bar
- Janey’s Cave Creek
- Jensen, Leslie – Farm Bureau Financial Services
- John Gangemi, D.C., – Health Solutions Center
- K9 Katelynn
- Kathie Norhe, Realtor – Re/Max
- Kiwanis Club of Carefree – Carefree Marketplace
- Kristy Young Insurance Solutions
- Lazy Lizard
- Le Sans Souci
- Levahah Acupuncture
- Lowe’s
- Magic Bird Festivals
- Matt Woosley, State Farm Insurance
- Money’s Worth Pool Construction
- Nutra Corp
- Out West Showroom
- Parkway Bank – Cave Creek Office
- Patagonia Fall Festival
- Perfect 10 Nail Spa
- Piek Tool Company, Inc.
- Pilates in Cave Creek
- Rancho Malta Golf Club
- Rare Earth Gallery
- Rebecca Niessink, Allstate Insurance
- Red Truck Trading
- Red Velvet Tailoring
- Ristorante Alberto
- Sesame Inn Carefree
- Silver Spur Saloon & Restaurant
- Smile Creations Dental
- Sockfish Trading Co.
- Sonoran Arts League
- Sonoran Beauty Salon
- Stagecoach Tailoring & Alterations
- Stagecoach Village
- Sugar Skull Salon
- The Carefree Traveler
- The Horny Toad Restaurant
- Town of Cave Creek – Taste of Cave Creek
- Tyrol Insurance Agency
- Un Jour en France, LLC
- Valley Audiology
- Venues Café
- Vermillion Promotions
- Walmart