Welcome to The Tabard Theatre Company at Theatre on San Pedro Square and to our exciting 2013-2014 season - filled with many twists and turns.

Thank you for helping us to be green. You can download Tabard’s 2013-2014 season brochures. If you would like to receive your season brochure ALSO via the U.S. Mail, please let me know. We will be mailing them the week of June 24th.

If you have already subscribed, please use this brochure to choose your dates and general seating area – and email your choices to Marilyn at boxoffice@tabardtheatre.org.
We are excited to announce, as of 7/29/13, the formal merger of Arts Council Silicon Valley with 1stACT Silicon Valley to create a new regional non-profit, Silicon Valley Creates (www.svcreates.org).

The mission of the new organization is “to ignite investment and engagement in arts and creativity,” with a commitment to:

- Raising the visibility and value of the arts,
- Building the capacity of our cultural ecosystem,
- Growing investment in arts and creativity, and
- Increasing participation in creative outlets.

The merger of 1stACT and Arts Council Silicon Valley brings the very best of two strong non-profits together for the benefit of the community. Historical Arts Council programs will stay intact, such as LiveSV.com, the Artsopolis Network, and the Grants Programs, while adding new 1stACT programs, such as the Children’s Creativity Collaborative and Adobe Youth Voices.

What does this mean for SVCA and its members?

We want to partner with you! Let us help you build your audience and serve your clientele in the following ways:

- Free event listings on www.LiveSV.com!
- Our event listings can show up on your site (our calendaring platform is currently implemented in 40+ cities nationwide).
- Put your special offers directly in front of corporate employees (behind the company’s firewall).
- We have media buys for multi-media campaigns.
- Workshops and granting opportunities are still available for local arts and cultural non-profits.
- Finally, we have a new focus on education.

These are just the highlights. We have many new programs and ideas in the works. Let’s start a creative conversation! -- Kereli Sengstack (kereli@svcreates.org)

Congratulations to Monta Vista High School from Cupertino, California, winners of the 2013 International Lodging Management Program (LMP) Competition, held April 10-12 in Orlando, Florida. We at the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (EI) are so proud of these fine students--Sonal Patel, Isabella Zhang, Emily Hong, and Michelle Li (pictured here with Robert L. Steele III, CHA, EI president; Joseph McInerney, CHA, retiring AH&LA president and CEO; and Albert Schmid, representing Gold Sponsor Sullivan University’s National Center for Hospitality Studies).

Congratulations to all of the competing teams who participated in the 10th annual International LMP Competition.

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Restaurant, hotel industry bounces back in Bay Area

By George Avalos
Oakland Tribune

Restaurants and hotels in the Bay Area have rebounded strongly from the economic downturn, and a boost in sales from free-spending customers has led to more hiring -- fresh indicators of the resurgence of the region's economy.

Since the depths of the dining sector's downturn in spring 2010, restaurants and drinking places have added 33,400 jobs, a 15 percent increase. Over the same period, the hotel industry has added 2,800 jobs, a 6 percent increase.

It's a sign of the gathering strength of the economy's rebound. Experts point out that spending on things such as hotels and restaurants is the first expenditure that consumers cut amid a downturn and the last to come back as the economy rebounds, until people are certain their jobs are secure.

Hotels and motels in the Bay Area added 900 jobs over the past 12 months, a 2 percent increase. Room rates are up 8.2 percent in the South Bay-Peninsula area, 5.5 percent in the East Bay and 2.8 percent in San Francisco.

"Things are not just getting a little better with the hotel industry -- they are getting a lot better," said Alan Reay, president of Irvine-based Atlas Hospitality Group, which analyzes the lodging industry in California. "Silicon Valley, San Francisco - those hotel markets are on fire right now."

Added Marshall Jones, sales and marketing manager with the Fairmont San Jose: "Last year, the hotel was mainly busy midweek. Now, the hotel is busy all week and on weekends."

The improvement in the economy is drawing both leisure and business travelers to the region.

"The Bay Area is one of the strongest hotel markets in the entire country," said Ashish Patel, a consultant with the San Francisco office of PKF Consulting, a firm that tracks the national hotel market. "Silicon Valley is a hub for technology. San Francisco has the leisure market."

In a sign that tourist travel is sturdy, Napa County hotels have experienced a 7.8 percent increase in revenue per available room, PKF reported.

The hotel market has improved so much that Atlas Hospitality has shifted its focus from tracking hotel foreclosures to keeping tabs on construction of new hotels.

"There is a shortage of new hotel development in San Jose and San Francisco, and those markets are hot," said Reay of Atlas Hospitality Group. "We are getting a lot of calls from developers who want to build hotels."

In San Jose, developers are planning to build 650 new hotel rooms, which, by Reay's estimates, is the largest current burst of lodging construction in a Bay Area city.

"We are feeling good about the hotel market," said David Gibbons, a senior vice president with Barry Swenson Builder, which is developing hotel projects in San Jose and Santa Clara. "I'm very optimistic."

The upswing in hotels is benefiting from a consumer bounce-back amid improved job prospects in the Bay Area overall.

K.C. Burney, an Atlanta resident who recently made a business trip to San Jose, is among those experiencing better economic times.

"I'm traveling more for work," she said. "I'm going to a lot of the restaurants downtown."

Contact George Avalos at 408-373-3556 or 925-977-8477.

7pm 'til 11pm -- ART WALK venues are open late & are free
In the SoFA District (on So. First Street between San Carlos and E. Reed streets) & beyond!
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Aug 9-11: San Jose Jazz Summer Fest. Summer in Silicon Valley wouldn’t be complete without this annual musical event. Celebrating its 24th year, the weekend festival features a stellar lineup of international stars, emerging artists and regional favorites performing a plethora of genres—jazz, blues, salsa, R&B, funk, Indian tabla and myriad more—on 11 stages. Taking place in downtown San Jose, it is recognized as one of the biggest festivals of its kind in the country, and a premier summer destination for music lovers, concert-goers and families alike. Each year the streets pulse with thousands of visitors for three full days of top-notch music, food and infectious fun. This year’s featured artists include: the “little orchestra” known as Pink Martini, New Orleans jazz masters Preservation Hall Jazz Band and Rebirth Brass Band, post-bop jazz musicians The Cookers, acclaimed Cuban saxophonist Yosvany Terry with his quartet; Tony-Award winner Ben Vereen, jazz great Dave Koz & Friends, Gypsy Allstars (featuring Gypsy King family members), chart-topping funk band Cameo, SF’s top live/electronic ensemble Afrolicious, gipsy swing band Le Jazz Hot and many more. A parade, club crawl and drum night round out the events. For a full schedule, visit www.jazzfest.sanjosejazz.org. (San Jose: Plaza de Cesar Chavez, 170 S. Market St.; 408/288-7557)

Aug 10-11: Los Gatos Fiesta de Artes. The Los Gatos art and wine tradition brings together the town’s artisans, vintners, micro-brewers, entertainers and merchants for this two-day summer celebration for the whole family. Live entertainment includes performances by Darryl Rowe, The Cocktail Monkeys, Workhouse Poets and The Sparkletones. 10am-6pm. (Los Gatos: Civic Center, 110 E. Main St.; 408/395-8016)

Aug 24-25: Italian Family Festa. Stop by and experience “La Dolce Vita Italiana” at this annual celebration held in San Jose’s Little Italy section. An abbondonza of authentic Italian sweet and savory delights, molto wine tastings and live entertainment will have you shouting “Bravo!” Play a game of bocce, participate in a grape stomping contest, take part in culinary demos and cultural discussions, browse through an array of arts and crafts booths, sample specialty foods, and much more. Viva Italia! Sat, 11am-8:30pm; Sun, 11am-6pm. (San Jose: Guadalupe River Park & Gardens, Julian & St. John Sts.; www.italianfamilyfestasj.org)

Thru Sept 1: Shakespeare Santa Cruz. Sit under the splendor of the redwoods and watch as the words of William Shakespeare are brought to life by the talented ensemble of repertory actors that gather together every summer at this world-renowned festival. Due to popular demand, every theatre production will be held at the outdoor Sinsheimer-Stanley Festival Glen. August performances include the following: The Taming of the Shrew, one of the Bard’s most popular and thought-provoking plays, offers fascinating, time-tested commentary on relationships (thru Sept 1); Henry V, the last installment of SSC’s three-play exploration of King Henry’s transformation from ne’er-do-well to fabled king, is one of Shakespeare’s most memorable plays (Aug 6-Sept 1); and Tom Jones (SSC’s Fringe Show), a bawdy and rollicking stage comedy, centers on the oftentimes bewildering world of romance (Aug 20 & 27). Sun-Thurs, 2 and/or 7:30pm; Fri, 8pm; Sat, 2 and/or 8pm. (Santa Cruz: Sinsheimer-Stanley Festival Glen, USCS Theater Arts Center, Meyer Dr. (at Heller Dr.); 831/459-2159)

Rita Vandera/Explore Publishing
Discover Silicon Valley Magazine
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Is the compensation and status of a concierge commensurate with the needed skills and experience in the hospitality industry? Much has happened in that industry in the past five years, internally, structurally, technically, and financially. The impact of these changes was also affected by changes in the business travel - and tourist industries. I have read various articles in publications from the New York Times, Travel and Leisure Magazine; to Hotel Interactive Hotel News. After all my reading I concluded that the skill levels needed in today's hospitality industry outstrip many of those in other hospitality professions. Before giving you some specifics, let me mention what Robert Marks, chief concierge of The Omni San Diego Hotel and vice president of Les Clefs d’Or USA, the national organization of hotel lobby concierges, defined as the key traits of a competent, experienced concierge: “The underlying quality that comes to being a very good concierge is an individual who has a true understanding of the needs of a guest and a true desire to be of service.” I would add to this, that it takes an individual who has also acquired the tools and experience to meet those needs and uses them accordingly. Having said this let me enumerate the skills that a good concierge ought to have in today’s hospitality industry:

- Know your product. Have a thorough knowledge of your property (be it part of a chain or individually owned), the range of services provided, and its organizational structure.
- Be aware of the type of guest you will be serving. Business travelers have different needs than tourists. This becomes particularly important if the business traveler is accompanied by family members.
- Be familiar with the offerings and attractions in your city or area. Have first-hand knowledge of restaurants; museums; meeting facilities (in addition to those of your property); sightseeing tours; sporting events; recreational facilities etc.
- Be familiar with current Social Media offerings (which have become a ‘sanctioned form of eavesdropping’). Examples: Google’s “Libra”; Twitter; Facebook; etc. Have a basic knowledge of the tools such as Laptops; iPads; iPods; Blackberrys; and other handheld devices. Know how to do searches on the Internet with either of these tools.
- Use Biometric tools, if financially and otherwise permissible, (iris scans; face recognition tools; fingerprints, etc.)
- Establish a good working relationship with the Front Office staff as they are your extended resources when serving your guests.

What a guest may request is not always predictable and may require ingenuity. The above “sanctioned form of eavesdropping” was, in one case I read, used to access a photo of the guest’s family, have it framed and put in his room wishing him a “Happy Father’s Day” since he could not be at home on that day. In another case, the “eavesdropping” revealed the guest as an advocate of LGBT rights and the staff left a magazine in the room that he/she could identify with.

These practices are more common at U.S.-based and independent hotels. In the EU, because of privacy regulations, companies are less likely to gather personal information online.

Discretion is a matter of judgment. As one article stated: “the fact is, profiling works – most of the time”. Who wouldn’t want their hotel to know, without even asking, what type of pillow to leave on the bed, which magazines to leave on the coffee table, what brand of juice to put in the mini bar? Who doesn’t enjoy being surprised and delighted?”

Back to the skill levels that Concierges ought to possess: If, indeed, a concierge has all or a majority of them, are they a path for climbing the ladder of success? Do Hotel Managers create an organizational structure that allows for promotions and commensurate compensation? The Clef d’Or USA group has four Categories of Membership: Provisional; Full; Affiliate; and Honorary. Qualifications, in abbreviated form, are:

- Applicants shall be at least twenty-one years of age, of good moral character, and employed in the hotel lobby-level for at least five years, three in the position of concierge and active within their local concierge community.
- The final year of these five years of employment must be worked continuously as a hotel lobby concierge
- The membership in Clef d’Or shall be limited to concierges who are employed by hotels and resort hotels having a transient clientele and who work full time at a desk located in the main lobby of such properties, from which they provide services to all guests of the hotel.
- Concierges providing services to certain guests on VIP floor or ‘towers’ or on any other floor other than the main lobby of the respective property shall not qualify for Clef d’Or membership.

The question at the outset of this column referred to the adequacy of compensation concierges or staff who possess the skills mentioned above receive. Without knowing details, it appears that hotels where they are employed, don’t readily divulge their pay scales. Let’s assume for the sake of argument that the hospitality industry will provide the staff that assumes concierge duties – regardless of the job titles – competitive salaries and benefits.

The Hospitality Industry covers a wide variety of services. This is illustrated by the SVCA’s checkerboard skills and titles of its members. Very few carry the title of ‘Concierge’. Members are more often Meeting Planners; Restaurant Managers; Tour Guides; Front Office Managers; Marketing or Sales Managers etc. They all must be competent in many phases of the industry. Their compensation varies considerably. One of the reasons may be that one of the key ingredients for their effectiveness, namely ROI (Return on Investment) is hard, if not impossible, to measure.

In next month’s ‘Insiders’ Track’ column I will focus in more detail on the variables that makes the hotel industry, especially in Silicon Valley and the S.F. Bay Area, but also globally, so challenging.
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