Please join us for our One Year Anniversary Party on February 28 featuring the Eulipion All-Stars (Charles McNeal, Howard Wiley, Mike Olmos, Peppe Merolla, Matt Clark, & Aaron Germain)

MARCH 2014
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SILICON VALLEY CONCIERGE ASSOCIATION
12th Annual Hospitality Awards

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Invitation to Follow

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Here are top picks from Discover Silicon Valley Magazine for what's going on this month. For a complete calendar, visit http://www.dineshopplay.com/events_main

**Cinequest,** Silicon Valley’s highly anticipated vanguard film festival, is widely recognized for showcasing premier films, renowned and emerging artists, and feats in cinematic technology. Running March 4-16, this dynamic 13-day event features 84 international films exhibiting unique social and artistic visions from around the globe, with hundreds of filmmakers, technologists and professionals from 43 countries in attendance. The spirit of Cinequest is innovation: in filmmaking, technology and the festival-going experience, with each year raising the bar a little higher. The festival presents its 300-plus events, forums and premieres in seven categories allowing audiences to interact based on what they want to “feel”—Celebration, Innovation, Inspiration, Thrills, Laughs, Life or Love. This year’s noteworthy events include: opening night premiere of the comedy, *The Grand Seduction,* from director Don McKellar and screenwriter Michael Dowse (3/4; 7pm); special award ceremonies honoring major media innovators—the “father of the cell phone” Martin Cooper (3/4; 7pm), and actor and filmmaker Matthew Modine for his new “appumentary” *Full Metal Jacket Diary* (3/15, 3pm); a discussion with Maverick Spirit Award recipient, author Neil Gaiman (3/9; 1:30pm); a special screening of *The Hands of Orlac* (3/14; 7pm), a rare German Expressionism silent horror film from 1924, with live Wurlitzer organ accompaniment; and the closing night world premiere of Small Time, with actor Christopher Meloni and writer/director Joel Surnow in attendance (3/16; 6pm). (Various theatres; Call 408/295-FEST or visit www.cinequest.org for a complete schedule)

**DANCE...**

*San Francisco’s Smuin Ballet* brings its X’treme’s Winter Dance Series (Mar 19-23) to Mountain View. The lineup features Jiří Kylián’s acclaimed “Return to Strangeland,” a touching dance production set to four pieces for solo piano by Janaček. From these depths, Carl Orff’s impassioned “Carmina Burana” sends the heart soaring with a boisterous production celebrating life, lust and joy and mourning the cruelty of fate. Considered one of Michael Smuin’s most lauded works, his intensely physical choreography culminates in the extravagant “O Fortuna.” And by popular demand, Smuin brings back the enchanting “Dear Miss Cline,” a buoyant and colorful romp set to the unforgettable music of Patsy Cline. Wed-Fri, 8pm; Sat, 2 & 8pm; Sun, 2pm. (Mountain View: Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St.; 650/903-6000)

*San Jose Stage* presents the world premiere of Game On (March 27-April 19). This provocative work weaves a confrontation between mediocrity and genius into a tale of breathtaking dramatic power. In the court of Austrian Emperor Josef, Antonio Salieri is the established composer. Enter the greatest musical genius of all time: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Salieri has given himself to God so that he might realize his sole ambition to be a great composer. Mozart is a foul mouthed, graceless oaf who has that which is beyond Salieri’s envious grasp: genius. Thurs-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm. (San Jose: 529 S. Second St.; 408/282-4200)

**THEATRE...**

*TheatreWorks* invites audiences to take a trip to the Caribbean with the exuberant musical Once on This Island, from the Tony Award-winning creators of Ragtime (March 5-30). In this thrilling adventure, which takes its story from a book by Rosa Guy (in turn inspired by Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Little Mermaid”), Ti Moune, a peasant girl on a tropical island in the French Antilles, saves the life of a wealthy young aristocrat. A star-crossed love affair begins, defying the class divide and invoking the interference of the island’s ancient gods, who offer the young girl a perilous deal in exchange for the young man’s life. Tues-Wed, 7:30pm; Thurs-Fri, 8pm; Sat, 2 and/or 8pm; Sun, 2 and/or 7pm. (Palo Alto: Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Rd.; 650/463-1960. theatreworks.org)

*San Jose Stage* presents The Threepenny Opera, thru March 30. In their opera “by and for beggars,” composer Kurt Weill and playwright Bertolt Brecht transform old-fashioned opera and operetta forms, incorporating a sharp political perspective and the sounds of 1920s Berlin dance bands and cabaret. Wed- Thurs, 7:30pm; Fri-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm. (San Jose: 490 S. 1st St.; 408/283-7142)

*City Lights Theatre Company* presents Amadeus by Peter Schaffer, March 20-April 19. This provocative work weaves a confrontation between mediocrity and genius into a tale of breathtaking dramatic power. In the court of Austrian Emperor Josef, Antonio Salieri is the established composer. Enter the greatest musical genius of all time: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Salieri has given himself to God so that he might realize his sole ambition to be a great composer. Mozart is a foul mouthed, graceless oaf who has that which is beyond Salieri’s envious grasp: genius. Thurs-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm. (San Jose: 529 S. Second St.; 408/295-4200)

*San Jose Repertory Theatre* presents the world premiere of Game On (March 27-April 19). Vinnie and Alvin care about the environment—almost as much as they care about winning at fantasy football. The two sequester themselves in front of a ballgame in the media environment—almost as much as they care about winning at fantasy football. (San Jose: 101 Paseo de San Antonio; 408/288-5437; www.sjrep.com)

**FILM...**

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*Cinema...* For film tickets, visit http://www.siliconvalleyfilmfest.org for information on the Silicon Valley Film Festival (Mar 7-18).

*Sundance...* For film tickets, visit http://www.sundance.org/ for information on the Sundance Film Festival (Jan 21-30).

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March Madness & Buffet’s Billions

March Madness has never been “madder” ever since Warren Buffett offered $1 billion dollars to anyone who can perfectly predict the NCAA Men’s 64-team basketball bracket. The chances of winning are 1 in 9 quintillion (that’s 9,000,000,000,000,000,000,000). Since I have a better chance of being struck by lightning (1 in 1,000,000-ish), I think I will limit my picks to three winning arts events here in Silicon Valley. Here they are, my Top 3 “picks” for the March Silicon Valley Arts bracket!

Cinequest 24: In its 24th year, Cinequest remains one of the last big festival bastions for the discovery of new and emerging film artists. A dynamic 13-day event of roughly 200 international films with over 600 film artists, technologists, and professionals from dozens of countries in attendance, Cinequest exhibits unique social and artistic films from around the globe, engaging audiences in thought-provoking dialogue, and giving film artists and film lovers alike an opportunity to connect. Mar. 4 - 16 in Downtown San Jose. For more information, call: 408-295-FEST or visit: http://www.livesv.com/event/detail/441822566/Cinequest_Film_Festival_24.

San Jose Jazz Winter Fest 2014: San Jose Jazz Winter Fest provides a cool counterpart to their celebrated Summer Fest by presenting great emerging jazz artists during the Winter season at indoor venues. This festival is the perfect opportunity to get up-close-and-personal to brilliant musicians and hear their cutting-edge creations in smaller, more intimate venues. Grab a cozy scarf, some hot tea, and brave the elements to see these jazz greats Feb. 28 - Mar. 2 in Downtown San Jose. For more information, call: 408-288-7557 or visit: http://www.livesv.com/org/detail/79/San_Jose_Jazz.

Happy Birthday, Heritage: The Heritage Theatre in Downtown Campbell is celebrating its 10th Anniversary! The party’s on March 1st with a reception catered by Campbell’s own Opa and Frost Cupcakes, followed by a concert featuring “Under the Streetlamp,” a 4-part harmony Jersey Boys-esque quartet singing from the American Songbook. Don’t feel bad if you’ve miss the party… the fun will continue with the Heritage’s all-star season: Air Supply (Mar. 27), Sister’s Easter Catechism -- Will My Bunny Go To Heaven? (Apr. 11-13), and Eddie Money (May 2). For more information, call: 408-866-2700 or visit: http://www.livesv.com/venue/detail/249/Heritage_Theatre.

Submitted by, Kereli Sengstack (kereli@svcreates.org)
The scope of traditional hospitality services is widening thanks largely due to social networking that allows business and leisure traveler’s digital alternatives.

Does this mean that the applications make those of a concierge obsolete? Of course not!

Despite all the sophistication they provide, they cannot replace a concierge’s personal touch and latest details on the myriad of services a traveler may require or be interested in.

In the February 2, 2014 issue if the N.Y. Times, under the caption ‘trending’ with the title “Need the Concierge? There is an App for That” Elaine Glusac cites, among others, the following examples: “The 26-room Le Pavillon des Lettres in Paris has unveiled a bi-lingual concierge app that offers itineraries for various ages and stages – consider a toddler’s day in Paris, or a Hemingway-themed outing – as well as Paris news, weather and arts listings.” Or this one: “the mobile app at the Wequasset Resort and Gold Club in Massachusetts that uses geo-tracking to tell when a guest is on the property and will refresh with activities, menus and events.” Or take the QT in Sydney, Australia where about 40 percent of the guests download the mobile app, which can be used in or out of the hotel to query the concierge directly. “So it’s a time saver for all parties – and it amplifies our reach to our guests wherever they are” Claudia Salacan, a QT concierge wrote in an e-mail.

The article continues: “No one is ready to call the concierge role obsolete, but changing demographics suggest a more wired future in which travelers increasingly use technology for self-service check-ins and dinner reservations.” States Chekitan Dev, associate professor of strategic marketing and brand management at Cornell University’s School of Hotel Administration in an e-mail: “if they (the concierges) don’t provide timely, high value and exclusive access to all a destination has to offer, - they will become extinct, just like the elevator operator or spittoon polisher.” (In my years of experience I don’t recall spittoon polishers though!)…

Make a note of it!

New Epiphany Hotel in Palo Alto

In the business and technology section of the February 15 issue of the SJMN, in its Q & A section is an interview with Niki Leondakis, CEO of Commune Hotels and Resorts. Ms. Leondakis it says has become one of the country’s most prominent women in the leisure and travel business. She had the following to say about the hospitality industry:

“People are really looking for more than just a hotel stay today when they travel. They’re looking for an experience that’s inspiring and memorable. Business travelers, too, are integrating their personal lives with their business trips. Ten years ago, a business trip meant abandoning your personal lifestyle routines, like dining and exercise, but today, people might extend their business trip by a day or two to see the sights or take family members along with them. They’re looking for a more inspired experience in their hotels, not just a place to park their clothes and get work done.”

In prior columns I have alluded to the need to offer visitors to Silicon Valley a vastly expanded menu of services, precisely because many of them have come to the area for the first time and don’t want to leave without having seen scenic Northern California, be it the Sierras, the wine country, Mendocino, Arta Nuevo, Carmel etc. meet some of those need, A well versed concierge or tour guide may fill this void as can boutique hotels such as the Epiphany in Palo Alto.

How to Deliver Exceptional Service

The Hospitality Industry – as its name implies – centers around ‘Customer Service’ in each of its branches. L. Scoyen, member of SVCA’s Board, drew my attention to “Dynamic One-Day Seminars” – designed by Fred Pryor Seminars, a division of PARK University Enterprises, Inc. in Kansas City, MO. The flyer she gave me advertises the seminar as “A must-attend, dynamic for everyone who communicates with customers”. Major sections focus on the following key parts of customer service:

• Turn Every Customer Into an Ally
• Out service Your Competitors
• Eliminate Negative Situations
• Overcome Stress and Burnout

If you are interested, you may mark your calendar for April 11 – Event 153645, at the San Jose Airport Hotel, 1471 North 4th Street in San Jose, CA. Express Enrollment can be made at: http://events.pryor.com/286088. The cost for the seminar is $199.

You owe it to your professional growth or as an opportunity to refresh your skills to seriously consider it. Incidentally, neither Lillian Scoyen nor I have any pecuniary stake in this opportunity.

Your comments and suggestions are always welcome
Gus Holweger
Adjunct / SVCA Board / Contributing Editor to VAM
gusholweger@comcast.net
From the airport. And I'm determined to prove it. Every interest, San Jose is worth more than just a look as visitors drive away. Roots and its reputation as the hub of high-tech Silicon Valley. From Spanish Bay Area sister. But the city is far more than the combination of its agricultural first civilian settlement in California, as well as the state’s first capital and the largest city in Northern California. San Jose is perpetually eclipsed by its Bay Area sister. But the city is far more than the combination of its agricultural roots and its reputation as the hub of high-tech Silicon Valley. From Spanish and Asian cultural influences to upscale shopping and museums for nearly every interest, San Jose is worth more than just a look as visitors drive away from the airport. And I’m determined to prove it.
The 160-room Queen Anne-style mansion’s bizarre features, from doors opening into blank walls to a staircase that goes from the floor to the ceiling, also include technology considered advanced for the time, such as a call-box system designed to communicate with the 18 house servants from anywhere in the home. Winchester also had her own gas and electrical plant on the property, as well as an early Otis electric elevator. The tour of the home and grounds has us yearning to wind down, so we drive across Winchester Boulevard to Santana Row, an upscale shopping complex that includes casual to gourmet restaurants and a -indy-film house.

We check into the swank Hotel Valencia and pass time sipping -cocks and people-watching from the balcony of the hotel’s Vbar before grabbing a bite to eat and calling it a day.

The next morning, as we walk up to The Tech Museum of Innovation — awash in bright, can’t-miss orange and blue — school kids jostle each other at the entrance. “No devices today,” says their teacher, eyeing their smartphones. We slide past them and through the d The hands-on technology and science museum brings back memories of your favorite moments in school, when play and education melded so effortlessly that you didn’t realize you were learning. The displays are more experience than exhibit — take the Social -Robots area, where visitors can build, design and program their own robots, or the Tech Silicon Valley Innovation Gallery, which illustrates the range of the region’s creativity and innovation through interactive experiences.

“Just 20 more minutes?” she asks, glancing from the blocks in her hands and looking a little like a preschooler pretending to be a disc jockey. I remind her that she was the one who wanted to see San Francisco. “Forget that,” she says. “I’m having too much fun.”

JILL K. ROBINSON is a freelance journalist who lives in the tiny California beach town of El Granada. She would have no problem spending the night all alone in the Winchester Mystery House hoping to get a few minutes of calm before the museum becomes a playground.
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