



Behind the Scenes: Gila Valley's Home on the Range Theater

This year's performance—*Hank the Cowdog: It's a Dog's Life*

The Gila Valley Library's Home on the Range Theater presentation is always an eagerly awaited community event. Over the years, students have gained poise, confidence, and a sense of accomplishment from their participation in these theater productions—a vital partnership between the library and Cliff School.

Rehearsals are well underway for the fourth annual Home on the Range presentation, *Hank the Cowdog: It's a Dog's Life*. The script, written and directed by Library Director Madge Slavec, is an original tale loosely based on several books in John R. Erickson's beloved Hank the Cowdog series. In this story, Hank the Cowdog, head of

continued

SAVE THE DATE

Date: April 28, 2017

Time: Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Location: Old Gym, Cliff School, Route 211, Cliff

Free and open to the public

Donations welcome at the door to help offset production costs.



Rehearsals are well underway! Gila Valley Library Director Madge Slavec and cast members work on some of the fine points.



ranch security, and his under-dog, Drover, are forced to leave the ranch when they find themselves in deep trouble with Sally May, the rancher's wife. Hank and Drover decide to reunite with their old friend Junior Vulture in the Canyonlands, embarking on an adventure through an "unchanted" forest, filled with monsters, to reach their destination. Upon arriving, they discover that Junior, along with two coyotes, has formed a musical band. You must join us for the performance to experience what happens next, when cast members in their guise as dogs, cats, an owl, vultures, and coyotes bring the script to life onstage in Cliff School's old gym.

Exciting New Approach to Production

Rather than using hired professionals, this year's library program is paying student interns Sarah King, Jewell Mimm, Roger Neil, and Nathan Huffman to design and create sets, work the lighting and sound systems, and help backstage, moving props and assisting the younger children with their makeup and costumes. When we asked the interns to share why they took this project on, Sarah said, "I love seeing the kids blossom and enjoying the creativity. It is fun to work with them! I'm also extremely interested in designing sets and the artwork that goes with the process. I am hoping to go into film in the future, so this work should help give me a peek into the field."

Meet the Characters

Student cast members have made *It's a Dog's Life* characters their own!

Hank's got attitude . . . Well, he *is* head of ranch security *and* the boss, but his self-importance often leads to trouble—and that trouble includes more than just himself.

"Course there's fleas on my ears. I got a five-cent gunnysack to sleep on cuz the cowboys around here sure don't want to spend an extra nickel on a new one for the head of ranch security!"

Drover is Hank's loyal sidekick, often dragged into Hank's misadventures. Drover idolizes Hank and depends on him to waylay his own sense of fear, worry, and forgetfulness. But

idolizing Hank can mean trouble for Drover.

"I know I am supposed to be fearless like you, Hank, but it's the end of the world and I am not brave like you."

Pete and Pan the Cats are Sally May's favorites, much to the annoyance of Hank. They love stirring things up and getting the dogs in deep trouble.

"We'll be real close by to see what happens in a dog's life—so entertaining to us!"



The Twin Coyotes practice "twin telepathy," seamlessly finishing each other's sentences. And, in this story, they effectively complicate things for Hank and Drover because they especially dislike dogs! To top it off, they know how to strut their stuff when it comes to playing in a band.

"Coyotes not like rules! Coyotes wild and happy!"

Junior Vulture is a rebel, thinking and acting in ways that drive his dad, Wallace, to his wits' end. Cheerful, and enjoying the company of band members, Junior would rather play banjo than eat dead animals.



"But, Paaa. . . I want to be a singer when I grow up!"

Wallace is everything you ever imagined a big black vulture could be!

Sally May is the Ranch Hand's wife and is none too pleased when Hank helps himself to the lunch steaks!



Miss Moonshine, a very wise owl, comes to the rescue of our intrepid travelers in the "unchanted" forest, helping Hank out of his troubles yet again.

"Hank always gets lost in the uncharted forest and I have to save him. Now I will have to save both of them."

CAST

Andrew Eggleston (9)

Zachary Eggleston (9)

Kyuss Hogan (10)

Phoenix Kilbourne Hogan (12)

Emma Smith (9)

Costumes

We are so very fortunate to have the support of individuals like Lynnette Duran, the grandmother of cast members Zachary and Andrew Eggleston, who lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado. When director Madge asked Lori, Zach and Andrew's mom, about costumes, Lori immediately thought of her own mom, who has created many costumes for family members over the years. Lori says, "I thought she would be willing to make the costumes for the twins, to help out, and that soon expanded to creating all the cast costumes. We brainstormed about how she could do it from Colorado. I talked with Madge and the students about what they thought the costumes should look like, and we decided that we could do all of them from the same basic pattern.

"My mom sent me directions on how to get the best measurements that she would need," Lori continues. Working with the cast and teen interns, Lori and Lynnette texted each other and



Lynnette Duran with costume pieces for the various creatures in the play

sent pictures of fabric and held remote "meetings" in the fabric sections of the Walmart stores in Silver City and Colorado Springs. "We even sent pictures of our dogs to show what we needed the ears and tails to look like. My mom had some great ideas about how to make the animals varied, and added to the pattern to

accomplish this." Lynette is well on her way to completing her task and is thrilled that she will be able to travel to New Mexico to see the kids in costume onstage. Thank you, Lori and Lynnette, for being such important contributors to this year's production!

Special Thanks

Special thanks to art and English teacher Ms. Massy for the use of her room and her assistance, and to music teacher Dan Cook for his help training students with microphones, sound mixing, and running lights from a light board.

Our generous local sponsors and major funders make this annual production possible. Thank you!

In memory of Lyman & Cleo Eggleston~
loving parents, grandparents,
& great-grandparents



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Coming Up at the Gila Valley Library

Sunday, April 2, 2017

at the

Gila Community Center

"Meeting Pilgrims Along 'The Way':
One Woman's Trip on the Camino de Santiago de Compostella"

Free and open to the public

The Camino de Santiago de Compostella is an ancient pilgrimage route of the Catholic Church, leading to the magnificent Cathedral of St. James in Santiago, Spain. Starting around 800 AD, pilgrims have walked hundreds of miles from their homes all over Europe to Santiago, where holy relics of Saint James are buried.

Who are today's pilgrims on the Camino? Are you interested in walking the Camino de Santiago?



Do you wonder if you could make it and what you'd see and learn?

Join the Gila Valley Library and pilgrim-speaker Esperanza Quintero, sixteen-year resident of the Burro Mountains, who walked the 540 miles in 2013, carrying everything she needed for five weeks.

Come learn about her trip!

Esperanza Quintero on the Camino

What's New on Our Shelves?

Check our website, www.gilavalleylibrary.org, for our complete collection and for new additions! Don't forget that you can also use the website for renewals and Interlibrary Loan requests.



Gila Valley Library

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Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 9 a.m.–4 p.m., Saturday: 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Wireless service: 7 a.m.–7 p.m., 7 days

The Gila Valley Library is a 501(c)(3) non-profit incorporated in New Mexico.

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