

Tickets vary by performance but all are \$25 or well under, matinees around \$12, making CATS shows one of theater's great bargains. Seeing a show of this caliber elsewhere would cost fifty bucks or more!

Call the PAC at (909) 866-4970. ■

"Bluegrass, Bluejeans and Beyond Festival"

Returning in 2009 is Big Bear Discovery Center's signature new event: "Bluegrass, Bluejeans and Beyond" on Saturday, July 25.

Spend an entire family fun-filled day with bluegrass, folk and country music, American food, nature-theme arts and crafts, gold panning and a bushel of interactive programs, all starting at 10 a.m. There's Bear Valley historical renditions on the Discovery Center stage and Wake the Bard kicks off the music at 11:30 a.m. Other performers include Sligo Rags, Johnny Cash Bluegrass Tribute, Scott Gates, Nathan McEuen and Chuck Hailes, Silverado Bluegrass and the Sit-Ins. Beer, wine and margarita bar is available along with Flo's fun festival treats and snacks.

Then at night the stars come out, both in the sky and on stage with live festival entertainment. Highlights include the Black Irish Bluegrass Band, last year's breakout band Ramblin' Rangers (who by day really are San Bernardino National Forest rangers!). The more formal Johnny Cash tribute "The Man in Black Show" from Las Vegas that closes the fundraiser with his slew of legendary hits, plus special tribute guests.

Dayfest tickets cost just \$10. The best deal is the combination ticket good for both day and night entertainment, just \$35. VIP passes are \$55 and are good all day plus include the best seating, on-site parking and access to hospitality area next to the stage.

Proceeds from Bluegrass, Bluejeans and Beyond benefit Forest Aid, the largest volunteer-based tree planting program in Southern California, as it puts thousands of seedlings into recent fire areas. Over 20,000 native seedlings were planted during the 2009 spring season. Call (909) 382-2790.

Jumpstart the Festival on Friday, July 24 at 7 p.m. with a free show featuring Irish bluegrass band Sligo Rags at beautiful outdoor amphitheater at Northwoods Resort, overlooking the pond. Northwoods guests and Bluegrass, Bluejeans and Beyond ticket holders get preferred seating, but really there's nothing but awesome seats and admission is free.

Northwoods is offering a "Bluegrass Pak" featuring two-night hotel stay in the full-service resort (July 24-25), all-day passes and complimentary shuttle across the lake to BB&J, plus the Friday show.

Call (909) 866-3121. ■

Big Bear Renaissance Faire

Set during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, the faire is an authentic re-creation of an English Summer Faire...and now the two weekend celebration on Aug. 8-9 and 15-16 gets a new home in Big Bear, across the lake in Fawnskin at the historic Pedersen Sawmill.

Visit an exciting, vibrant village Faire from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and experience live jousting, strolling entertainers, stage performances, beautiful handcrafts, delicious food and drink, children's area and the spirit of the days of William Shakespeare and the Renaissance. Archery tournaments, live steel

battles and living history encampments and demonstrations are other highlights.

Then there's knights jousting on horseback...an impressive show for lords and ladies alike. Musicians, singers, jugglers, belly dancers and special guest entertainers the Poxo Boggards, favorites at Faires everywhere, also perform.



Photo by Richard Millener ©2004

Faire admission is \$15 for adults, or \$26 buys a weekend pass and \$50 covers both weekends (senior/student/military \$12, \$20 and \$38, respectively).

Call (909) 585-7824. ■

Fan Dance: The Legend of Sally Rand

The story of Fan Dance legend Sally Rand from a unique, personal perspective comes to life on stage during the world premiere of *Fan Dance: The Legend of Sally Rand* for three shows at the PAC.

Rand, originally "discovered" by the great Cecil B. DeMille, was a silent movie actress who fell out of favor when "Talkies" arrived because she spoke with a lisp. Eventually she was desperate and out of work in the Great Depression when she happened on an ad for exotic dancing. After bartering for two ostrich feathers at a pawn shop and discovering the only tune ("Clair de Lune") a drunken piano player knew, the world's greatest Fan Dance career was born.

Along the way she's led off the stage for indecent exposure at the Chicago World's Fair—charges that are later dismissed by the judge for "Lack of equity" meaning "you couldn't see anything." The story is told as part of a personal anecdote by the author Misty Rowe, whose 19 years on the television show "Hee Haw" won her The Entertainer's Award from TV Land last year.

Performances are on August 7-8 at 7:30 p.m., plus August 9 at 1:30 p.m. matinee.

Call (909) 866-4970. ■

Music in the Zoo

Find out firsthand if music really does charm the savage beast when this annual event is held at Moonridge Animal Park on August 8.

From 5:30-7:30 p.m. guests stroll through the 2.5 acre park as sunset approaches and enjoy the talents of a wide range of musicians who donate their time for this zoo fundraiser. Hear everything from Native American music to Irish ballads and Celtic tunes, and see if it's really true that music charms the savage beasts. An enchanting way to end the

day! Admission is just \$10, \$7 child.

Call (909) 584-1171. ■

Cowboy Poetry and Music Gathering

Four days of western music, poetry, food and fun come to Big Bear during the 10th annual Gathering set for Aug. 20-23 at the Performing Arts Center.

Gathering pays tribute to the greatest cowboy of them all, John Wayne, with a screening of his classic film *The Shootist*. Also appearing at the Gathering is the film's screenwriter Miles Swarthout, ready to answer questions about *The Shootist*, and there's even going to be a Duke impersonator on hand in costume for those ultimate photo opportunities.

A terrific lineup of entertainers present authentic cowboy music and entertainment through the festival. Dave Stamey, Dennis Gaines, Curly Musgrave and Belinda Gail, Nancy Lee, Les Buffham, Gary Allegretto and other top cowboys will perform specialties ranging from music and campfire stories to harmonica.

In addition to evening shows at the PAC Friday and Saturday, there's a Western Mercantile with a variety of wares on the City Hall grounds under the pine trees, creat-

ed by camp-style breakfast and is free, breakfast costs a few bucks.

Call the PAC at (909) 866-4970 or call (909) 649-3492. ■

39th Annual Big Bear Oktoberfest

Southern California's favorite Oktoberfest celebration returns for its 39th year in Big Bear from Sept. 19-Oct. 31, on the "Express" track for fall fun.

Held over six-and-a-half weekends at The Convention Center at Big Bear Lake, Oktoberfest features authentic German food, music and beer, all served in the perfect setting under the pine trees and with beautiful changing colors all around. Lively contests and lots of events for the kids make it a celebration the entire family can enjoy each Saturday and Sunday, with a Friday night special thrown in for good measure.

Opening weekend on Sept. 19-20 is an American Heroes tribute and features the always-popular Express Band both days, one of Southern California's great party groups. Year-round gigs at Alpine Village, the Phoenix Club in Anaheim and other locales keeps the members polished and they always put on a great show in Big Bear, playing not just German music but today's danceable favorites as well.

The Express Band's rendition of the chicken dance gets the dance floor hopping...and flapping! All badge-carrying personnel—i.e. police, fire, military, medical, etc.—get in for free with proper ID.

The direct-from-Germany Franken Power



Longtime favorites The Express Band return for Oktoberfest

ing a cowboy encampment with good grub and cowboy coffee. Join Wild West Pioneertown Posse for western skits and fun. For youngsters there's bounce house, rope tying, pony rides and the whole family enjoys rides on a genuine stagecoach. On stage there's live entertainment, and the best part is it's all free!

Friday and Saturday night entertainment is indoors on the PAC stage; tickets are \$25 and \$30, respectively.

For an inspiring start to the week enjoy nondenominational Cowboy Church on Sunday from 9-10:30 a.m. There's nothing like spiritual cowboy music, poetry and beautiful Big Bear surroundings to create a sense of awe at God's creation! Church is preced-

Express Band returns the next three weekends in 2009, bringing with it the "Cowboys and Indians" song that was so popular on its last visit three years ago. The band also specializes in Top 40 hits, swing, even a little country. Then The Express Band returns for the final two full weekends plus the Oct. 31 Saturday finale, with closing ceremonies and famous Halloween costume contest with cash prizes.

The Convention Center's outside beer garden under the pines is the ideal place to enjoy a beer or bratwurst while enjoying Big Bear's beautiful fall colors. Speaking of beer, Oktoberfesters enjoy German favorite Warsteiner, including the company's special Oktoberfest brew plus dark. Assorted