

Shakespeare joins a magical circus

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Shakespeare is fun. That's what kids will discover at "The Tempest, A Magical Circus," co-produced by the Actors Gymnasium and Tangerine Arts Group, through Oct. 22, at Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes St., Evanston.

The production offers a condensed version of the tale of deposed duke Prospero who lives with his daughter on a nearly deserted island. A shipwreck offers Prospero the chance for revenge and gives his daughter the opportunity to find love.

"There's a little bit of comedy, a little bit of romance, there's drama, there's suspense," said Chris Berzac of Lake View, who plays the drunken servant Stephano. There's also Three Stooges-type fighting, stilt-walking and trapeze work as well as acrobatic feats on silk fabrics and ropes attached to the ceiling.

"We geared it towards the family," Berzac said. "We try to focus on getting the emotion out and saying the words as quickly as possible so we can get to that next circus act!"

Performances are 4 and 7:30 p.m. Saturdays, 2:30 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$15, \$8 for children under 12. Call 800-838-3006 or see www.brownpapertickets.com

Guy talk

Men like to read, too. That's the word from the Northfield Branch of the Winnetka Public Library, 1785 Orchard Lane, which hosts a monthly father-son book club called "No Girls Allowed" for 4th and 5th grade boys and their dads. They'll be discussing "Zach's Lie" by Roland Smith at the next meeting of the club, 7:30-8:30 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 26. For details, call (847) 446-5990.

Dogged determination

Popeye tamed an aggressive dog and turned her into a real trouper, who has made celebrity appearances on the Animal Planet channel, "Ripley's Believe it or Not" and "Live with Regis and Kelly." See Swee'Pea walk a tightrope, balance a can, jump rope and do other amazing feats, 4 p.m. Sunday, at "Popeye and Swee' Pea," Gorton Community Center, 400 E. Illinois Road, Lake Forest. Tickets are \$10. For details, call (847) 234-6060.

Lederhosen optional

A touch of Germany comes to Winnetka on Saturday, Sept. 30, for "Oktoberfest." From 4 p.m. on at Skokie Playfield, 540 Hibbard Road, kids can have their faces painted, play games and enjoy other attractions. Food and beverages will be on sale from 5 p.m. on and traditional music begins at 5:30 p.m. with Freeze Dried. For details, call (847) 501-2040.

Nature calls

Fall is a beautiful time of year at the 97-acre Heller Nature Center, 2821 Ridge Road, Highland Park. Explore the preserve on a nature walk during "Autumn Fest," 4:30-7:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 29, and your kids can also enjoy crafts, games, pony rides and a pumpkin hunt. Grilled food will be available for sale. The fee for this drop-in event is \$6 per person. For details, call (847) 433-6901.

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