



Scarlett and Rhett

A BENEFIT TO RISING STARS

• South Orange County School of Arts (SOCSA)

As we entered the Dana Hills High School auditorium through an archway created of black and white balloons and beautiful ceramics lining the entryway, we were greeted with a warm southerly hello from Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara (Cameron Denny-Burnus and Jordan Colton respectively). Their sparkling eyes reminded me of my younger days when I was filled with life's anticipation.

The students and faculty of the South Orange County School of Arts (SOCSA) had dedicated their hearts and souls to prepare for the evening's impressive fundraising gala. The proceeds raised were going to be directed to help finance SOCSA's continued suc-



cess. Says Donna Latterman, past Treasurer, "With the generous donations from individuals, local businesses and corporations, we hope to raise \$65,000 during tonight's event. Our silent auction features an array of spectacular items that guests can bid on throughout the affair. Among the assortment of prizes that we will be auctioning off include gift certificates from the St. Regis, portraits, fine wine and celebrity memorabilia."

SOCSA, which started in 1996, is a performing arts academy in the Capistrano Unified School District. The mission of the academy is to provide an in-depth educational opportunity to high-school students who

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have chosen fine arts as their first occupational objective. Students in the program have expressed special interests in this field and have demonstrated potential for creativity.

Each school in the district offers a different academy, featuring various disciplines: Aliso offers its students culinary courses; San Clemente features bacorlette and auto mechanics; and Dana Hills teaches health & medical and performing arts, which includes vocal music, dance, visual arts (ceramics), philosophy and theater.

The night started out with the Young Marines enthusiastically serving a wonderful steak and seafood dinner, which was generously donated by Harpoon Henry's restaurant. Our ears were entertained with vibrant music from the marching band and vocalists who enthusiastically sang for us.

As we ventured backstage, we saw the students eagerly warming up for the show. Marylyn Monroe and Charlie Chaplin (Pamela Burns and Mike LaMasa respectively) knew that this affair was to go down as a legend at Dana Hills High School.

As we continued to tour backstage, I quickly learned that the academy is not just about the front of the house, but also about the extraordinary technical expertise that goes on behind the scenes. Says Robb Rigg, Director of Theater and Dance for SOCSA, "Stage production is essential for any performance, a critical piece of production that most people don't think about. Our academy enables students to learn about stage design, lighting, sound and costumes. Each quarter, one student is designated as the shop foreman."

Says Bryan Latterman, this semester's shop foreman, "SOCSA has taught me a lot about production, which I'm particularly interested in. I'm having a great time and I am thankful for this experience." Latterman has spent the last semester learning how to run the show from behind the scenes.

SOCSA encourages students to attend college after high school, but to get related job training in the summer, or during the school year if they must work. SOCSA's goal is to connect students with the community and potential mentors.

Comments Rigg, "Our program is very practical. We don't put unrealistic stars in their eyes. Our staff includes professional actors who coach the students and share real life experiences with them. Furthermore, we encourage students to take classes outside their specialty to broaden their education. Participants take the program along with their regular classes and they must maintain a GPA of 2.0 for general classes and 2.5 for social classes."

South Orange County School of Arts is open to all high school level students. This process can be facilitated through either a personal audition or prepared portfolio. A committee consisting of SOCSA faculty members reviews each application and then determines which students meet the academy's standards. Students who are accepted into the program are notified before the current school year ends. This is done so that students and parents will have enough time to make transfer arrangements.

As I watched the talent displayed that evening, I felt like a judge on Star Search. There was so much energy and enthusiasm that filled the air. I found this to be a marvelous program and wish to thank the students for their wonderful performance and passion. Break a leg, gang! ☉

— Leslie Stevens

