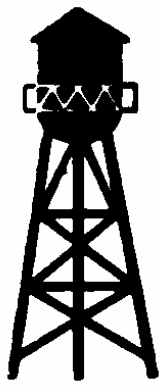


# Campbell



# Express

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## Honk is for all ages

By Sally Howe

There's no way you can go see West Valley Light Opera Association's new offering *Honk* and not enjoy yourself!

I had never heard of this show before attending last Saturday's opening. It was absolutely delightful! Sure, it's full of "corny:" jokes and calls upon your imagination sometimes to follow some characters, but once you "get it" you can't help but appreciate the dialog and songs.

Based very loosely on Hans Christian Anderson's wonderful *The Ugly Duckling* this tale takes a lot of liberty with the original story—but most pleasurably!

I found the wonderful actors in this production were a little difficult to identify because even if the program said that the cast was "in order of appearance", they were really in alphabetical order and there were so many cute names in the cast, I had difficulty keeping them straight.

Add to that the fact that almost every performer was (very successfully) double-cast.

This created a number of "stars" of the production, including Steven Anthony, Doug Brook, Molly Carter, Kristin

Brownstone, Jay Steele, Karyn Rondeau, and Kimberly Kay (and probably a couple of others that I missed).

The four young ducklings were standouts and their "mother" Ida played by Jennifer Wheelwright was terrific! So was Michael Johnson (Drake) and Justin Torres (Cat). And the young play who played Ugly (Jeff Clarke) really made you believe he was "ugly" and his transformation was truly amazing!

Director Geri Carlson Sauls did a fantastic job of interpreting the show—making it lots of fun for the children in the audience (and you must bring your children, neighbors, grandchildren to the special Saturday matinee on March 17) and still allowed the adults to have lots of laughs. And costumer Sue Howell should have plaudits for her wonderful interpretations.

Kudos also to vocal director Katie Coleman and musical director Bobbie Howe. Producer Liz Dale pulled together a wonderful staff: Howard Miller, Stephen Wathen, Michael Munoz, Ken McCreight and Bob Nelson.



**National School Nurse Administrator of the Year Melinda Landau coordinates health services for Campbell Union School District. She and her team of nurses and health clerks take care of everything from bumps and bruises on the playground to emergency treatment for asthma attacks to daily management of diabetic students and others with special needs. Last May, the Board recognized Melinda for earning a State-level award from the California School Nurses Organization. The National School Nurses Association named Melinda Landau as the National School Nurse Administrator of the Year. Landau (center) is pictured with husband Steve (far left), Superintendent Johanna VanderMolen, and District Governing Board President Scott Kleinberg (far right).**



**Nancy Atkinson (far left), principal at Capri School, has been nominated for the State of California Principal of the Year award given by the Association of California School Administrators. She is pictured here with Rolling Hills Middle School Teacher Sylvia Davis (center) who was the district's nominee for California League of Middle Schools' Teacher of the Year award, Davis' husband, Tom, and Kathleen Gibbs (far right), principal of Rolling Hills Middle School.**



**Ugly, played by Jeff Clarke, is shunned by the rest of his family, Alexandra Vigil, Emmy Faresse, Carolyn Di Loreto and Marissa Parkhurt in West Valley Light Opera's *Honk*.**

## Animal doctor directs local show!

When Geri Carlson Sauls took on the "job" of directing the musical *Honk* for West Valley Light Opera Association (WVLOA), she probably never thought that she might get some teasing that here she is, a veterinarian by day, supervising a show about animals by night!

With a long history of performing, choreographing and directing shows in the area, Geri's many theatrical talents have not gone unnoticed by community theater fans.

Although she attended veterinary school in Louisiana, she moved to Santa Cruz to do her internship and stayed!

Fifteen years ago she came

"over the hill" to see *Kiss Me Kate* staged by Saratoga Drama Group and saw the announcement that Gene Nelson (yes, that Gene Nelson, the dancer we loved in the movie *Oklahoma*) was coming up to direct *Stepping Out*. The lure was too great, so she auditioned and got the Liza Minnelli part of Mavis.

That was the start—since that time she's been performing for South Bay and Santa Cruz productions. Having started dance lessons at age 3 and having parents who took the family to lots of Chicago shows during her youth, it was natural for her to perform when she attended college in Baton Rouge, Louisi-



**Geri Carlson Sauls**

ana. She said she was also fortunate to attend a high school that had great music theater—plus mom did a lot of costume sewing and dad played the clarinet!

Her first directorial experience was with *A Chorus Line*, for Sunnyvale Community Players and she called upon her experience as a member of the cast

when it was performed in her college to share the choreography she learned there. Later she moved into the role of *Sheila* when WVLOA offered the show.

*Honk* is a musical that was staged a few years ago at Cabrillo Stage. She performed the part of *Queenie* and found she really enjoyed the show, so when WVLOA announced it would be on their production list this year, she was delighted to be selected as the director. (Review of the show is elsewhere in this paper.)

Her "take" on the show? "It's the story of the ugly duckling told with a lot of humor and also, tenderness. There are wonderful lessons to be learned throughout the show about trust, how we treat others, how we look at others, what it's like to be "different" from everyone—

and of course, a happy ending!

"It's also a wonderful show for the entire family—the kids will love the story and the fun animals, but there is a lot of humor and jokes that the adults will be roaring at!

"So I truly believe it is a show that everyone will enjoy - from 5 or 6 to 106!!

"All the characters you see are animals—ducks, hens, geese, turkeys, cats, pheasants, frogs, quail—but all are very "real" with personality traits you can relate to.

We asked her: "Is there any similarity between the barnyard critters in the show and your practice as a vet?"

"Not really any similarities for me—although my personal cats have been used as examples for the two cats in the show!"

And both of the cats in the show are a hoot!