



Kids Stuff



Deep diving into acting with the Little Mermaid Jr.

By ANGELA COOPER-MCCORKLE

Kids at Heatherwood Middle School are learning how much fun it is to be on stage.

They're using their talent and imaginations to perform "The Little Mermaid Jr.," a shortened Disney version of the Hans Christian Andersen fairytale.

The students are excited to entertain their friends and the community at the end of March when the audience will get to see the aquatic adventures of Ariel and her crab sidekick Sebastian and soar with feathered friend Scuttle the seagull.

At a recent rehearsal, the children spent two hours learning dance moves for the musical number "Under the Sea." Twirling, prancing, skipping and galloping, they crossed the school cafeteria. The room echoed with the happy hum of students

learning Disney music.

Nearly 100 children auditioned in January, singing a favorite song and performing a short speech called a monologue for judges. A little more than half the kids, 53, were cast for the stage and about 50 more are helping as crew behind the scenes.

The show gives outgoing and shy kids a chance to create theater, whether in front of the audience or working backstage on creating props and sets, helping with costumes or other important jobs.

Madeline Carlson, age 12, will make her acting debut as Ariel, the little mermaid. The seventh grader was surprised to earn the starring role: it was her first audition. Her friends were just as excited as she was when her name got posted on the cast list. "A friend ran up and jumped on me. I didn't believe it," Carlson said.

Ariel's underwater confidant and babysitter Sebastian is played by 11-year-old Sarah Bennett. She said she was not surprised to get the part; she set her mind on it and her confidence paid off. "You have to go big, go all the way," is Bennett's advice to kids who want to try acting.

And of course, there will be villains. The antiheroes of the musical are Ursula, a witch who makes Ariel a dangerous deal she can't refuse, and her pair of slimy eel sidekicks, Flotsam and Jetsam.

The two actors playing the evil eels are glad to be bad, at least on stage.

"The Slytherin in me really enjoys this," said 14-year-old Daniel Wilder, who plays Jetsam, speaking to a place for dark wizards in "Harry Potter."

"I like being evil and we don't have to be in any dance numbers," said 13-year-old Gabriella Lobb, who's playing

Flotsam.

Along with the main characters, dozens of children will sing and dance in the ensemble, as all kinds of sea creatures and "merpeople." They're working hard at rehearsals four days a week to memorize all their lines, dance choreography and music. Learning a show like the "Little Mermaid Jr." requires more than 80 hours of rehearsals to be ready for opening night, but the kids say they love being with their friends and have fun playing characters.

"My favorite is my chase scene, running in and out and under the table," Bennett said.

"There are so many kids that have totally found their people," through acting, said producer Shoshauna Mohlman. She said the kids in theater don't just learn parts, they learn life skills such as perseverance, organization and time



Photo courtesy Shoshauna Mohlman

Pictured above are Jack Neuharth (Flounder) and Holly Simonsen, Sophia Erb, Emma Denning, Katherine Peterson, Alyssa Owens, Bianca Moya, who play a group of Mersisters.

management, plus how to handle choreography.

"It's a challenge at first and then by the time they are on stage, it's 'I can totally do this!'" Mohlman said.

"The Little Mermaid Jr." opens at 7 p.m. Friday,

March 23 and continues through Friday, March 30 at the school. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for children. Showtimes are 7 p.m. March 23-30 plus a matinee performance at 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 24.

Local Easter egg hunts

Monroe

The 22nd Annual Monroe Community Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, March 31 at Lake Tye Park. Pre-event activities start at 9:00 a.m. with lots of fun, free activities including face painting, and pictures with the Easter Bunny. The Egg Hunt starts at 10:00 a.m. sharp. All kids through 10 years of age are welcome to hunt for eggs. Please contact Denise Jacobsen at (360) 863-4559 or email djacobsen@ci.monroe.wa.us.

Lake Stevens

Jay's Market's 9th Annual Easter Egg Hunt, March 31 at 1:00 p.m. on the grassy field behind Jay's (1809-124th NE). There will be separate groups for ages 2-12 to collect

over 2,000 eggs. There will also be candy, prizes and a grand prize basket for each age group. 425-334-1256

Everett

Kids of all ages and their families are invited to Bethany Christian Assembly's annual candy-filled Eggstravaganza celebration on Saturday, March 31! At 10 a.m., the doors will open for two hours of adventure, beginning with a fun-filled 20-minute Easter message and prizes galore. From there, head out with your family to explore the various age-appropriate games and activities, collecting eggs as you go! Since MOST of the activities are indoors, the hunt is sure to be on — rain or shine! There will be

inflatables, free cotton candy and popcorn, and a chance to win a number of amazing prizes, including new bicycles and a Drone! Bring your camera, because the Easter Bunny will be there! This is a free event, with the option to purchase fresh coffee or food at the espresso stand or cafe. The church is located at 2715 Everett Ave.

Maltby

The Maltby Community Easter Egg Hunt will be Saturday, March 31. Preschool 10:10 a.m.; kindergarten and first grade 10:20 a.m.; 2nd and 3rd grade 10:30 a.m.; 4th, 5th, 6th grades 10:40

a.m. Egg hunts, coffee and doughnuts and prizes rain or shine at The Church at Maltby, 9322 Paradise Lake Road in Snohomish. For more information call (360) 668-4180 or visit www.thechurchat.org.

Sultan

This year's celebration will be Saturday, March 31 at River Park, between the gazebo and spar poles. The fun kicks off at 10 a.m. with Street Fun including games and face painting. The Easter Bunny will arrive by fire truck! The Egg Hunt will be divided up by age groups and will be at noon sharp.



Snohomish

The Snohomish Community Easter Egg Hunt is hosted by Snohomish Faith Church, 1220-22nd Street. The Egg Hunts begin promptly at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. on March 31 for children of pre-school age through grade six. Each hunt will have 4,000 eggs!

• Bob's Corn is hosting

Canyon Creek Church's Easter Egg Hunt March 31 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Event is free and includes hay rides, bouncy houses, cow train, carnival games, rope maze, laser tag, photos with the Easter Bunny and more. 10917 Elliott Rd. For hunt times, visit www.facebook.com/bobscom.