

Young Tahoe actors to star in holiday play

By Kathryn Reed

Children not listening, talking when it's not their line and parents almost looking more bewildered. It's impossible at this juncture to know who the angels, shepherds or wise men are. Joseph is one of the tall boys. Mary is twirling a doll – aka Jesus.

“The whole play is supposed to be chaotic and I expect it will be,” Ginger Nicolay Davis said of “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever” days after this particular rehearsal. She laughs a little when she says this. But this veteran South Lake Tahoe actor knows that rehearsals look nothing like the end product.

But Davis admits there are a couple boys she wonders about. They have a few lines and know them well. It's just that they say them at random times and never at the right time.



Director Dave Hamilton talks to the actors about how the scene is supposed to unfold.

Photo/LTN

Davis is producing the play for Barton Foundation's fifth annual Festival of Trees & Lights. Dave Hamilton is directing

the production and Diana Evans is co-producing. Davis, Hamilton and Evans all have ties to the Tahoe Tallac Association. This play is a partnership with Barton Foundation.

Forty children are part of the show, ranging in age from 5 to 12. The 10 adults in it will be performing alongside at least one of their children.

"It's the right little show to get anyone in the mood for the holidays," Davis told *Lake Tahoe News*. "There is a religious component, but it's a funny look at it." Even the non-religious will enjoy it, she said.

"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" is about a woman putting on a church Christmas pageant. The problem is the worst kids in town are part of the cast. It's about how those kids and the Christmas story meet head-on.

The Tallac Association has long wanted to do a winter play, but the boathouse where summer events are staged isn't heated. Talks began a couple years ago about partnering with Barton Foundation. The goal is this particular play could run for multiple years during the Festival of Trees and Lights, with the cast changing.

Davis chose this play because of the age group of actors involved. There aren't many opportunities for elementary and middle school students to act on the South Shore.

Of course there are challenges with this group, but nothing the adults aren't ready to overcome. Hamilton is patient and tolerant of his young charges. Practicing at the Grand Hall at Valhalla, he tells them where to go, answers questions and keeps an eye on the moving young people. When one boy wants to sit instead of stand, Hamilton says fine but has him move so the audience would see him.

The cast will have three days to rehearse on the actual stage

of MontBleu so the kids can get a feel for what show time will be like. Of course, all of this is after the weeklong Thanksgiving break when no rehearsals are scheduled.

Davis said it's all part of the chaos – some choreographed, some not.

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Notes:

- “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever” is Dec. 5-6 at 6pm and Dec. 8 at 2pm. All shows are in the MontBleu showroom. Tickets are \$20 for ages 9 and older, \$10 for ages 2-8. For tickets, go online.
- The Festival of Trees and Lights is Dec. 4-8 at MontBleu.
- For more details about the entire festival, go online.