

# SHERMAN OAKS SUN

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OCTOBER 20-26, 2006



## SUNDIAL COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### HALLOWEEN



#### Halloween Carnival Van Nuys/ Sherman Oaks Park

Haunted house, carnival games, trick-or-treat village, costume contest, jump-house, food, drink, prizes. Nominal fee for most attractions. Oct. 31, 5-9pm. Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Recreation Center, 14201 Huston St. Rob De Hart; (818) 783-5121

#### Halloween Carnival Beeman Park

Carnival games and food. Oct. 31, 4-8pm. Fees vary. Studio City Recreation Center, 12621 Rye St. (818) 769-4415

#### In the Shadow of the Raven

Actor Duffy Hudson portrays Edgar Allan Poe in this one-man show on Halloween night about the enigmatic life and death of the suspense-horror writer and poet. Oct. 31, 8 pm. Whitefire Theatre 13500 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks. (818) 990-2324

#### Local Haunted House

A haunted graveyard scene in a Studio City yard. Includes props, many borrowed from the Museum of Death, and people that jump out for maximum fright. Oct. 31, dusk to 9:30pm. 4307 Beeman Ave.

#### Haunted Pirate Shipwreck

The L.A.P.D. is holding its annual open house with a haunted jail, arts, crafts and other exhibits. Oct. 21, 10am-4pm. North Hollywood Station, 11640 Burbank Blvd. (818) 623-4001

#### Haunted Travel Town

Playful Spooks invade the mini-trains (1/8 scale) at Griffith Park. Evening rides feature 30 displays around the track. Oct. 21-22, 28-31, 7-9:30pm. 5202 Zoo Drive, Griffith Park. Donation \$2/ kids \$1. Info: <http://www.lals.org> or 323-662-8030.

#### Grimstone Cemetery

A less-scary place that "shows you the spookiness that Halloween has to offer." Good for all ages. 2006 will be the last year. Oct. 29 - 31, sundown (6:30) to 11pm. Free. 6706 Blewett Ave., Van Nuys. Info: <http://www.grimstonecemetery.com>.

#### Halloween Events at Pierce College

Visit a five-acre corn maze plus other attractions. Pierce College, 6498 De Soto Ave. (corner of De Soto and Victory) in Woodland Hills. (818) 999-6300. Through Oct. 31. [www.halloweenharvestfestival.com](http://www.halloweenharvestfestival.com)

#### Boo-tiful Downtown Burbank

Opportunity to trick-or-treat before it gets too dark or too late in the evening. Children and families who visit Downtown Burbank's shops and restaurants will enjoy Halloween with treats from participating merchants. Oct. 31, 4-7pm. Downtown Burbank. Info: <http://www.downtown-burbank.org/events.htm>

#### Carpenter Avenue School Halloween Carnival

Spirited family fun at the PTA's largest fundraiser. Over 20 booths and games. Everyone is a winner. Open to the public. Friday, October 27 12:40-3:45 pm. Costumes welcome; no masks. 3909 Carpenter Avenue, Studio City.

*continued on page 24*

### INSIDE

News.....	5
Habitats.....	6
From the Desk of SOHA.....	8
Spotlight.....	9
Community Compass.....	9
School Notes.....	12
Technology Triumphs.....	13
Back to the Kitchen.....	18
Earth Talk.....	19
Theater.....	20
Short Cuts.....	22
Scoops.....	23
Destiny Quest.....	25
Sudoku.....	26
Sun Classifieds.....	26

## Life story writer binds memories in cherished pages

*Chronicling the extraordinary lives of ordinary people*

BY RACHEL HELLER

Having sifted through harsh memories of the Holocaust, of Depression-era Chicago and the Japanese internment camps of World War II-torn Manila, Loren Stephens has shaped a steadfast personal philosophy.

"You can tell a story as if you're a victim," she says, "or you can tell a story."

The memories aren't her own. They belong instead to a colorful list of L.A. denizens who have entrusted Stephens to tell their life stories, a pursuit the Brentwood based writer believes will preserve voices and legacies far too precious to let die with their bearers.

To many, memoirs are only warranted by celebrity; biographies belong to the realm of the famous, like Bill Clinton or Elizabeth Taylor. That's why Stephens founded Write Wisdom, Inc. on the principle that "everyone has wisdom to impart" – some might just need a little guidance along the way.

"Lots of people need their stories told, but they don't have the discipline or the know-how to sit down and do it. Many people need a guide to ask the right questions," she noted one recent afternoon. "Everyone has a fascinating story.



Loren Stephens at home.

It's just a question of unearthing it."

Stephens' four to five-month process begins with a series of interviews that she later transcribes, crafting a tale from her subjects' memories told in their own voice. For a few thousand dollars, she can turn the written manuscript into a hardcover book of 150 to 200 pages,

complete with printed photos of loved ones and significant events.

Now in the finishing stages of her fifth book, Stephens is used to the positive reactions of past clients like Hedi Azus.

"It was an enjoyable experience. She managed to get stories from me that I'd stuck away in the little corners of my mind," said Hedi, a Los Angeles resident who asked Stephens to write her story, *The Music of My Life*, after she finished that of her husband, Al Azus. "She brought it all out."

From the ocean liner that brought the Gelsdorf, Germany native to New York at age five, to a career in modeling and a long-distance romance with her Army officer husband during World War II, Stephens' rendering of Hedi's memoir captures the intimate details that comprise her life.

Working at the Gibraltar Savings Bank in Los Angeles after the death of her first husband, Hedi caught the eye of a self-made businessman raised in Chicago by a Turkish immigrant family during the height of the Depression. Al's "rags to riches" success in the envelope business – told with grit and heart in Stephens' *Life is a game: Bet on Yourself* – has given the Azus family status as honored donors at children's charities and local institutions, including the Jewish Home

*continued on page 14*

## SONC inducts new board members; Jill Banks Barad re-elected President

BY PAMELA TURSKI

Election results, school grants, budget issues and Proposition R highlighted the Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council (SONC) monthly board meeting October 9 at Sherman Oaks Elementary School.

West Valley Area Director Fortuna Ippoliti representing Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, and Field Deputy Joan Pelico, present on behalf of Councilmember Jack Weiss, swore in the following new and returning board members as Stakeholder Representatives: Colleen McGurrin, Area 1 Residential; Craig Buck, Area 1 Business; Malcolm Burman, Area 3 At-

Large; Dave Rand, Area 5 Residential; Zach Behrens, Area 5 Business; Richard Marciniak, Area 5 At-Large; Anthony St. John, Area 7 Residential; Neal Roden, Area 7 Business; Laura Smith Nash, Area 7 At-Large.

Jill Banks Barad was re-elected President; Richard Marciniak was elected as First Vice President and Ken Silk was re-elected Secretary.

Barad acknowledged outgoing SONC Board Members Ron Merkin, Gay Lannon, Laurette Healey, Elizabeth Versten, Dr. Norman Isaacs, Bill Pollock, Jules Feir, and Ray Vega for their commitment to the community.

"I want to say thank you very, very

*continued on page 6*

Treasure Trove at Storyopolis ♦ BID ♦ Local Traffic Protections

# Local jazz singer reinvents her genre

BY LYNN MILLS

Put on the first cut of the Tierney Sutton Band's Grammy-nominated CD, "I'm With the Band (2005)," and a classical arpeggio-jazz scat hybrid lilts out of the speakers, at once earthy and ethereal.

You might say, "Hey, I thought this was a jazz album?" before Sutton launches into a swinging rendition of the timeless "Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise."

With singer Tierney Sutton and her band, the standards are anything but standard. Duly noted, Sutton will be honored on October 22 with the Jazz Vocalist Award at the Los Angeles Jazz Society's 23rd Annual Jazz Tribute.

A playful quality comes through as Sutton, Christian Jacob (piano), Ray Brinker (drums), Trey Henry and Kevin Axt (alternating on bass) take you on a roller coaster ride through each song. Tempos shift repeatedly. Vocals are inventive, crisp, warm, embracing. You may have heard these songs a million times, but the band manages to make them seem brand new, leaving you

breathless.

"The mainstream tradition was done about as well as I think it's ever going to be done," says Sutton. "So what is it that I can do that brings the sensibilities of my own time, my own voice to a different place, to move the story forward? To me, that's what jazz is really about. It's about innovation."

Raised in Milwaukee by "very alerno" parents – her father is a civil rights lawyer and her mother was a commercial artist – the Van Nuys resident's unusual musical style complements the way she looks at life and career.

Despite numerous recordings and awards (including Jazz Week's 2005 Vocalist of the Year), appearances at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and the Hollywood Bowl, Sutton and her band won't shy away from playing small venues – like a little jazz club in Dayton, Ohio, at the Greyhound Bus Terminal.

While the big venues "are really nice," she says, "the weird thing is that they're not as 'esteeming' as the person that drives across two states to see

you at the bus depot. Those are the real things that feed your soul."

She first discovered jazz in college. A Russian language and literature major at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, Sutton was a singing cocktail waitress when she heard a jazz trio at the country club across the street.

"I became a jazz monk and that's all I listened to for about ten years. All the records I bought, every song I learned, was in that tradition because I was really thirsty for it. It was like learning a new language. But I fell in love with it."

She adores Carmen McRae, Shirley Horn and Sarah Vaughn, but her vocal influences are mainly instrumentalists like Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Stan Getz. She aims to achieve a different sound than other singers, and she succeeds.

Sutton made the unusual choice of moving to Los Angeles to pursue jazz in the early 90s. "Any self-respecting jazz singer would move to New York," she admits, due to the slew of jazz venues



Tierney Sutton.

point, she became head of the Vocal Jazz Department at USC.

The Tierney Sutton Band's formation marks the next step in the singer's musical journey. "It is ridiculously democratic," she notes. "The best arrangements we've done, it becomes unclear who provided what by the end of it."

They spend about one week per month on the road, mostly in New York. But for Sutton, that entails time away from her husband, Alan (a musician for the film industry), and her son, Ryan. "Anything that messes with either of those things has to have a really good reason for being there," she says.

Art, not commerce, is still Sutton's main focus.

dotting the East-coast hub.

But she soon found the decision could actually work to her advantage. "L.A. was a cool place to be if you were one of the few serious jazz singers where there are so many great jazz instrumentalists who often need a singer to get a gig," Sutton explains.

She started out listening and taking notes at local clubs like the Money Tree and Chadney's, then started performing at open mikes and jam sessions. She got small gigs, sang jingles and taught voice to survive – at one

"We don't think, well, what record are you going to make that's going to sell 12 million records? I realized that all my goals were the same as all the jazz musicians that I knew – to make records that would be listened to in 50 years, that were unusual or worthwhile in some way, because that's how we function as jazz musicians.

"If your motivation is, 'This is something I need to do, and if I do it in the closet, that's great, and if I do it at Carnegie Hall that's great,' then you're safe." \*

## RENT REAL COSTUMES FROM WESTERN COSTUME

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