

In case inaugurations are not your thing, I invite you to join us at The Plaza Arts Center on Tuesday, January 20, to see Bill Oberst, Jr. as he portrays “Lewis Grizzard: In His Own Words”. Lewis had a home at Great Waters and was beloved in these parts so it’s no small wonder that ticket sales are brisk and those who knew Lewis personally are excited to have ‘him’ in our midst again. He left us much too soon but also left a legacy of laughs that will be hard to beat.

The new year is well underway at The Plaza and our Lewis Grizzard show is a hint of the top-notch programming we are working to bring your way. We also know the year ahead presents certain economic challenges but, personally, I believe that in tough times, we all need a place and way to escape the drudgery of everyday life. Our goal is to have no more than two ticketed events in any one month and to give you as much advance notice as possible so you can plan and spend your entertainment dollars wisely. We are also working with venues in throughout Georgia’s Lake Country to share our calendars and, hopefully, avoid doubling up on major events. Our plan is to spread out events to give you the most enjoyment. It won’t always work out perfectly for the two events to be spaced evenly apart, however, each event has a targeted audience in mind so there shouldn’t be any overlap.

On Valentine’s Day we are turning back the clock and giving you a chance to take your date back to ’58 with the Great American Rock and Roll Revival and sock hop. A rousing show is planned including the likes of Butch and the Buckheads, Elvis and a group called The Sock Hops. Knowing, though, that you will not be able to keep your seat, a good old-fashioned sock hop will take place in the reception hall after the concert where we will push back the chairs and take over the dance floor. You don’t have to dress in 50’s attire but no one will stop you at the door if you do. Just don’t forget a pair of socks.

I happen to have a huge place in my heart for comedy and believe that laughing is truly good for the soul, so it was a quick decision to bring ‘Drew the Dramatic Fool’ to The Plaza for a week-long residency and show. Drew teaches an adult workshop on the art of foolery and will also be visiting each of our schools, including Gatewood, during the week. Twelve high school students will be chosen to work with Drew to create their own silent movie and on Friday, April 17, when Drew does his full program, the audience will also be treated to the world premier of the students’ film.

May brings us PAPA’s return with Somerset Maugham’s “The Constant Wife”. If you saw “Second Samuel” last June, you just know it’s going to be good.

Summer gives us the Meet Me at The Plaza concerts, which will open again in June with Jimmy Buffet-like A1A on stage. The rest of the summer line-up is being finalized but we promise you will go away from each concert with great tunes lingering in your head and foggy memories of an evening well spent.

One of the most exciting presentations we have planned will be in September when the Manhattan String Quartet performs at The Plaza. That’s Manhattan, New York; the top of the heap. No small potatoes for our little town. We are going Big Time thanks to Kazanetti, who helped us secure this show.

Much, much more is on the way, but I wanted to give you plenty of advance notice so you can plan your travels and social calendars accordingly. You can also check our website www.theplazaartscenter.com for more details, ticket sales and calendar listings. The site isn't 100% but we're on our way.

Thanks for helping us get off to such a great start and Happy New Year. May 2009 be full of blessings for all.