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Diva smackdown hits the stage in 'Legends!'

By BRIE IATAROLA

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Hair-pulling, face-slapping and downright bitchiness make for an epic catfight -- and almost everyone secretly enjoys watching one.

Joan Collins and Linda Evans know this all too well. In the 1980s, the duo sent television ratings soaring as "Dynasty's" glamorous rivals -- Alexis and Krystal Carrington. Now they have reunited for "Legends!," Tony Award-winning author James Kirkwood's classic catfight comedy that centers on two somewhat desperate and waning movie stars named Sylvia (played by Collins) and Leatrice (played by Evans).

Citing Paul Newman as their co-star, a deceitful young producer convinces both actresses to perform together in a Broadway show, despite the fact that they have loathed each other for decades. What results is a full-blown confrontation between the two divas and a comedic resolution.

"Legends!" is playing until Sunday at San Diego Civic Theatre. Call (619) 570-1100 or Ticketmaster at (619) 220-8497 to order tickets, or visit www.ticketmaster.com.

Prepare for another chaotic weekend downtown as the ninth annual San Diego Multicultural Festival nears. The free event, which takes place from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday along the Martin Luther King Jr. Promenade on the north side of Harbor Drive between Market Street and Fourth Avenue, across from the San Diego Convention Center, will feature a variety of food and entertainment that reflects the city's diverse population.

Included in this year's loaded entertainment lineup are: Harvey Mendiola, Polynesian dance master; Skelpin', a San Diego-based Irish-American band that fuses traditional Irish ditties with "Celts-Iberian flair and romantic soul"; and artist Asako Aizawa, who unleashes the beauty of Japan through her intricate origami.

More than 25,000 to 30,000 people are expected to attend, so plan accordingly. Visit www.ccdc.com for more details.

Only 17 membership libraries remain in the United States, and La Jolla is home to one of them.

After undergoing and completing a \$5 million expansion project, reclaiming all of the space in its three historic buildings -- by far the most ambitious undertaking in the organization's 108-year history -- the Athenaeum Music & Arts Library is ready to celebrate. And the public is invited.

Sunday marks Community Day, held in honor of the 100th anniversary in 1999, when everyone has a chance to experience what makes Athenaeum different from the good ol' public library. The event, commemorating the nonprofit's past, present and future, lasts from 2-5 p.m. and includes live music, docent tours and art demonstrations.

Athenaeum is located at 1008 Wall St., La Jolla. Call (858) 454-5872 or visit www.ljathenaeum.org for information.

More than 30 years ago, fondue made culinary history by dipping its way into the kitchens of fiesta lovers and providing a great reason for bad cooks to throw a party. Some people quickly discovered it wasn't just about melting cheddar in a pot on the stove and praying it didn't burn.

To teach both foodies and novices more about the art of fondue, George and Mary Palmer, proprietors of Hillcrest's Taste Artisan Cheese & Gourmet Shop, have taken an inside-out approach to cheese and gourmet food and are offering a class. With special guest Urs Hwylar from Proof of the Pudding, students are afforded a personalized touch-tasting experience in "Cheese 101: Fun with Fondue," 7 p.m. Jan. 17 at 1243 1/2 University Ave.

The course costs \$35. To enroll, send an e-mail to cheese101@tastecheese.com or call (619) 683-2306. For more information, visit www.tastecheese.com.

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