

HER FAMILY / HIS™

Reviewing Family Entertainment



HERS

"It's May, it's May, the merry month of May!" Whenever I see the Iris burst into bloom I am reminded that we are in the season blessed by the muses, Spring. What's a parent to do? There is so much to experience and so little time to indulge.

Armed with enthusiasm and my budding adolescent son, we jumped on the I-5 South and headed to California Adventure's newest Disneyland attraction, the **Hollywood Hotel Tower of Terror**. Not being a thrill-ride enthusiast, I expected to take in the sights of the Hollywood Pictures Backlot area while my husband and son jolted their bodies through space and emerged to enthusiastically share what I had missed. My expectations were misguided. I am a big *Twilight Zone*® fan, and the attraction is a *la Twilight Zone*®: full of original memorabilia, archival sights and sounds and even a surprise appearance from Rod Serling! Caught in the moment, I boarded the attraction and screamed my way through three minutes of sheer thrill! I loved it. Can't wait to go back. I was able to introduce my son to the *Twilight Zone*®, max out my adrenaline meter, and enjoy, again, the best that Disney can be; and when they are good, they are the best! Don't miss this attraction. Riding The Hollywood Hotel Tower of Terror is worthy of a memory bank. My son said it best, "So rad -the bomb- really, really fun."

Then there was the Tenth Annual International Family Film Festival (IFFF) in Valencia. Amidst all the excitement of seventy movies, one sixteen-minute film caught the magic of independent filmmaking. I dragged my fourteen-year-old son to see **Aviation Challenge**, written, directed, produced and acted by Alex Capogna. The story documents a summer at Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama. The filmmaker's vision energized my son's imagination and led to that rare commodity between parents and teenagers - conversation. Winning the IFFF/Nickelodeon "What IFFF? NICK's PICK Award" for Best Documentary, this twelve-year-old filmmaker connected with the audience. He made me want to fly! This story told through the eyes of a sixth grader from East Lansing, Michigan, resonated in California and bridged the age gap between parent and child. This new generation holds a lot of promise for the future.

Finally, how better to celebrate this season then with a play! After all, a play is play. **Cheerios in My Underwear (And Other True Tales of Motherhood)** is a delightfully funny and insightful look at the sometimes wacky, always stressful life of a mother. Amy Simon, the energy cell powering this one-woman journey through stay-at-home mothering, allows the audience to laugh with her at their own parenting realities. Using the magic of movement and music to highlight her wry comedy, she turns a mirror on the audience, reflecting truth from every mother's reality. Leave the kids and husbands at home, this is a great way to spend an afternoon with the girls. After all, it's May--take some time to smell the flowers.

The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror: The next time you visit the Disneyland

Suzanne earned her Ph. D. in Theater from the University of Missouri and did post-doctorate work at Oxford. Chris graduated with a BEA in Theater from The Ohio State University and studied with the International Circus School and at the world renowned L'ecole Jaques LeCoq Studio in Paris. The Shoemakers have worked as freelance artists and writers in England, Canada, France, China and Hawaii. They now call Los Angeles their home where they live with their three sons and two grandsons. They can be reached at suzanne@actsofcreation.com or chris2@actsofcreation.com

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Resort, check the sign at the park's entrance - it might just read, "The Eeriest Place on Earth!" Disneyland's newest attraction, The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror based on the *Twilight Zone*® television series, measures up to that macabre spin on their merriest of refrains. This hot new attraction opens May 5th.

The setting is the abandoned Hollywood Tower Hotel at the forgotten end of a dilapidated cul-de-sac. Reminiscent of the moody film, *The Shining* (without the bloody deluge), the elevator ride and its pre-show are filled with a ghostly family, heart-throbbing suspense, haunting music, a decaying atmosphere, wonderfully art directed details, and enough adrenaline packed thrills to send you back for seconds and thirds.

The ride portion of this attraction guarantees to leave you short of breath without that post-ride nauseous loss of balance. Even Suzanne (no die-hard ride fan) wanted to hop back on the ride for another go.

As if embarking on a scavenger hunt, the Tower's Art Director, Neil Engel assures, "You can look forever in every corner of this attraction and never find all the *Twilight Zone*® references built into it." That might be fun, but you'd best get to the intermittently blasting elevator ride. Even Mr. Rod Serling himself might have screamed with delight on this one! We did.

Cheerios In My Underwear: Motherhood (like fatherhood) is full of conundrums, insecurities, ups, downs, distractions, multi-tasking, caring and humor mixed in with all other shades of colorful emotion. Plays focused on this most venerable role typically ring belle canto clear or decidedly false. This one rings clear with recognizable truth and close-to-the-heart wit.

Cheerios In My Underwear is a one-woman play written and performed by the diminutive, stay-at-home mom Amy Simon. Presented with minimal staging, props and costumes (although her Donna Reed look-a-like cake baking dream sequence is a hoot not to be missed!), this hour-long play resonates a familiarity any mother or parent will readily relate to. As an actress, Simon is controlled and seasoned. This mom doesn't fib - she shares her innermost thoughts with us. The question, "How do you make GOD?" is posed, but don't worry, she humorously sidesteps this unanswerable question. Simon draws from her down to earth pool of real-life experiences that make her lines hit home.

And don't worry guys - this play has plenty of male references you can relate to. You might even recognize a tad of your own wife in Simon's mom. Like dry cheerios sticking to the cereal bowl, *Cheerios In My Underwear* is sure to cling to the heart. You'll laugh out loud and be GLAD you spent an hour with this mom.

Details:

Cheerios in My Underwear (And Other True Tales of Motherhood)
One Woman Show Starring Amy Simon,
Directed by Richard Kuhlman
Sundays in May, Lillian Theater (310)308-0947

The Hollywood Tower Hotel
The Tower of Terror Attraction, Opening in May
Disney California Adventure, Anaheim, California

Aviation Challenge
Short Documentary Winner, What IFFF? Kids Category
International Family Film Festival
Young Filmmaker: Alex Capogna, 13 years old

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