

15 MINUTES

Choose your adventure

Druin Heal is an experienced tracker and hunter, a master of knots and lashings, an archer, a tomahawk thrower, an Eagle Scout and a genius at orienteering. And he wants to take you on an adventure. A certified California naturalist, Heal gathered quite a following while running the science and nature program at the Chico Creek Nature Center. He recently ventured out on his own, developing his popular field trips into something more spectacular—Adventure Quest. Combining his love for medieval times, passion for useful outdoor skills and desire for adventure, Heal now provides personally curated quests for birthday parties, wedding proposals, bachelor/bachelorette parties, class field trips and more. These events come with ancient treasure maps, ciphered clues, complicated riddles and battles with trolls. They can last hours, days, weeks or more; the details are personalized and pricing varies. Check out Heal's Facebook page @quest4adventure for his event calendar (he offers free monthly field trips) and for info on how to create your own quest.

How did this idea come about?

It was born out of Ranger Corps, a group I created about eight years ago—we camp and hike in medieval gear, teaching and learning woodsman stuff



PHOTO BY NEESA SONOQUIE

like tool use and pioneering, all with a fantasy twist. From that, I thought, wouldn't it be cool to go on a quest? You get these stories in books and the movies, there are great deeds to be done, but I wanted to *do it*. Who wants to file paperwork? Wouldn't you rather go and fight some orcs?

What does Adventure Quest offer?

We have three major themes to choose from. Quests are medieval, *Lord of the Rings*-style; adventures are more *Indiana Jones* or *Tomb Raider*; and then treasure hunts are pirate-themed. There are mental and physical challenges, like maybe you have to fight a bunch of bandits ... Right now we mostly use [foam-padded swords], but as we earn more money we are getting LARP [live action role-playing]-type swords that look real, because the greater the immersion the better.

What are some of the coolest quests you have created so far?

I'm a leathersmith and my wife makes jewelry, so we make quest items and costumes, we color scrolls and maps with tea and burn the edges to make it look really old. We recently did a quest at Monkey Face with a magical stone. It was for a school class, fairy-themed, and we used a lot of Celtic mythology. I dressed up as the God of Wild Things and gave them three clues—one was underground, one in the deepest waters, one up high in a tree. What I love about the kids ones is that they are just so into it, they really believe it. The challenge with the adults is in creating the clues, the intricacy. We try to make it as real as possible, and it *is* real. You are out in the physical world, climbing ropes, scaling rocky bits, finding caves with real items and real clues. It's a blast.

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THE GOODS

Restoration, resiliency



by
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For me, one of the most charming things about any downtown—including Chico's and Oroville's—is the history in which it's steeped. I love walking around and looking up at big, historic buildings, reading the plaques that explain their past and admiring the grand architecture.

Sometimes, sadly, that grandeur gets butchered by time and owners who care more about their singular missions than the cohesive whole. Restoring and maintaining old buildings comes at no small cost, of course. Thankfully there are things like historic registries that open up some funding sources—and prohibit certain modifications.

I mention this because the **Oroville State Theatre** is undergoing a restoration project that its parent company, the nonprofit **State Theatre Arts Guild** (STAGE), has dubbed **Miracle on Myers Street**. It cleared one hurdle last year, with the installation of a Wurlitzer organ. Now, it's hoping to get the go-ahead from the city Planning Commission to update its marquee.

Turns out, according to the STAGE website, when **United Artists** bought the place in the 1970s, it tore down the old "State" sign as it "modernized several aspects of the theatre, but with considerable loss to the interior detail and damage to the theatre's infrastructure." The guild wants to re-create the sign—similar to those that adorn the **Senator** and **El Rey** theaters in Chico (in fact, **Timothy Pflueger**, who designed the State Theatre, designed the Senator that same year, 1928).

I can't see any reasons to think STAGE's bid will be turned down—it's already gotten the blessing of the state Office of Historic Preservation.

MAKING SPACE About two years ago, **Bank of America** chose to close its only branch in Paradise, but as it turns out, the company never did anything with its empty building on the Skyway. Since it didn't burn in the Camp Fire, now is the time: Last week it was announced that BofA donated it to the town of Paradise. It could clearly use the space, having added a team of building officials to handle the influx of permit applications—so the timing is good.

"The town intends to utilize the building as a **Resiliency Permit and Housing Resource Center**," a town press release reads. "After the fire, our new reality requires more public outreach and assistance than ever before as our community digs deep to build back our town."

SOMETHING TO CHEER FOR **Hype Dance Studio** has some exciting news: It's been chosen to help choreograph routines for the **916 Crew**, the **Sacramento Kings'** gender-inclusive hip-hop group. The Chico-based studio will be working with **Dance Elite All Stars** from Rocklin and **KAST Academy of the Arts** out of Elk Grove for the group's debut season. Apparently this job is nothing new for Hype owner **Sarah Schneeweis**, who said in a Kings press release that, "I had the great pleasure of choreographing the Sacramento Kings Dancers for 15 years and this trend toward coed dance teams is exciting." Agreed—can't wait to see what they come up with.

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