

# SVCT's show goes on despite no home base

By **DEBBI OLSON**

Special to The Dispatch

MORGAN HILL — For a theater company still without a home, what better place to present an intimate play that requires an intimate setting, than in a place with a homey atmosphere.

Such is the case facing the latest production by the South Valley Civic Theater.

In a unique twist, SVCT will present Neil Simon's "California Suite," inside the new home of Rosso's Furniture Store at Tennant Station in Morgan Hill for five weekends beginning Oct. 24.

Producer Steve Bauman said that when plans to do the show began, SVCT was again faced with the dilemma of where to put on the show since they had been forced out of their Tennant Station playhouse in 1995.

"We thought of doing a dinner show in a restaurant, but then decided the ticket prices would end up being too expensive," Bauman said.

In many productions, Jaime Rosso, president of Rosso's Furniture, had lent pieces of furniture to SVCT to help in productions.

"Since this play requires some free standing furniture, it occurred to me that instead of dragging the furniture out of the store, that maybe there would be a small space in the store where we could do the show," said Bauman.

Rosso needed to think only for a moment before agreeing to the idea.

"We've always supported the theater and this was an opportunity to help while they're in transition," Rosso said. "I think it can be a win-win situation."

After walking around Rosso's location, which used to be the old Safeway store at Tennant Station, Rosso and Bauman agreed the back of the store where the clearance furniture is located would provide enough space for a stage 12-foot by 32-foot stage and ample room for the audience.

A storeroom to the left will provide dressing room space for 10 actors in the show, while the store's showroom provides an excellent foyer of the Beverly Hill's Hotel in which the houses the suite visited by four different couples in succession.

"It is a unique setting," Bauman said.

In order to house the SVCT production, Rosso will put on hold plans to convert the back area of the store into several display areas where he is planning to put office furniture and expand the children's furniture area.

"We will have to scale back some plans we had for that space," Rosso said. "The requirements it takes to do a show here will require a certain amount of disruption, but we want to be partners in this, and we'll make it work."

With a new warehouse in Gilroy, Rosso will move his clearance items to the Gilroy store on the corner of Tenth and Monterey Road.

Logistically, SVCT producers and technical staff will have to work out the details of lighting and set design to accommodate the show.

"We will have a raised stage, and the audience will be able to sit up close to the stage," Bauman said. "This show doesn't require a lot of special effects lighting, so the lighting changes will be quite subtle."

Although the play doesn't open to the public until Oct. 24, SVCT will begin moving into Rosso's on Oct. 11 to set up the stage. This will give technical lightings and sound crew a chance to see what they need, what will need to be brought in and what will and won't work in terms of doing the show.

The actors, being directed by Jeremy Lefferts, have been rehearsing in a classroom at San Martin School. They will have their first opportunity to rehearse in the converted theater and get used to the stage just four days before the show opens.

"This show brings us (SVCT) back to Morgan Hill and into the shopping center where we had our playhouse," Bauman said. In the past two years SVCT has had to rent rehearsal and performance space to continue their 26-year tradition of bringing community theater to South County.

All performances of "California Suite" will begin at 8 p.m. with two matinee shows on Nov. 2 and 16 at 2 p.m. Ticket prices are \$10 for adults and \$8 for students and seniors. Matinee shows will be \$8 and \$6. Reservations: 842-SHOW.

## RELAX ON A ROSSO'S SOFA AND ENJOY A GREAT LOCAL THEATER PRODUCTION

### EDITOR:

If there are any readers with interests that encompass both furniture and the performing arts, there is a great deal going on at Rosso's Furniture at Tennant Station in Morgan Hill.

On Friday and Saturday nights at 8 p.m. for the next four weeks, the South Valley Civic Theater is putting on an excellent production of Neil Simon's "California Suite."

The stage is set up in the back of the furniture store and believe me, it works very well. As an added bonus, for those of you who hate sitting in straight back chairs, there are some sofas available at no extra charge, just arrive a little early, and you can still get a great view of the action.

So come on down, or up, depending on where you live, arrive about 7:15, do some furniture shopping and then settle down to enjoy the production and show that we do deserve a good quality local amateur theater group.

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