

ENTERTAINMENT

Whip it good!

New *Indiana Jones* movie spurs interest in whip artistry



Gery Deer as Indiana Jones

The new *Indiana Jones* film has ignited a new interest in the art of the bullwhip, or more correctly, "Whip artistry." Whip artistry is the skillful use of a whip for sport or performance. Whip artists spend countless hours learning the craft from skilled master instructors as carefully and meticulously as any performing artist or musician. One member of the Times Community Newspapers family has a passion other than writing.

Times Community Newspapers Commercial Publications Director Gery L. Deer of Jamestown is better known to some as a professional whip artist and instructor who has been performing and teaching the once lost art of the whip for more than two decades. He has performed around the country from Las Vegas to Pennsylvania, at corporate events, state fairs, comedy clubs and street fairs. Deer has been a featured performer on NBC's *America's Got Talent*, and his work has also been seen in the Universal Studios film *The Rundown*, and on Steve Harvey's *Big Time Challenge*. In addition to his duties as Features Editor of "Your Home," Deer has been busy keeping up with the revived demand for bullwhip artistry performances and lessons thanks to the release of the new *Indiana Jones* movie. "Whip artistry is not new," said Deer. "Whips have been used as a performance skill in the U.S. since the late 18th Century."

The first appearance of a whip to a mass audience was in Douglas Fairbanks' movie "The Mark of Zorro" in 1921. Since that time, the whip has been misrepresented by the media and Hollywood has painted a dreary picture of the whip portraying it as a tool of torture.

Just as baseball bats were not intended to be used as weapons, neither were whips, but unfortunately, bullwhips and stockwhips are often confused with their torturous cousins known as flogs or cats-of-nine-tails. These devices bear little resemblance to whips and were designed solely to administer pain.

Movie makers and even historians will often insert a bullwhip where flogs would have been used and this is what the public has seen over the last century. As a result of this false history, whips are usually forbidden at parks and other public areas because of their perception as a weapon. In reality, whips were designed for one purpose - to make a noise.

Though their tip can be used as a precision targeting tool for entertainment and marksmanship, whips don't actually 'whip' anything. The 'crack' of the whip is the sonic boom produced by the constantly-increasing velocity of the whip's tip to more than 760 miles per hour.

"Whip artistry is a legitimate performing art and is every bit as rewarding and skill-driven as dance or music," said Deer, who is a Society of American Whip Artistry certified whip artistry performer and instructor. "It's great that Indy is back on the big screen to inspire new generations of whip artists."

Slowly, whip artistry is being more accepted as entertainment and several organizations now exist to promote the positive and entertaining use of whips on stage. One of the most prominent organizations is The Society of American Whip Artistry which is a professional credentials organization that focuses on American whip artistry styles and sets measurable standards for whip training and performance.

To learn more about modern whip artistry performances and lessons go online to www.thewhipstudio.com or contact The Whip Artistry Studio at 902-4857.

Dayton Theater Guild announces schedule

The Dayton Theatre Guild will begin its 2008-2009 season, themed "The Cost of Living," with the classic revival of *Outward Bound* by Sutton Vane, which was last produced at The Dayton Theatre Guild when it first opened in 1945.

Performance dates are September 26 through October 12.

Following *Outward Bound* is *The Cover of Life* by R. T. Robinson (November 21 - December 7); *Catfish Moon* by Larry Sartin (January 9 - 25, 2009); *The Paris Letter* by Jon Robin Baitz (February 27 - March 15, 2009); *The Cashier* by Glen Merze (April 17 - May 3, 2009) and *Fuddy Meers* by David Lindsay-Abaire (June 5 - 21, 2009.)

Each show runs three weekends, Fridays through Sundays, with all Friday performances at 8 p.m., the first Saturday at 8 p.m. with second and third Saturday performances at 5 p.m. All Sunday performances are at 3 p.m. No one under the age of seven will be admitted, made by visiting the website www.daytontheatreguild.org where it is now possible to pay for your tickets in advance. Season ticket holders may also change reservation dates on-line.