

Want to be in movies? Here's your chance

By Ann B. Niendorf
Special to The Record

Hollywood comes to Lodi this year when Mad Science Productions presents "Movie Magic: The Science Behind the Movies" at the Lodi Grape Festival.

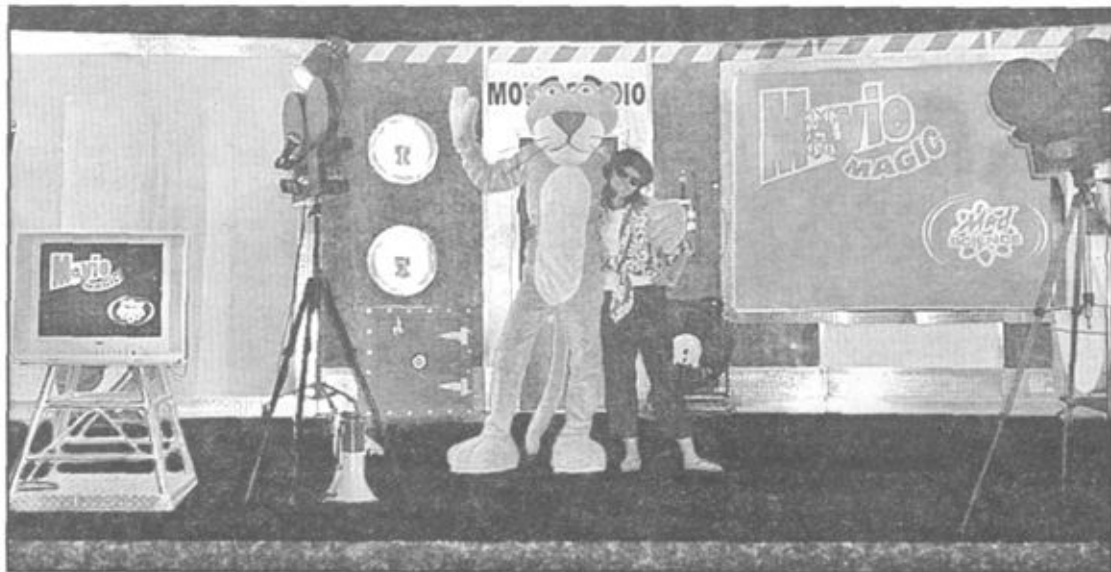
Mad Science Productions, which operates under the umbrella of the Mad Science Group in Montreal, Quebec, developed the show as part of the company's mission to make science fun for kids, said Leonard Lipes, vice president of Mad Science Productions.

"We take science and technology and involve them one on one," he said. "We're sparking their imagination and feeding their curiosity."

The Movie Magic show features four projects licensed from MGM: "Legally Blonde," "Agent Cody Banks," "Pink Panther" and "Rocky." A story line involving the Pink Panther stealing a script requires the audience's help making a movie to save the day. Children from the audience are selected to serve as actors, camera people and special effects operators.

Participants get to use the latest Hollywood technology to make their film, including green screens, which allow actors to be digitally placed into actual movie scenes. The final product will be a five- to-six-minute feature film starring the participants. The film will then be edited to include clips from the actual movies.

Response to the show, which



Courtesy photo

IT'S A WRAP: The Pink Panther will make an appearance at the Grape Festival as part of the Movie Magic presentation.

debuted in May, has been tremendous, Lipes said.

"This has probably been our strongest reaction to a show so far... The Hollywood component really turns kids on. Being in a film — how cool is that?" he said.

The show is family friendly, he said, and the target age is probably children ages 7 to 14, although all ages are welcome.

"Everyone that sees the show

has fun," he said. "There's no doubt about it."

Mad Science Productions has been presenting shows at theme parks, fairs and festivals for about nine years, Lipes said. The shows allow children to touch, feel and do things, he said. "It doesn't matter how they learn as long as they are learning."

It's unusual to have a theatrical experience that is also inter-

active, he added. "It really gets the crowd involved."

That crowd may find themselves holding up signs to cheer Rocky on during his boxing match with the Pink Panther, for example. Volunteer actors will get to wear costumes appropriate for the film they are stepping into.

The Lodi Grape Festival's timing worked out well for the show's touring schedule, Lipes

PREVIEW

'MOVIE MAGIC: THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE MOVIES'

- **WHERE:** Lodi Grape Festival
- **WHEN:** Sept. 16: 5:30 p.m., 7 p.m., 8:30 p.m.; Sept. 17: 3 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 6 p.m., 7:30 p.m., 9 p.m.; Sept. 18: 3 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 6 p.m., 7:30 p.m., 9 p.m.; Sept. 19: 3 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 6 p.m., 7:30 p.m., 9 p.m.
- **STARRING:** You

said. "We're very excited. We've never been there before."

Festival manager Mark Armstrong is excited about the show as well. He saw a Mad Science show at a fair convention last year and was impressed with the professional nature of the production. The movie show is a perfect fit for the festival, Armstrong added. "We were looking for something different, something people don't get a chance to see."

Mad Science Productions usually plays larger venues than the festival, and Armstrong said the show will be able to have a higher profile at the Lodi show than in other places. He also expects the performances will be packed.

The show, sponsored by Diede Construction, takes place three times on Thursday and five times a day Friday, Saturday and Sunday.