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SHOOTING STARS: Rolling the dice — and the cameras — for Monopoly documentary

Posted by **Carol Cling**

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Monopoly might not be the first game people think of when they think of Las Vegas.

Except, of course, during the past week's World Monopoly Championship at Caesars Palace.

But dice were hardly the only things rolling during the three-day tournament.

Five high-definition digital video cameras captured the action for "Under the Boardwalk," a feature-length documentary devoted to the world's most popular board game, which is expected to hit the festival circuit early next year.

A crew of 14 shot for four days, not only at Caesars Palace but also at Paris and the Rio. (Talk about an around-the-world tour ...)

It was the second Vegas shoot for producer-director Kevin Tostado and crew; they previously visited Southern Nevada in June 2008 to interview two U.S. semifinalists from Las Vegas.

Last week's championship represented "our last big shoot," Tostado notes; they've still got to interview various celebrities and collectors and catch up with newly crowned world champion Bjorn Halvard Knappskog (pictured) in his native Norway.

Although Monopoly commemorates Atlantic City landmarks, Las Vegas provides a far more picturesque visual backdrop, according to Tostado.

"They held a previous U.S. championship in Atlantic City, but it was in a generic (hotel) ballroom," he says, contrasting that with "the grandeur" of the Strip — especially for competitors from 41 countries, many of whom "have never been to the U.S. before," Tostado notes. "And to have this be the first impression of our country really gave them a sense of livin' large."

Although it documents the world championships, "Under the Boardwalk" explores the wider world of Monopoly, from the game's origins (it celebrates its 75th anniversary next year) to its universal appeal.

"Regardless of age, sex, language or race," Tostado points out, "everyone plays Monopoly."

Madison time: "Peepshow" headliner Holly Madison's self-titled E! reality series keeps rolling along at her Planet Hollywood home base — and around town.

As one of E!'s "Girls Next Door," Madison quickly became accustomed to having a video camera as a constant companion.

"You get used to it really, really fast," she says.

Which is just as well, considering one of her eventual goals: politics.

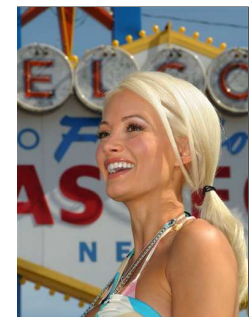
"Las Vegas politics," to be specific. (Maybe one of her first guests, Mayor Oscar Goodman, gave her some electoral advice.)

"It's definitely fish-out-of-water," Madison acknowledges, but "I just love the city" of Las Vegas. And "as great as it is, there's plenty of room for improvement."

Rockin' with 'Rocks': Speaking of Planet Hollywood, Las Vegan Darby Kelly was one of eight finalists competing in the second annual "On the Rocks: The Search for America's Top Bartender," which shot there last week.

The second annual contest, hosted by Maria Sansone of LX.TV, pitted Kelly against rivals from New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Miami; judges included Las Vegas Tobin Ellis (a world mixology champ) and first-season winner Amanda Gager (who tends bar at Mandalay Bay's Stripsteak).

Sponsored by the LX.TV.com Web site (which is owned by NBC's Local Media Division), the contest expands to TV this year, with three half-hour episodes airing on various NBC stations following "Saturday Night Live" Nov. 7, 14 and 21 — including NBC's Las Vegas affiliate, KVBC-TV, Channel 3.



Same 'Deal': The deals (and zonks) keep on coming at the Tropicana, where "Let's Make a Deal" continues with three tapings this week. Audience call times are 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; for free tickets, call the Trop at (800) 706-8767 or go online to www.cbs.com/daytime/lets_make_a_deal and click on "Online Ticketing."

And while we're on the subject of tickets, they're now available for "Regis and Kelly's" Vegas visits Nov. 22 and 23 at the Wynn's Encore Theater; to register online, click on <https://register.go.com/regisandkelly/tickets/index>.

Casting about: The faith-based movie "Rescue Us," which will shoot in Las Vegas early next year, is holding the second of two appointment-only casting sessions from 9 a.m. to noon and 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 7; for more information on available roles, check out www.rescueusthemovie.com; to request an appointment, e-mail rescueusthemovie@yahoo.com.

Reality bites: In addition to Holly Madison's aforementioned E! series, other projects scheduled to shoot here this week range from MTV's "The Hills" to History's "Pawn Stars" to a BBC documentary devoted to "The Culture and History of Las Vegas," which is expected to complete its 12-day Southern Nevada visit Friday.

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