

Arts & Entertainment

'Ed' Said 'We Do' When KaBloom Owner Asked to Do Wedding Work

By MICHELLE Le POIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD - Naomi McElynn knows a good opportunity when she sees one blooming right in front of her. In mid-October of 2003, while the cast of NBC's "Ed" was filming on Elm Street and using the coolers and restrooms at her store, the owner of KaBloom in Westfield caught sight of the sitcom's script which indicated the engagement of characters Ed Stevens (Tom Cavanaugh) and Carol Vessey (Julie Bowen).

McElynn approached Set Director Paul Cheponis with a curious intriguing proposal. Offering her business card to Cheponis, she asked to do the floral arrangements for the television couple's upcoming nuptials set to air on Friday, February 9.

After calling the production company, and assuring them that she was indeed serious about undertaking the task, McElynn was sent a printed copy of Carol's wedding dress - which was created by famed fashion designer Vera Wang - to coordinate the flowers.

While production officials suggested some of the designs for the bride's and

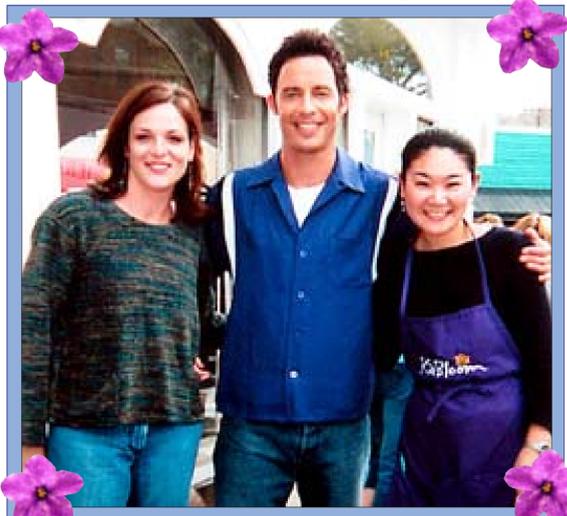


Photo Courtesy of Naomi McElynn, KaBloom Westfield
THE WEDDING PLANNERS... While NBC's "Ed" was filming on Elm Street in Westfield, KaBloom owner Naomi McElynn proposed to producers that she should supply the flower arrangements for the upcoming nuptials between the lead characters. Pictured, left to right, are: Mrs. McElynn, actor Tom Cavanaugh, who plays Ed Stevens, and KaBloom floral designer Chie Urbanick.

of filming, McElynn told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* that roses in hues of light to dark pinks were used for Carol's bouquet. The bridesmaids' bouquets, all in shades of pinks and purples, included delphinium, anemones, garden roses and purple tulips.

Last week, McElynn, who is also a big fan of the show, traveled to Viacom studios in Northvale to deliver the arrangements, and afterwards, enjoyed a two-hour tour of the "Ed" set and met with the cast, which was in the process of filming Carol and Ed's rehearsal dinner.

After assembling another bouquet on the set, she had the opportunity to take some pictures, including a few fun-filled shots where she put her feet up on the desk of Ed's humble law office, located inside the Stuckeybowl bowling alley.

"They worked really well with our

team and they were thrilled," McElynn said when asked about how the producers reacted to her floral creations. She added that Cheponis told her that, when it comes to flowers, he normally puts a couple of blooms together quickly.

Now that the folks at "Ed" have McElynn and the folks at KaBloom - real experts on their team - she hopes to hear from the crew in the future when floral needs arise.

"We do the stars' weddings," quipped McElynn, when she noted that she would be filling her store windows with tidbits about her brush with fame.

While in Northvale, she told Cheponis that she "wanted *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* to have the exclusive story on KaBloom's special contribution to the wedding which so many faithful viewers have been anticipating.

DECA's Art Auction Yields \$1,000 For MDA

By MARYLOU MORANO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS - "Sold! The Kinkadee goes to number 14 for \$20!" The Scotch Plains Fanwood High School's DECA held an art show and auction, "An Evening Of Art" at the high school on January 22 for the benefit of Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA).

Over 130 custom-framed and matted lithographs, photographs, prints, sculptures and oils by such art masters as Picasso, Delacroix, Chagall and Boulanger were featured. Many pieces were original and signed by the artist.

The event, which was conducted by Ross Galleries of Holbrook, N.Y., was organized by senior, Matt Goldberg and juniors Mike Baumwoll and Terrance Charles, all of Scotch Plains. Thirteen additional students worked on the auction committee.

Most of the artwork had an opening bid of between \$50 and \$300. The auction made \$6,400 in gross sales and raised \$1,000 for MDA.

According to Matt, the auction was a new venture for DECA. He added that there was the possibility of its become a regular fundraiser for the organization.

"The students did an incredible job organizing this auction," said marketing teacher Dan Margolis of Westfield, who serves as DECA's advisor.

DECA is a national sponsor of MDA. Last Thursday's auction is part of an ongoing competition among state and national DECA chapters to raise awareness of civic and community concerns.

Michelle Pignatelli, Program Coordinator for MDA in Avenel was present at the auction. "The SPFHs DECA does a great job helping MDA," she said. Funds raised by "An Evening of Art" will help in MDA's continuing effort to combat neuromuscular diseases in a variety of ways, including research, education and medical services.

DECA is an association of marketing students. The SPFHs chapter currently has 150 members. Other community projects that DECA participates in help homeless and disadvantaged children and adults.

Coming Next Week:

- Carol Davis meets painter Joan Polishook;
- Marylou Morano reviews *Visiting Mr. Green*;
- Tomasulo and NJCVA Exhibitions: The Tale of Two Galleries;
- My Take on It returns

Ties to Maine Anchor First-Time Author, Westfield and SP Native

By MARYLOU MORANO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

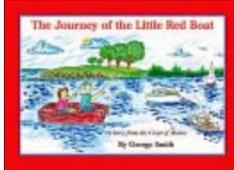
WESTFIELD - His summer home in Maine has inspired a former Westfield resident to write a children's book as a gift to his granddaughter.

George Smith, who currently resides in Lambertville, has recently released his self-published picture book, "The Journey of the Little Red Boat."

Born in Scotch Plains, Smith came to live in Westfield when he was 5 years old, and was educated in the Westfield school system where he has fond memories of Miss Dietrich's English and short story writing classes at Westfield High School (WHS).

"The Journey of the Little Red Boat" is Smith's first attempt at writing since his college days.

Originally intending to become a veterinarian, he received a Bachelor of Science degree from the College of Agriculture and Environmental Science (now Cook College). Leaving that career path, he earned a Masters of Business Administration from Adelphi University on Long Island, and eventually worked for several companies as a business requirement analyst, programmer and project manager.



He also served two years in the United States Army. Smith has many ties to Westfield. His stepfather is the late Gomer Lewis, the renowned WHS history teacher and his cousin is former Mayor Bud Boothe.

"The Journey of the Little Red Boat" highlights the activities of Smith's granddaughter, Grace, when she visits the family home on the Medomak River in central Maine, near the coast. Grace is a prominent character in the book.

"The things depicted in the book - playing games at the kitchen table, walking among the rocks looking for minnows and baby crabs trapped in pools of water - are the things I did as a teenager. They are what my children did when they were growing up, and are now what my grandchildren do when they visit. There are five generations of family attached to that place," explained Smith.

The author credits his cousin, Jennifer Lee of Westfield, with inspiring him to write the book.

"She conceived the idea of a story for my granddaughter from the actual incident of a little red boat drifting into our dock, and she persuaded me until I wrote the story," he said.

"I had just retired and was mulling what I would really like to do with my newly found free time. The book was also a way to write about an area of Maine that I love," he continued.

Another cousin, Gaile Boothe, has



Photo Courtesy of George Smith
FIRST MATE... Author George Smith, a native of Westfield, reads "The Journey of the Little Red Boat" at a bookstore in Maine.

been very instrumental in determining potential buyers of the book.

In addition to publishing "The Journey of the Little Red Boat," marketing the book has added an extra dimension to Smith's writing life.

"I enjoy visiting schools and discussing the book and the topic of creative writing with elementary school children. Helping children improve their writing skills and engage their imaginations is very satisfying," he said.

Smith is currently working on two additional children's books.

"The Journey of the Little Red Boat" is suitable for youngsters from preschool through early elementary schools. It is available at The Town Book Store. For more information and to see a sample page, log on to Smith's website at www.georgesmithpublishing.com.

PREFACH STRIVES FOR PERFECTION

By LISA M. BASILE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

FANWOOD - A gifted vocalist, 17-year-old Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHS) student Jillian Lisa Prefach has strived to make her passions come to life.

With a seemingly innate affinity toward theatre and performance, Jillian has taken her talent to heights seldom reached by others of her age group.

"I plan to major in either musical theatre or theatre," she told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*.

Still unsure of which college she wants to attend, she added, "My long term goal is to be a success on Broadway."

Presently, Jillian is building the foundation of her goals by being the only female accepted from SPFHS to go to Boston, Mass. to perform with the All-Eastern Honor Chorus on Valentine's Day.

"I'm looking forward to making new friends and having a great time," she said.

The All-Eastern Honor Chorus is not the only ensemble to include Jillian's vocal abilities. In 2003, she traveled to Atlantic City with the All-State Honor Chorus, and she was also the only female selected along with seven other male vocalists on the trip. Jillian also performed as a soloist with the Region Chorus in 2000 and 2003.

Her deep love for drama, dance, and voice is evident in her extensive training over the past eight years. She has shaped her talents with seven years of lessons in dance, and private voice and acting lessons. She has also trained with the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn.

Jillian does not only take command of the stage, she is president of the SPFHS Chorus, an intern at Paper Mill, and the treasurer of the SPFHS Repertory Theatre. She has held roles in numerous plays at the high school, including "Ariel" in *Footloose*, "Mrs. Upson" in *Mame*, and has performed as part of the ensemble for *Anything Goes* and *Tosca*.

She was also a finalist in Ryan Davis' Rising Stars at Cafe Chasama in New York City and a soloist at the Paper Mill New Voices Conservatory.

From March 18 to 21 and 26 to 27, she will play "Cosette" in the SPFHS production of *Les Miserables*.

"I absolutely cannot wait," she stated, "performing is what I love to do. When I'm on stage, it's the

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Green Garage Band, 'The Falling Stars' Suggests Persistence

By LISA M. BASILE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS - There are several types of musicians and groups. Some live and breathe music for spiritual enlightenment, while some make music for money, sex, and popularity, and others form groups because it is entertaining for the performer and the audience.

The Falling Stars (TFS), a garage

band comprised of three teenagers from Scotch Plains desires fall into the latter category.

The trio's music consists of more than three instruments. Members include Caryn Feder, 17, the lead vocalist, guitarist, and percussionist, Mikey Sodomorra, 17, the bassist, and Rupnath (Rup) Chattopadhyay, 17, the saxophone and trombone player.

Aside from the usual setup of instruments, a harmonica, piano, flute, clarinet, and trumpet are also incorporated into the mix. TFS has been together since Caryn became inspired at a competition.

"I always wanted to be a musician," she said, "I went to a battle of the bands...so we decided then on that we weren't going to miss any opportunities to play."

Despite their varied musical tastes, they manage to work well together. While Mikey listens to Alan Jackson, Rup prefers The Beatles and Real Big Fish, and Caryn listens to Incubus and Red Hot Chili Peppers.

Caryn explained, "I think that it's a great thing (to have taste in many genres) because when we sit down to write something, all these influences get meshed together."

What musical genre would describe TFS?

"We are enjoyably different, creative, and fluent," said Mikey.

"We want to offer something different, we did a bunch of genres, that's what we do," said Caryn, adding that there are short periods of jazz and hip-hop that mix with their predominantly pop-rock sound.

The band, however, appears to

fall short of mastering any one sound, or blending the differences together cleanly. But their confidence and passion may one day lead to a mature manifestation of their musical goals.

Fans of the Indie music, Hanson-like pop-rock, or pop-punk bands may appreciate what they have to offer. Although TFS is certainly no professional entity, they seem to take a stab at forming their own sound - a goal

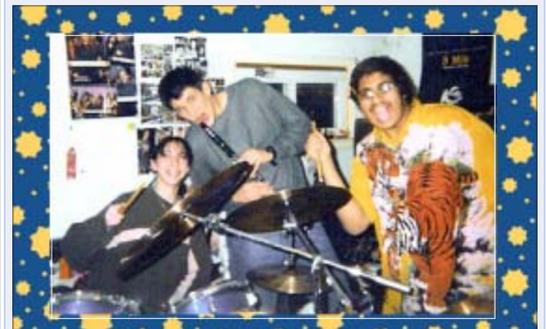


Photo Courtesy of The Falling Stars
JAM SESSION... Scotch Plains residents and members of The Falling Stars garage band take pride in their collaboration. Pictured, left to right, are: Caryn Feder, Mikey Sodomorra and Rupnath Chattopadhyay.

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Photo Courtesy of Naomi McElynn, KaBloom Westfield
FOR THE BRIDE... KaBloom of Westfield owner Naomi McElynn stands with the bouquet designed for "Ed" character Carol Vessey, played by Julie Bowen. For full color and details, please see www.goleader.com.

bridesmaids' bouquets, McElynn was given free reign to choose the final creations. She was aided by floral designer Chie Urbanick, who came from Japan about seven to eight months ago, as well as Lucille Lukas, who was



Photo Courtesy of Naomi McElynn, KaBloom Westfield
AND BRIDESMAIDS... KaBloom of Westfield also designed the bouquets for the bridesmaids, one of which Lucille Lukas of KaBloom holds in the picture above.

responsible for the ribbons, bows and boutonnieres.

Using silk flowers, which would allow the arrangements to endure the heat of lights on the set and long hours

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PEACE POSTER... Roosevelt Intermediate School student Phil Cohn holds a copy of his winning poster that won local acclaim in the Lions International Peace Poster Contest. A seventh grader, Phil was encouraged by his art teacher Anne Cohen to enter the contest. The theme of the competition was "Create a Brighter Tomorrow." Phil's entry included a peace sign with borders containing the flags of various countries upon a background suggesting a galaxy of stars. His original design was judged on originality, artistic merit and expression of a theme.