

Annual Tour of Notable Homes On May 14 Will Aid Symphony

WESTFIELD — The Friends of Westfield Symphony Orchestra (WSO) will produce its 21st Annual Tour of Notable Homes to benefit the orchestra's education and outreach programs on Saturday, May 14.

According to its chairwomen, Lee Corcoran and Lisel Perselay, "The tour is a one-time-only opportunity for the public to view five outstanding residences in some of the area's most prestigious neighborhoods."

The chairwomen noted that one of the homes scheduled on the tour, a renovated classic colonial, located in the storied Wychwood section of town, "contains Colonial design elements which have been produced according to the highest levels of taste, authenticity and craftsmanship."

The owners' selection of period furniture, fabrics and wall coverings mixed with more contemporary elements

door prizes, opportunities to purchase chances to win an array of luxury merchandise donated by local merchants, cultural organizations and restaurants; a plant sale, complimentary refreshments and more.

Dr. Norman Luka, President of the WSO's Board of Trustees, explained, "The WSO depends on this outstanding effort by The Friends each year and we are grateful for the continuing support. In addition to our critically acclaimed concert season this revenue literally makes our community outreach possible."

Tickets purchased in advance are \$25 and increase to \$30 on tour day. They are available in town at Burgdorff Realtors, Coldwell Banker Realtors, Weichert Realtors, Lancaster, Poppyfields, and The Town Bank of Westfield. In Cranford they are available at Martin Jewelers, and at Irma's Hallmark in Fanwood and Mary's



PRESTIGIOUS HOME...This Hawthorne Drive home will be featured during the Westfield Symphony Orchestra Friends' 21st Annual Tour of Notable Homes on Saturday, May 14.

make for what Mrs. Corcoran referred to as a "uniquely sophisticated home environment."

In addition to the tours, activities scheduled from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., according to Mrs. Perselay, will include live musical interludes, refreshments,

Hallmark in Clark. Addresses of tour locations and a map are printed on the tickets. For further information or to obtain a schedule of upcoming concerts, please call the WSO at (908) 232-9400 or visit www.westfieldsymphony.com.

Festival of Harmony to Feature High School, College Singers

AREA — The fifth annual a cappella Festival of Harmony, funded by the Rahway Valley Jerseyans Chapter of

Flynn

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Mrs. Flynn has been very active with the Westfield Education Association as its Second Vice-President, Treasurer, and Executive Council. She also serves on the District Technology Committee.

"I have prepared technology workshops for art educators as part of professional development for teachers this year," noted Mrs. Flynn, who worked with Ms. Happe-Conway on revising the entire high school curriculum this year.

When asked about how long she would like to continue art instruction in the school district, she said, "I am going to take one year at a time. It's work, but I'm still having a lot of fun."

"Then, after a brief pause, she quipped, "Maybe when I can stop lifting 50-pound bags of clay!"

the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America (SPEBSQSA), will join other barbershop harmony chapters and Sweet Adeline chapter, continues its interest in high school and college chorals groups to sing a cappella barbershop style. Admission is free.

Approximately 80 high school and college students will perform at the Festival of Harmony on Saturday, April 23, at 7:30 p.m. at Rahway High School, located at 1012 Madison Avenue in Rahway.

Feature performances by the Moonance Quartet, the 2003 Region 19 Sweet Adeline Champions, Reveille Quartet, the 2003 Division SPEBSQSA champions and the Jerseyans Chorus will also be held that evening.

For more information, please call Hugh Divine at (609) 799-8170, Joe Weiss at (908) 486-5218, Don Pennell at (973) 324-0957, Carolyn Schmidt at (908) 647-4363 or Doug Brown at (908) 276-5811.



MAGICAL MUSIC...The Westfield High School Marching Band, under the direction of Michael Fackelman, played at the Magical Music Days at Disney World. Pictured, above, are some of the 103 members of the band that represented Westfield at Epcot on April 16. The members were able to enjoy Disney MGM/Epcot, The Magic Kingdom, as well as Downtown Disney. The band played selections from its fall season.

Applications for Union County History Grants Now Available

COUNTY — The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders is seeking applications from Union County-based history organizations and other non-profit groups for the Union County History Grant Program.

"The purpose of the grant program is to provide funds to historical societies and other groups for the development and presentation of quality programs and projects that preserve, teach and promote better understanding of Union County and local history," reported Freeholder Chairman Rick Proctor.

"The deadline for proposals is Monday, May 23," said Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski, liaison to the county's Cultural and Heritage Programs Advisory Board. "The grants support activities taking place during the period from September 1, 2005 to August 31, 2006."

Grant funds are awarded on a competitive basis. The maximum request for a General Operating Budget grant is \$7,500, which is available only to Union County-based history organi-

zations; other non-profit groups may request up to \$5,000 to expand their history programming.

Funds from the history grant program can support activities such as public exhibitions, lectures, educational projects that focus on Union County, or any aspect of New Jersey history, conservation and preservation of historical material, speakers, honoraria/expenses, oral history projects and tape transcription, ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) assistive services, technical assistance, and project-related supplies.

The Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs administers the Union County History Grant Program, which is funded by a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State.

To request an application and guidelines, please contact the Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs at 633 Pearl Street, Elizabeth 07202, call (908) 558-2550 or e-mail culturalinfo@ucnj.org. Relay users may dial 7-1-1.

Arts & Entertainment



STANDING TALL...Noreen Farley, Angela Della Ventura of Mountainside, and Barbara Guidi of Scotch Plains are the *Three Tall Women* in The Theater Project's production of Edward Albee's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, running from Thursday, April 21, to Sunday, May 8, at Union County College.

Three Tall Women Will Be Staged by Theater Project

CRANFORD — *Three Tall Women*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Edward Albee, will open at The Theater Project (TTP), Union County College's (UCC) professional theater company, today, Thursday, April 21, at 8 p.m. at UCC, 1033 Springfield Avenue in Cranford.

Directed by TTP Artistic Director Mark Spina, with a cast that includes Angela Della Ventura of Mountainside, Noreen Farley of Clinton, and Barbara Guidi of Scotch Plains, the production team includes Jessica Parks (set design), Jeff Greenberg (lighting design), Katie Falk (costume design), and Mike Magnifico (sound design).

Audiences are invited to meet the actors following each performance. In *Three Tall Women*, ladies in dif-

ferent stages of life compare notes about love and sex, death and taxes.

"Albee is unflinchingly honest," said Mr. Spina. "His insights about what we lose and what we gain as we grow older, about the inability sometimes of one generation to sympathize with another, are so striking that the play is irresistible."

Three Tall Women will be staged through Sunday, May 8, on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.

General admission is \$18. April 24, the first Sunday of the play's run, is designated "Senior Sunday" when all senior citizen tickets are \$10. Student tickets are always \$10.

To reserve tickets, please call the TTP Box Office at (908) 659-5189.

POPCORN™
Fever Pitch:
Lukewarm Outing

One Popcorn, Poor • Two Popcorns, Fair • Three Popcorns, Good • Four Popcorns, Excellent

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
2 POPCORN

As recurrent as opening day itself, Hollywood routinely celebrates the beginning of the baseball season by releasing a movie about our national pastime. This April it's *Fever Pitch*, starring Drew Barrymore and Jimmy Fallon as would-be lovers vexed by the spirits annually unleashed when the ump yells play ball!

It's a good title for what the directors, Bobby Farrelly and Peter Farrelly, are trying to accomplish. And that is to dissect, examine and classify just what it means to be a diehard, true-blue, dyed-in-the-wool fan of the sport. They are almost successful.

All of which might have been hunky-dory if *Fever Pitch* were a movie about horseshoes, the only sport where almost courts. But then again, does that almost court stuff also extend to movies about horseshoes?

I'm giving that a "yes," based solely on the assumption that people so traditionally accepting of near success would naturally be tolerant of a film that almost achieved its goal. Besides, when was the last time someone made a movie about horseshoes? So what if it isn't that great? They should be happy someone bothered.

But the Farrellys didn't pick a sport whose audience so readily embraces mediocrity, whether on the field or as portrayed on celluloid. Rather, what they chose is, in a poetic way, about perfection. And we have definite feelings.

In fact, until road rage bullied its way into first place, baseball was the leisure activity that best exemplified our national character. For within that diamond exists an ideal world parallel to our own, where purity of deed exceeds, fairness rules and justice prevails. We know about it the way we know about democracy ... some even better. So, in fashioning a film concerning its culture, there is little room for error.

In all fairness, Fallon's Red Sox-crazed Ben Wrightman, who keeps himself busy in the off-season by teaching middle school math, almost achieves that air of absolute devotion and sincerity.

Almost as convincing in spots is Barrymore as Lindsey Meeks, the high-powered executive, who at first wonders what possible flaw this seemingly terrific guy might possess. Okay, so he doesn't make much money. But he's already 30. Why isn't he taken?

Truth be told, when they first meet in winter, Ben, like the ashamedly honest guy who descends from a long line of axe murderers, figures it best to put the family embarrassment right on the table. So out it comes. He is a baseball fan ... a Red Sox adherent, to be specific. The indoctrination began when he was seven, just after his father died. Uncle Karl introduced him to Fenway Park, the curse of the Bambino and all. And when Karl passed, he bequeathed Ben his season tickets.

Lindsey thinks it's cute. How nice that he has a hobby ... especially one with such a pastoral connotation. Most of the guys she's been dating have been fast track, single-minded workaholics, like herself.

But come opening day, while this may be a change, it isn't quite so refreshing. He said fan ... not zealot. Which in his case means attending every home game, where his summer family of comical cohorts seasonally enraptures him. Don't think said group doesn't exert its influence. They have something to say ... especially when they fear that Ben's love interest may dislodge him from their mitts.

Of course Lindsey should have seen the handwriting on the wall, particularly the one in his apartment. It's a facsimile of Fenway's infamous Green Monster. Other baseball souvenirs and memorabilia populate, nay, permeate, the dwelling.

The premise sufficiently set, Barrymore and Fallon go about the business of doing the romantic comedy thing. Alas, in attempting to infatuate us with their take on the dating process, they are only almost

successful. Fallon is no great actor, at least not as of this writing. Still, he has a likeability that lends reasonable credibility to the role of sports fender.

Barrymore, on the other hand, is an accomplished actress. She too has an ennobling quality. It's been delighting us ever since her debut in *E.T.* (1982). Only thing is, grown-up Drew's done this winsome fluff thing so many times before that by now it seems like she can do the role in her sleep. There's no originality. No vivacity. Hey, you're a Barrymore. We know you can do it.

Perhaps as a complication of these thespic factors, there is little chemistry between the two. Unlike with the Tracy-Hepburn variety of romantic comedy, the standard by which we judge practically all other attempts at the genre, we aren't so much rooting for Barrymore and Fallon as we are simply interested in seeing love win out. Quite the reverse, there is little doubt that we are keenly concerned with the well-being of Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal in *When Harry Met Sally* (1989).

Further adding to *Fever Pitch*'s numbers in the loss column, there isn't much in the way of subtext to bolster the weak-kneed plot. There are, however, some notions that almost work.

For example, there's the divorced couple among Ben's summer family who maintain a box-seat relationship; Lindsey's slightly askew, absurdly coiffed dad, hesitant to offer his approval of her new beau, and Ben's oddball gaggle of childhood pals who, similarly smitten by the Red Sox syndrome, are forever vying for that guest ticket. But the failure to follow through on these ideas, a process as important in storytelling as it is in baseball, limits the comic value in each case.

There's just one more criticism. Well, maybe just one more. Writers Babaloo Mandel and Lowell Ganz, known for much more creative efforts (*A League of Their Own*), and likewise les Freres Farrelly (*There's Something About Mary*), received an unexpected bonus when, during filming, the Beantown crew finally broke the aforementioned curse. But while managing to integrate the surprise into the script, the full magnitude of this magic doesn't completely make it to the screen. It almost does.

It could be there's another curse at work here. Purportedly based on the novel by Nick Hornby, *Fever Pitch* was originally about a British soccer fan's unbridled enthusiasm for the Arsenal team. As a result, the attribution to Mr. Hornby's book has a cadre of his devotees up in arms over the change in venue. Maybe it should have been horseshoes all along.

Fever Pitch, rated PG-13, is a 20th Century Fox release directed by Bobby Farrelly and Peter Farrelly and stars Drew Barrymore, Jimmy Fallon and Willie Garson. Running time: 101 minutes.

Browne

"Aspen Heir" is published by AuthorHouse Publishers.

For more information on Ms. Browne or to purchase a copy of "Aspen Heir" or any of her other books, please visit www.marlenebrowne.com.

Clarification

The April 7 article regarding Leah Jarvis should have noted that, during Senior Recognition Night at Westfield High School, over \$15,000 in scholarships and grants is distributed, not over \$1,500 as previously noted.

S. Plains & Fanwood Arts Assn. Sets Members Show

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains & Fanwood Arts Association's annual members show will be held from Monday, April 25, to Saturday, April 30, during library hours at the Scotch Plains Public Library, located at 1927 Bartle Avenue in Scotch Plains.

Joe Hulsen, a well-known local artist, will judge this year's exhibition. He works in a variety of techniques, ranging from wheels of an automotive, to scenes of nature.

Collages created by Mr. Hulsen were recently exhibited at Les Malamut Gallery in Union.

Presently, he is a board member at the Yard School of Art and the Westfield Art Association.

A special reception, during which visitors can meet the artists, will be held on April 30 at 11 a.m. An awards presentation will be held at noon.

For more information, please call Tom Yeager at (908) 322-5438.

LOCAL STARS



THOUGHT-PROVOKING ARTIST...Wardlaw-Hartridge art teacher Gale Goldman presents Craig Torpey, a senior at Scotch Plains, with a certificate naming him a Gold Key recipient from the Scholastic Art Awards of 2005 for his mixed media piece, "Flight."

Scotch Plains Teenager Captures Gold Key for Mixed Media Piece

SCOTCH PLAINS — Scotch Plains resident Craig Torpey, a senior at the Wardlaw-Hartridge School in Edison, has been notified that he won a Gold Key in the Region-at-Large competition of The Scholastic Art Awards of 2005.

His mixed media creation, "Flight," and the work of other Gold Key award recipients from around the country have been forwarded into the national level of judging.

Craig, who has attended Wardlaw-Hartridge since sixth grade, has studied under Wardlaw's Upper School art teacher Gale Goldman for four years of high school and was under the tutelage of middle school art teacher Tanda Tucker for his seventh and eighth grade art studies.

Ms. Goldman described Craig's award-winning piece as "cut paper in a series of cells which, tells the story of man's destruction of nature."

She added that Craig's strengths include "his intellect combined with his artistic skills."

"All of Craig's work is thought-provoking," noted Ms. Goldman. Panels of distinguished artists, writers and arts professionals will now make the final selections from the 2,000 art entries who have made the cut.

Fanwood Resident Cooks Up Her Way While in Australia

FANWOOD — Ariel Prasad of Fanwood, who has chosen to spend her summer in Australia, is representing Johnson & Wales University's Providence, R.I. campus in the third annual "Taste Down Under" recipe contest held at the school.

Ariel will prepare her "Triple Mascarpone Mousse" for a panel of judges at the end of this month. The Grand Prize in all categories is a culinary tour of Australia — a combination of sightseeing, sampling Australian produce and wine, and working with Australian chefs in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory.

The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Prasad, Ariel is a junior studying baking and pastry arts. She attended The Purnell School, where she worked in the school kitchen.

Other experience includes working in the three-star The Stage House in Scotch Plains and the Johnson & Wales-owned Johansson's in Providence.

Ariel said, "I have always wanted to take on the challenge of a baking competition, and Australia happens to be a place I have always wanted to see. The main ingredient — wattleseed — was a bit of a challenge; I had never come in contact with it before."

She added, "During the introduction to the contest, I had a chance to (sample its) coffee, nutty flavor. I thought this special ingredient would go great in a mascarpone-based mousse."

After graduation, Ariel plans to "pursue a career where I can create new desserts with new textures and tastes."

Competition finalists will gather in Miami, Fla. for the Grand Final Cook Off on Saturday, April 30. The Taste Down Under Awards Dinner will take place at the Conrad Hotel that night; there will be a special musical appearance during the dinner by Colin Hay, former lead singer of Aussie band, Men at Work.

The Taste Down Under Culinary Competition and its related events promote Australian cuisine and culture in America. Now in its third year, the competition was open to Johnson & Wales students, faculty and alumni.

Participants were required to submit an original recipe using Australian boneless leg of lamb; wattleseed, an indigenous Australian spice; or one of three featured seafoods: Western Australian rock lobster, royal Tasmanian salmon, and Western Australian tiger prawns.

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