



Arts, Entertainment and Education



Mountainside Swim Coach Returns from Year in Japan

By LINDA CONDRILLO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

MOUNTAINSIDE - Chrissy Milkosky, head coach for the Mountainside Swim Team is back. After graduating from Williams College last May, Miss Milkosky resumed her coaching position for the Mountainside Community Pool, and, like other recent college grads, started looking for a job. What ensued was an opportunity of a lifetime for the Cranford resident who had never traveled outside of the continental United States.

Since last August, Miss Milkosky has spent nearly a year at the American School in Japan (ASIJ) as Aquatics Coordinator/Phys Ed Swim Instructor, coaching and giving swim lessons to the K-12 School of roughly 1,000 students, and will be returning to Tokyo at the end of the month for another school year.

In a recent poolside interview, Chrissy told the *Westfield Leader* and *The Times* that after attending the New England Small College Athletic Conference coaching seminar during her senior year at Williams, she felt certain she was destined for a career in coaching.

It was the first time N.E.S.C.A. hosted a women's coaching symposium, largely necessitated by the disproportionate number of women coaches to the huge rise in women's athletics. Sponsored by the NCAA and held at Tufts University, the three-day conference featured top women involved in coaching at the college level and discussed issues facing female coaches today. Miss Milkosky noted, "Attending the symposium really helped solidify my desire to pursue a career in coaching," but added, "that was just the beginning of my job search."

She immediately started network-

ing with personal contacts, which included previous coaches, friends of people in the business and searched the Internet in pursuit of a permanent position. Soon after, a call came into the swim coach at Williams College from the Headmaster's wife, Mrs. Barbara Carr at the American School in Japan, who just happened to have grown up in Williamstown, Massachusetts - the home of Chrissy's alma mater.

Coincidentally, the Headmaster's wife was also a personal friend of Chrissy's college swim coach. Her name was passed along to Mrs. Carr, and a job offer soon followed. "The thought of an international position never crossed my mind," said Miss Milkosky. She sought the advice of her friends and family and that of Jim Wood from the Berkeley Aquatic Club where she "grew up swimming and competing."

Along with Chrissy's father, Mr. Wood was instrumental in the decision making, who simply said, "Go for it!" A telephone interview was held with Headmaster Tim Carr at the A.S.I.J., but things were not definite until she received a call at the Community Pool from the school, asking, "How's the passport coming along?" An ecstatic Chrissy was soon on an airplane headed half way around the world.

Chrissy's experience in Tokyo has been awesome. In addition to putting in long days teaching water polo, basic swim instruction and lifeguarding, after school she doubled as the swim coach, competing against other international and military based American Schools. Miss Milkosky pointed out most students are children of parents of international workers assigned in Tokyo on business. When asked how the swim team did, she was pleased to report that the girls high school team was undefeated and won the championship, and the boys team placed third. Three records were

broken on the girl's side in the 50-meter freestyle (28:65); 100-meter freestyle (101:02) and 200-meter back stroke (2:38).

Living abroad does have its challenges, Chrissy notes. "There was real culture shock at first" and "I wasn't used to earthquake drills." Miss Milkosky lived in an apartment with another teacher and commuted by bicycle, even in inclement weather, to her school, five minutes away. She noted that everyone uses public transportation in Tokyo, which is "incredibly clean and safe."

She very much enjoyed eating sashimi, ramen and her favorite—green tea, and had no problem making friends with the other interns at school. She enjoyed the opportunity to travel on school sponsored faculty trips, and even went to a sumo-wrestling match. Her many excursions included Thailand, Cambodia and Laos with other interns.

Thankfully no one from the school perished in the tsunami in Thailand, a popular place for the international students to vacation. The American School in Japan did a tremendous fund-raising effort and donated over \$30,000 to a school that was destroyed in Sri Lanka.

Miss Milkosky said, "People in Asia are very respectful of other people and other traditions. They are very friendly and are genuinely interested in you." She also said that most Asian people are very reserved, mostly dressing alike so no one stands out, and then added that "anywhere we went, we were always, always, always, the loudest." Miss Milkosky also pointed out that everyone in a group society contributes, attributing this to how clean and orderly everything is and then remarked that no one litters in Japan; respect for everything is just part of the culture. Lesson learned.



SWIMMING IN SUCCESS...Chrissy Milkosky, head coach for the Mountainside Swim Team, recently returned after a year in Japan where she participated at the American School in Japan (ASIJ) as Aquatics Coordinator/Phys Ed Swim Instructor. In the picture she is near the shrine at Mount Takao in West Tokyo.



GETTING CHOKED UP...Kean University's Production of *Owed To My First Love* features the story of would-be actor Nick Farco (left), in his role as waiter, saving the life a Hollywood producer and director- Allen Rickman (right). In gratitude, the casting director gives Mr. Farco's character his 'big break,' acting in a kid's show.

Take the Stage

With Susan M. Dougherty



Kean University: Ode To Inaugural Season Opener

By SUSAN M. DOUGHERTY
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

UNION -- When Pinocchio sings, "it's an actor's life for me," does he really know what he's getting into?

In *Owed to My First Love* by Susan Barsky, the main character John (Nick Farco), like that long nosed puppet, learns that the world of the professional theater is not always as glamorous as it seems.

The audience gets to experience the character's odyssey to become a professional actor -- the thrill of auditioning, the agony of rejection and the turmoil of introspection and self-doubt that come from baring one's soul for a role. Despite hardships, John pursues his passion, or first love of the theater.

Through this two-act play, the winner of Premiere Stages Play Festival at Kean University, comic moments are stereotypical in nature, but still ring true: the parents of the actor lament the fact that he is not going to law school, the struggling actor can only afford a low-ceiling cramped apartment, his waiter job pays the bills and an unplanned cameo in a porn video comes back to haunt him.

Even more important, we see how an unassuming, naïve guy --with or without talent --can transform into a phony, self-absorbed Hollywood type star he instinctively dislikes.

Reminiscent of Zach's unseen voice in *A Chorus Line* who drones "Thank you" as a signal of the vaudevillian hook, a booming voice announces doom to the spotlighted actor who keeps bleating out his Shakespearean lines, ignoring the falling axe.

"It's tough being judged on a two-minute performance," John moans. Anyone who has auditioned even for a local production recognizes that gut wrenching dismissive rejection.

What makes a person walk away from pursuing a law degree to enter a profession where an eggshell ego can be cracked by one director's opinion on any given day?

Why would a person with a healthy self-image go through humiliation and destructive scrutiny for a demeaning "acting" job?

These and dozens of other actor/

stage related questions are explored without giving definitive answers. All wanna-be stars need to pencil in those circles for themselves.

Playwright Barsky's ensemble piece is held together with a giant tube zed of crazy glue talent.

Along with struggling actor John (who, by the way is the only one in the cast not an equity actor but you wouldn't know it based on his stellar talent) are the concentric rings of people in his life: Allen Lewis Rickman, Andrea Bianchi, Vicki Tripodo, Paul Whelihan, Keith Arthur Bolden and Christine Albright. Each of them slips into multiple roles of varying ages and ethnic backgrounds as easily as donning well-worn slippers.

Outstanding characterizations include Vicki Tripodo's gum-cracking office gal Friday at the acting school singing "Broadway Baby" under her breath. When she greets an over the top self-indulgent Truman Capote-esque actor, their air kisses and affected body language look all too familiar.

Keith Arthur Bolden is sympathetic as Alex, and great as a fellow auditioner too cool to study his lines, become familiar with the play, or even give John an acting tip.

It seems that the acting world is all about who you know, who has seen your work, who has worked with you and who knows that you have the talent to do the show. Being prepared as well as lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time doesn't hurt either.

John Wooten, Producing Artistic Director, a professional playwright himself, knows how to get the right people in this impressive right theater. He has assembled a cast that creates synergy on a bare yet starkly beautiful stage and can pull out weird yet credible characters from their creative imaginations.

Welcome to the area, Premiere Stages, the professional Actors' Equity Association (AEA) Theater program at Kean University.

If their first offering of the 2005 season, *Owed to My First Love*, is any indication of the caliber of staging, lighting, sound, talent and direction in the season to follow, there will be standing room only. Get a subscription now.

Get Outta' The House

By CAROL DAVIS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Here is a listing of totally free events for you to enjoy in the upcoming weeks...

The World of ElectroEtch, presented by the Printmaking Council of New Jersey in Somerville, will run through October 10. This international exhibition of prints made by a non-toxic printmaking method developed in New Jersey includes works by artists using the method, who are master printers, art professors, students, and independent artists from all over the world. The reception will take place on Saturday, September 10th from 2 - 4 p.m. Call (908) 725-2110 or visit: for more information.

For a more "modern" art exhibit see **Inked!** at the Shore Institute of the Contemporary Arts in Long Branch. This exhibition of artists whose works have been influenced by tattoo culture runs through August 20. The intention of **Inked!** is to "provoke a dialogue on how this pervasive underground subculture has infiltrated the everyday and influenced artistic production in surprising, inventive, and remarkable ways." For directions or information call (732) 263-1121 or log onto: www.sica.org.

The Berkeley Heights Summer



Anna Tsubaki- INKED

Concert Series in Memorial Park at Park and Plainfield Avenues will present **The Kootz** (Rock 'n Roll with fiber) on Wednesday, August 17, from 7:30-9 p.m. Food vendors will be on site. In case of rain, the concert will be moved indoors or postponed. Call (908) 464-0625 after 4 p.m. for location information, or (908) 464-0550 prior to that date. Learn more about them at: <http://www.thekeotz.com>

Elton John and Tim Rice's **AIDA** will be at West Orange's Oskar Schindler Center for the Performing Arts through this weekend only. The musical tells the story of the love between an enslaved princess and a soldier that condemns them to, well, death. The singing, dancing, and staging are sure to please a multi-cultural audience. It's outdoors, so don't forget chairs or blankets. For theater information call (973) 325-0795 or visit: www.theaterunderthestars.org

The Fabulous Greaseband will be at the **Union County Summer Arts Festival** at Echo Lake Park in Mountainside on Wednesday, August 17, performing dance music spanning four decades, from the 50's through the 80's. The show starts at 7:30 p.m. Call (908) 527-4900 or visit: www.ucnj.org except for concert day rain information, when you must call the 24-hr. hotline at (908) 352-8410 after 3 p.m. There are refreshment stands on site.

NJIO Featured in NJN Documentary Film

AREA - The New Jersey Intergenerational Orchestra (NJIO) is featured in a documentary film entitled: **The Open Road: America Looks at Aging**, which is scheduled to air on New Jersey Network between August 14 and August 25. Check local listings or <http://www.njn.net> for specific times in your viewing area.

The film, produced by Emmy award-winning filmmaker Nina Gilden Seavey of the Documentary Center at George Washington University, examines the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for individuals and society, as 77 million Baby Boomers near retirement age. NJIO is featured for its unique intergenerational approach of "Bridging the Generations Through Music."

"NJIO is honored to be featured in this film," said Alan Campell, president, NJIO Board of Trustees. "The focus on aging and how to remain vital in one's senior years is essential to our mission of 'Bridging the Generations Through Music' by bringing together musicians of different ages and abilities."

The Open Road: America Looks at Aging shows the curves, straight-aways, and unexpected turns that lie ahead as Baby Boomers - the generation that came of age in the 60s - turn 60. More information on the film can be found at www.theopenroadfilm.com.

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