

Town Book Store Begins New Chapter in Westfield

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

WESTFIELD — The coming New Year will bring positive changes to one of Westfield's oldest and most beloved businesses: The Town Book Store.

After 72 years at its original location at 255 East Broad Street, The Town Book Store will be moving across the street to 270 East Broad Street, and into the building that housed the town's first library.

A new location isn't the only change for The Town Book Store. With the move comes new ownership. Anne Woodward Laird, a lifelong Westfield resident and a Town Book Store employee for six years, has purchased the business from Grace Roth. In doing so, Mrs. Laird becomes the sixth owner in the store's history.



Michael Pollack for The Westfield Leader Times
BOOK IT... After 72 years at its original location, The Town Book Store will move across the street to 270 East Broad Street, and into the building that housed the town's first library.

This new chapter in The Town Book Store's life begins on January 6, 2007. Until then, The Town Book Store will be fully operational at its present location and ready to assist customers, both new and established, with all of their holiday shopping needs.

One of the most interesting aspects of The Town Book Store's relocation is that its new site was once a "Carnegie Library," one of the almost 3,000 libraries worldwide, whose start up funding was donated by business tycoon Andrew Carnegie between the years 1881 and 1917.

Westfield's library was built in 1906. The Town Book Store will be in a 1970s addition, sharing space with Betty Gallagher Antiques and Felice Dress Shop.

"The building is a beautiful spot that is very appropriate for a book store," explained Mrs. Laird, who credits Felice Cohen for making the relocation to 270 East Broad Street possible.

"Her husband was very encouraging of small businesses," Mrs. Laird said.

"It is a wonderful site and highly appropriate for Westfield to have the store in this structure," commented Westfield resident and historian Barbara Burton, who recently completed

extensive research on New Jersey's Carnegie libraries.

"We believe Westfield needs a book store," said Mrs. Roth, who owned The Town Book Store for 10 years. She added that it is inconceivable that a community as cultured as Westfield should be without one.

Most Town Book Store customers echo her sentiment. "I was so happy to hear that the store would live on. Personally, I consider it a measure of the intellectual life of a town if it can support a bookstore and I would be

crushed to think that Westfield couldn't," one longtime customer recently told Mrs. Laird.

While the new Town Book Store will boast a new look—for example, there will be leather seating for browsers and a reading table for children—the convenience and personal attention of a down town book store will multiply.

Mrs. Laird plans to install a new computer system that will provide instant information about any book, and whether or not it is in stock.

"We plan to continue the same individualized service that sets us apart, like special orders, most of which can be filled within a day or two, free used and out-of-print book searches, discounts for book clubs, gift wrapping and shipping, and author signings that have been a mainstay of the store for years," says Mrs. Laird.

"Although The Town Book Store is going through many changes, offering recommendations and personally assisting customers in finding just what they are looking for will remain our top priority," continued Mrs. Laird.

Transfer of inventory to the new location will begin shortly after Christmas and will be completed in time for the January 6, 2007 grand opening. To celebrate the store's new location, a number of special events, including prize raffles, are being planned.

For store hours, directions or to check availability of any book title, contact The Town Book Store at (908) 233-3535 or visit their website at townbookstore.com.



MAESTRO...Thomas Wilkins, music director of the Omaha Symphony and resident conductor of the Detroit Symphony, conducted the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra as the ensemble supported Canadian Brass at NJPAC on December 9.

Canadian Brass Lights Up Performing Arts Center

By VICTORIA McCABE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — Perhaps the best thing ever to come out of Canada, the Canadian Brass quintet has captivated the music world for decades.

In its 36-year history, the ensemble has wowed worldwide audiences and shared stages with the likes of John Williams and the Boston Pops.

On December 9, the Brass wowed a captivated audience at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) in Newark with their excellent Christmas program, helped by the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO) and the NJSO's Community Chorus.

The NJSO opened the concert with a thrilling arrangement of "Carol of the Bells" that morphed into "We Three Kings," "Greensleeves," "Silent Night" and "Joy to the World" before its rousing conclusion. As NJPAC filled with carols, a sort of electricity shot through the hall — this was a rare opportunity to hear first-rate musicians perform beloved Christmas music.

Guest conductor Thomas Wilkins was an immediate presence; his vigorous conducting style energized the whole orchestra.

"Wow," he turned to the audience after the first piece of the night. "You can just tell from those opening notes that we're in the season."

The Omaha Symphony music director and Detroit Symphony resident conductor's remarks set the stage for Canadian Brass' grand entrance from the back of the hall, their sound slowly growing as they processed up to the stage.

Original Canadian Brass members Eugene Watts, trombone, and Chuck Daellenbach, tuba, acted as emcees for the night, offering both insight and offbeat remarks in between pieces.

Before J.S. Bach's Fugue in G minor, Daellenbach reflected, "I think its depicting Christmas morning."

No stranger to Canadian Brass or the NJSO, Wilkins conducted the two groups' joint performance at NJPAC last December. "I'm actually getting sick of these guys," he said with a smile.

The joke was lost on no one; Wilkins was clearly having a ball.

He was a perfect liaison between the Canadian Brass and the orchestra; he let the seasoned brass quintet set its pace, and he skillfully conveyed tempo and dynamic changes to the orchestra, keeping all the musicians in step with each other. His animated conducting style sparked the NJSO, and his acute sense of the quintet's motion allowed the Brass to take liberties with the music's direction without losing orchestral cohesion.

During a *Farrago of British Folk Songs*, a medley arranged by Robert Farnon, each ensemble's skill fueled the other. Canadian Brass' Bernhard Scully delivered an exquisite French horn solo on "O Danny Boy," and a grandiose full orchestra climax answered him, a wash of strings carrying the emotional torch. Later in the piece, a lively solo from the NJSO concertmaster ushered in a stately segment of the work.

Trumpet players Josef Burgstaller and Jeroen Berwaerts were excellent; Burgstaller's turns on the piccolo trumpet were most impressive.

The best moment of the concert was "White Christmas."

"I know it's a little early in the evening for singing," Watts told the audience, "but close your eyes and imagine Christmas, and just sing the song to yourself."

The effect was actually chilling; a packed house murmured the "White Christmas" melody, and a hushed whisper filled the hall, floating over the delicate instrumental arrangement.

For the first half of the program's closer, Daellenbach asked Wilkins to step down from the podium and provide the sleigh bells for "Frosty the

Snowman."

"We had a deal — bells or tuba — but he got to the tuba first," Wilkins joked as he took the bells and then called on the oboist for a concert 'A' pitch to "tune" the bells.

Music nerds might have called that moment the cleverest gag of the night, but Daellenbach quickly provided additional comedic fodder. As the Brass played the popular "Frosty" tune, he began to "melt," sinking lower and lower until he was curled up in a fetal position, playing his instrument (flawlessly, one might add) as his band mates chanted, "This is it, Frosty!"

Ensuing cheers prompted a curtain call from the Brass before intermission.

The NJSO opened the second half of the program alone, gliding through an expansive arrangement of "Sleigh Ride." Musicians of this caliber could snooze their way through Christmas tunes, but they infused wonderful spirit into the music, no doubt coming off of Wilkins' infectious delight. As the first-chair trumpet whinnied like a horse, it was impossible not to feel how much fun the musicians were having.

The Community Chorus joined the two instrumental ensembles on stage, beginning their portion of the set with "Do You Hear What I Hear?" The sound balance was at times regrettable; the full orchestra overpowered the singers during *piano* passages. But soaring female lines buoyed the vocal melody, and the final cadence was lush and powerful.

Introducing what would become the set's centerpiece, Daellenbach spoke of criticism the group has received for "subliminal advertising" within "The 12 Days of Christmas."

"We disagree," he told the audience. "If there was any advertising, we wish it were a bit more obvious."

A minute later, the musicians had the entire audience laughing as the choir sang, "On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me some brass music on a CD."

For every subsequent day of Christmas, the choir sang about what "the CD played for me," and the Brass would play an interlude of that piece. In the 11 days, the musicians covered everything from J.S. Bach to Purcell to "Rossini's famous tune" to "heroic tunes by Wagner" to Gershwin, with delightful musical snippets punctuating the choir's a cappella story.

The choir's phrases were not always crisp as they enumerated all the different pieces that the CD played each day; the foreign lyrics at times seemed cumbersome for the singers. Nonetheless, the ambitious reinvention of the Christmas song was highly entertaining.

"I don't know if the program tells you that you're supposed to sing with us," Watts said before the Brass performed their famous rendition of "The Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah*. "We would have told you to practice first."

But it would have been difficult for any audience members wishing to take the trombonist up on the singing challenge — the impact of the Canadian Brass, full orchestra and choir was tremendous. Again, the choir was a bit muffled at times, so one had to strain to hear the intricate vocal lines. But the power of the piece's finale is undeniable, and once the choir began singing at full volume, the effect was amazing.

Adding to the ambience, Prudential Hall looked beautiful — lighted Christmas trees, wreaths, poinsettias and garlands adorned the sides and back of the stage, and light beams cast snowflakes onto the stage walls.

"I want to congratulate all of you in the audience," Wilkins said. "Out of all the things you could be doing right now, you thought, 'I'm going to let my New Jersey Symphony wash us with sound.'"

No one in the audience could have regretted their choice — the Canadian Brass, supported by the NJSO, washed everyone in Christmas spirit.

HOME & GARDEN TRENDS



The Holidays, Naturally

By CHRISTIE STORMS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

There's nothing quite like having the scent of fragrantly fresh evergreen and holiday florals gently wafting through your home this time of year. There's also nothing quite like repeatedly finding dry needles and petals shed all over the mantel, the table, the floor, the dog...

And while you can't completely eliminate the wilting and/or drying-out process that may plague your natural decorations, you can learn the best way to care for these items to keep it to a minimum. Knowing what the plants' needs are and their typical life spans may also help you time your purchases so that everything is looking its best on the actual holiday itself or for any entertaining you might have planned.

According to Concetta Capone, owner of McEwen Flowers and Gifts in Westfield, the temperature inside your house can greatly affect how well holiday plants thrive.

She said poinsettias, for example, don't do well when the indoor climate fluctuates between extremes of warm and cool temperatures daily.

Ken Einhorn, owner of Einhorn's Florist in Scotch Plains, said temperatures between 65 and 70 degrees during the day are ideal, with only a slightly cooler 60 to 65 degrees at night.

"Cooler nighttime temperatures help delay bud drop and maintain the bright color of the flower," he said. He added that they should be kept away from drafty doors.

Ms. Capone also cautioned that while poinsettias like bright light, they should avoid "baking" in the sun.

Both florists emphasized keeping the soil evenly moist. Ms. Capone said they don't do well with dry soil, but they won't thrive if it's a mud-like consistency either.

Mr. Einhorn recommended watering only when the soil surface feels dry to the touch to avoid making it too soggy.

Regarding fresh evergreens, there are many different varieties available. And while each has its own characteristics, the care involved is pretty much universally the same.

If it's a bold scent you're seeking, Ms. Capone said balsam tops the list. However, it doesn't last as long as some of its less fragrant counterparts. She suggested cedar as comparable and longer lasting.

Visually, she described the cedar as being flat, white pine providing a fluffier look, noble fir for a gray-

green color, and desert juniper as having its own blue-gray berries.

Mr. Einhorn suggested, "Port Orford Cedar is a really nice dark emerald green, almost like arbutivates, and is really fragrant."

He said a lot of people don't like the smell of juniper because it's very strong.

Ms. Capone described it as similar to eucalyptus fragrance in that people usually end up either loving it or hating it.

According to Mr. Einhorn, it can be difficult to predict how long cut evergreens will last.

"Most of the greens come from Oregon," he said. "But even our wholesalers have no idea when they were cut and processed by the farms out there. So some may just dry slowly and not shed, and others can shed by the end of the first week."

For extended life, he suggested placing sprigs in "Oasis" floral foam that can be watered. This works especially well for centerpiece or mantel arrangements.

His other solution was to plan to replace evergreen swags or banister garlands that were displayed early in the holiday season with another fresh batch in mid-December.

"A typical cedar mixed garland is only about \$1.50 a yard," he said, citing that it's pretty economical to change them as needed.

Keeping indoor temperatures on the cooler side can also help slow the drying and shedding process.

Ms. Capone reported that holly probably has the shortest life span once indoors. She recommended purchasing it only a few days before Christmas or your holiday event.

For tabletop and mini-Christmas trees, Mr. Einhorn said boxwoods work well and last a very long time.

"Plus they can be decorated and lit up," he said. "You can stick them in your sink to water them, and most people end up having to throw them away before they die."

He also adds roses, Gerber daisies, amaryllis, and tulips imported from Holland to his holiday arrangements. He recommends replacing cut flowers like these every 10 to 12 days.

Ms. Capone additionally suggested flowering cyclamen plants, which are long lasting and available in shades of red, white, and pink at holiday time.

Do you have a home or garden question or topic you'd like to see covered in this column? Send your inquiries to cstorms@goleader.com.

POPCORN™

Apocalpyto No Be-all End-all



By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
2 & 1/2 popcorns

It's the decline of Mayan civilization according to Mel, circa 1517. Introduce a haunting forest inhabited with primeval hunters. Have them attacked by their civilized counterparts. Staple together what seems like an endless series of chase scenes, and please, don't spare the rod, as well as the knives, the whips, the spears, etc. There you have *Apocalpyto*.

Oh, and just to add to the intended profundity and mystique, have the impressive cast of mostly unknowns speak only Yucatec. Moviegoers who've forgotten most of their high school Mayan will appreciate the English subtitles.

Though repeatedly tripping on its own sanctimony, this is a painstaking bit of conjecture. There's no denying the attraction.

It's big time, no-expenses-spared filmmaking of the Cecil B. DeMille sort, replete with sweeping panoramas and pretentious postulations to match. And if the facts are obscured in the torrent of cataclysms, well, it's for the greater good. Or so the auteur would have us believe.

For all its engaging Sturm und Drang, pageantry and brutal tension, it comes to mind that maybe history isn't best served by the sort of violent sensationalism in which Mr. Gibson trades. Doubtless, the dialectic gets lost somewhere in the aberrational murk that exists between Hollywoodization and the filmmaker's rather dark idea of what makes the world go round.

Apologists for the director's often gratuitous piercing into the past could very well opine that this is still preferable to the cookie cutter chronicles Tinsel Town pumped out like sausages in the 1930s and 40s. The story was always the same. Only the characters and era changed.

By example, *Scorsese (Gangs of New York, 2002)* and *Oliver Stone (Alexander, 2004)* would agree. Everyone's doing it, although the severity of these nouvelle truths varies. Which actually tells us more about our own times than the era purportedly under examination.

That said, what really ropes us into the deal remains unchanged throughout the ages. And that's the personalization of the epoch via an empathic central character.

In this respect, *Apocalpyto* delivers. Rudy Youngblood as Jaguar Paw, husband, father and son of the tribe's wise leader (Morris Birdyellowhead), serendipitously gifts the tale with that special credibility only a talented newcomer can provide.

Representative of the human spirit we root for in all our heroes, Jaguar Paw is the Mayan answer to the com-

mon man. As such, he is interested first and foremost in his family's welfare, and then the general well being of his group. And as a war-torn orphan foretells early in the incursion, woe to whoever causes his rise to uncommon circumstances.

Thus, if you've read your *Drama #101*, it comes as no surprise when a platoon of bad guys led by Zero Wolfe (Raoul Trujillo) invades the jungle Eden and takes everyone captive. You see, things aren't going all that well back in the capital.

Human sacrifices are needed to appease a populace driven crazy by crop failure. No sense in telling the madding crowd, "Hey, but we're really ahead in our knowledge of arithmetic."

Setting up the subtext to which the camera will alternately switch, before being captured Jaguar Paw safely ensconces his equally heroic, pregnant wife (Dalia Hernandez) and brave little son in a deep pit. Think it'll rain?

But on with the death march, wherein Mr. Gibson repeatedly illustrates man's inhumanity to man in the charming manner that has won him signature fame. The agony is curiously relentless. Even when they reach their cosmopolitan destination, where it's thought some comparative sociology might at least give us a brief respite, alas the worst is yet to come.

Oh sure, there are pyramids a plenty. Unfortunately, they're being used to roll heads down to a merciless mob. Let's hear it for culture.

Seeing man's little head start on the French Revolution, Jaguar Paw signals his remaining buddies with a 'Let's get out of here' look. Shamelessly on cue, Mother Nature helps with a superstition-feeding phenomenon, just like she has in any number of Tarzan movies. Our man high-tails it for the woods, his captors in angry pursuit.

It's the chase, part two, with Mr. Paw luring the competition back to his home court. Here, he can even fashion a poison dart gun from local resources. Cool!

Of course, by now, the amount of blood that's seeped into the earth should have alleviated any drought. No matter, we're too pooped to tell. So, aside from a majestic deus ex machina appearing in just the nick of time, it's just more pain and suffering until, at long last, *Apocalpyto's* history through torture runs out of red dye #3.

Apocalpyto, rated R, is a Walt Disney Pictures release directed by Mel Gibson and stars Rudy Youngblood, Dalia Hernandez and Raoul Trujillo. Running time: 139 minutes



HAPPY FEET...WYACT musical theatre students dance in class. From left to right are: Ellie Tanji, Jeremy Busch, Katy Cockrell, Sarah Beese, Olivia Kenwell and Jennifer Kujawski. George Franco accompanies them on the piano. See pg. 22 for release.

WESTFIELD FOOD 4 THOUGHT



By JAYNE SALOMON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

'Tis the season for cold and shopping, along with presents, crowds and decorations. Though the weather may be bone chilling, our hearts are filled with warmth, as we feel more charitable and prone to giving and displaying our generosity in many ways.

Whether it be a small donation at the checkout counter of the supermarket or volunteering to gift wrap, most of us feel more gratitude at this time of the year. Our spirits are lifted and our hearts and wallets are open as we joyously buy gifts for all those on our gift lists while not forgetting those less fortunate.

It is a fun time of the year for children and adults alike. Downtown Westfield gets into the spirit with seasonal decorations adorning the lampposts and the shop windows.

This Saturday, between 2 and 5 p.m., enjoy the music of The Watson Highlanders Bagpipe Band as they perform throughout town. Every evening during the eight nights of Chanukah, Temple Emanu-El lights the menorah on its front lawn at 5:45 p.m.

Who doesn't look forward to the gift giving, the celebrations, the vacations and, of course, the wonderful parties? From office parties to holiday cocktail parties to family dinners, this is the time of the year for gala get-togethers, so party hardy with these appetizers and cocktails.



Coconut Chicken Skewers

Coconut Chicken Skewers

INGREDIENTS

4 boneless skinless chicken breasts (cut lengthwise into strips)
1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup orange juice
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon ginger powder
3 tablespoons soy sauce
1 cup shredded coconut
10 wooden skewers

PROCEDURE

In a large bowl, marinate the chicken for at least one hour in the honey, orange juice, garlic, ginger, soy sauce and coconut. Toss to coat. Thread the chicken on the skewers and broil at 400 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes turning once or place on barbecue at medium heat for approximately 10 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Serve warm.

Apple Parmesan Toasts

INGREDIENTS

1 loaf narrow Italian, French or garlic bread
1 Red Delicious apple

Olive oil
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

PROCEDURE

Slice the bread into thin slices. Brush each slice with olive oil. Place a thin slice of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese on each slice and top with a thin slice of apple with the peel. Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 10 minutes or until the apple is slightly browned.

Eggplant Pancakes

INGREDIENTS

1 medium eggplant (peeled and cut into 1 inch chunks)
2 eggs
3/4 cup flour
1 medium onion
2 medium to large baking potatoes (peeled and cut into chunks)
2 tablespoons creamy horseradish sauce
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
Vegetable oil for frying

DIP

4 tablespoons sour cream
2 tablespoons creamy horseradish sauce

PROCEDURE

In a blender or food processor, put about a third of the eggplant and potatoes, 1 egg, half the onion and puree. Gradually add some of the flour. Add the horseradish sauce, salt and pepper. Continue adding all the ingredients, including the second egg until all are used and the mixture is thoroughly pureed. In a large skillet, heat the vegetable oil and drop mixture by teaspoons into the hot skillet. Place as many in the pan as possible and brown on each side. Drain on paper towels and repeat until all the batter is used. Makes about 30 miniature pancakes.

Champagne Cocktail

INGREDIENTS

1 bottle Champagne
3 to 4 shots Chambord liqueur
Lime slice for decoration



Holiday Champagne Cocktail

PROCEDURE

Pour Champagne into four Champagne glasses. Add 1/2 to 3/4 of a shot of Chambord liqueur (depending upon the size of the champagne glass and the redness desired). Garnish each with a slice of lime by peeling a lime, slicing a portion of the rind into 1/2 inch strips and wrapping each strip around a straw for a few minutes until cured.