



LITERARY BUNCH...At the Junior League of Elizabeth-Plainfield (JLEP) seventh annual Literary Luncheon (LL) on April 28 at the Grand Summit Hotel in Summit are, from left to right, Westfield's J. Michele Moore of Westfield, LL assistant; chairman and author Kevin Baker, author Hilma Wolitzer, author Roni Schotter, author Diane Meier Delaney, LL Master of Ceremonies Frank Delaney and Cyrene Foltz of Westfield, LL chairwoman.

JLEP Holds Seventh Annual Literary Lunch in Summit

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

SUMMIT – The Junior League of Elizabeth-Plainfield (JLEP) held its seventh annual Literary Luncheon on April 28 at the Grand Summit Hotel in Summit. Frank Delaney, best-selling author of "Ireland, A Novel," was Master of Ceremonies. Featured author-speakers were authors Kevin Baker, Diane Meier Delaney, Roni Schotter and Hilma Wolitzer.

Mr. Delaney was born in Tipperary, Ireland where he worked in broadcasting in both radio and television. Eventually, he moved to London, where he focused on arts broadcasting, again in both radio and television. He is the author of more than 15 books, the most recent of which is "Ireland, A Novel," an epic story of the history of a people and their land. It was published in the United States in 2004.

His wife, Diane Meier Delaney, joined Mr. Delaney at the luncheon. Mrs. Delaney owns her own marketing agency in New York City, and counts DeBeers, Elizabeth Arden, Neiman Marcus and Maximilian Furs among her clients.

At the luncheon, she signed copies of her book, "The New American Wedding." The book is unique in that it allows the reader to plan a wedding uniquely suited to his or her style.

Columnist and novelist Kevin Baker was born in New Jersey and grew up in Massachusetts. He is the author of the novel, "Sometimes You See It Coming," which is loosely based on the life of Ty Cobb.

Mr. Baker has also authored a trilogy of novels, which is collectively titled "Baker's New York, City of Fire Trilogy." The final volume of the trilogy, "Strivers Row," was published in February 2006.

In addition to writing novels, Mr. Baker writes a monthly column for *American Heritage* magazine and has been published in many additional magazines, as well as newspapers.

Roni Schotter is the award-winning children's author of "Nothing Ever Happens on 90th Street," "F is for Freedom," and "Hanukkah!" Her first book was the young adult novel, "A Matter of Time," which was made into an after-school special by ABC.

Elizabeth Strout, author of "Amy and Isabelle," and "Abide with Me: A Novel," was also scheduled to appear at the luncheon but had to cancel due to illness. Hilma Wolitzer, author of "The Doctor's Daughter" and "Hearts," took her place. Ms. Wolitzer is the recipient of Guggenheim and National Education Association (NEA) fellowships, and an Award in Literature from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

JLEP partners with several community-based social service organizations to bring assistance to those in need. The proceeds of the luncheon will be used to support JLEP's community involvement, with a special focus on "Families in Crises," according to Teri Di Francesco, JLEP president.

Among those receiving JLEP grants in 2005-2006 are the YWCA of Eastern Union County, Central Jersey Legal Services, Contact We Care and Kidz Pax.

Founded in the early 1920's as two separate entities, the present day Junior League was formed in 1976 when the Junior League of Elizabeth and Cranford merged with the Junior League of Plainfield to become the Junior League of Elizabeth-Plainfield.

For additional information about the JLEP, call (908) 709-1170 or log onto www.jlep.org.

Arts & Entertainment

'Down Over Normandy' A Gift to Author's Family

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

WESTFIELD — Author Susan Lorentzen of Westfield never imagined that she would publish a book, but this month, 500 copies of the first printing of "Down Over Normandy" will hit the bookstores. Co-authored by Denis Ledoux of Soleil Lifestory in Maine, the book chronicles the short life of Ms. Lorentzen's paternal uncle, John W. Myrretus, who was born on July 25, 1918, and lived until he was gunned down in WWII on June 25, 1944, just one month shy of his 26th birthday.

The story begins on that tragic day, when the Lieutenant's B-17, *Slick Chick*, was on a mission with a crew of eight over France. Attacked by German forces, his entire crew was able to bail out, but this brave soldier remained with his plane until the end.

All of the crew, with the exception of the lieutenant and his co-captain, landed safely. They became POW's, but all returned home when the war ended. Although the co-captain bailed right after the rest of the crew, he was too close to the airplane to survive.

Impetus for penning this family story came to Ms. Lorentzen after the death of her father, her uncle's brother, the youngest and the last surviving member of that generation. She was cleaning up the remaining papers from her dad's estate, and came across documents her father had saved from the time the family was notified via telegram that their boy was MIA.

His parents had hoped that their son would be found alive, but when the year was over, he was officially declared dead. Ms. Lorentzen learned about the "green sedan that drove up

to the house," making the official declaration to the family. More than three years later, the body, which had been buried by the French people in the area shortly after the crash, was recovered. This brave young soldier now rests in the National Cemetery in Beverly.

The story then goes on to follow the course of his life, from his early days growing up in Collingswood, through his youth and into the beginning of his career at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

From Ms. Lorentzen's days as an investment banker on Wall Street, through motherhood, sorting through all of the letters, papers, and photographs that she never knew existed was a task for which she was not fully prepared.

"I woke up early one morning and could not go back to sleep," she said.

"I spread out all the memorabilia on the dining room table. That was the beginning."

Ms. Lorentzen found Mr. Ledoux in an internet query, and decided that with his expertise in technical writing and research, and her information and passion, the two would make a real team. Mr. Ledoux found a publisher interested in the story, and their work began.

She put it all together, sorted by date, including the letters from a girl she believes to have been her uncle's fiancée. From that date in October 2004 until today, Ms. Lorentzen's life has not been the same. Although she never knew her uncle, she became extremely connected while writing this book. "I wrote this book to memorialize him," Ms. Lorentzen states, "and I want the family to have this."



Susan Lorentzen



SAVVY SELLERS... Barbara Roberts and her nieces, Lauren and Jasmine, of the Sleepy Hollow section of Plainfield, display their merchandise for the annual garage sale held Sunday, May 21.

Plainfield's Sleepy Hollow Hosts Annual Garage Sale

By CASSIE LO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

PLAINFIELD – Hundreds of Union County residents gathered in Plainfield on Sunday, May 21 for the annual Friends of Sleepy Hollow (FOSH) garage sale. The garage sale, which has taken place for the past 13 years, had 125 participating homes throughout the Sleepy Hollow section of the town.

The sale ran from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., but residents saw savvy customers as early as 7:30 a.m. Watchung Avenue was particularly crowded, with at least 20 homes involved in the sales. Items sold at these garage sales ran the gamut, from classic '80s memorabilia to old appliances. Popular items included children's books and videos. Some houses even sold snacks and beverages along with their merchandise.

Each home in the garage sale had to pay \$25 to the Friends of Sleepy Hollow, which covered the cost of a garage sale permit, balloons and advertisements. The houses were also displayed on a map used by serious bargain hunters. Any leftover money will go to projects in the Sleepy Hollow area.

From the proceeds of previous garage sales, the group managed to provide a Leland Ave. park with play-

ground equipment. The Friends of Sleepy Hollow hope to make other community improvements with the proceeds of this garage sale. The next project they hope to tackle is to purchase lights for the park.

"It is great because it brings people to the community," said Plainfield resident and garage sale participant Alan Feste.

Sarah Cheung, another Sleepy Hollow resident, claimed that she uses the garage sale as "annual house cleaning." "We start cleaning the house after Easter," said Mrs. Cheung when asked about her preparation for the event.

Ms. Kathleen McDermott, board member of FOSH, said that the garage sale is "very labor intensive." She and other volunteers collected money, applied for permits for all of the homes and made over 2,000 copies to create information packets for shoppers. FOSH's main goal with the garage sale was to promote Plainfield, and Ms. McDermott was pleased with the outcome. "My phone rang off the hook with people asking for directions...I thought it was very successful," she said.

The FOSH garage sale occurs annually on the third Sunday in May, and they are planning to continue with the successful event next year.

Workshops Add Theater Program, Present *Seussical*

SCOTCH PLAINS – Summer 2006 marks the 24th season of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Creative Summer Workshops (CSW), a program developed and conducted by the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education that provides almost 50 enrichment experiences for students of all ages.

This year, for the first time, a theater component has been added to the artistic offerings that are available. The Theater Workshop, directed by John Brzozowski, Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Choral Director and former CSW student, will be offered to students entering grades 6 through 12.

Workshop participants will rehearse from June 26 through July 27 for a full-scale culminating production of *Seussical the Musical*. The Theater Workshop students will give a daytime performance of the show for fellow Creative Summer Workshop participants, followed by two evening performances on July 27 and 28 that will be open free to the public.

In *Seussical the Musical*, characters from the stories of Dr. Seuss bounce from page to stage in a musical sprinkled with bits of wisdom for audiences of all ages. *Seussical* explores a world where anything is possible – an elephant in a tree, a person too tiny to see, a heroic child with dreams running wild – all in a magical, musical world where helping a friend, never giving up, and keeping a promise come alive. When chaos erupts in the Jungle of Nool, it will take the Cat in the Hat, Horton the Elephant, Gertrude McFuzz, and many more characters to bring harmony back to their world.

The Tony Award-winning team of Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty (*Ragtime* and *Once on This Island*) created the *Seussical* score that includes pop, gospel, blues, and rhythm and blues.

For more information on the Theater Workshop or how to become a

part of the *Seussical* production, contact John Brzozowski at jbrzozowski@spfk12.org or (908) 899-8600, ext. 361.

Get Outta' The House

By CAROL F. DAVIS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

The 30th Anniversary Garden Party of the Victorian Society of Northern New Jersey will take place on Sunday, June 11, from 2 – 5 p.m. at the Duane's 1894 House in Morristown. Your \$50 admission gets you the High Tea, a tour of the house, and a stroll through the gardens. The High Tea has an extensive gourmet menu. Victorian and period dress is encouraged. For information on availability, call (973) 744-8267, or e-mail: aot@earthlink.net.

The Alliance Repertory Theatre Company's production of *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*, the powerful story of three men held captive in a prison in Lebanon, will be at the Linden Presbyterian Church, 1506 Orchard Street, weekends from June 9 through 24. This Tony-nominated play was inspired by the true account of former prisoner Brian Keenan. Tickets are \$15 - \$20, and you can reserve a seat by calling (908) 486-0665. Visit www.AllianceRep.org for more information.

The New Jersey Jazz Society will present *Jazzfest 2006* on Saturday and Sunday, June 10 and 11, on the grounds of Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison. There will be nonstop music each day from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. at three locations on campus. Tickets are being sold in advance. To order tickets call 1-800-500-7939 or log onto: www.njjs.org. Don't forget to pack a picnic lunch.

The New Jersey State Opera will present a concert in celebration of the life and legacy of *Alfredo Silipigni* on Monday, June 12 at 7:30 p.m. in Prudential Hall at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Newark. Musical selections will include works by Mascagni, Puccini and Verdi. Maestro Silipigni, a New Jersey native, passed away on March 26, 2006, and was instrumental in the founding of the New Jersey State Opera 40 years ago. The concert will be open to the public without charge. For information visit www.njstateopera.org or call (973) 623-5775.

Kean University's James Howe Gallery is home to the Art Educators of New Jersey 2nd Annual Membership Show through June 24. The Gallery is located in the Vaughn-Eames Building. Gallery hours are Monday – Thursday, 11 a.m. until 2 p.m., and 5 p.m. until 7 p.m., Friday, 11 a.m. until 2 p.m., or by appointment. Call (908) 737-4400. Admission is free.

HOME & GARDEN TRENDS



Small Updates, Big Impact

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

I'll never forget my first impression of the outdated kitchen when we bought our house a few years ago. Instead of providing an inviting and homey welcome, the sterility of the plain white laminate cabinets and countertops seemed to say, "The doctor will be with you in a few minutes."

We knew it needed a complete makeover, but after recovering from the shock of what we paid for the house combined with the tax increase that year, we were certainly in no position to gut the kitchen right away.

Fortunately, there are creative ways to change the entire look of a room without breaking the bank.

We began by removing the dated chrome trim and covering the backsplash with painted beadboard wainscoting. My husband added inexpensive crown molding to the box cabinets, and we changed the white plastic cabinet hardware to pewter hooded knobs for only \$2 each. The circa 1960's sink fixture was replaced with a graceful, goose-neck faucet. Obsolete floor tiles were pulled up in favor of an easy-to-install glueless laminate that mimics natural stone.

After adding a pewter chandelier plus floral and checked curtains and cushions, the cold medical environment was transformed into a warm country cottage atmosphere. And the whole renovation cost us hundreds instead of spending a hundred thousand on a full redo.

Another reason to invest a little bit of money on simple updating is if you're selling your home. While you may wonder why you'd bother if you're not planning to live there any longer, keep in mind that updates can also add tremendous value to your selling price.

Realtors often refer to "staging" a home, which means making changes to have it look its best to attract and keep the attention of buyers. Some staging just requires cleaning, reorganizing and rearranging at no cost.

"Good staging gets a house sold faster and for more money," said Bernadette Houston of Prudential New Jersey Properties in Westfield.

Whether you choose to renovate for your own pleasure or whether you're planning to sell your home, here are some ideas for inexpensive fixes:

The initial impression that your

home makes begins on the outside.

Linda Lies is an accredited staging professional who is not only a realtor with Burgdorff Era in Westfield but also owns her own staging business, LML Designs.

She said that while you may not want to invest in repainting the whole exterior of the house, you could just paint the front door and shutters to give an instant facelift.

"Black is always a good trim choice. It's like putting mascara on eyes," Ms. Lies said.

She also advised, "Fill in any empty holes in the landscaping. Try azaleas or arbutovite, which is a hardy, tall and narrow tree that buffers views."

Erik Farber of Weichert Realtors in Westfield suggested, "Prune the landscaping to keep the windows clear. Add a new brass door knocker with potted plants near the front door and maybe annuals along the walkway."

Diane Cassitta of Century 21 Taylor & Love in Westfield recommended replacing the screen door.

"And don't forget to clean the windows," she said.

Ms. Houston added, "Mulching covers a multitude of sins outside. Power wash the front of the house and clean the gutters."

Inside, Deirdre Bottomly of ERA Suburb Realty in Scotch Plains, recommended crown molding, chair rail or framed panels to add instant character.

"This is something you can do yourself. They sell kits at home improvement centers that come with corner pieces you can insert so that you don't have to miter the corners," Ms. Bottomly said.

If you have an outdated bathroom but just don't have the funds to replace the avocado or teal bathtub or tiles, Ms. Lies advised having surfaces reglazed in a neutral color.

"I had a bright yellow tub reglazed in white, and it lasted twenty years," she said.

Ms. Huston addressed plain bathroom mirrors. "Try framing it with some molding while it's on the wall and replace the lighting fixtures."

If your vanity appears antiquated, Ms. Bottomly suggested, "Put a new pedestal sink, which is a lot less money than a new cabinet."

Mr. Farber recommended replacing shower curtains and towel racks.

"There are also kits available to fill



SUMMIT FROM AIR...Last Sunday's street fair is shown here from the air with the Summit Train Station shown in the center. The picture was taken at 11:30 a.m.

NJ State Opera Celebrates Life of Alfredo Silipigni

NEWARK – The New Jersey State Opera will present a concert in celebration of the life and legacy of Alfredo Silipigni Monday, June 12, at 7:30 p.m. in Prudential Hall at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, located in Newark. Musical selections will include works by Mascagni, Puccini and Verdi.

The performance will feature the New Jersey State Opera Orchestra and Chorus with invited soloists and guests, and will be conducted by Joseph Colaneri, with Jason Tramm as Chorus Master. Mr. Colaneri, a specialist in verismo opera, is a member of the conducting roster of the Metropolitan Opera and Artistic Director of Mannes Opera at Mannes College of Music in New York City. He began his career as Chorus Master for the New Jersey State Opera.

Maestro Silipigni, a native son of New Jersey, who passed away on March 26, was instrumental in the founding of the New Jersey State Opera 40 years ago in Westfield, and had served since that time as the company's principal conductor and artistic director.

Maestro Silipigni brought in many

of opera's most celebrated artists, among them Licia Albanese, Beverly Sills, Birgit Nilsson, Magda Olivero, Richard Tucker, Robert Merrill, Jerome Hines, Franco Corelli, Anna Moffo, Sumi Jo, Carlo Bergonzi, Roberta Peters, James McCracken, Sherrill Milnes, Samuel Ramey, James Morris, and Placido Domingo.

Maestro Silipigni's and the New Jersey State Opera's productions included two world premiers, and his performances of the verismo repertoire created a venue for emerging young singers, musicians and practitioners of operatic stagecraft.

Maestro Silipigni's development of New Jersey State Opera's music and education programs inspired the formation of the New Jersey State Opera Guild, and attracted the partnership and financial support of corporations and foundations.

The concert will be open to the public without charge. For further information about this event, the New Jersey State Opera, or contributions to the New Jersey State Opera in memory of Maestro Alfredo Silipigni, visit www.njstateopera.org or call (973) 623-5775.

Teen Arts Exhibit Begins At Springfield Library

AREA – The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders announced that the 2006 Teen Arts Traveling Exhibit would open this year's tour at the Springfield Public Library, 66 Mountain Avenue in Springfield and will be on display through June 22 during regular library hours.

The exhibit consists of 75 pieces of art selected from more than 600 visual art works shown at the 2006 Union County Teen Arts Festival held in March at Union County College.

The students/groups selected to perform at the reception are: Westfield High School's Kate Fallon and Natalie Narotzky; Edison Intermediate School's Sarah Szollar, Maddie DeJohn, Annie Oldowski, and Bernadette Hopper; Deerfield School's Rebecca Witt and Danielle Fine; and Governor Livingston High School's Marjula Raman and Veronica Thomas.

The exhibiting students include, from Mountainside, Deerfield School's Michael Caudo and Michelle Harpster.

In Scotch Plains, Union County Vo-Tech students Ernst Labady and Joseph Foster will exhibit their work along with Hillcrest Academy's Angel Diaz.

In Westfield, Edison Intermediate School's Melissa Littman and Jessica and Margolies will join Beadstone High School's Jose Albino.

The public is invited to a reception honoring the artists on Monday, June 5 at the Springfield Library from 7 to 9 p.m. For information about the Teen Arts program, contact the Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs at 633 Pearl Street, Elizabeth 07202, or call (908) 558-2550. Relay service users should call 711 or email culturalinfo@ucnj.org.

Correction

It should have stated in last week's Celebration Singers review that Carmelyn Marinero choreographed and directed the "Movement Artists" for both "Comedy Tonight" and "Grand Night." Mara Canlas was her assistant as dance captain.

NJDTE Announces Final Auditions

AREA – New Jersey Dance Theatre Ensemble (NJDTE) will hold auditions to fill remaining openings in its summer intensive ballet program at Drew University in Madison.

The program will be presented between July 17 and August 11. Auditions will take place on June 6, 13, and 20 at 5:45 p.m. at the Yvette Studio, 118 Walnut Avenue in Cranford.

Call (908) 232-0114 for an audition appointment.