

## HOME SPUN



## On The Surface: Renovating Perception

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

AREA - Welcome to *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood's* new home and garden column. We know many of you are either planning to or are in the process of renovating or redecorating your properties, and we hope to become an informative resource for you. What spurs you to begin a home or garden project? Maybe your family is growing and you need more living space. Or maybe you're simply in love with the flower boxes whose blooms seemed to burst right off the magazine cover you saw on the check-out line.

My recent moment of motivation came when, due to the complete lack of counter space in my outdated bathroom, my hairbrush teetered over the edge and rolled into the sink for the umpteenth time.

I had grown weary of my daily battle with toiletries tumbling into the sink. Plus, I knew it was only a matter of time before the blow-dryer followed suit, and I'm not a huge fan of sudden death by electrocution. We were more than ready to make some changes.

At some point during home ownership, most of us are faced with a kitchen or bath renovation. And whether it's a simple facelift or a complete remodel, choosing a countertop surface is a key factor.

With the myriad of products and price ranges available, from natural stones like granite to manufactured ones like Silestone, I felt a bit overwhelmed with my project.

So I did what most of us do in situations like this. I pestered every friend, casual acquaintance and, yes, even complete strangers I met while shopping about their experiences with the different surfaces.

And I found that for every person that loved a particular surface, someone else had some horrifying staining, scratching or chipping incident with it.

After much research along with talking with local fabricators and suppliers, I compiled enough facts about the more common surfaces to make an informed decision for my bathroom. I hope this will also help you navigate the sea of countertop choices more easily.

### First Congressional Hosts Musicales

WESTFIELD - The First Congregational Church of Westfield, 125 Elmer Street, continues its Mid-Day Musicales concert series on Wednesday, March 15, at noon, with a program by the Westfield High School Concert Choir, Chorale and Choraleers.

The Westfield High School Chorale, conducted by William Mathews, sings madrigals and motets, the Choraleers, with conductor Sharon Reynolds, jazz and show tunes. These students will be joined by 50 others to form the 70-voice Concert Choir, conducted by Mr. Mathews, which will sing three well-known works - Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus* from the *Messiah*, the *Lacrimosa* from Mozart's *Requiem*, and the famous setting of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* by Wilhousky.

These free, half-hour concerts are followed by an optional soup and sandwich luncheon, available in the church's social hall for \$5.

For further information contact the church office at (908) 233-2494.

Natural surfaces like granite and marble are known for their luxurious beauty, durability and longevity. You can find styles with lots of color variegation as well as some that appear more monochromatic.

Laurie Escalante of Creative Habitats in Garwood, fabricators of natural and manufactured surfaces, said, "You just can't duplicate the look of natural stone. It's beautiful, durable and scratch resistant."

She explained that granite rates higher than marble on the hardness scale, as marble can chip under certain circumstances.

"You'd dull your knife before you'd scratch or chip your granite," she said.

Ms. Escalante clarified that even granite can scratch when subjected to extreme abuse, but that any pits or scratches can be professionally buffed or filled.

According to Telma Carinhas of Nature's Beauty Marble & Granite in Scotch Plains, another plus about granite and marble is their heat resistance. "You can take a pot off the stove and put it directly on a room-temperature granite counter without damaging the surface," she said.

Something to keep in mind about both granite and marble is that they are porous. This means they can absorb certain stains, especially acidic ones like wine and juice. They also need to be resealed one to four times a year.

Some people fear that this maintenance requires too much work and worry on their part.

But Ms. Escalante assured that sealing granite is neither a difficult nor time-consuming task.

"There are different types of sealers, from kinds that you spray or wipe on to those that you brush on," Ms. Escalante explained. "Either way, it's a 10-to-15 minute project. That's less than an hour a year."

It's also important to realize that because granite and marble are derived from nature, no two slabs are exactly alike. So the four- or 12-inch sample you view in a showroom may not represent the exact color and pattern that will be used in fabricating your countertop. You can instead go to the stone yard and ask to view the actual slab.

Another factor to consider is that natural stone often comes with a hefty price tag. That price can be inflated further when it comes time to choose what type of edging you'd like.

Simple eased or rounded, bull-nosed edges are usually included in the purchase price. However, if you long for the fancier ogee-type edges similar to those that grace fine furnishings, be prepared to pay \$20-\$30 or more per linear foot.

Ms. Carinhas provided a simple explanation for the price difference. "The eased, beveled and bull-nosed edges are done by a machine you can set to run by itself. Ogees have to be crafted by hand with a handheld router."

Soapstone is another natural substance that is quarried like granite and marble. It has a solid tone and stains do not penetrate all the way through it. Any damage or staining remains on the surface and can be buffed or sanded away.

"Soapstone is very soft," says Margot Comar of BKC Kitchen Design Gallery of Westfield.

She explained that it is often honed to take away the shine and provide an old world patina. It is more porous

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# Arts & Entertainment

## TAKE THE STAGE



## Death's A Suspenseful 'Trap'

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

WESTFIELD - The Westfield Community Players' (WCP) production of *Deathtrap* opened Saturday to a packed house. In its 70th year, WCP must be doing something right.

That "something" is simple attention to detail. Sets, costumes, wigs and props all might seem incidental, but because the production teams at WCP constantly pay attention to those "little" things, they all add up to a healthy sum of the parts to produce quality, superior shows.

Of course, accurate casting, strong directing, fine acting and intelligent play selecting can't hurt either.

*Deathtrap*, Ira Levin's mystery, has somewhat of a play-within-a-play framework. Mystery writer Sidney Bruhl's student Clifford Anderson has written his first play, *Deathtrap*, and sends it to his mentor and seminar instructor Bruhl, who plans to kill the talented young man, steal his spectacular script and pass off the masterpiece as his own.

Now in the genre of mystery it's not unusual for the police to appear after a murder to piece together clues. Playwright Levin kicks it up a notch with a psychic neighbor arriving on the scene to foresee the atrocious act.

"How far will one man go to have a hit play?" is the underlying question of this serpentine mystery.

Playwright Levin, also the author of *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Stepford Wives* and *Boys from Brazil*, was the Stephen King of the 1960s and '70s. He understands suspense and how to pull the audience into the storyline. But once we think we know where he's going, he pulls the expensive Persian rug right out from under us and wraps it around a corpse.

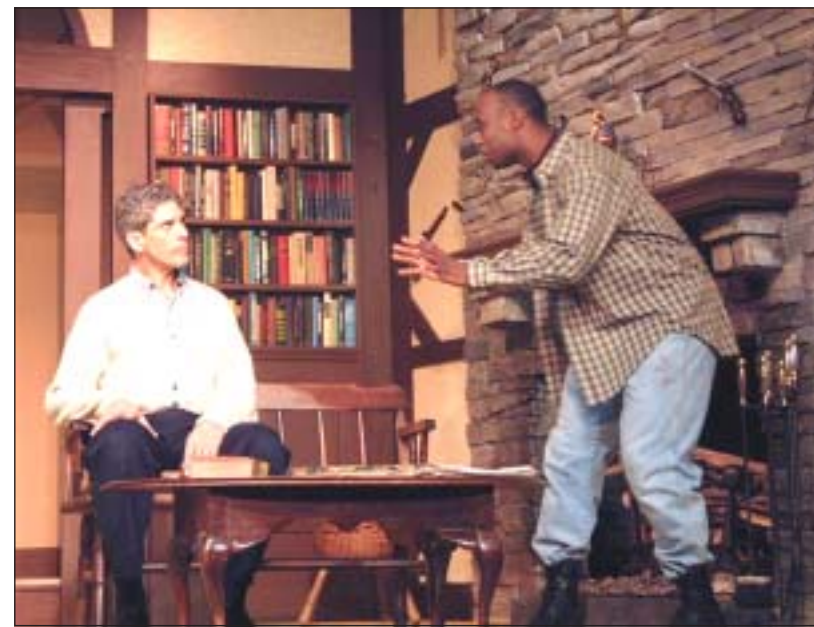
In the lead role of Sidney Bruhl, Larry Shagawat is a comfortable actor who keeps scenes moving and fresh. He continually surprises the audience without tipping his hand at twists and turns in the character.

WCP veteran Linda Correll plays his wealthy wife Myra to a tee (down to the expensive rings on many fingers). The antagonism of the duos rings true in their body language and dialogue.

In the role of Clifford Anderson, Shaka Malik delivers delightful diction and just the right amount of awe for his mystery-writer guru/idol Sidney. His scenes with Sidney are quite credible.

Irene Moses carefully offers funny lines in broken English as psychic Helga Ten Dorp, but looks like she stepped out of Talbot's at times when she should look more like the caricature she portrays. Her second outfit of mismatched items fits the stereotype better than her first or third outfits.

In contrast, well-cast Porter Milgrim looks and exudes the de-



Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
HATCHING A PLAN... Veteran mystery writer Sidney Bruhl (Larry Shagawat), left, collaborates with first-time writer Clifford Anderson (Shaka Malik) in *Deathtrap*, which opened March 4 at the Westfield Community Players Playhouse. The Ira Levin mystery runs weekends through March 18.

meanor of a perfect lawyer in his dark suit, crisp shirt and tie.

Now back to the "simple attention to details" in this show. The incredible brickwork around the arched transom above the French doors couldn't have looked more real. Set construction by Bill McMeekan built a floor-to-ceiling fireplace that couldn't have been more luxurious, and the artifacts of death adorning the walls couldn't have been scarier.

Speaking of scary, subtle spiderweb shadows by lighting designer Bob Murray didn't go unnoticed. Those sparkling details, as brilliant as Mrs. Bruhl's diamonds, pack the play with quality.

As part of the team who kept not

only a watchful eye on the details but had a hand in all of it is producer/actress Linda Correll, who is credited for set design, set decoration, make-up and props. Her husband, director John Correll, a talented actor himself, has made insightful choices to keep the play moving visually. The couple does it all.

Unraveling the plot of *Deathtrap* is like digging into a bowl of cherry jello with a fork - each time you think you have it, it wiggles and slips from your grasp.

So don't try to second guess what will happen, just enjoy the little details and, like riding a Disneyworld attraction, hang on because you don't know who or what's around the next corner.

## SPFHS Theater's 42nd Street to Debut March 17

SCOTCH PLAINS - Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHS) cast members and their adult mentors are putting the final touches on this year's annual musical show, *42nd Street*. The singing and dancing will debut on March 17, and performances will span two weekends.

SPFHS' *42nd Street* production features a cast of 50 students. The show, based on the classic 1933 movie musical of the same name, concerns the story of a successful producer putting on what may be his last show. At the last moment, his leading lady is injured and must be replaced by a novice.

Leading the troupe will be seniors Caitlyn Delaney as the leading lady, Dorothy Brock, and Brian Glassett as the director, Julian Marsh. Sarah Marable will appear as the novice

performer Peggy Sawyer. Ally Rome and senior Nick Mondy will play the playwrights Maggie Jones and Bert Barry. Adam Biner is cast as Billy Lawlor, the show's romantic lead.

*42nd Street* represents a cheerful departure from the heavier dramas of SPFHS' last two productions, *Les Miserables* and *West Side Story*. According to John Brzozowski, *42nd Street's* musical director and SPFHS' choral director, "This year's toe-tapping, light-hearted show will be very special due to a very talented cast of performers." Mr. "B" believes the highlight of the show will be the finale, when all the dancers come out on stairs created by Tom Rowe, a SPFHS parent and recreational set designer, who created the show's scenery.

After a brief hiatus, Director/English teacher Diane McGovern has returned to direct the show. Ms. McGovern is excited to be working with students who are, according to her, "triple threats: they need to act, sing and dance."

Laurie Wellman, who retired last year as SPFHS' musical director, has returned to lend her expertise as producer. Also returning to SPFHS will be Gisa Dilorio, who heads the dancing and choreography of the show, and Durand Thomas, SPFHS' assistant instrumental music director, will also once again lead the pit orchestra. According to senior Gregg Bruno, lead trumpet in the orchestra, "The jazzy score is quite challenging, but really fun."

"It's really different acting in this 'show-within-a-show' satire," said Caitlyn Delaney. "I have always enjoyed singing, and I love playing Dorothy, the 'diva.' Inside, Dorothy

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### Full Frontal Folk Performs in Westfield

WESTFIELD - The Coffee With Conscience Concert Series of Westfield presents the folk trio Full Frontal Folk in concert at the First United Methodist Church of Westfield, 1 East Broad Street (corner of North Avenue) in Westfield on Saturday, March 18. Doors will open at 7:30 p.m. and the concert begins at 8 p.m. Admission is \$15. All net proceeds from this evening's concert will be donated to the New Jersey Chapter of the Names Project (AIDS Quilt).

Full Frontal Folk combines the talents of Wendy Fuhr, Jennifer Schonwald and Courtney Malley. They've taken old folk music from the '50s and '60s out of the closet, dusted it off, polished it up and brought it back into the world. The trio shares a love of traditional, old-time and bluegrass music, as well as contemporary singer-songwriter pop and punk - pulling it all together as a full sensory experience.

For more info about Full Frontal Folk, visit: [www.fullfrontalfolk.com](http://www.fullfrontalfolk.com). Reservations can be made by calling the concert hotline at (908) 412-9105, or e-mailing [concerts4causes@aol.com](mailto:concerts4causes@aol.com) or visiting [www.coffeewithconscience.org](http://www.coffeewithconscience.org). Volunteers are always appreciated.

## WF Frazee Film Showing To Help Restore House

WESTFIELD - The Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Frazee House Committee and Fazio Filmworks will present the documentary film *Two Lords and a Lady* on Wednesday, March 15, at 7 p.m. at the Westfield Community Theatre, located at 1000 North Avenue West in Westfield. Admission is free. Light refreshments will be served.

*Two Lords and a Lady* is the story of Aunt Betty Frazee and the historic Battle of the Short Hills fought in Scotch Plains on June 27, 1777. It dramatizes Aunt Betty's confrontation with two of the highest-ranking British generals. To help the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Frazee House Committee save the historic Frazee House, an all-volunteer group produced the 30-minute film.

The committee is raising funds to restore the 18th-century farmhouse for use as a museum and community meeting house. Hope Weinstein of Westfield stars in *Two Lords and a*

*Lady* as Aunt Betty Frazee, whose farmhouse on Raritan Road in Scotch Plains is the setting of this historic drama. Martin Marks, the Mayor of Scotch Plains, portrays British General Lord Charles Cornwallis. Lou Jung, a former Mayor of Fanwood, plays His Lordship, General William Howe.

John Fazio, the director of *Two Lords and a Lady*, has worked in film production in the United States and Britain since 1976. The Frazee House Committee of the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Club will gladly accept donations to help restore the historic Frazee House. Checks may be mailed payable to the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Frazee House Committee, PO Box 426, Fanwood, NJ 07023.

For further information about the Frazee House Committee, contact Patricia Plante at (908) 233-2162. E-mail R.S.V.P.s about the showing of *Two Lords and a Lady* to [Frazeehouse@hotmail.com](mailto:Frazeehouse@hotmail.com).

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## Get Outta' The House

By CAROL F. DAVIS  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
You don't need an exotic vacation to feel like you're in the rainforest. Visit *The Orchid Show* at the New York Botanical Garden now through April 2. In addition to tours, talks and demos, there will be a special *Vanilla and Chocolate Extravaganza Weekend* from March 10 through the 12. If you intend to visit more than once or twice, it pays to purchase a "Run of the Show" ticket; otherwise admission is \$13 - \$18. Leave the strollers home for this one. For directions and details, log onto: <http://www.nybg.org/>.

Now through March 19, The George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick is showing *The Pillowman*, a comedy-drama by Martin McDonagh. It is recommended for adult audiences only. Find out why the *New York Times* calls it "the season's most exciting and original new play." Call (732) 246-7717 for information and reservations, or visit: <http://www.georgestplayhouse.org/>.

For family fun, the JCC of Scotch Plains is having a *Purim Carnival* on Sunday, March 12, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. They are promising an extensive array of rides, games, crafts, music, food and more. Admission is via wristbands or tickets. Contact Jodi Baxter at (908) 889-8800 x235 or [jbaxter@jccnj.org](mailto:jbaxter@jccnj.org).

The Westfield Community Players at the Theater on North Avenue will perform *Deathtrap*, the mystery by Ira Levin on March 11, 17, and 18. Murder plots, attorneys and nosy psychic neighbors will keep you riveted. Single tickets are \$15. Call the Box Office at (908) 232-1221, or email: [players@westfieldnj.com](mailto:players@westfieldnj.com)

There are a variety of workshops offered at the Visual Arts Center, 68 Elm Street, in Summit. Try your hand at jewelry making with *Epoxy Resin: Creating Jewelry with Color* on two Saturdays, March 11 and 18, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. The fee is \$175, with a \$30 materials fee. Register online at: [www.artcenternj.org](http://www.artcenternj.org) or call (973) 273-9121. There are also opportunities for kids and teens.

[www.goleader.com](http://www.goleader.com)

### Longtime WF Resident Cosponsors Exhibit

WESTFIELD - Robert Harcourt, a 1951 Westfield High School graduate, is among the co-sponsors of the "Changing Hands 2" exhibit during its two-month 2006 visit to Santa Fe, NM. This exhibit will be housed at the Institute of American Indian Arts Museum. Mr. Harcourt has been associated with IAlA for more than 35 years.

The exhibit is the second in a series of three exhibitions surveying the most important contemporary work by Native American artists.

Mr. Harcourt was longtime Westfield resident and completed all of his public education there. He is the son of the late Mary and Stanton Harcourt, 50-year residents of Westfield.

### Erica Cenci Performs In Tap Ensemble

WESTFIELD - Westfield resident Erica Cenci, part of the the Muhlenberg College Jazztap Ensemble directed by Shelley Oliver, will join Ms. Oliver's tap ensemble for performances in mid-March.

Erica, a senior at Muhlenberg, has performed in Ms. Oliver's *Sources of Light: A Tribute to Ray Charles* and Charles Anderson's *Bodies and Souls* in the Master Choreographers Concert 2006, and she danced in *Business or Pleasure* at the Kennedy Center for the American College Dance Festival in 2004.

Her choreography includes *Tango x Three* and *We Stepped Into this* for Student Choreographed Concerts and question mark for the Informal Concert produced by the Muhlenberg Dance Association. Erica's other credits include Muhlenberg Theatre Association's *Cabaret*, *On The Town* and *Lures & Snares*, as well as *George M!* and *Godspell* with Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre.

### Examine What to Do In NJ By Town Name

WESTFIELD - In time for spring outings, The Town Book Store of Westfield is hosting an informative meet and greet book signing this weekend. On Saturday, March 18, from 2 to 4 p.m., Barbara Westergaard will be in the store to promote her new book, "New Jersey: A Guide to the State" (third edition).

In this updated classic guide arranged alphabetically by town and city name, the entries describe what there is to do and see in a community and its surrounding area and how each place is connected to its past. The book lists museums, parks, historical points of interest, natural and recreational areas, among other attractions. There is also the guided tour of the New Jersey Turnpike that identifies what everyone has been whizzing by for years.

If unable to attend this event, residents can call the bookstore at (908) 233-3535 to reserve an autographed copy.