

## HOME &amp; GARDEN TRENDS

## Fall for Your Front Porch

By CHRISTIE STORMS

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

I'm not sure whether it's the initial burst of cool air, the crunch of leaves underfoot or the first sip of hot apple cider by the fireplace, but something about this season makes me feel like singing.

Forget winter wonderlands or hot sunsets in the city, why hasn't someone set an appropriate ode to autumn to music? We need a catchy little ditty that pays homage to fall's vibrancy, how its resplendent hues make even rainy days appear cheerful.

Nature has certainly provided a stunning backdrop, and you can punch up the palette with plantings and more along your front porch or walkway.

When it comes to seasonal flowers, mums are usually the word—and rightfully so. Available in a full spectrum of fall colors and known for their hardiness to withstand cooler temperatures, they're typically the flower of choice. But there are a few things to keep in mind regarding when and how you plant them.

"A mum, from beginning to end, will typically last about six to eight weeks," said Ed Williams of Williams Nursery in Westfield.

So while mums are available by late summer, if their flowers have already opened, they're most likely not going to last throughout the fall season. An October purchase, on the other hand, could continue to thrive right through Thanksgiving.

Steve Parker of Parker Greenhouses in Scotch Plains advised buying mums that are just starting to bloom.

"Take it from the bud just showing a little bit of the color it's going to be, with the flower maybe a quarter of the way open," Mr. Parker said.

He cautioned against purchasing completely closed buds in October because an early frost could prevent them from blossoming.

Whether you choose to plant your mums in a pot or urn or directly into the ground, Mr. Parker shared a tip that helps ensure the roots are getting enough water to produce a vivid display of color.

"When plants grow in that little plastic pot you buy them in, the roots turn and grow inward," he said. "So when you replant it, break some of the fibrous roots, but without breaking the whole root ball apart. That will help them start growing into the outside soil."

This can help prevent water from floating over the top surface of the soil and failing to reach the deep inner roots. You may have witnessed this if you've ever started watering a plant and immediately seen water shoot out the bottom of the container.

A problem I've encountered with mums is how the plant sometimes separates or splits down the middle instead of maintaining its mound formation.

"When that happens, you can put three or four stakes with a string to keep

them from falling apart," Mr. Williams advised. "But if you select the shorter varieties, they are less apt to do that."

Taking good care of your mums now can also increase the probability that these perennials will grow back next year.

"When they're through flowering, cut them back to two or three inches from the ground," Mr. Williams said. "Then mulching is all you need."

However, Mr. Williams reported that even well-mulched mums may really only have a 50/50 chance of returning.

"I've actually had mums above ground come back if it was a winter where we didn't get below 20 [degrees]," Mr. Williams said. "But if it's 10 below zero, I don't care what variety they are, you're probably going to lose a lot."

There are also many other types of flowers and plants that can add fall flavor besides mums.

"Pansies are great, and all pansies are hardy," Mr. Parker said.

He spoke of asters and marigolds that can take some cool weather and millet, which he described as similar to a cornstalk but with different shapes and very purple leaves.

"Fall cyclamen are also very pretty," Mr. Williams said. "And we sell thousands of kale and cabbage plants. They can even come up right through the snow."

Most would agree that no fall display is complete without a pumpkin or gourd or two. Keep in mind these items are available in many colors and shapes besides the typical round orange.

Try mixing up the colors and sizes for added interest. You can even stack a small, medium and large pumpkin on top of each other, snowman-style.

Gourds and pinecones can look great simply gathered in a bushel or basket, or try stringing them together with fall leaves on wire or jute to create garlands and wreaths.

Fasten plaid ribbons around cornstalks, bundles of wheat or dried corn and tuck oak or maple leaves under the bows for added pizzazz.

Tall vases or urns can hold entire branches of fall leaves for a dramatic effect flanking the front door.

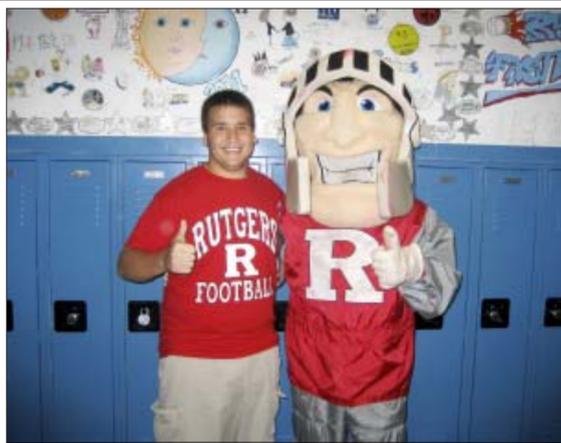
The variety of natural decorating materials is infinite, but unfortunately, squirrels, deer, insects and other pests can sometimes sabotage our efforts.

Mr. Williams spoke about newer products on the market that address this problem.

"This has been a battle we've been fighting for years," he said. "This year we sprayed Deer Off and Deer Out, and both have been very effective. We've used gallons of it and haven't had a single pumpkin or mum eaten in the back field."

If only my efforts to find an appropriate anthem for autumn could be as successful.

*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.*



WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T GO HOME...Deerfield Elementary School alumni Michael Kolenko stands with a fellow Rutgers University student, who came back to their grammar school to cheer on the coprotectors and sell tickets to Rutgers' football games.

## MS Families Run Together In Seventh-Annual Cop Trot

BY LINDA B. CONDRILLO

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

MOUNTAINSIDE – More than 150 Mountainside residents braved the cooler-than-normal temperatures last Saturday morning to run a five-kilometer race known as the "Cop Trot."

Sponsored by the Police Athletic League (PAL), this year's event was dedicated to the memory of Doug Trimmer, a beloved member of the community, parent and coach who passed away in 2005.

After observing a moment of silence for Mr. Trimmer, Gabe Rodriguez, a student at Governor Livingston High School and Deerfield Elementary School alumnus, sang the National Anthem into a bullhorn—and the race was on.

Starting out from the Deerfield parking lot, runners as young as the age of four walked or ran the hilly course, looping around paved roads with police escort in tow, including new recruits from the John H. Stamler Police Academy.

Before the race began, Frederick McCarrick, a seventh-grade social studies teacher who does double duty as coach for the boys' soccer team, told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, "Nicky Yomans, one of the boys on my team, told me about the race. His dad is one of the organizers of the event and proposed the idea that the boys run together as a team-building activity; and I have to say, many of them were very excited about it."

The avid bike rider confessed he was not a runner and was "hoping not having to be picked up off the ground after the first mile."

Also running the course were many fathers and sons and brothers and sisters, as well as many mothers, some of whom can be seen running regularly in town, at times behind baby strollers.

One such mom, Janet Skinner, was the top female finisher for the race with a time of 23:53. While the bulk of the participants were from the borough, the top male finisher was Timothy Styler from Cranford with a time of 17:09.

Three sets of siblings took either first or second place for their age groups. Brothers Blake and Tremearne Hotz, ages 14 and 11, ran 20:33 and 24:21, respectively. Erica and Colin Stevenson ages 11 and eight, had times of 28:00 and 30:31. And Ben and Cassie Kinney, ages 10 and 12, finished with 23:03

## Bob Malone Performs In Westfield on October 21

WESTFIELD – The Coffee With Conscience Concert Series continues its seventh season by presenting Bob Malone in concert at the First United Methodist Church of Westfield, 1 East Broad Street (corner of North Avenue) in Westfield, on Saturday, October 21.

Doors will open at 7:15 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 Names Project (AKA the AIDS Quilt). Mr. Malone's wife, Los Angeles-based singer/songwriter Karen Nash, will open.

Mr. Malone (bobmalone.com) makes music for grownups. His sound is a mixture of uptown blues, gutbucket New Orleans ragtime stomp and singer/songwriter pop songcraft.

The Coffee With Conscience Concert Series of Westfield is a 10-show

and 29:37 respectively. Abby Perasso was first in the female eight-and-under category, with her dad, Robert Perasso, finishing 24th overall.

Corinne Moore, who has run the event since its inception with Chief of Police James Debbie's wife, Pat, told the newspaper that she got the inspiration for the Cop Trot while visiting Long Beach Island during its annual "Dog Day Road Race."

Mrs. Moore said, "I told Pat, this is really neat, we should do this in our town." Upon arriving home, she spoke to Chief Debbie, who simply said, "Go ahead, get it done." Other major organizers of the event are Anne Marie Pires, an EMT volunteer, Lori Rubino, Karen Fenn, Nancy Kinney, Cindy West and Patrice Maxwell.

Mrs. Moore said, "We really couldn't have pulled this off without everyone's help." She also noted, "Gary Whyte donated all the fruit for the runners here today, and there are so many people who made private donations who make this all possible, and help support the PAL activities for the kids in town."

Mrs. Moore said she would like to thank all this year's sponsors, including: Maxwell Family Limited Partnership, Mountainside Municipal Alliance, Sevell's Auto Body, Breathe Fitness Studio, All American Auto Salvage, United Crane, Walter Heckel & Sons, Denbar Construction, Headturners Salon, Mountainside PBA Local 126, C&M Refrigeration, Hudson River Futures, Charles Contracting, Vogel Bus Company, The Spinners, Cranford Ophthalmology, The Kelley Family, Christoffers Flowers and Gifts, TAP Realty, Melo Contractors, Bonita Bananas, Party Designs by Dana Kline and the Debbie family.

After the race, the newspaper caught up with Mr. McCarrick to see how he had done. He reported that he had been outrun by none other than Nicky Youmans, and remarked with a grin, "I guess I'll have to get in better shape for next year."

The imperfect weather gradually improved dramatically and none too soon for the second round of activities to be held at Deerfield—the PTA Annual Fall Festival. Hundreds of kids, parents, teachers and other members of the community enjoyed a beautiful day of togetherness. In Mountainside, it just doesn't get any better than that.

series running from September through June at the First United Methodist Church.

This season, the concerts are being recorded for broadcast by Westfield's TV-36. Residents of Westfield, Scotch Plains, Fanwood and Mountainside can catch each month's concert on Saturday and Sunday at 7 a.m.

For more information about the Coffee With Conscience Concert Series, the upcoming performance, ways in which to get involved with the series or information on getting a copy of the Season Sampler CD, visit [www.coffeewithconscience.org](http://www.coffeewithconscience.org), call (908) 412-9105 or send an e-mail to [concerts4causes@aol.com](mailto:concerts4causes@aol.com).

Volunteers are always appreciated.

See It All on [www.goleader.com](http://www.goleader.com)

## Seniors Sing, Dance To Help Draw The Line

By MEREDITH MANNINO

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

GARWOOD – Filled with laughter, song, dance and a philanthropic spirit, the Garwood Senior Club's second variety show at the town's Lincoln School was a lively celebration of young and old.

Tickets sales totaled \$1,255, and the money was donated to Garwood's Draw The Line, a drug education/awareness program for sixth and eighth graders led by 12 Garwood parent volunteers.

Garwood resident Pat DiFabio, 78, the variety show's coordinator and director, explained that the generosity, positive attitude and politeness of Garwood kids inspired him to sponsor the show for Draw The Line.

At a dinner for seniors hosted by the Garwood Recreation, Mr. DiFabio was extremely impressed with the local youngsters who served Mr. DiFabio and his friends.

"We just sat there and the kids treated us so well," he extolled. Mr. DiFabio decided to show his appreciation with an equal display of kindness and respect, so he decided to donate proceeds from the second annual senior variety show to Draw The Line.

Barbara Tweedle, president of Draw The Line, was extremely grateful for Mr. DiFabio's efforts.

"I think it's phenomenal what Pat has done," she said. "We all really appreciate it."

The money raised from the show's ticket sales will fund the eighth graders' trip to a Union County courthouse for more drug abuse education.

Lincoln School sixth grader Ryan Baron is one of the kids who impressed Mr. DiFabio at the recreation

dinner, and Ryan lent a hand at the variety show as well. The 11-year-old, whose mother Sue is an active Draw The Line volunteer, managed the lighting at the performance with the help of his peers Ryan Tombs, 12, Joseph Mondi, 11 and T.J. Bianco, 11.

"It feels good to help out," Ryan said. "It's fun to volunteer."

Every performer was terrific, and highlights included the Bridgewater Roxies, a dance troupe of women from the Bridgewater Seniors Club, and Union's Rosalyn Charnes' highly entertaining and animated rendition of "I Need A Man."

Westfield entertainers included Charles Roessler and Robert McLeester. The roster of talent also included Union's Recreation Harmonica Band, Walter Battiatto, the Kenilworth Seniors, Rosalie Marcus, Plainfield's Mount Olive Baptist Church singers, Lee Jackson, Hal Winters, George J. Journe, John Simone, Al Alberti and Pat Esemplare.

Mayor Dennis McCarthy presented Garwood Seniors president Ann Romano with a resolution to acknowledge her dedication and hard work in the senior community.

Mrs. Romano thanked her husband for his support and patience, and her peers for their assistance and commitment. She said she was "very touched" to receive the resolution.

Mayor McCarthy expressed his pride in the community of Garwood. "Garwood has a great group of youth, seniors and everything in the middle as well," he said.

Incidentally, Mr. DiFabio celebrated his 78th birthday on the night of the show, September 29.



ROXIE HEART... The Bridgewater Roxies of the Bridgewater Seniors Club don their "Let It Snow" outfits and pose for the camera.

## Sounds of Switzerland Recreated at NJ Workshop

WESTFIELD – To hear the deep, rich sounds of the Swiss Alphon, one does not need to take a transatlantic flight to Europe. Those same sounds will be recreated on East Broad Street in Westfield when the alphon workshop begins this month at the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts (NJWA).

Musicians who have an interest in learning to play this instrument can receive group or individual training. A 10-week group session begins on Saturday, October 21, from 4 until 5:30 p.m. at the NJWA studios at 150-152 East Broad Street, located in Westfield.

Tuition for this course is \$275. The classes will be divided into five levels: beginning students who never played a musical instrument; students with experience on a woodwind instrument; students with experience on brass instruments; students with experience on a string or percussion instrument and students with alphon playing experience.

Private instruction is also available in 30 minute, 45 minute or 60-minute lessons, at \$36, \$54 and \$72, respectively.

Alphon Workshop participants will perform solo or in ensembles playing traditional Swiss, classical, folk, jazz and popular music.

The instructor for the workshop is Dr. Ted Schlosberg, founder and executive director of the NJWA. Proficient on most musical instruments, Dr. Schlosberg, who brings with him 46 years of teaching experience, has performed in concerts, arts festivals, community events and for school and service organizations.

Ranging in length from seven to 12 feet, alphorns are crafted from fir, lime or poplar trees, and have traditionally been used in Switzerland as well as Scandinavia, Russia, Hungary, Romania, Germany and Scotland. Composers such as Rossini, Strauss, Beethoven and Mozart have also incorporated the instrument into classical music.

For those who attend the alphon workshop, several alphorns are avail-

able for rental at \$10 per week on a first come/first served basis. For information on this program, or any program of the NJWA, visit the studios on East Broad Street or call (908) 789-9696. Additional information can be found on the web at [www.njworkshopforthearts.com](http://www.njworkshopforthearts.com).

## Art in the Gardens

## Scheduled for Sunday

ELIZABETH – Jersey Gardens, New Jersey's largest outlet mall, continues to host Art in the Gardens, a month-long celebration of the arts. The Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, in the Department of Economic Development, coordinates this annual event.

The following upcoming performances will take place in the mall's Center Court.

Sunday, October 15, 1 to 2 p.m.: Anne Marie Noronha of Scotch Plains; 2 to 3 p.m.: Amy Marie Keller of Linden; 3 to 4 p.m.: Rob Benaquista of Nutley; 4 to 5 p.m.: Kenny Woods of Warren.

Jersey Gardens is located on Kapkowski Road at Exit 13A of the New Jersey Turnpike and features more than 200 stores under one roof.

For more information about Art in the Gardens and other programs and services of the Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, contact the Division at 633 Pearl Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202, call (908) 558-2550 or e-mail [culturalinfo@ucnj.org](mailto:culturalinfo@ucnj.org). New Jersey relay users dial 711.

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