



Courtesy of Shelley Roberts, director of press relations, NJPAC THE CATS PAJAMAS...Erica Cenci of Westfield plays the role of Rumpelstaezer, left, in *Cats*.

WF's Erica Cenci - Cats

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The Muhlenberg College graduate, with a double major in theater and English, has also performed at Roosevelt Theater's famed summer productions at Plays-in-the-Park.

Being on tour in *Cats* is, in her words, "a dancer's dream."

In September, they opened the show in the Midwest, got a break after a month of performing and have now picked up the tour in three cities in Canada.

Ms. Cenci is particularly pleased to be back in New Jersey to perform.

"I've heard wonderful things about the space at NJPAC, so it will be great

to be there in front of my friends and family," she said.

The tour is booked through the end of May 2009. "That's the perfect time to end a tour," she said, "because then I'll be back here to audition in New York for other national tours, cruise ships and Broadway."

No matter what she goes for, this gal, like the role of the kitten she plays, will land on her feet.

Cats will offer two productions today at 1:30 and 7:30 p.m., an 8 p.m. show on Friday, November 21, two shows on Saturday — 2 and 8 p.m. — and a 3 p.m. matinee on Sunday.



Erica Cenci

SP-F Art Association Plans Museum Trip

SCOTCH PLAINS — The fall trip of the Scotch Plains and Fanwood Arts Association will be held on Tuesday, December 2. The group will head to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

A number of displays, including the exhibition of approximately 300 works of art to celebrate Philippe de Montebello's years as director of the museum, will be featured.

There is a comprehensive survey — the first in the United States — of Giorgio Morandi's career. Mr. Morandi is one of the greatest 20th Century masters of still-life and landscape painting. The

exhibition presents approximately 110 paintings, watercolors, drawings and etchings.

In addition, an exhibition of "Art and love in Renaissance Italy" will explore the various objects created to celebrate love and marriage. The Christmas tree will also be on display.

The bus departs from the Scotch Plains Municipal Building Parking Lot at 8:30 a.m. and returns around 3:30 p.m. The cost of the trip is \$30, bus only.

To reserve space or obtain more information, please call (908) 232-2631 by November 21.

Pat Cooper to Perform His 'Comedic Anger' at SOPAC

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SOUTH ORANGE — Folks heading to Pat Cooper's comedy show at the South Orange Performing Arts Center (SOPAC) — be ready for some local news jokes. Turns out the funnyman likes to peruse neighborhood newspapers to add some local flavor to his comedy act.

"This is very important as long as not to put down the town disrespectfully," he told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* in a phone conversation, calling from Pomona Park, Fla., where he is celebrating a friend's 80th birthday, an occasion the comic will approach himself next July.

Though Cooper may crack wise on current events, he said, "I don't like political humor; it turns me off." So don't expect any backtalk of President-elect Barack Obama.

"I tell my fellow comedians 'don't say black or white.'" He said you have to give the new President a chance and see what he can accomplish in four years.

His MySpace.com page lists under his interests "Ron Paul for President;" when asked about this, he said, "My son-in-law was backing Ron Paul. I backed John McCain." Goes to show how true those "official" MySpace pages are.

"I voted John McCain and then went

Greer Captures Beauty Of NJ in Photography

WESTFIELD — Area resident can meet Steve Greer, author of "Our New Jersey," on Saturday, November 22, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Town Book Store of Westfield.

For all the popular stereotypes of crowded turnpikes and industrial wastelands, "New Jersey in reality is one of the most beautiful and diverse states in the nation," according to Mr. Greer.

"From sweeping countryside to vibrant urban centers to the celebrated Jersey Shore, New Jersey has something for everyone, and then some. Our New Jersey is a stunning visual tour of every corner of the eclectic Garden State, including small towns and urban centers, state parks and historic sites and breathtaking natural wonders," he added.

Award-winning photographer Steve Greer captures the landmarks and sites celebrating the state's seafaring heritage, its role in the Revolutionary War, its famous natives like Thomas Edison and much more.

A Lambertson, N.J. resident, Mr. Greer regularly travels throughout the state to capture its natural beauty, people and spirit.

The bookstore is located at 270 East Broad Street and can be reached at (908) 233-3535.

WESTFIELD FOOD 4 THOUGHT

A Microwave Thanksgiving

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

If you've ever undergone a kitchen reconstruction, you know the difficulty of living with a makeshift kitchen. If you live in Westfield, chances are good that you have had your kitchen redone. In this town, the kitchen makeover is more popular than rebuilding.

I believe it has more to do with the quality of care that goes into maintaining our properties than with the age of our homes. In the beginning of my construction, living with two mini-refrigerators, two microwave ovens, a toaster oven and a Kurig coffee pot set up in an upstairs bedroom with a bathroom was almost fun.

My substitute kitchen looked and felt very much like a dormitory room. After a few weeks however, it began to get a bit annoying.

I certainly didn't pick the best time for my renovation. Economically, I am not in the same position I was a few months ago when I decided to undertake this project. Additionally, Thanksgiving, is around the corner and it is probably my favorite holiday to host. Each year the dinner gets bigger and better; more guests, new recipes and more elaborate decorating.

How can I have Thanksgiving dinner at my house this year? Though it may be difficult, it is not entirely out of the question. If I am seriously motivated, it can be done. I am definitely entertaining the idea. Keep the guest list small, use disposable plates and figure out a new way to cook the turkey. All I have to do is set up a table on the upstairs bridge, which can accommodate eight to 10 people. Cook the turkey outside in a turkey fryer, which will be a different experience for me.

I have friends who have been cooking their turkeys this way for the past few years and wouldn't think of doing it any other way. The turkey it produces is moist and tender and better than oven baked turkey, I am told, and cooked in a lot less time. However, extreme caution must be exercised as it is highly flammable. For safety tips, see youtube.com/watch?v=2ljY0mXuaRE.

My vegetable dishes will all be prepared in the microwave ovens. Microwaving vegetables has several advantages over conventional cooking methods. Because less water is required, more nutrients are retained and the natural flavors and colors are preserved.

Besides being fast, easy and effective, microwaving preserves precious phytonutrients such as flavanoids, which are believed to play an important role in preventing some significant diseases. Since a deep-fried turkey is more caloric than an oven baked turkey and

since my resources are quite limited, plain unadulterated vegetables will be the wisest choice.

I am thinking corn and brussel sprouts in the microwave. Probably cole slaw or a green salad, fresh corn bread and the following two recipes to continue the tradition of something new and festive.

With the limited equipment that is available, I am considering serving mini pumpkins stuffed with a pumpkin and bread stuffing. Here is the recipe for that and a traditional yam made special by stuffing it with pineapple. Happy Thanksgiving.



Stuffed Mini Pumpkins

Stuffed Mini Pumpkins

INGREDIENTS

- 6-8 mini pumpkins
- 1 1/2 cups herb stuffing
- 1 cup pumpkin (canned)
- 2 apples, peeled and finely diced
- 1 tablespoon butter (broken into small pieces)
- 3/4 cup chicken broth

PROCEDURE

Place pumpkins on a microwave safe platter and microwave on high for 2 minutes. Let cool, as they will be very hot. Carefully cut a circle, about 1/2 inch in circumference in the top of each one and scoop out all the seeds. Mix the stuffing with the canned pumpkin, apples, butter and chicken broth in a mixing bowl. Spoon the mixture into each pumpkin. Microwave on medium (7 or 8) for 3 minutes.

Yams Stuffed With Pineapple

INGREDIENTS

- 8 yams
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2/3 cup milk or non-dairy creamer
- 2 cans (16 ounces) crushed pineapple, drained
- 4 tablespoons margarine or butter
- Dash of pepper

PROCEDURE

Pierce the yams with a fork. Microwave them on high for 15 minutes stopping once to turn. Remove when they are tender. Let cool. Slice lengthwise and scoop out the pulp, set aside. In a mixing bowl, combine the pulp with the brown sugar, milk, pineapple and pepper.

Spoon back into the skins by placing a 1/2 tablespoon on top of each one. Return to the microwave and cook on high for 5 minutes.

WF, FW Residents Direct Act IV Plainfield Production

PLAINFIELD — Act IV Productions will present Neil Simon's play *The Sunshine Boys* in six performances beginning November 21.

Cast and staff members come from Middlesex, Union and Somerset counties. The producers are Gail Pollak and Barbara VanSavage of Westfield and Fanwood, respectively.

Octogenarian John Boucher, winner of a 2007-08 Perry Award from the New Jersey Association of Community Theaters for his role in Act IV's production of *Over the River and Through the Woods*, plays the cranky vaudevillian "Willie Clark." His partner, "Al Lewis," is portrayed by Renato Biribin, an attorney who took up acting in 2000 at age 60.

The vaudeville partners agree to

bring back their act, Lewis and Clark, for a television show on the history of comedy. But their off-stage dislike for each other stands in the way and creates the humor that has made the Simon play a hit over more than 30 years on stage, film and television.

Opening night is Friday, November 21, at 8 p.m. in the Parish Hall of First Unitarian Society of Plainfield, located at 724 Park Avenue. Performances follow at 8 p.m. on November 22, 28 and 29, and 3 p.m. on November 30. A November 23 benefit performance for UNICO is sold out.

Tickets are \$15. For reservations or more information, call (908) 756-0750.

Deerfield School Students to Present *Bye Bye, Birdie*

MOUNTAINSIDE — A swaggering teen idol, his swooning fans and a publicity ploy gone haywire take center stage this weekend as Deerfield School students present the 2008-2009 school musical, *Bye Bye, Birdie*.

The show, based on the 1960s Broadway hit, runs November 21 and 22, at 7 p.m. in the Deerfield gym. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors and children. Senior citizens are invited to a free dress rehearsal performance Thursday, November 20, at 6:30 p.m.

The musical chronicles Presley-esque rock 'n' roll star Conrad Birdie's last-ditch publicity stunt to kiss a dotting fan goodbye on national TV before he ships off to the army.

Birdie, played by Craig Thomas, sparks hysteria in a small town when local girl Kim McAfee, played by Morgan Kelleher, is randomly chosen for the spotlighted smooch.

Kevin Connelly plays Birdie's down-and-out agent Albert Peterson, and Isabelle Perrin is Rosie Alvarez,

Albert's doting secretary and the brains behind the ill-fated scheme.

As the plan goes awry, an energetic cast — including Luke Hoydich as Kim's boyfriend, Arthur Mezzo and Amanda Fenton as Kim's parents, Severio Zipeto as her kid brother and Naomi Fox as Albert's meddlesome mother — ratchets up the mayhem.

Rounding out the principal roles are Katie Wells, Emily Tinnirella, Allison Alexander, Kelly Rice, Moriah Arrundegui, Aaron Slepoy, Aziza Khalfani, Jessica Tirado, Matthew Barbera, Colin Stephenson, Mia Tighe, Alon Drori and Danielle Amatucci.

A 40-member chorus belts out show classics that include a lively rendition of "The Telephone Hour."

Deerfield music teacher Jeannette Maraffi directs, Michelle Boniface is assistant director, and Mary Barber choreographed.

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Christina M. Hinke for *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW...Candace Wicke chose for the chorus to sing a new piece, "Requiem For My Mother," by Stephen James Edwards despite the Vatican's preference for a Mozart or Brahms work. Ms. Wicke insisted on the new piece and told the newspaper, "Getting new music out to the public is so important...You need to capture that vision again."

Vatican City Choir, Wicke

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opportunities as a way to promote the arts. This is how her collaboration to perform Mr. Edward's piece formed.

Concert Band To Celebrate Church's 50th

MOUNTAINSIDE — On Sunday, November 23, at 2 p.m., the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts (NJWA) Concert Band, under the direction of conductor Howard Toplansky, will perform a concert at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, located at 300 Central Avenue in Mountainside, to celebrate the church's 50th anniversary.

The concert is open to the public, and admission is \$10 per person.

Mr. Toplansky said, "Our musical selections are geared to please a variety of musical tastes and range from Renaissance to Ragtime favorites."

John Ondrey, the organist and adult choir director at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, will be featured as guest conductor, while the Concert Band performs "Dedication Overture" by Clifton Williams in recognition of the parish's 50th year.

The concert will also offer "Highlights from Carusel," by composer Richard Rodgers, as well as "Carusel Waltz," "June is Bustin' Out All Over," "You'll Never Walk Alone" and others. Matvey Blanter's "In the Forest Near the Front," a famous waltz dating back to World War II, is also planned for November 23.

For further information, call (908) 964-1793 or e-mail njwband@att.net.

Schwarz

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photograph them with a very short depth of field and print them larger than life. I find their features and fur on this scale so soothing."

Recently, *Tails Pet Magazine* named Ms. Schwarz "Best Pet Photographer for 2008."

The portraits in the exhibit have been custom framed by the proprietor of Simply, Gary Fletcher.

An artist, framer, art designer and consultant for 17 years, he opened Simply in May of 2008.

"People really do smile when they see Joanie's portraits," he said.

Simply is located at 11 Walnut Ave in Cranford. The exhibit will be at the gallery until November 29; after which, selected works will be exhibited at the Starbucks in Westfield.

More information, including hours, can be found on simplyartandframes.com.

The website for Ms. Schwarz's business, "Joanie Schwarz Portraiture," is joanieschwarzphotography.com.

An accomplished film scorer, his *Requiem* is the first choral music he wrote.

She described his song as "a new form in a sense that it has large-scale choral and orchestral composition, but it also adds the narrative and drama of film scoring. It explodes in not only the way it affects the performer but the way it affects the audience. It's just mesmerizing."

"I'm looking forward to presenting this to a European audience and seeing what their response is and their reaction to it," she continued.

Ms. Wicke is breaking through in other ways, too. Not only is this the second contemporary piece the Vatican has presented in the music series, now in its seventh year, but Ms. Wicke is the first female conductor asked to appear, and it is the second time America will perform.

"It's a wonderful experience, and as Candace said, it's a wonderful opportunity to be ambassadors, too," Ms. Whitman said.



Westfield's Jim Barone, Elvis tribute artist, set to rock Baker Theater in Dover along with two other tribute artists

Elvis will be in the building later this month, when DLB Productions brings three Elvis tribute artists, representing three eras of Elvis' career, to the Baker Theater on November 22, according to a press release about the event.

At the November 22 show in Dover, Jim Barone — a Westfield, New Jersey, resident — will perform as Elvis from the '50s; Rick Virga from Long Island will recreate the legendary 1968 comeback special; Doug Church will perform as the Elvis of the 1970s.

This is a show you won't want to miss. It is a true tribute to our late King. Fortickets, call (888) 358-4732.

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