

Arts & Entertainment



WAS LOST BUT NOW SHE'S FOUND...Former Westfield Leader and Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times editor Lauren Barr, right, has opened up about a past marred by child abuse and neglect in her new collection of poems, "Little Girl Lost." Leader/Times stringer Marlou Morano interviews Mrs. Barr.

Barr's 'Little Girl Lost' Helps Her Reclaim Self, Heal From Abuse

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

WESTFIELD – Former Westfield resident Lauren Barr is using the power of the pen to help her come to terms with an abusive childhood. Mrs. Barr, who served as the assignment editor for *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* from 1999 through the end of 2004, recently published "Little Girl Lost," an emotionally charged collection of poems that center on the sexual, emotional and physical abuse she received as a child.

Poignant, heartfelt and more than a little sad, many of the poems in this anthology are a retrospective look at violation, emotional abandonment and self-blame. "The writing of 'Little Girl Lost' has been a journey from a life of abuse to a life of wholeness," said Mrs. Barr.

This progression is marked in the book. The further one reads, the more hopeful the poems become. The end of the book contains poems replete with the promise of a new relationship, new love, strength and self-awareness.

Mrs. Barr, who said she has been writing poetry "forever," began writing the poems in "Little Girl Lost" about 10 years ago, when she first began therapy.

At that time, she was looking for additional resources to help her heal the wounds inflicted on her in the

past. "I felt as though I were alone," she said. "It seemed like no one could relate to me and my experience."

Mrs. Barr found that as she worked through her memories, she was flooded with emotions.

Putting pen to paper was a catharsis. Writing also helped her focus her anger.

"Writing was helpful in freeing myself from the pain," she said.

Now married and the mother of an infant daughter, Mrs. Barr has learned that healing from abuse is possible, and one of the ways to make the healing happen is by being open and honest about the past.

"For many years, I kept my abusive situation a big secret," she said, adding that living in a town like Westfield contributed to the secrecy. "Many people think that something like child abuse couldn't possibly happen here, in Westfield," said the writer, who now lives in Clark.

When she finally reached a point when she was ready to move on, it still was not easy.

"I was dealing with a family situation, so it was a complicated breakdown," she said.

Mrs. Barr has now come to terms with her abusive past.

"I tried to run from [my past] for many years, but now, I realize it is a very big part of who I am," she explained.

Her years in the newspaper business also helped.

"Telling the stories of others was good for me. It allowed me to temporarily escape from my own situation," she said.

Mrs. Barr is now at work on a novel that has "similar themes running through it."

In addition to working for *The Leader* and *The Times*, Mrs. Barr has worked as a pharmacy technician, convenience store clerk, political campaign operative and emergency medical technician.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Thomas Edison State College.

"Little Girl Lost" is published by AuthorHouse and can be purchased from BarnesandNoble.com, Amazon.com, Target.com or directly from the publisher's website, authorhouse.com.

Scotch Plains Resident Coauthors New Book

SCOTCH PLAINS – Amateur investors can learn the secrets of the pros with "Asset Allocation For Dummies" by financial expert Jerry Miccolis of Basking Ridge and financial author Dorianne Perrucci of Scotch Plains.

Ms. Perrucci is a freelance writer and editor who has been published in *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *TheStreet.com*. She has worked on seven previous financial books, including "I.O.U.S.A." and "The AARP Retirement Survival Guide."

Mr. Miccolis is a senior financial advisor and co-owner of Brinton Eaton Wealth Advisors in Madison.

"It has never been more important to get back to basics and structure your investing on sound fundamentals," Mr. Miccolis said.

One of the first in-depth books on asset allocation written specifically for consumers, "Asset Allocation For Dummies" is a comprehensive guide to maxi-

Leader/ Times Photographer Makes Ordinary 'Unlikely'

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

AREA – The work of Cranford resident and *Westfield Leader* and *Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* photographer Paul Lachenauer will be on exhibit at Pratt Institute's Manhattan campus until July 10.

Mr. Lachenauer's exhibit, "Unlikely Events," consists of 14 warm-toned black-and-white images taken over the last three years.

He calls the photos in the exhibit "short, random images shot here and there in the course of daily life."

"I take my camera with me wherever I go – whether it is to work, to the park with my daughter, Julia, or even to the Shop Rite for milk," he continued.

The photos – sometimes quirky, off kilter or intentionally blurry – speak to the manner in which Mr. Lachenauer sees the world and its unconventionalities.

Mr. Lachenauer also employs semi-sarcastic titles to add a tongue-in-cheek touch to his work, pointing out how ordinary occurrences can truly be unlikely.

energetic and representative of life, while the other appears calmer, closed off and perhaps more accomplished.

Another almost-ghost-like portrait of a white, snowsuit-clad girl playing on a swing set in Bridgewater has been titled "The Hanging."

"The Hanging" is an ambiguous-looking picture that is representative of the types of photographs I like to shoot," said Mr. Lachenauer. "My subjects are often random things that strike my eye."

Originally from Michigan, Mr. Lachenauer and his wife, Nicole, have an interesting story to tell about how they came to live in Cranford.

"We were driving on the Garden State Parkway looking for a place to live, and we turned off at Exit 137," he said.

"Cranford looked like a pretty nice place, and so we stayed," he said.

Mr. Lachenauer holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in photography from North Michigan University.

In addition to working for *The Leader/ Times*, he works fulltime as a photographer for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he documents objects in the



Farrah Fawcett 1947 – 2009

Hollywood Deaths Shock the World

By DEBBIE HOFFMAN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

The news brought the Internet to a crawl: Michael Jackson was brought to the hospital due to cardiac arrest. Just hours later, he was dead.

And this was only hours after the world learned that actress Farrah Fawcett succumbed to her very public battle with cancer.

And this was just days after the announcement that Johnny Carson's sidekick Ed McMahon died.

Jackson, 50, went into cardiac arrest at his home in California, June 25. The cause has yet to be determined.

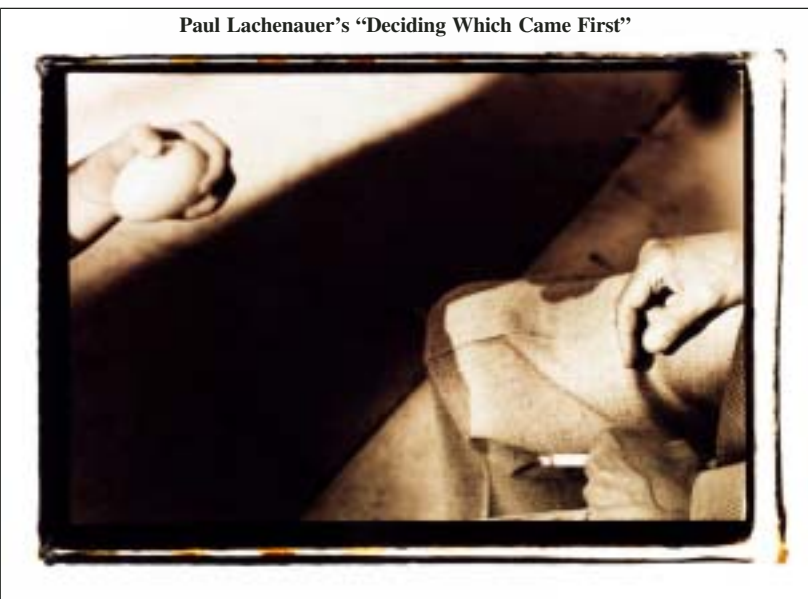
He jumped on the music scene in 1968, as part of the legendary Jackson 5 with his four older brothers. He began his solo career in 1971, hitting the pinnacle in 1982 with the release of the *Thriller* album, which remains the best-selling album of all time.

"Michael Jackson was probably the most talented pop star of our time," Mountaineer resident Marianne Jennings said. "We were very lucky to have lived during his time. The talent that he possessed showed us things that no one else ever attempted to do."

Fawcett, 62, came to prominence in 1976 with her famous pin-up photo in *Life* magazine and rose to international fame as one of the stars of the television show "Charlie's Angels." Throughout her television career, she was nominated for eight Emmy and Golden Globe awards.

McMahon, 86, had suffered from multiple health problems and had been hospitalized for several weeks. Aside from his job on "The Tonight Show," McMahon was also a famous television pitchman, promoting a number of products through the years, including Budweiser and American Family Publishers' sweepstakes.

An informal survey of teens at the Mountaineer Community Pool revealed that the passing of another pitchman, Billy May, was more of a shock to them than the deaths of Jackson, Fawcett and McMahon.



Paul Lachenauer's "Deciding Which Came First"

In his photo "Deciding Which Came First," a young child's hand grasps a plastic Easter egg and presents it in the direction of an older, mostly unseen person. Although one can only see the two hands – one holding a cigarette – of the gentleman, the photo allows one to juxtapose the two people; one is open,

museum's Greek and Roman collections.

He is also a part-time instructor at Pratt Institute, where he teaches courses in photographing artwork, fine arts photography and portfolio development.

Other professional accomplishments include having worked in the permanent collections of The Brooklyn Museum, The Museum of the City of New York, The New York Public Library and The Detroit Historical Museum.

"Unlikely Events" can be viewed at Pratt Institute's Center for Continuing and Professional Studies (CCPS) Gallery, located at 144 West 14th Street in New York City.

For more information, call (212) 647-7199 or log onto prostudies.pratt.edu/gallery_lachenauer.html.

Kaleidoscope Department Views the Art in Everything

WESTFIELD – The Westfield Summer Workshop's (WSW) Kaleidoscope Department offers varied and diverse programs to the public.

The popular CSI: Westfield course, with separate sections for grades 5 to 8, allows "investigators" to combine their interests in science and mystery as they become part of an investigative team to identify and trace evidence left in a simulated "crime scene."

Young scientists, in grades 2 and 3, can enroll in Exploring Science, where they can experience the joy of discovery with simple experiments. Scientific Encounters guides students, in grades 4 to 6, in simple biology, ecology, chemistry, physics and geology experiments.

In Scoreboard, participants can use statistics to tally bowling scores and calculate batting averages in an innovative approach to math skills.

Little Chefs, for grades 2 and 3, will have culinary artists exploring easy cooking techniques and preparing simple recipes. Those in grades 4 to 6 can enroll in Gourmet Kids, where they can experiment with snack and meal ideas while they learn measurements and food preparation.

Also part of the Kaleidoscope Department is Think Tank, a course in

which third and fourth graders can sharpen their skills with pictures, words, logic and jigsaw puzzles, and hidden-word games.

In addition to the Kaleidoscope Department, the WSW offers classes in arts, crafts, communications, music, dance and drama for students to grade 8. There are separate classes for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, along with the special first grade Little Artists program.

The WSW also enrolls students in grades 6 to 12 in the Summer Stage Theater, which will present the sci-fi musical spoof *Little Shop of Horrors* this July. No audition is needed to be part of the cast.

The 2009 WSW, open to residents of all communities, is running now until Friday, July 31, from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. daily at Edison Intermediate School in Westfield. Early morning drop-off is available in addition to a full day of programming in conjunction with the Westfield Area "Y".

Classes are taught by professionals and certified and degreed teachers, many of whom have advanced degrees in their areas of expertise. A registered nurse is on staff during the regular workshop hours.

To learn more, call (908) 518-1551 or log on to njworkshopforthearts.com.

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July 18 – August 8 Special 4 Week Class: Mommy & Me (ages 4-7), Learn new ways to interact with your child through art, 12-1:30pm.

July 26 Weekend Workshop: How to Paint like Monet, learn impressionists' painting techniques, 10am-1pm. Course details online.