



BIKE RACE...The 11th Annual Tour de Elizabeth cycling event will be held in conjunction with the 350th anniversary of Elizabethtown on Sunday, May 18. The 15-mile bicycle ride is open to cyclists of all ages and skill levels and will be held rain or shine.

Annual 'Tour de Elizabeth' Celebrates 350th Anniversary

ELIZABETH — "A tale of Two Histories" will be celebrated during the 11th Annual Tour de Elizabeth — the 350th Anniversary of the founding of Elizabethtown, and the 11th Anniversary of the bicycling event known as the "Tour de Elizabeth." The Tour is scheduled rain or shine for Sunday, May 18. The 15 mile bicycle ride is open to cyclists of all ages and skill levels.

Based upon its shared commitment of building an environmentally sustainable community, Elizabethtown Gas is partnering with Groundwork Elizabeth to provide key support for this year's Bicycle Tour. Elizabethtown Gas has a rich history in Elizabeth and has been providing safe and reliable natural gas service since 1855.

This non-competitive cycling event is supported by Mayor J. Christian Bollwage, a host of city agencies and non-profits, community minded sponsors and volunteers, and is escorted by the Elizabeth Police Department through streets closed to

the riders.

In 1664 Elizabethtown became the first permanent English community in New Jersey. Its boundaries included most of Union County, and parts of Essex County. A myriad of activities are planned for the year long celebration, such as a battle reenactment on Saturday, March 29, the 11th Annual Tour de Elizabeth, a block party celebrating the city's diversity on Sunday, June 29, and a large reenactment of the Battle of Springfield scheduled for mid October.

The bicycle ride begins at 9 a.m. sharp and registration begins at 7:30 a.m. Advanced registration is available online at the Groundwork www.groundworkelizabeth.com, and City of Elizabeth websites www.elizabethnj.org, and riders are encouraged to sign up before Saturday, May 10, which has been assigned for the cutoff date for signature t-shirts and/or hats to be distributed to the pre-registrants. Opportunities to sponsor the ride are available by contacting Groundwork.

POPCORN

"Mr. Peabody and Sherman"

There's Life in the Old Dog Yet

3 popcorns

One Popcorn, Poor — Two Popcorns, Fair — Three Popcorns, Good — Four Popcorns, Excellent

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
Film Critic

A human can learn a lot from a dog, especially if said hound is the smartest person, er, I mean being, in the whole wide world. I refer to the title characters in "Mr. Peabody and Sherman," resurrected from the 1960s for the good of all humankind by director Rob Minkoff.

I had forgotten, *sigh*, how much I enjoyed the "Peabody's Improbable History" portions of TV's "Rocky and Bullwinkle Show" back when I was only a few years older than Sherman. How cool I thought it might be to have a pooch friend and guardian as brainy as Mr. Peabody, Sherman's adoptive dad.

Oh, not to say I hadn't fully anthropomorphized my dear dog Taffy, a mutt/wirehaired terrier with a perfect black eye who, aside from an Achilles heel that compelled him to, alas, chase cars, had scholarly abilities in his own right. Through my fantasy syllogism, Mr. Peabody simply validated my assertion of Taffy's intelligence.

This is a nostalgically indulgent treat if you are a Baby Boomer, made even more gratifying by the care and dedication exerted to modernize the brilliant bowwow without detracting from the integrity of the franchise. Executive producer Tiffany Ward, daughter of series creator Jay Ward, made sure of that.

Regrettably, in one of the rare events where it would be a welcome situation, I didn't see this splendidly animated film with an audience full of 9-year-olds. The mirth it might have generated among them would be a true barometer of its target appeal.

But a serendipitous irony creates a dynamic that perhaps even the producers themselves didn't contemplate. Just as "Mr. Peabody and Sherman," about a dog that's master to a little boy, celebrates a reverse on convention, children, ever more canny than they're given credit for, might see the fun and profit in accompanying significant elders to their cartoon mecca, and at least partially enjoying it through their eyes.

You still get popcorn, nonpareils, Whoppers, Goobers...maybe even nachos with that cheese stuff...junk your parents might not allow, at least not with such reckless abandon. Heck, it's Saturday. And you get to see Grandpa laugh, and maybe even wrap your mind around the idea that this old guy you love so much watched this cartoon when he was little like you. So, if he looks over to see if you're laughing, kindly emit a chortle or two.

Actually, it shouldn't be much of a stretch. This is wittily written. Hey, it's where my generation learned some of its historical fact, fiction and satire. What Hippies occupying what college administration building could have instituted such important social change

without a working knowledge of the political thought imparted by Mr. Peabody?

But don't worry. Junior won't go subversive. Yet he will more than likely enjoy the free-wheeling and heady creativity, a definite divergence in style from today's mainstream offerings for the younger set. Mom and Dad, if familiar with the series, will most likely know if this is their own genius' box of juice. But just in case the source material is unfamiliar to them, here for the great unwashed is a synopsis.

Mr. Peabody, an abandoned pup, rose above his circumstances to become rich, scholarly and famously urbane. Wishing to give back, he adopts and raises a similarly cast off infant and, through the whimsically judicious employment of the time machine he invented, educates Sherman in every discipline via live, first-hand examples. This includes intercession from cognoscenti like Albert Einstein and Leonardo da Vinci, to name only a couple, all known to Peabody on a first name basis.

Unfortunately, however, in addition to the pangs of relinquishing a portion of Sherman's education when it comes time for the lad to start school, Peabody soon has to cope with a whole new set of fatherly concerns. Specifically, appeasing the angry parents of little Penny Peterson, who the precocious Sherman unintentionally shows up by informing that the George Washington cherry tree story she related is "apocryphal." Huh?

Oy vey! A chain-reaction is put in motion, and soon evil, prejudiced Mrs. Grunion from Social Services is trying to wrest Sherman from Mr. Peabody, contending a dog cannot be a fit parent. And so the stage is set for metaphorical lessons about bullying, tolerance, respect, love and proper behavior in general.

Voyaging through the ages in search of wisdom, truth and redemption, "Mr. Peabody and Sherman" creatively makes its case in a colorfully contrived, logically illogical twisting of history, and along the way causes us several heartwarming laughs. While some may shun its mind-expanding sophistication, most will find that this pedigreed tail-wagger is that rare breed of kiddie flick that entertains not only our small fries, but the child within us as well.

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"Mr. Peabody and Sherman," rated PG, is a Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation release directed by Rob Minkoff and stars the voices of Ty Burrell, Max Charles and Ariel Winter. Running time: 92 minutes

www.goleader.com

NJ Festival Orchestra Announces Corporate Sponsors for Gala

WESTFIELD — The Board of New Jersey Festival Orchestra (NJFO) and its Friends' group will be celebrating the 31st anniversary of the New Jersey Festival Orchestra (formerly Westfield Symphony Orchestra), with its annual gala under the theme, "Starry Starry Night" on the evening of Saturday, April 5, at The Clubhouse at Galloping Hill Golf Course in Kenilworth.

In making the announcement earlier this week, Norman Luka, President of the NJFO Board of Trustees, also shared the news that Mercedes Benz dealer Ray Catena of Union will be the Gala Sponsor for this year's celebration, which will include a cocktail reception, gourmet dinner and dancing to a 10 piece band, as well as live and silent auctions.

"We are thrilled and honored to be associated with such a wonderful celebration and crucial fundraising event," remarked Sue Hengstler, Financial Controller for Ray Catena of Union.

"There are very few suburban towns across America with an orchestra of this caliber. We have been constantly dazzled over the years by its performances and we are delighted to help ensure that Westfield and the surrounding community will have access to this fine music for many years to come," added John Weber, Ray Catena Sales and Leasing Representative.

In addition to a 50/50 cash raffle, there will be an array of unique items and experiences for auction.

Some of the items to be auctioned during the evening by Assemblyman Jon Bramnick include get-away packages to exotic locations, tickets to some of the best theatre locations in New York and New Jersey, premium ticket packages for Giants football and Rangers hockey games, and eclectic New York dining.

A silent auction of items donated by over 70 local retailers, restaurants and businesses has also been put together. The silent auction will run throughout the evening which will culminate in the drawing of the winners for the 50-50 cash raffle. Raffle tickets may be purchased at the NJFO office and winners need not be present to claim a prize.

In his statement, Dr. Luka also acknowledged the outstanding generosity of corporate sponsors PNC Wealth Management and Fragomen, Del Rey, Bersen and Loewy, LLP commenting, "The arts are again taking a fiscal hit this year and it is essential that we rally to fill the gap in public funding in order to continue the WSO (Westfield Symphony Orchestra) tradition of live music within our community."

Invitations and raffle tickets have been mailed to NJ Festival Orchestra subscribers and supporters, but attendance is open to the public.

To learn more about NJ Festival Orchestra or to purchase tickets for Starry Starry Night, which may be obtained on a first-come first-served basis, the public is invited to go to www.njfestivalorchestra.org or call the NJFO office at (908) 232-9400 on weekdays 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



GALA PARTNERS...Ray Catena of Union will be the corporate sponsor for New Jersey Festival Orchestra's upcoming fundraising Gala on Saturday, April 5. Pictured, left to right, are: David Wroe, NJ Festival Orchestra's Music Director and Conductor, Ray Catena of Union's General Manager Daniel Liguori, Sales and Leasing Agent John Weber and Financial Controller Sue Hengstler shown with the 2014 Mercedes S-Class.

Sleeping Beauty at UC Sensory Friendly Theatre

UNION COUNTY — The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders is pleased to announce that tickets are still available for the quintessential classic ballet *Sleeping Beauty* at the Union County Performing Arts Center in Rahway on Sunday, March 16, at 2 p.m.

Performed by the New Jersey Ballet, *Sleeping Beauty* is the latest installment in Union County's Sensory Friendly Theatre. This series of music, dance, and theatrical events is designed especially for persons with autism and other sensory sensitivities.

The Sensory Friendly Theatre series began in 2012 as an initiative of the Chairman that year, Freeholder Alexander Mirabella. This unique performance series was designed and adapted in collaboration with Autism Friendly Spaces, LLC, the Union County Performing Arts Center, Paper Mill Playhouse, and Children's Specialized Hospital.

Adjustments to sound, lighting and other elements are made in order to present a calming atmosphere, and trained staff is available to assist audience members and their families.

Sleeping Beauty is filled with colorful characters brought to life by New Jersey Ballet's troupe of international artists in a magical fairytale castle.

The performance is accompanied by a storyteller to help young ballet fans follow the story.

The next performance in the Sen-

sory Friendly Theatre series is *Aesop's Fables* with acclaimed puppeteer Jim West.

For more information or to purchase tickets call the Union County Performing Arts Center, (732) 499-8226 or visit ucpac.org. All seats are \$8 per person.

For information on additional Union County recreational programs for people with disabilities age five and up, call the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation at (908) 527-4806 or visit ucnj.org.

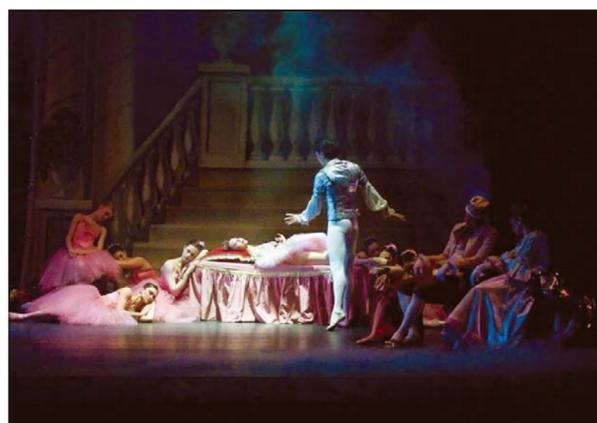
Kean Stage Presents

4 Girls 4

UNION — Kean Stage will present *4 Girls 4* on Sunday, April 6, at 3 p.m. in Wilkins Theatre located at Kean University.

4 Girls 4 is a fabulously flirty, funny, frolic, featuring Andrea McArdle, Maureen McGovern, Donna McKechnie and Faith Prince. The dynamic, award winning musical stars from Broadway, film, TV and recordings will delight you performing the biggest hits from their Tony Award winning shows.

Wilkins Theatre is located on Kean University's main campus at 1000 Morris Avenue in Union. Tickets are \$30 standard; \$20 senior, student, child and are available at the Wilkins Theatre Box Office on campus, by calling (908) 737-SHOW (7469), and online at www.keanstage.com.



SLEEPING BEAUTY...Tickets are still available for the quintessential classic ballet *Sleeping Beauty* at the Union County Performing Arts Center in Rahway on Sunday, March 16 at 2 p.m., in a special Sensory Friendly Theatre performance by the New Jersey Ballet.



ENSEMBLE CONCERT...Members of the Junior Musical Club rehearse for the Ensemble Concert to be performed Wednesday, April 2, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church, 170 Elm Street, Westfield.

Junior Musical Club Presents Ensemble Concert

WESTFIELD — The Junior Musical Club will present its annual Ensemble Concert on Wednesday, April 2, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church, 170 Elm Street, Westfield.

Club members in eighth grade and high school from the local area will join together in duets and trios, playing the most popular music of the past 250 years. The public is welcome to attend the concert free of charge. Refreshments will be served at a reception following the performance.

The duos performing will be Kristin Hauge, violin, and Cindy Gong, viola (Mozart's Duo, K. 423, Rondo); Belle Lin, violin, and Mira Yang, viola (Mozart's Duo, K. 423, Allegro); Suraj Chandran, violin, and Belle Lin, viola (Michael Haydn's Sonata 3 in F Major, Rondo); Hermes Suen, violin and Chrissy Griesmer, viola

Fanwood's Historic Philathalian Scrapbooks

FANWOOD — For more than 60 years, from 1933 to 1998, Fanwood's community theater group called the Philathalians, entertained audiences with their thespian talents. Legend has it that the group was formed to keep themselves occupied so as to divert their attention from the dismal effects of the Great Depression.

To memorialize their activities for future generations of Fanwoodians, they made faithful and consistent use of the scrapbook. Some seven of those scrapbooks are part of the holdings of the Fanwood Museum located on the lower level of the Historic Fanwood Railroad Station.

On Sunday, April 6, between 2 and 4 p.m. these scrapbooks will be available for visitors to view and examine.

The details of all of the Philathalian productions have been faithfully preserved in playbills, newspaper publicity releases, ticket samples, photographs and sketches of set design. Fanwood's elementary school building on LaGrande Avenue now a children's hospital was the place where the Philathalians first staged their productions. Some were later presented at the Park Avenue elementary/high school in Scotch Plains. For years, they used a converted barn on Elm Street in Fanwood before they moved to Fanwood's Carriage House in the late 1980s.

For an intimate glimpse into one of Fanwood's longest enduring social organizations visit the Fanwood Museum on April 6.



SOUNDTRACK...A sound piece written by Calderone School of Music faculty member, Professor Maria Mykolenko, above, (violin) was used as the soundtrack for "Ascension," a dance piece by Rachel McGinnis.

Mykolenko's Sound Piece Selected For Concert

AREA — A sound piece written by Calderone School of Music faculty member, Professor Maria Mykolenko, violin, was used as the soundtrack for "Ascension," a dance piece by Rachel McGinnis.

The performance was held at the Theatre at the Mort and Irma Handel Performing Arts Center at the Hartt School, University of Hartford in Connecticut on March 7.

The performance was part of the "Senior Dance Concert" with original choreography and musical compositions from students of the Hartt School. It was also live streamed at www.hartford.edu/harttstreaming as part of "Live from Hartt" series.

The Calderone School of Music in East Hanover and Springfield offers private lessons on all instruments and

(Michael Haydn's Sonata 1 in C Major, Adagio); Abbie Fossaceca and Katherine Purachev, piano four hands (Scott Joplin's Bethena); Victoria Tian and Mira Yang, piano four hands (Bill G. Evans' Ivory Watch); Samantha Tropper, soprano, and Abbie Fossaceca, piano (Richard Rodgers' "Come Home" from Allegro); Samantha Tropper, soprano, and Kristin Hauge, piano (Handel's "V' adoro Pupillo" from Julius Caesar).

The duets continue with Belle Lin, violin, and Tiffany Chen, viola (Eighteenth century anonymous, Duetto 1, Allegro moderato); Anna Song and Victoria Tian, flutes (Grétry's Gavotte from Barge Music); Allie Liang and Alice Yue, piano four hands (Yingju Wu's Theme from The Heroic Sings of the Grassland); Hermes Suen and Dan Zheng, piano four hands (Benjamin Britten's Playful Pizzicato); Kristin Hauge and Katherine Purachev, piano four hands (Arthur Benjamin's Jamaican Rhumba); and Max Flysich and Chrissy Griesmer, piano four hands (Bizet's "The Top" from Children's Games).

Book Signing at Plainfield Library

PLAINFIELD — On Saturday, March 22, the Plainfield Public Library will sponsor a book signing event from 2 to 4 pm. Seven New Jersey authors will meet the public and share with visitors their latest writings. The books will be available for sale and their authors will be on hand to autograph any purchased titles.

The featured works represent a diversity of categories including fiction, non-fiction, self-help and history. Authors scheduled to appear include Nellie Dixon, former resident and arts activist; Joanne Rajoppi, Union County Clerk; Dr. Thomas Brown, retired President of Union County College; and Linda Barth, N.J. Canal Historian. Other authors include Janet Hilliman, Azuka Zuke, and Eric Nierstedt.

For more information on this Book Signing event or any of Plainfield Public Library's other services, call (908) 757-1111 ext. 132.