



Christina M. Hinke for The Leader/Times

FUN TIMES...Local band The Lovehandles headlined Saturday night at the Crossroads in Garwood. Claudine Flynn belts out tunes with band members Tim Goodwin, Yusuf Mufti, Chris Lenza, Vin Lenza, Michael Marchesi, and Brett Aveni, mostly all from Cranford. The band plays upbeat Rock, R&B, Ska, Blues, Swing, Funk, that gets the crowd groovin'.

April Movies & Showtimes At the Scotch Plains Library

SCOTCH PLAINS — Join fellow movie lovers at the Scotch Plains Public Library each Friday at noon for Friday Films. In April, the library will be showing a few movies celebrated at the Oscars. No registration is necessary.

April 12: *Black Panther* (PG-13, 135 min) — A superhero known as Black Panther defends Wakanda, a technologically advanced country in Africa that has hidden itself away from the rest of the world. Now, he must face a dissident who wants to sell the country's natural resources to fund an uprising.

April 26: *Green Book* (PG-13, 130 min) — A working-class Italian-American bouncer becomes the driver of an African-American classical pianist on a tour of venues through the 1960s American South.

These events are free and open to all interested participants. Registration is not required. For more information, visit <http://www.scotplib.org>, call (908) 322-5007, ext. 204, or e-mail library@scotplib.org.

The Scotch Plains Library is located at 1927 Bartle Avenue, one block from Park Avenue in the center of town.

Fanwood Celebrates Poetry Month With Poetry Readings

FANWOOD — The Carriage House Poetry Series invites the public to celebrate National Poetry Month at a free event on Tuesday, April 16, at 8 p.m., featuring distinguished poets Deborah LaVeglia and Edwin Romond in the Kuran Arts Center on Watson Road, off North Martine Avenue, adjacent to Fanwood Borough Hall. (GPS use 75 N. Martine Avenue).

Ms. LaVeglia is director of the "PoetsWednesday" readings at the Barron Arts Center in Woodbridge, the longest-running poetry series in New Jersey. A resident of Cranford, she has published poetry and essays in numerous journals and anthologies. She was a guest on National Public Radio and has been a featured poet at readings in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Ms. LaVeglia was poetry editor of *Black Swan Review* and published a chapbook of her poems, "Vigil," in 2000. She conducts poetry workshops in schools, colleges, and other venues, and is the creator and director of the Woodbridge Township High School Annual Poetry Slam and the Woodbridge Literary Festival.

Mr. Romond is the author of eight collections of poetry and has been awarded writing fellowships from the

National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the New Jersey and Pennsylvania State Councils on the Arts. He is the recipient of the 2013 New Jersey Poetry Prize.

Mr. Romond was a public-school teacher for 32 years at Metuchen High School, Thorne Middle School in Port Monmouth, and Warren Hills Regional High School in Washington, N.J. before retiring in 2003. He now works part-time in the poetry program of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.



Deborah LaVeglia



Edwin Romond

A native of Woodbridge, Mr. Romond lives in Wind Gap, Penn. The Carriage House Poetry Series was founded in 1998 at the Patricia Kuran Arts Center, an historic 19th century Gothic Revival structure that was once a carriage house, hence the name of the series.

The April 16 reading is free and open to the public. An open mic will follow the featured performance, so individuals are invited to read one poem of their choice.

For online directions, and the 2019 Carriage House Poetry Series calendar, visit <http://carriagehousepoetryseries.blogspot.com>. Or call (908) 889-7223 or (908) 889-5298.

Documentary on Immigration And Talk on April 23

COUNTY — Union County residents and visitors are invited to attend a free screening of the documentary *Home is a Human Right: 6 Stories of Immigration* on Tuesday, April 23 at 7 p.m., at the North Avenue Academic Building of Kean University, 1075 Morris Avenue in Union Township. The free event is presented by the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders through the Office of Community Engagement and Diversity in partnership with the YWCA of Union County through its Stand Against Racism campaign.

Agencies that offer services in support of undocumented refugees and immigrants will also be on-site before and after the screening to offer resources and guidance.

"*Home is a Human Right* focuses a sharp lens on the threats that refugees and immigrants face in their home countries and here in the U.S.," said Freeholder Chair Bette Jane Kowalski. "It also provides informed, effective guidance for people who want to take action in support of human rights and protection for undocumented neighbors in our community."

Home is a Human Right seeks to highlight the human story of immigrants pursuing better lives in the

middle of conflict by exploring the growing complexities of immigration in the United States. The series touches upon topics like DACA, refugees, sanctuary cities, medical care for undocumented immigrants and the plight of immigrant students. Details on the 6 short films can be found at https://www.bravenewfilms.org/home_is_human.

The movie screening will be followed by two speakers: Victor Salama, Executive Director of First Friends of NJ & NY, and Sara Cullinane, Esq., State Director of Make the Road NJ, as well as a discussion.

The event is co-sponsored by Community Access Unlimited, Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council, Family Promise Union County, The Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless, and St. Joseph Social Service Center.

For more information or to RSVP, please contact Nathalie Hernandez, Coordinator, Union County Office of Community Engagement & Diversity by email at nahernandez@ucnj.org or by phone at (908) 527-4880.

goleader.com/subscribe

POPCORN

Transit
As in, Letters of...
3 popcorns

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

By Michael S. Goldberger
film critic

One has to be either a fool or a complicit coward not to recognize the mercilessness regularly perpetrated on humankind by immoral governments and their tyrannical leaders. Equally clueless are those who don't realize that the worldwide, mass immigration being used as a scapegoat by said guilty-as-sin autocrats is in essence a product of their regimes' greed, racism and ineptness. Ever notice that the really bad guys are never ever wrong? While Rick in *Casablanca* (1942) occasionally confesses to a lack of judgement, you'll never hear good Nazi Major Strasser admitting a mistake. Civics Lesson #1: Rick is good; Major Strasser is bad.

What all this has to do with *Transit*, adapted by director Christian Petzold from Anna Seghers's 1942 novel, is just about everything, albeit in an artistic, symbolic, poly-metaphorical way. Read the plot synopsis and it seems rather clear-cut: A man fleeing France from the invading Germans assumes, at first unintentionally, the identity of a dead author whose wife he falls in love with upon their chance meeting. She doesn't know her husband is dead. However, in weaving his muckraking tale of turmoil and inhumanity in the world of borders, checkpoints and provincialism, leave it to Petzold to invariably take the more obscure path.

Perhaps it's his form of audio-visual touch-n-feel in an attempt to make us appreciate the uncaring horror inflicted on those caught in the vice of tyrants playing at government. And just to make it a little more murky in an art house sort of way, especially for those watching it stateside with subtitles, while Ms. Seghers's story takes place in the 1940s, when the Nazis are indeed invading and occupying France, Mr. Petzold asserts a current poignancy by setting it in the present day. To further complicate matters, subtitles or not, you can't help but feel a tad disoriented by actors speaking German playing the French people who are being forced to flee from the Nazis who would "cleanse" them.

We are tossed headlong into the discomfort of the protagonist, Georg, ably played by Franz Rogowski, an everyman attempting to find some sort of mental and physical terra firma on which to stand in this never-ending upshot of a Babel toppled for its overweening vanity. Marie (Paula Beer), the stary-eyed wife who simply won't believe that her famous writer spouse is dead, co-represents the face of immigrants. They weren't born

immigrants with DNA denoting that, but flung into it, putting a face on it. In short, people just like you and me. They once went to work, watched TV at night, rooted for Bernie at the little league game on Saturday and agonized about not being able to find a good, honest handyman. Now someone wants to see their letters of transit, and more often worse.

The film is a refresher course in what goes on if we blink too long and miss the signs alerting us to a democracy in jeopardy. Sadly, I know the story only too well, not because I am astute, but because I have been around for a while and those ignominious powers that be rarely take a break from their blatant attempts to evaporate our freedom. They are the bully in the playground who grew up without benefit of a life-changing epiphany. This isn't happy viewing. Still, while it would be more enjoyable were I a college sophomore parsing the recently screened film in a coffee shop with my bright-eyed and bushy-tailed cohorts, and planning how we will change the world, I'm grateful the discussion is still in progress.

Granted, it is esoterically embroidered. Yet, even after we're confident that *Transit* is like something Aesop may have written were he determined to challenge the wiles and wherefores of contemporary totalitarianism, we're still at a bit of a loss. You can't help but feel that there is yet another cryptic element of human psychology to be deciphered, that there is a gene in some folks that not only precludes them from calling out obvious tyrants, but actually causes them to vociferously side with them. Organisms in good health move toward pleasure and away from pain. Thus, one needn't be Dr. Freud to understand that any aberration thereof is, well, aberrant, and in human beings specifically, downright unsociable.

Plopped atop all this high-minded contemplation, director Petzold submits a mini thesis on bravery and sacrifice in the face of world upheaval. And, proving that brilliant minds do indeed think alike, one should note that while the windup in "Transit" bears heroic similarities to "Casablanca," the two stories were written at about the same time. Both are primers of civic-mindedness that essentially ask, would that candidate you're about to vote for give up his or her letters of transit so that Victor Laszlo and Ilsa could continue their fight for freedom?

Transit, not rated, is a Music Box Films release directed by Christian Petzold and stars Franz Rogowski, Paula Beer and Godehard Giese. Running time: 101 minutes.

Classic Baseball Films On The Big Screen at UCPAC

RAHWAY — *A League of Their Own* and *The Natural* are set to screen on 35 mm film in a double feature on Sunday, April 14, at 2 p.m. as part of the Union County Performing Arts Center's classic film series.

All film screenings include free popcorn along with an organ pre-show on the theater's historic Biggest Little Wurlitzer organ.

A League of Their Own is a fictional account of the real All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, founded when the WWII draft led to a scarcity of male players. It boasts an all-star cast including Tom Hanks, Madonna, Rosie O'Donnell, and more.

At 5 p.m. is *The Natural* stars Robert Redford who plays baseball player Roy Hobbs, whose skills get him a tryout with the Cubs at age 19. However, an attack leaves Hobbs with a gunshot wound, completely derailing his dream. Hobbs signs with the NY Knights, the last place team, at age 35, and must now prove through age and injury that he can still become the "best there ever was."

The Union County Performing Arts Center is located at 1601 Irving Street in Rahway. General admission tick-

ets, start at \$5 for one movie and \$10 for a double-feature, and can be purchased at www.ucpac.org/events, in person at the Box Office, or by calling (732) 499-8226. The Box Office can be reached via email at boxoffice@ucpac.org.

St. Michael's to Hold Tricky Tray Apr. 12

CRANFORD -- St. Michael School in Cranford will host their fourth annual Designer Bag BINGO & Tricky Tray. This year's event will take place on Friday, April 12, at the Kenilworth VFW located at 33 South 21st Street in Kenilworth. Doors open at 5 p.m. Calling begins at 7 p.m.

Admission is \$25 per person and includes 10 games of BINGO (3 faces/game) with a chance to win a designer handbag each game. Plus, hundreds of Tricky Tray raffle prizes! Tricky Tray tickets will be available for purchase at the event.

For additional information, please contact the school at: saint.michael@verizon.net or (908) 276-9425.



ART IN BLOOM...Alicia Flynn Cotter's work above will be hung along with other artists' work that are centered around the visual beauty of gardens in an exhibit "Art in Bloom: Images Inspired by Flowers and Gardens" to be on display through April 28 at the Watchung Arts Center. See watchungarts.org for more information.

'Painting Nights with Pat' To Benefit Nitschke House

KENILWORTH — The Kenilworth Historical Society is presenting a continuing series of "Painting Nights" with resident artist Patricia Hubinger to benefit the historic Oswald J. Nitschke House "living history" museum and cultural arts center. The enlightening, enjoyable, two-hour painting sessions, held in the Nitschke House cultural arts center (49 South 21 Street, Kenilworth), give participants of all ages, backgrounds and abilities an opportunity to create unique paintings under the guidance of a master artist instructor. The next "Painting Nights with Pat" will take place on Tuesday, April 16; Thursday, May 2; and Tuesday, June 18, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Acrylic paint, brushes, canvases, easels, smocks and other art supplies will be provided as part of the \$25 admission price. Participants are asked to arrive by 6:15 p.m. and are

invited to bring food and beverages. Advance registration is required, as seating is limited. To make reservations for any of the Painting Nights, to receive information about future painting sessions and/or to arrange for private painting parties, please call (908) 709-0434. Gift certificates are available.

Proceeds will benefit the Kenilworth Historical Society's Oswald J. Nitschke House (c. 1880) "living history" museum and cultural arts center by helping defray the cost of an elevator that makes all levels of the newly restored site fully accessible to everyone.

The Kenilworth Historical Society is an independent, volunteer-based, non-profit, tax-exempt, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to the research, preservation and interpretation of the Oswald J. Nitschke House, local history and culture.

CASA Fundraiser Tours U.S. History With Whiskey

WESTFIELD — Whiskey connoisseurs rejoice! On Saturday, April 27, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Union County will host a men's only event, "American History Through a Whiskey Glass," an immersive experience for guests and their senses, at Classic Thyme in Westfield.

Tour guides for the evening are Duke University Professor Harris Cooper, also an executive bourbon steward, and Beth Cooper. The pair have prepared an experience both informative and satiating, as guests journey through time learning the cultural significance of whiskey throughout history, and enjoy small dishes prepared by Classic Thyme's Master Chef David Martone that complement each whiskey and incorporate era-specific ingredients. Period music and several whiskey raffles round out the event.

Tickets are \$160; proceeds benefit CASA of Union County, which recruits, trains, supervises and supports community volunteers to advocate for abused, neglected and abandoned children placed in foster homes or residential facilities. There are approximately 500 Union County youth, from birth to age 21, in foster care, and the nonprofit advocates for just over half. Volunteers have court-or-

dered access to a child and all parties in their life, then report findings to the judge in order to ensure best interests remain a priority, their needs are met, and their trauma is not exacerbated while in care.

Space is limited; purchase tickets at www.casaofunioncounty.org/whiskeyevent.

To learn more about CASA of Union County and ways to get involved — from becoming an advocate to attending and sponsoring events throughout the year, like the upcoming 5K run/1M walk May 4 at Oak Ridge Park in Clark, contact Courtney at cgreen@casaofunioncounty.org or (908) 293-8136.

Newsies Is Delivering To Cranford This May

CRANFORD — *Newsies* is playing May 3 through May 18 at the CDC Theatre in Cranford. Advance tickets are \$25, general admission open seating, and \$23 for seniors ages 62-plus. Tickets purchased at the door are \$30 general admission seating and \$28 for seniors ages 62-plus.

The theatre is located at 78 Winans Avenue. See cdctheatre.org for more information about the two-time Tony-award winning musical.

The Best Free Music in Town...

is at the Westfield Memorial Library!

Enjoy the Music of the West African Kora (Harp) on Tuesday, April 16 at 7:00 pm



Hear Sean Gaskell play traditional songs on this melodic instrument with 21 strings.



Gordon James Performs Songs From Down Yonder on Wednesday, April 17 at 7:00 pm
A quartet of notable musicians!



It's your Library ... make the most of it
550 East Broad Street
Westfield www.wmlnj.org 908.789.4090

Open to WML and MURAL cardholders. Sign up online at www.wmlnj.org and click on the Calendar link, or call 908.789.4090 option 0.