



COURTESY OF WESTFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CREATIVE MATH LESSON...A Math Bakery took place at Franklin School in Westfield, where fourth graders in Beth Billing's class recently donned a baker's hat and apron for a creative lesson on how to multiply whole numbers by fractions/mixed numbers. "Because fractions are often used in baking, this activity was an engaging way for my students to apply these skills in a real-world scenario," said Ms. Billing. "They rotated between different stations with varying levels of difficulty - from basic computation to more complex problem-solving. They worked with their groups to understand and solve the problems at each station."

Jackie Robinson Program Tonight at Fanwood Lib.

FANWOOD - The Fanwood Memorial Library presents Jack Roosevelt Robinson - An American Icon, with Dr. Lawrence Hogan on Thursday, May 16, at 7 p.m.

Jackie Robinson was a great baseball player, and a great American. This presentation will explore both those aspects of his life. His contributions to his country are coupled with the unparalleled grace and excitement he brought to the baseball diamond. We will explore the contours of the world that made him who he was, and watch how, with Dodgers' owner Branch Rickey, he conducted the "Great Experiment" that changed forever, in such positive ways, our National Pastime, and our nation as a whole.

Dr. Lawrence Hogan is Emeritus Professor of History at Union County College. He is the author of several books on the history of black baseball most notably "The Forgotten History of African American Baseball," and is executive director of the documentary *Before You Can Say Jackie*

Robinson.

This family presentation is made possible by the Friends of the Fanwood Memorial Library. Please visit the library website to learn more about this and other library programs at www.fanwoodlibrary.org.

Les Misérables: Student Edition on Through May 19 at UCPAC

RAHWAY - Union County Performing Arts Center (UCPAC), in association with Pixie Dust Players, presents *Les Misérables: Student Edition* through Sunday, May 19, at the Hamilton Stage. This production features two casts with 38 teen performers in each.

Tickets are \$25 each. For more information and tickets, visit ucpac.org/events, visit the Box Office in person at 1601 Irving Street, Rahway, or call (732) 499-8226. The Hamilton Stage is located at 360 Hamilton Stage in Rahway.

Wardlaw+Hartridge Students Shine at Art Show, Concert

AREA - Upper School students at The Wardlaw+Hartridge School in Edison displayed their talents in the



Isabella Sena-Cash of Scotch Plains and Tosin Otarewaju of Piscataway perform in the band.



William Rehwinkel of Scotch Plains sings in the choir.

fine and performing arts during the annual Spring Art Show and Concert on May 2. Parents roamed the halls and admired many forms of outstanding art, including an award-winning painting and creative sculpture on display in the lobby of the Berry Performing Arts Center.

The concert included performances by the Concert Band, new Jazz Combo, MadJazz vocal ensemble, Jazz Band and Concert Choir. Highlights included several impressive solos by the jazz musicians, a delightful rendition of "Ain't Misbehavin'" by MadJazz and the Concert Choir's finale, "This is Me" from *The Greatest Showman*.



Camila Martinez of Scotch Plains proudly displays her creative art work.

Auditions at CDC Theatre in Cranford

CRANFORD - CDC Theatre in Cranford will be having auditions for two exciting shows!

The first will be for a summer theatre production of *Carrie*, the musical. This is a program for college aged performers ages 18-25. Auditions will be at the theatre's home, 78 Winans Avenue in Cranford on Thursday, May 23, at 7 p.m. and Saturday, May 25, at noon. Performers are asked to prepare a 16-32 bars of a song and an accompanist will be provided.

The second set of auditions will be for the opening show of the theatre's 101st season: *Chess*. Open auditions for this musical will take place on Wednesday and Thursday, June 12 and 13, at 7 p.m. Performers are asked to prepare a 32-bar cut of a song in the style of the show.

Additional information can be found by visiting cdctheatre.org.

POPCORN

Avengers: Endgame
 What the World Needs Now
 4 popcorns

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

By Michael S. Goldberg
film critic

Y'know how I'm always looking for metaphors and clues in movies that might lead the way to saving our republic from the current rash of misanthropic evildoers? Y'know...those who would replace our democracy with autocracy for their own profit and narcissistic obsession. Well, someday I'm going to just review a movie. But this isn't that someday. Nah...*Avengers: Endgame*, a surprisingly entertaining, jaunty ride to vicarious liberty is simply too rich with the stuff of the Four Freedoms to be treated as just another superhero movie. It celebrates and brims with the very idea of righteousness, replete with an utterly contemptible villain too hateful and too real to discount as mere comic book fiction.

Whether it's because I've laboriously waded through and consumed way too much Marvel lore in the films leading up to *Avengers: Endgame*, or because the directors Russo wanted to reach the greatest number of viewers this go-round, it seems the minutiae is kept to a minimum. While there are surely enough series details to satisfy those devotees who've practically eschewed all the conventional aspects of life in favor of total devotion to the alternate fantasy world Stan Lee created, I'd say this is the one you could recommend to your old Aunt Millie. Granted, it might be a bit of a lab experiment. I mean gosh, she hasn't seen a movie since *Forrest Gump* (1994). Still, attired for the occasion in wig hat and high-heeled sneakers, it may be an epiphany for her.

Truth be told, I approached the newest *Avengers* with no small smidgen of trepidation. Weighing in at 181 minutes, that's three hours and 60 seconds in human film critic's time...meaning there'd be forces to distract me from my evaluative duties. Helpful pundits on the Internet offered all sorts of advice to potential viewers, including special guidance for moviegoers of a certain age understandably concerned with how nature might intervene. But the recommendation here is just go. You'll catch up, or your sidekick will be happy to give you his or her subjective and probably erroneous take. No matter. As a parking attendant recently related on a totally different matter, "It's all good."

Fact is, though the serio comic adventure tale, a panoply of the very latest computer magic to suffuse the silver screen, is rapid fire action most of the way, it is ultimately an exuberant kaleidoscope of technology, friendship and the separating of truth from the deceit of

those who would bamboozle us. In a splash of inspiration so needed in our current state of affairs, wherein we agonize just who could smite the dragon (should it be a man, a woman, and what color of either?), the *Avengers* are an embarrassment of heroes.

Heck...there's nothing much more fun than saving the world for democracy with some of your best pals, and our gallant, larger-than-life surrogates are especially adept at exemplifying that. Oh sure, they have their tiffs, and just enough soap-opera-like complications to prove they are indeed human and/or otherworldly. However, as is demonstrated time and time again when a group dedicated to a noble cause gets its head screwed on right, where there's a will there's a way.

Gee, you have to get a load of this bad guy. He is worthy of every effort our champions are able to summon in his defeat. But the depravity of Thanos (Josh Brolin) sways curiously from the usual. This baddy goes beyond the traditional antihero you love to hate. Grotesquely conjured, he is strikingly familiar in his zeal to destroy the world and remake it in his image. And of course he has the endorsement of the bootlicking grovelers and fawners who make the villain possible. Filmic heirs to the flying monkeys who backed the Wicked Witch of the West in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), they are the mob, ready to do the master's bidding at any cost. But what's their game? Are they so bereft of hope so as to support a monster that they know is at a minimum full of bunk, barely able to hide his disdain for their blind fealty, and at maximum just short of being the Devil incarnate? Those metaphors were giving me the willies.

But the group of teenagers behind me who nostalgically reminded of my nights at the Park Theatre with that old gang of mine, apparently feared not. Animated like a Greek chorus in their rousing, enthusiastic certainty that the title characters would prevail so long as they didn't lose sight of the common goal that binds them, their optimism prodded me to indulge in yet one more metaphor. That they were young and cheering for morality to be victorious over corruption offered me hope that they might very well turn out to be the real-life *Avengers* we'll need for a virtuous future.

Avengers: Endgame, rated PG-13, is a Walt Disney Studios release directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo and stars Robert Downey, Jr., Chris Evans and Scarlett Johansson. Running time: 181 minutes.

Building a Brighter Future for The Valerie Fund Kids

PLAINFIELD - The Valerie Fund invites the public to take a self-guided tour of Grace's House, a Valerie Fund Designer Show House, building a brighter future for The Valerie Fund Children, at 950 Hillside Avenue, Plainfield. Built in 1870, the 7,000+ square foot historical property features three floors of living space and is set on two acres of land. Architecturally, 950 Hillside Avenue is a combination of both the Second Empire and popular Colonial Revival styles.

This designer show house will showcase the talent and vision of some of the area's most extraordinary interior designers. Come meet them

and let them share their vision for the transformation of their rooms. Each of these designers has shared their time, talent and experience to bring this magnificent home back to its former glory, all while helping The Valerie Fund.

The Valerie Fund is a New Jersey based, four-star non-profit that provides comprehensive healthcare to 6,000 children and their families with cancer and blood disorders.

Tours of this revitalized home, Grace's House will continue Thursday, May 16, through Sunday, May 19. Tickets can be purchased at the door for \$35.

Poets Christian, Koplow Featured in Poetry Series

FANWOOD - The Carriage House Poetry Series invites the public to a free event on Tuesday, May 21, at 8 p.m., featuring distinguished poets Judith Christian and Elaine Koplow in the Kuran Arts Center on Watson Road, off North Martine Avenue, adjacent to Fanwood Borough Hall. (GPS use 75 N. Martine Avenue).

Judith Christian is a former president of the South Mountain Poets. With a foundation of prior experience in the field of technical publishing, she was instrumental in editing and producing several South Mountain anthologies of New Jersey poets. Judith recently returned to an interest in photography and is creating digital photo art for sale and public exhibition. The Paulinskil Poetry Project published her collection of poems, "A Certain Knowing," in 2018.

Elaine Koplow directs the Sussex County Writers' Roundtable, serves as assistant copy editor of *The Stillwater Review*, and is associate editor of *The Paulinskil Poetry Project*. A former high school English teacher, Elaine is a three-time Pushcart Prize nominee. Her poems have been published in journals and anthologies, including *Exit 13 Magazine*, *Tiferet*, *U.S. 1 Worksheets*, and *Journal of New Jersey Poets*. Her collection of poems, "Sketch Pad," was published in 2019.

The May 21 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 more, visit carriagehousepoetryseries.blogspot.com, or call (908) 889-7223 or (908) 889-5298.



PROM TIME...The Peer Ministry Club at Mount Saint Mary Academy in Watchung sponsored a Prom Dress Collection to benefit Catherine's Closet in Newark. Gently-used prom dresses, handbags and accessories were donated by students, parents and other members of the Mount community. Pictured, left to right, are: Elizabeth DiGrande, Nicole Nunez, Claire King and Lindsey Sieman.

County Spring Garden Fair And Plant Sale Is May 19

COUNTY - Gardening enthusiasts can stock up on plants, seedlings and other supplies - and shop for a cause, too - at the 30th annual Master Gardeners of Union County Spring Garden Fair and Plant Sale. The Spring Garden Fair is known for a large selection of flowers, herbs, and vegetables including the popular Ramapo and Rutgers 250 tomatoes.

The event takes place on Sunday, May 19, from noon to 4 p.m., on the grounds of the Union County Demonstration Garden at the Trailside Nature and Science Center in the Watchung Reservation, 452 New Providence Road in Mountainside. All proceeds from sales at the Garden Fair go to support the many community service projects of Master Gardener volunteers, including donations of fresh produce to local food pantries, educational events for youth and adults, programs for people with special needs, and more.

Visitors are advised to bring a small wagon to convey their purchases. As always, admission to the Garden Fair is free, and parking is also free. Please note that credit cards are not accepted, and pets are not permitted.

Among the hundreds of plants and seedlings offered for sale, the Spring Garden Fair features deer resistant, drought tolerant and fragrant plants that thrive in Union County, including native species and many easy-to-grow plants for beginner gardeners.

Along with plants, baked goods, crafts, and gently used garden supplies for sale, the Spring Garden Fair offers free activities for gardeners of all ages including: Guided tours of the Demonstration Garden including the vegetable and herb gardens; Displays and information for Square Foot Gardening, Invasive Plants and Mosquito Control; Information on joining the Rutgers Master Gardeners, Environmental Stewards and 4-H Master Tree Stewards; Children's activities (children must be accompanied by parent

or guardian); Garden clinic and Rutgers information fact sheets for trouble-shooting garden problems; Attendees can bring plant and insect samples for diagnosis; Rutgers soil test kits are available for sale.

Free parking is located nearby at the Trailside Nature and Science Center parking lot and the Scout Camping Area in the Watchung Reservation. Additional free parking is available in the Loop playground area, located a short walk away on the other side of the Trailside Center.

Union County residents and visitors with an interest in preserving native plant species are also invited to attend the free "Good Plants and Bad Plants" seminar on May 18 at Trailside.

Meet Photog. Feller at SP Lib. Saturday

SCOTCH PLAINS - An exhibit of photographs, entitled *Signs of Life*, is being presented at the Scotch Plains Public Library on through May 26 by photographer Sherman Feller. A reception with the artist is taking place on Saturday, May 18, between 2 and 4 p.m.

Mr. Feller has exhibited over 100 photographs at the library with five displays over the last several years. He has been actively involved in photography for over 50 years and has been active in the Unique Vision photography workshop for over 10 years. He is a longtime resident of Fanwood and is a retired chemist.

This exhibit displays images of wall art, signs and graffiti that Mr. Feller has encountered in his travels throughout Europe and the U.S. The exhibit, which is free and open to the public, is shown in the downstairs gallery of the library.

The Scotch Plains Library is located at 1927 Bartle Avenue in Scotch Plains. Call (908) 322-5007 for directions, hours of operation and other information.

Art Show 'Green' at South Avenue Arts is on Through May 31

GARWOOD - The Contemporary Art Group is holding its member show "Green" at South Avenue Arts through May 31, at the gallery located at 221 South Avenue.

The Contemporary Art Group is a not-for-profit organization that was established in 2006. The group is affiliated with the Watchung Arts Center, where the membership of 35 local artists meets monthly and exhibits in various venues in New Jersey throughout the year.

Participating local artists in the South Avenue Arts show: Dorothy Bellew, Ruth Brown, Virginia Carroll, Maryann Ficker, Alicia Flynn Cotter, Diane Gallo, Brooke Gardner, Lesya Dovbenko, Tamara Hanenko, Sheila Lenga, Charlann Meluso, Kathy Nademus, Christina Pruczynski, and Linnea W. Rhodes.

Gallery hours are: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday noon to 5 p.m.; Wednesday noon to 7 p.m.; and Saturday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

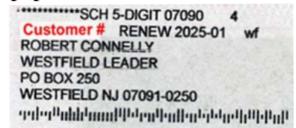
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