

Arts & Entertainment

Wezyk of Westfield Goes Solo in Show Of Other-Worldly Paintings at Juxtapose

By MICHELLE H. LE POIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD – If it seems that her paintings are not of this world, time and place, it may have something to do with the fact that Joanna Wezyk of Westfield recreates the past and her beloved native land of Krakow, Poland in each of her dark, yet illuminated pieces.

The subject matter – whether it be a French room, a piece of furniture, or a cluster of peonies – are all depicted with a technique similar to one of the artists she most emulates, 17th century Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer. Incandescent light peeks from ebony backgrounds in almost all of Wezyk's pieces and the artist's interpretation of perspective is hauntingly similar to Vincent Van Gogh's.

Either way, Wezyk is a master. And Juxtapose Gallery, located at 58 Elm Street in Westfield, will present a solo exhibition for Wezyk, comprised of over 25 new pieces. Opening today, "The Romantic Hours of Chopin," will spotlight Wezyk's works through Tuesday, December 17, from 5 to 9 p.m.

Beginning with Wezyk's interior paintings, such as "Open Door" and "Secret Garden," it is clear that an artist does not have to be thoroughly knowledgeable regarding linear perspective in order to paint a room. Though the doors in both pieces are shown open in an almost comic book fashion, Wezyk's style works just right. The eye is drawn instead to what lies beyond the doors – gardens of olive green and moss tones.



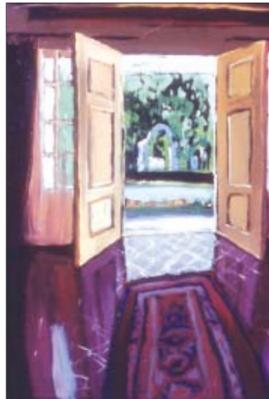
"Joanna - My Memory," 2001, 36" x 24", oil on canvas by Joanna Wezyk.



"Irises," 2001, 40" x 30", oil on canvas by Joanna Wezyk.

natural order of things.

Wezyk's skills in portraiture are truly remarkable, as evidenced in "Joanna - My Memory." A green-frosted figure is in the foreground with eyes almost begging for some kind of attention and exploration. Cartoonish flowerpots surround her, symbolizing a sense of the figure's growth, while a house laced with embers falls nondescriptly to the back.



"Secret Garden," 2002, 20" x 24", oil on canvas by Joanna Wezyk.



ODD PERSPECTIVE...Vincent Van Gogh's "Room at Arles" has a similar linear perspective to Joanna Wezyk's "Secret Garden."

In most of her floral works, Wezyk cleverly positions contrasting colors atop the petals and backgrounds of irises and sunflowers, while the petals themselves seem to haphazardly overlap.

At the Krakow Academy of Fine Arts, one of Europe's premier academic institutions, Wezyk earned a Master of Fine Arts Degree in painting and graphics. The artist left Europe and moved to the United States in 1989, where she has dedicated her time to painting.

While she admits that painting interiors is the closest to her heart, Wezyk's artwork has been represented in over 100 group and solo exhibitions. Though she now exhibits at East Coast galleries (three of which are in New Jersey), the artist once exhibited solely in Soho's Ambassador Galleries.

Also an admirer of artists Egon Schiele (1890-1918) and Edouard Vuillard (1868-1940), Wezyk's art is included in the permanent collections of museums of Poland and the United States.

Wezyk never limits herself. In fact, she seems to notice the scope of the average imagination, always knowing she can exceed it. As a child that insists that it is far better to color outside of the lines, Wezyk makes up her own rules and carves out her own path as an artist and thinker. Instead of conforming to our world, she reigns in her own, always inviting us to pay a visit as we behold her paintings.

For more information on Wezyk's exhibition at Juxtapose, please call (908) 232-3278.

Borough's Library Collection Chronicles Devlins' Legacies in Art and Authorship

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

MOUNTAINSIDE — The lives and works of authors and artists Harry and Wende Devlin are being celebrated at the Mountainside Public Library, where an assemblage of the late couple's writing, art and personal memorabilia was recently dedicated.

The collection honors 60 years of extraordinary contributions made by the Devlins to children's literature, the art world and the community of Mountainside, where they had resided since the late 1940s. Harry Devlin died in November of 2001 and Wende Devlin nine months later, in August of 2002.

Approximately 45 items, including books, cartoons, comic strips and poems comprise the collection, which will be permanently housed in the library's large reading room. Newspaper and magazine articles written by the couple, as well as pieces written about them, are also part of the compilation.

Of special interest are two scrapbooks which chronicle the Devlins' professional and personal contributions. Created by the library staff, one scrapbook titled "Harry at the Library" focuses on Harry's relationship with the Mountainside Public Library, and the years from 1964 through 1971 when he served as a Library Trustee.

Both Devlins spent much time at

the Mountainside Public Library, holding children's programs, exhibits and book signings.

"Despite their enormous success, the Devlins were down-to-earth people who enriched the community by generously giving of their time and talent to the people of Mountainside," Miriam Bein, Library Director, told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood*.

Wende was editor of the year-book and Harry served as artistic editor of the college humor magazine when the two met at Syracuse University in the 1930s. Wende was a still-life portrait painter in addition to a writer, and many of her portraits won prizes at New Jersey art exhibits.

Harry began his career as an illustrator for pulp magazines; he later progressed to *Life* and *Colliers*



REMEMBERING MOM AND DAD...Nick and Libby Devlin, Marilyn and Harry "Herb" Devlin, Geoff and Wende Devlin Gates, David and Marianne Devlin, Jeff Devlin and Brion Devlin gathered at the Mountainside Public Library to remember the authorship and artistry of their parents and in-laws Harry and Wende Devlin, which has been archived in a special wing of the library.



Pen & Ink: The Psychotics of Christmas Shopping: Save Yourself

By MICHELLE H. LE POIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

I was taught to "look both ways" before crossing a street and, better yet, before backing out of a parking space in a pre-Christmas crowded department store lot. So, when a banged-up New York licensed plated lunatic mobile came barreling toward me this Saturday afternoon in a Target parking lot, straight for my teeny Beetle, I knew the shopping season had really begun.

The girl and her companion giggled as they sped past me, profanities on the tip of my tongue. Inhaling deeply, I uttered instead, "Stay Christian. Calm down." Not five seconds later, my patience had paid off when an SUV from Jersey let me cut into a crowded line of cars.

Despite my obsessively organized roster of holiday shopping duties, which are carefully checked off at the second of purchase, I had found myself swamped by the holiday havoc and it wasn't even December.

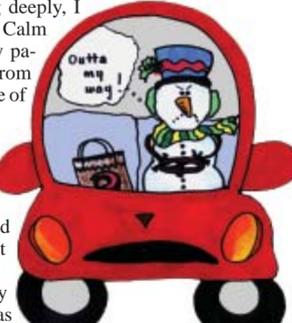
I thought I was wiser this year by doing 25 percent of my Christmas shopping online. One store, located in New York, came through in less than a week. "Efficiency," I told myself, smiling smugly. "Somebody knows how to get things done right." Confidently, I ordered my next purchase from a larger outlet in California.

The customer service guy, Ted* (name used to protect the innocent) assured me that the package would be at the doorstep of *The Leader* in two to three weeks –without a hitch. These people had guarantees sprawled across every web page, so I wasn't fretting –that was until Ted called the day the package was due and apologized because the company had run out of what I was looking for. Poor Ted. He probably hoped he took the day after Thanksgiving off once he talked to me. At the end of the conversation, I not only got a better product, but my bill would be nearly half price. My package would get to Westfield by Christmas.

But, I had to wonder. Was Ted really sure about that? Would Ted be there on Christmas morning when my parents were told, "Your gift is on its way in the mail...somewhere...soon...it's coming, really?" Was Ted smarter doing 100 percent of his holiday shopping in the cockamamie atmosphere of the mall? Were there any guarantees?

That week, I had placed a smaller order with a church gift shop run by a band of nuns offering discount religious goods. They'd make great stocking stuffers, I thought upon seeing some of the bookmarks and statues the shop had to sell. After I faxed my order to the store the morning before Thanksgiving, one of the nuns e-mailed me confirmation of my order, but no telling when the package would arrive at *The Leader*: I began to panic.

Look what holiday shopping does to us. Attacking each other like animals in a parking lot, begging people across the country to guarantee the arrival of a package in order to "make your season bright," and wondering if a nun is lying to me about a delivery date. The only guarantee would be that a nation of shoppers, myself included, will surely lose its focus of the season's message in a flurry of catalogs, lines at cash registers and empty promises of "finding the perfect gift" when that perfect gift really lies in a manger.



magazines. He also drew editorial cartoons for the *New York Daily News*. In 1967, his "To Grandfather's House We Go: A Roadside Tour of American Homes," which he both wrote and illustrated, became a recommended text for architectural history classes.

Together, Wende and Harry collaborated on 24 books for children, some of which have earned the distinction of being among the most popular children's books ever published, including the Cranberry Series, "How Fletcher Was Hatched" and "Old Black Witch!" The couple also produced a syndicated comic strip, "Raggmopp," which was based on their family of seven children.

In addition, Wende was a regular columnist for *Good Housekeeping* magazine, where her "Beat Poems of A Beat Mother" showed her gift for comedic writing.

While the books in the Harry and Wende Devlin Collection can not circulate, they are available to be read by library patrons within

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In Coming Editions:

- Former Fanwood resident Jacqueline Harper Cecchetti describes the fondness for Fanwood that led her to authoring a book about the borough.
- Residents on Harrison Avenue in Westfield count down the holiday season with a neighborhood advent calendar.
- St. John Denver? A group mystified by the musician's songs thinks he should be beatified. Pen & Ink says, "huh?"
- What did SP-F Arts Association members learn from Kate Block's demonstration?
- What happened when Mountainside kids got crafty one Saturday?

CARTOON CORNER

With Matt Robinson



MOVING DAY: 18:30 HRS.

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420 Topping Hill Road, Westfield



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Charming 3 BR, 2 full BTH Dutch Colonial within walking distance to town, park and schools. Beautiful natural woodwork, refinished hwdfls, diamond paned wndws. Many built-ins. LR, FDR, EIK w/ breakfast bar, walk-in pantry & mud rm. 2 CG, recirculating pond. (WSF6861) \$429,000

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