

THE STUDENT VIEW

The weekly column written by local high school students

Call The Doctor: New TV Shows Have Taken A Turn For The Worse

By JEREMY LIPSTEIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

With no name actors and poor plots, new fall television shows have failed miserably in the past several years, and this year won't be an exception.

I admit it; I actually was one of the few people in America that decided to catch a glimpse of NBC's new "so-called" comedy Inside Schwartz. It gave me Goosebumps thinking that some NBC executive thought that this was comedy. The show could not have been more predictable in the punch line of the jokes; and when tied in with the fact that any two-year-old could have put together

a better plot, the show just makes itself worse.

Add NBC's Scrubs and Lost to the same category that Inside Schwartz is in, and NBC's now got three open time slots to fill once they realize that these shows are sending viewers to other networks.

One would have thought that ABC would have abandoned The Mole halfway through its first showing, but now with the oncoming The Mole 2, ABC is sure to scare away viewers with another network reality show that tries to compete with CBS's Survivor.

Though Seinfeld was one of the best shows all time, Jason Alexander's new show on ABC, Bob Patterson, is sure to fail much like The Michael Richards Show, starring Michael Richards, did on NBC last year.

The FOX network is just up to its typical sleazy and scandalous business with shows like Who Wants to Be a Princess, Love Cruise and Temptation Island 2, all of which have the sole purpose of showing people that have such an avarice for money and power, that they will do anything to get it.

Remember a day when new shows were something to look forward too. Parallel that to now when new shows mean that a bunch of "has-been" actors get together in one final attempt to revive their pathetic careers.

It is too soon to tell whether or not new shows will be a hit in future years. But for now, writers and network executives should realize that viewers aren't stupid, they only watch what they like. And, if what they like isn't on, they won't watch at all.

Wesley Hall Reveals Back to School Night

WESTFIELD — Wesley Hall Nursery School in Westfield will host its annual Back to School Night on Thursday, November 1, at 7:30 p.m.

The nursery school teachers will present an overview of the school year and offer suggestions on how to enhance a child's school experience.

A Book Fair will also be held. This event will be a fundraiser for WHOOPS, the Wesley Hall parent organization. The public is invited to attend both events.

There is limited space still available in the four-year-old class. Wesley Hall Nursery School, is located in the education wing of the First United Methodist Church, 1 East Broad in Westfield. For more information and registration, please call the school office at (908) 233-9570.

DiNizos Celebrate Golden Anniversary

Congratulations and best wishes to Frank and Eileen DiNizo of Scotch Plains on their 50th wedding anniversary tomorrow, Friday, October 26.

Erratum

In the gardening column that appeared in last week's edition, an incorrect Plant Hardiness Zone was listed for the Union County area.

It is Zone 6, with an average minimum temperature of 0 to minus 10 degrees.

Area Residents Receive Syracuse Scholarships

Kevin Johnson of Westfield, Brett Bushinger of Scotch Plains, Alexander Grunberg of Mountainside and Diana Schiel of Berkeley Heights were awarded scholarships at Syracuse University.

These scholarships recognize outstanding academic achievement. Students must have strong academic credentials in high school, be active in extracurricular and community activities, and demonstrate good character and citizenship.

Westfield Schools Post School Closures Dates

Kindergarten through fifth grade students will attend four-hour sessions on Thursday, November 1, to allow for Curriculum Planning meetings for teachers in the afternoon.

Grades 1-5 will attend 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., while both morning and afternoon kindergarten sessions will be held from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Westfield Public Schools will be closed for all students and teachers on Thursday and Friday, November 8 and 9, to permit the attendance of teachers at the New Jersey Education Association Convention.

Business can be transacted with school offices and the Administration Building from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Classes will resume at their regular starting time on Monday, November 12.

Islamic Scholar to Give Talk at Willow Grove

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Willow Grove Presbyterian Church, located at 1961 Raritan Road in Scotch Plains has invited Sarah Elshazly, an Islamic scholar and spokeswoman, to speak to the congregation on Sunday, October 28, at noon.

A representative of the Islamic Circle of North America in Piscataway, Ms. Elshazly will speak on the Islamic faith, the various factions and movements within the Moslem tradition, and its extremist sects.

Throughout her presentation, she will be open to questions and will guide her presentation to the interests and needs of the audience.

The program will be held in the church's Fellowship Hall beneath the sanctuary, where congregation members will have a light spaghetti lunch while listening to Ms. Elshazly. The public is invited to attend.

See it all on the Web!
www.goleader.com

New Standardized Tests To be Implemented at Mtg.

WESTFIELD — At the October 16 Westfield Board of Education meeting, the Board approved the use of New Jersey Proficiency Assessments of State Standards (NJPASS) as an assessment tool for grades 3 and 7 beginning this school year.

Previously, third and seventh grade students were administered the IOWA tests. The merits of NJPASS were outlined earlier in the year at a June 19 board meeting.

At that time the recommendations of a committee that researched five different elementary tests were announced.

The committee determined that NJPASS was the best assessment tool because the test is closely aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, is more challenging than the IOWA test (in which most Westfield students "topped out") and provides better feedback on student achievement.

The state already requires that all fourth grade students take the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA) and eighth grade students are administered the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA).

Superintendent of Schools Dr. William J. Foley and board members discussed the pros and cons of implementing further standardized testing beyond NJPASS, ESPA and GEPA.

"What we in Westfield must now determine is: Do we want to do standardized testing in more than the third and fourth grades at the elementary level?" questioned Dr. Foley.

The recommendation in the committee's report last June is to eliminate standardized testing in the second and fifth grades, where IOWA's were previously administered. Part of the reasoning behind this recommendation is due to the amount of time spent during the test (3.25 - 4.74 hours), the time devoted to preparing the students, the loss of classroom learning, and the expense (e.g., the cost for approximately 470 students to take the IOWA's is \$13,000).

At the October 16 Board of Education meeting, two options for assessing achievement in grades 2 and 5 were discussed:

Implement an in-district analysis based on curriculum. Westfield's language arts and mathematics curricula have been revised and now closely align with state standards. Westfield is already testing the students on a district level to determine their understanding of the curricula and can continue to provide this type of assessment; or

Administer the IOWA test to grades 2 and 5. According to Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Janice P. Edmonds, there is a new version designed with more open-ended questions and less multiple choice. Dr. Edmonds acknowledged that although a benefit of the IOWA's is to provide a comparison on national norms, teachers and administrators question the value of this test in assessing student needs.

Dr. Foley called on board members to reach out to the community to seek input from parents before making a

final decision on second and fifth grade assessment. He also addressed PTO/A presidents the morning following the board meeting and asked these representatives to also get the pulse of the community on this issue.

Specifically, the district would like to determine if parents feel they have derived helpful information from the IOWA's, that the time spent taking them in 2nd and 5th grades is worthwhile, and that the district's financial commitment to supporting the testing is reasonable or should Westfield abandon national testing and rely on district assessment in grades 2 and 5?

The district is already committed to the state-required test ESPA in grade 4 and will be instituting NJPASS in grade 3. NJPASS will also be administered to grade 7 and the state-imposed GEPA in grade 8.

Any comments and experiences that parents would like to share in regard to these issues can be relayed to Board of Education members or to Dr. Foley at wfoley@westfieldnj.com.

Concepts & Thought

Christopher Nelson Plays Mellophone In University Band

SCOTCH PLAINS — Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pa. has reported that Christopher Nelson of Scotch Plains is playing the mellophone for the University's Stadium Band this fall.

The ensemble plays at all home football games, the homecoming parade and pep rally, and at special events which occur during the fall.

A sophomore liberal arts major, Christopher is also the President of Susquehanna University International and Vice President of the Asian Student Coalition.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Nelson of Scotch Plains and a 2000 graduate of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School.

Kathryn R. Johansen Studies in England

SCOTCH PLAINS — Kathryn R. Johansen, a junior at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa., will participate in the college's study abroad program in Norwich, England, for the 2001-2002 academic year.

A graduate of Mount Saint Mary Academy in Watchung, Kathryn is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur F. Johansen of Scotch Plains.

Westfield BOE Meetings Summarized On-Line

WESTFIELD — Dr. William J. Foley, Superintendent of Westfield Public Schools, announced that a summary of each Board of Education Meeting is available on-line for the public.

The public can read the summary of each meeting, entitled "Synopsis", at www.westfieldnj.com by clicking on the "Synopsis" link.

"Synopsis" may also be automatically sent to all electronic subscribers following every Board of Education meeting.

Board of Education meetings are open to the public and are also taped and shown in their entirety following each meeting on Thursdays at 6 p.m. and on Tuesdays at 4 and 8 p.m.

Chaz Maffey Named AP Scholar by Board

WESTFIELD — Westfield resident Chaz Maffey was one of 10 members of the St. Peter's Preparatory School Class of 2001 named an Advanced Placement (AP) Scholar by the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level AP exams.

Only about 13 percent of the more than 840,000 students in 13,680 schools who took AP exams in May performed at a sufficiently high level to merit such recognition.

Chaz was one of three members of Prep's Class of 2001, who qualified for the AP Scholar with Honor Award by earning an average grade of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken, and grades of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams.

Currently enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania, Chaz plans to major in English and psychology. He is a 1997 graduate of Roosevelt Intermediate School in Westfield.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Maffey of Westfield.



WE REMEMBER... Students in Jennifer Newell's first grade class at Evergreen Elementary School in Scotch Plains proudly display the flag they made together to show that they "will remember and stand strong" as American young people in the aftermath of the September 11 World Trade Center tragedy. All students in the class joined with their teacher and used their painted handprints to form the "stars and bars" of the U.S. flag.

Coles Pupils Bring Words Of Thanks to WTC Helpers

SCOTCH PLAINS — In the wake of the tragedies that occurred at the World Trade Center, students at J. Ackerman Coles Elementary School in Scotch Plains wanted to get involved.

The second grade classes sent words of thanks and praise to the volunteers at Ground Zero.

"After the tragic events occurred, the students were asking questions about what happened and they began asking what they could do to help," stated Jennifer Dubroski, a second grade teacher at Coles School.

"The faculty at Coles began discussing various projects, and we thought that thank you letters to the firefighters, police officers and volunteers who have given so much, was a way that we could help," she said. "We discussed the project with the students and they were thrilled to do it."

The second grade class at Coles School is comprised of approximately 95 students. Each pupil created a card that included a picture that the students drew themselves. Inside the card, were the students' words of thanks.

"Once we decided upon a project we needed to find a way to get the letters to the volunteers," explained second grade teacher Jennifer Murphy. "The students were so excited about the project, that we have to find a way to reach the brave men and women in New York."

The answer came from a parent, Anne Hoblitzell, who volunteers her time serving meals from McDonalds to the thousands of workers at Ground Zero.

"We were so grateful when Mrs. Hoblitzell informed us of the time that she has given to making a difference," said educator Suzanne Friedrichs. "Mrs. Hoblitzell was thrilled that the students were working hard to acknowledge the volunteers and assured us that the students' kind words and thoughts would be appreciated."



CAREER MILESTONE REACHED... Staff members of Brunner Elementary School in Scotch Plains were presented with flowers by the Parent Teacher Association to recognize and celebrate their having attained tenure on October 11. Pictured, above, are: speech teacher Michelle Ortega, third grade teacher Elizabeth Sutherland, Spanish teacher Karen Joseph-Lee, and Brunner School Principal, Jodi Frank.

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