



Pen & Ink

By Michelle H. LePoidevin

TV, Film Entertainment Has No Place In Today's Climate of Grief and War

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

About 30 minutes after he died, I ran home in the rain to be away from the house where my grandfather lost his battle with cancer. It wasn't possible to decipher the tears from the rain. I felt compelled to take care of everyone else's grief, so I had to become distracted... somehow.

I turned on "Family Ties," which was running on NBC at the time. Legs folded Indian-style I sat in the dark, on the carpet. Michael J. Fox's humor made the corners of my mouth almost form a grin, a muffled chuckle stirred from my lips. But, the laughter and the "entertainment" were out of place.

Just as it is today, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, which murdered thousands of innocent people.

I do not possess a scrap of sympathy for the movie companies that are bemoaning the money they wasted because they now have to delete footage of the Twin Towers or images of characters blowing them up. Too damn bad. Maybe Hollywood will wake up and find some feelings and consideration for its viewers after all.

Some commercials have yet to rearrange images or inferences to such violence. For example, just this morning, I was subjected to a commercial for Capital One, in which passengers on a train were hijacked by cowboys. Their faces full of fear, some of the passengers managed to escape into the desert with briefcases in hand. Replace the train with a plane, the cowboys with the Taliban, and the desert with a demolished Lower Manhattan and you've got a replay of September 11. It's disgraceful and unfeeling that corporations are still showing such commercials two weeks after a hijacking.

My father, who spent 4 1/2 years in The United States Navy, wants his country to settle the score. But, like so many Americans, he wants to be able to avert his attention with regularly scheduled programming like "Jag" and "Who Wants to Be A Millionaire?" He watched 15 minutes of "Just Shoot Me" last Wednesday unable to crack a smile before mom asked for MSNBC to be put on again.

Dad scowled, mostly because he was angry at the news channel's anchor for using a penlight on a map to outline exactly how and where our troops would attack.

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my take on it Broadway Lights Must Glitter Again To Show Terrorists They Can't Win

With Kerriane Spellman Cort



By KERRIANNE SPELLMAN CORT
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SCOTCHPLAINS—As America nervously watches the precarious fluctuations of the stock market and tries desperately to make some sort of peace with the recent tragedy that we all have faced, virtually all industries are struggling to bounce back.

The economy in New York is suffering a terrible loss, with near-empty hotels and restaurants in some areas. No one can blame tourists for canceling vacations at a time like this. Honestly, does anyone truly feel like celebrating?

However, the lack of visitors to Manhattan in the last two weeks has caused the entertainment industry to make some difficult decisions. Par-

ticularly hard-hit is the Broadway community.

This past weekend, six successful New York shows were forced to close their doors and lower the curtain for the last time. In the days following the tragedy, all shows were dark for three performances, with some shows in the downtown area having to stay closed for as long as a week.

A Thousand Clowns, starring Tom Selleck, *If you ever leave me, I'm going with you*, the very popular *Rocky Horror Show*, *Stones in his Pockets*, *Blast*, and the Off-Broadway *Batboy* all played their final performances this past Sunday.

The money lost due to the cancelled performances was enough to send producers into a tailspin, but the final insult to this community was the lack of attendance in the days following the awful events of September 11.

The extremely successful *Rent* played to 50 people in a performance last week. Again, I understand that people do not feel politically correct going out for a night on the town at the moment, but these good intentions are having a devastating effect on the entertainment industry, and indeed, on the economy.

The fact that any one of these shows had to close is abysmal. *Rocky*



Thunder

By KIM SOKOL

Thunder booming in the dead of night, awakened and shaken. I think back to a time when most things seemed right.

Passenger planes flying overhead, once a noisy nuisance now bring fear, instead.

I wonder if this is a glimpse of how a war veteran feels?

How long does it last?

When do we heal?

Such sadness and grief brought on by misguided ones, causing grief, death and destruction by the tons.

So evil and cruel these deliberate acts of hate, I am truly afraid for our whole world's fate.

I know we will answer back and that too brings fear.

Our enemy, terrorism, is far away and also near.

I urge good citizens of the world to unite.

Show support and even their might.

I urge those responsible for these terrible crimes to examine their actions while there is still time.

Kim Sokol, a resident of Westfield, decided to write this poem in the wee hours of the morning during a thunder storm. She read the poem to friends and family. They encouraged her to share it with her local newspaper and its readership.

'A Small Voice' Speaks Volumes In Frank's 'Firefighters,' Trilogy

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

WESTFIELD—The pleasure of spending a day at the beach with her grandchildren is a memory that Springfield artist Helen Frank feels compelled to translate into an etching.

But, with the same dedication, a Tuesday of tragedy was also an event that Frank, a woman who spent her childhood sketching skyscrapers and scenes throughout the City of New York, knew she had to convey.

"In good times and bad times, artists reflect the times," Frank told *The Westfield Leader and The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood*. "It has helped me to relieve my tremen-

ous stress and sadness."

ing." The monotype, explained Frank, holds "torn pieces of paper, tacked on a wall with no faces in it."

Shortly after the terrorist attacks, Juxtapose Proprietor Gerri Gildea cleared her window to present Frank's "Firefighters" and an original Americana piece by Carol Jones, 3rd in colored pencil.

Flanked by an American flag owned by Juxtapose Gallery Manager Karen Troiano, whose husband was a Korean War veteran, Jones' work features the window of a house with a thin ray of light emanating from the portal — a symbol of hope, according to Gildea.

Frank applauded Gildea and Troiano for their patriotic presen-



SOME OF THE BRAVEST...Springfield artist Helen Frank's "Firefighters at Ground Zero" captures the heroic deeds of firefighters from New York City and beyond at the World Trade Center.

What has become a therapeutic outlet for Frank herself, has helped her admirers and passersby to heal from and grasp the magnitude of that dark Tuesday.

Three original 22-inch by 28-inch pieces by Frank have eloquently related the bravery of rescue personnel and the terror of a nation in a way that photographs could never approach.

"Firefighters at Ground Zero," which is currently exhibited in the window of Juxtapose Gallery in

tion in the gallery window.

"Their vision needs to be commended," she said. A countless number of posters, prints and sculptures have made New York City their centerpiece. The skyline, the buildings, the bustling activity — all of that seems to have changed now.

Frank, who has translated the landscape and love for a metropolis into treasured etchings, is not certain how the terrorist attacks will shape her depiction of the skyscrapers she loved to sketch.



WE REMEMBER...Polish artist Joanna Wezyk created "Remembering," one of her original oils, to express her sadness over the terrorist attacks and her love of America.

Westfield, is an original oil on paper. An empty swirl encompassing the unknown of the attack's aftermath is portrayed in this piece. The grouping of firefighters bravely seek entry into the void.

What fascinates the conscience and the eye about "Firefighters" points to the enormity and symbolism of one simple object — the beckoning circle.

"I can't even imagine their bravery," said Frank, modestly explaining, "It's just my small voice in a great big world."

Frank explained the message and composition of the second piece, "Missing," and the third work, "The Rescuers," which are not currently exhibited at Juxtapose.

According to Frank, "The Rescuers," an original drawing, includes "five or six men huddled around a dark space with an attitude of bravery and exhaustion."

Perhaps the most symbolic and staggering of the trilogy is "Miss-

"How dare they do that to my New York, to my city?" she said. "Words cannot express this tragedy, but maybe art can do that better than words."

Gildea and Frank reported in a press release, "'Firefighters at Ground Zero' is being donated by the gallery and the artist to the New York Historical Society, New York City, to honor the heroes of September 11 and serve as a permanent reminder of that day and the days following."

The statement continued, "The primary purpose is to raise funds for the September 11 Fund, which has been established by the United Fund of Westfield."

To make a contribution to the September 11 Fund, please make checks payable to The United Fund of Westfield, FOR September 11 Fund. Checks may be mailed or dropped off at Juxtapose Gallery, 58 Elm Street, Westfield, 07090.

The release concluded, "Art is also a prayer."

Artist of the Week



Bob Hope (1903-)

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

They call him "Old Ski Nose," the man who calls his birthplace London, but is as American as the great red, white and blue. Leslie Townes Hope — or Bob Hope — has used his funny bone, theatrical ability, and trademark song, "Thanks for the Memory," to console and elate throngs of soldiers during wartime.

With young soldiers poised for combat against the multi-headed monster called terrorism, it seems only natural that the nation needs his spirit and commitment to help the military maintain its moxie and might.

Though he was falsely reported as deceased in 1998 by a television anchor, Hope chuckled about the mishap. Even recent hospitalizations have not prevented the jester, who was granted honorary knighthood in May of 1998, from trudging on.

By entertaining the troops during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, Hope earned Academy Awards at several separate ceremonies.

It is unclear whether or not Hope will be able to make a small appearance for any programs or events supporting the troops, but his last name is certainly a hint at what he holds in his heart for the soldiers' long journey ahead.

Remembering

By STEVE BEATTIE

I'll never forget the initial shock of a meeting interrupted, followed by the fear and eventual realization that friends have been lost. Quickly ushered to a room with two televisions, we became a distant, helpless audience to the unfolding tragedy.

Incomprehensible...sky piercing towers, the strength of steel, concrete, and product of thousands in its creation, reduced to burning rubble in less than one hour.

Personal stories streaming in from friends, and friends of friends. The outgoing phone calls in the final minutes. A final chance to say, "I love you."

With each story comes greater empathy and pain — internal questioning...I was scheduled to be in the building...what would I say with one final phone call? What would I say to my children? Would they remember me years from now?

Idle cars in hometown parking lots — grim reminders of a one-way commute. Had these people any realization of what the day would bring? Another day woken up by alarm clock, the everyday challenge of matching clothes in a "business casual" world, a Starbucks coffee from the vendor downstairs.

I have come to realize that one of our early dating memories, being witness to a stunning bleeding, red sunset, fracturing the sky from atop the viewing towers, is gone forever.

Why must we introduce and explain the concept of death so soon to my 5-year-old son? A simple explanation...people who are angry, who are not talking about how they feel, death as an unending sleep, souls recaptured to go someplace nice...followed by innocent questions.

So much senseless loss of life...how will they be remembered?

Memories will not be lost, but rather, are shared with one another to ensure others appreciate and remember. With each story comes a greater realization of how special each person was.

The children are resilient. I now watch my son "build" the World Trade Center and Empire State Building on his Tonka construction game. His favorite buildings are gone, only a model remaining in his room. Does he understand? I

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