

Pen & Ink

By Michelle H. Le Poidevin

My Superman Doesn't Need To Wear A Cape

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

"What have you got there, Shelks-My-Nelks?" His eyes were as big as the Commemorative State Quarters he has collected on a cardboard map, while he eyed the nighttime snack I just toted into the living room.

Shortly before my 30th birthday, my mother had been trying to break my father of repeating that nickname which he coined when I was small. Sure I had



outgrown it. I was a businesswoman now, a businesswoman in fluffy red slippers no less. Mom and I shook our heads in his direction. To him, I'd always be Shelks-My-Nelks, the little girl he let trim his hair with real scissors, never really fearing the outcome of the haphazard hairdo.

This Sunday will not be just another Hallmark Father's Day for my father and me. As I watch him get older, I know he may not be physically able to hoist me out of the pool waters and toss me off into a summer bellyflop - and he can't lift me into the tree branches that hover over our backyard. Instead, I revere the man who has been more than just a playmate for an only child; he's become an adult to understand my growing pains and a friend to know just when I need to talk, even when I insist that I don't want to.

Today's movies and mass media encourage us to envision our superheroes cavorting about in massive capes, spandex spider-webbed costumes, saving us from untimely destruction, all while freezing their Kryptonite powers for future battles with the bad guys. My superhero wears Rutgers Scarlet Knight Football sweatshirts around the yard, offers to wax my car, cleans out the gutters, and plants Dahlias. And though he falls asleep by 9 p.m. with the remote nearly toppling from his hand, he would don the heaviest armor if it meant shielding his daughter from a broken heart, or encountering any of the trials he himself has suffered in his 60 years.

My superhero boasts a stalwart faith in God, not a laser

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PIECES OF CHILDHOOD...Laura Kruglinsky, a senior at Governor Livingston High School and a Berkeley Heights resident, presented her collage, "Childhood Memories" at the traveling exhibition.

County's Traveling Art Fest Boasts Emerging Area Talent

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

COUNTY — Forty nine pieces of art chosen from the Teen Arts Festival held in March at Union County College in Cranford are now part of a county-wide touring exhibit which will travel to sites throughout the county until January 2003.

The demonstration's first stop is the Springfield Public Library, 66 Mountain Avenue, where it will be available until June 27.

The Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, Department of Economic Development sponsors the annual event. An opening reception sponsored by the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders was held at the Springfield Library on Monday.

"The enthusiasm of the public for the Teen Arts Exhibit grows each year. That sends a positive message to our young artists and encourages them to follow their strengths," said Freeholder Vice Chairwoman Mary Ruotolo, Liaison to the Union County Cultural and Heritage Programs Advisory Board.

Approximately 513 pieces of art were part of the Teen Arts Festival. The 49 selected works for the touring show were all two-dimensional pieces. Other pieces will become part of the New Jersey State Festival and New Jersey State Tour.

Several area students had artwork selected for the touring exhibit. Brian Halpin from Park Middle School in Scotch Plains and Lynnette Olmeda from Hillcrest Academy represented the township. Shanay Twine, a student at Beadleston High School, and Ronald Wichowski, a student at Centennial High School represented Westfield.

Pupils represented from Berkeley Heights were Katie Ruiz and Megan Naokarni of Columbia Middle School, and Laura Kruglinsky and Sarah Egbert of Governor Livingston High School. Becky Kutner of Deerfield Middle School in Mountainside also had artwork exhibited.

At the reception, each student received a certificate commemorating participation in the exhibit.

Many of the high school seniors with work is featured in the exhibit plan to further their artistic studies. Kruglinsky of Berkeley Heights will be an art major at The College of New Jersey in September. Her work, "Childhood Innocence," is a collage of wood and leather.

Olmeda, also a senior, has many artistic and creative outlets in addition to art. She dances, plays 10 musical instruments, sings and writes music. She will be attending the School of Audio Engineering in New York next year and hopes to



HOW SHE SEES HERSELF...Lynnette Olmeda, a senior at the Hillcrest Academy and a Scotch Plains resident, pieced together images to compose a self-portrait.

release a CD shortly. Her collage, "Self-Portrait" utilized various personal items, including roses she received from her first boyfriend.

The students from Westfield did not attend Monday's reception.

Next stop on the schedule for the Touring Exhibit is the Freeholders' Gallery at the Union County Ad-

Arts Entertainment John DeMarco: The World's A Stage and He Could Sell It to You for A Song

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

WESTFIELD — Early Friday morning, John DeMarco knew he had a tight calendar to juggle. There were homes to sell in

Westfield's competitive real estate market — homes that commanded millions — and later that night; there would be the 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. rehearsal for *It Started With A Dream: 2 Guys, One Voice*, a show where he would mix his velvety vocals with those more vigorous tones of friend Joe Agosta.

"I have a very low tolerance for boredom," DeMarco admitted. "I need to be stimulated." A real estate agent for Coldwell Banker in

ing" — "Listen to my heart, listen to it sing. Listen to my voice. It wants to tell you everything. All about a life that's just about to start; and if you want to know how much I love you, listen to my heart."

Quintessentially, DeMarco was born to be a romantic balladeer, a lover of love songs who has amazed listeners with his entrancing vocals that are, to borrow a phrase from a spoof on Barbra Streisand, "like buttah." To his credit, DeMarco has



COMPLEMENTING VOICES...The resonant voice of Joe Agosta, left, will be the ideal match to the melodic, smooth style of John DeMarco, right, in *It Started With A Dream*. DeMarco is a real estate agent with Coldwell Banker in Westfield.

Westfield, the number one agency in the Northeast and the number two office in sales in North America, DeMarco currently resides in Plainfield.

Keeping an attentive ear to the jingling phones at Coldwell's reception desk nearby, he shared, "This company has been extremely supportive of me, especially Michael Scott (Managing Broker for the Westfield office)."

At Judy's Chelsea Supper Club, 169 Eighth Avenue in New York City, DeMarco and Agosta will perform up to 17 romantic ballads in *It Started With A Dream*. The shows will take place on Tuesday, June 18, Monday, June 24 and Tuesday, June 25, beginning at 8:30 p.m.

In his spare time, DeMarco, 57, is also directing a show on Long Island, *The Grove Follies 2002* at The Arts Project of Cherry Grove.

He explained that the production is a take-off of *Les Follies Bergères*, filled with comic numbers, show girls and all of the dazzle familiar with the 20s and 30s.

The Grove Follies will contain various numbers from Broadway shows, with "Listen to My Heart" by David Friedman, a melody DeMarco says "equates love with his love for sing-

been told that if audience members aren't "in the mood" after hearing him sing, they pretty much are incapable of feeling anything.

When asked by *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times* about his top five ballads, DeMarco cited "I'll String Along With You," "Here's That Rainy Day," "Empty," "This Time Around" by Frank Wildhorn, and "You Don't Have to Do It For Me."

DeMarco has carved out a special place in his heart for "Empty," which, when sung with Agosta, becomes a tribute for both of their deceased fathers. "You Don't Have to Do It For Me," DeMarco explained, also holds the same meaning to them.

Friends since May 19 of 2001, Agosta, a teacher on Long Island, and DeMarco bear "very separate voices." DeMarco's is melodic, while Agosta possesses a booming, Broadway style. The differences have complemented each other beautifully.

"Joe gets the 11 o'clock numbers and the thunderous applause," explained DeMarco, adding that Agosta has learned to tone down his vocals for singing ballads. In comparison, DeMarco has understood what it means to "push out" his voice in

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MEETING THE ARTIST...On May 23 at Galeria West, residents and visitors had the opportunity to meet Marlene Golab at "Meet the Artist: Brazilian Music and Art."

If Food and Love Make You Wax Neurotic, Link to The Food Chain

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

CRANFORD — "If you are obsessive-compulsive, Press I repeatedly," so goes the familiar joke between mental health professionals about patients coping with the malady, which nearly everyone seems to share in this fast-paced world.

Flourishing New York playwright Nicky Silver is renowned for his use of unusual metaphors in depicting the neuroses of the common man/woman and Mark Spina, Founder and Artistic Director of The Theater Project at Union County College in Cranford, is banking on Silver's angst-filled comedy *The Food Chain* to draw audiences to his show.

On Monday morning, Spina told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* that the play "satirizes the obsessive-compulsive needs that everyone has." Someone may crave a cigarette or a piece of cake, while another person is desperately seeking a date or becomes consumed by the hunt for Mr. or Ms. Right.

"I think it's something people can definitely relate to," said Spina, who is directing the production, which includes a cast of five.

The story swirls around the lives of Amanda, a newlywed and poet with an eating disorder, who phones a crisis hotline and speaks with Bea about her new husband, Ford, who has been missing for weeks since their nuptials.

The situation climaxes when Serge, a male model awaiting a visit from his lover (who turns out to be Ford), is visited instead by his ex-love Otto. The stories of the five neurotic characters intertwine dynamically in Silver's comedy-drama, during



EAT OR BE EATEN...Megan Muckelmann tempts John Marinko with a bite-sized donut in *The Food Chain* at The Theater Project at Union County College in Cranford.

which the personalities often solve their problems through overindulgence.

An overflowing buffet of Equity and non-union actors in The Theater Project's version of *The Food Chain* will satiate the audience's need to see a highly professional cast take the

college's Roy Smith Theater stage.

Former Plainfield resident Christopher Kirk Allen, currently of New York City, Brian Kennedy of Wayne, John Marinko of Roselle, Megan Muckelmann of Livingston and Deborah Pires of Teaneck will join the ensemble.

Allen's credits include roles on ABC's former soap opera, "Loving," and daytime favorite "All My Children." He has also actively performed in New York City theaters, such as The Harbor Theatre.

Muckelmann has also commanded New York stages, dazzling audiences at The Vital Theatre in *Unwanted: The Very, Very Ugly Duckling*.

The Theater Project has the unique reputation of putting on productions which surpass the average expectations of audiences by posing moral questions and tickling funny bones beyond the standard Broadway titles viewers have seen time and time again. Spina and company take risks and that seems to be why so many audiences anticipate their productions.

Silver's *The Food Chain* is such a production, using what Spina calls "wonderful, wild metaphors and symbols for things we do in our everyday lives."

Spina revealed that next year, his theatre troupe hopes to perform another Silver masterpiece, *Pterodactyls*, which "satirizes denial and families," centering around discovered dinosaur bones used to reconstruct the creature in the center of the family's living room. Yet, Spina explains, everyone denies the structure dwells among the family members. He confirmed that the metaphor follows along the lines of "the elephant in the room" that no one wants to confront or contend with.

The Food Chain will be presented by this critically acclaimed company on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. from June 27 to July 14, with no performance offered on the Fourth of July.

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Clubhouse

ANTIQUES & FURNISHINGS
Mountainside, NJ

Please join us on Saturday, June 15th, for the Mountainside Sidewalk Art Fair from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM (Raindate June 22). The show will be located on Mountain Avenue between New Providence Road and Mountain View Terrace. Local artists from the Westfield Art Association will be featured, as well as a Children's Art Display. There will be food, entertainment, and family fun.

If you are looking for the unique gift for Father's Day at exceptional prices, please stop in.

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