

Hazel Finck's Art: Widely Admired

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

WESTFIELD — Although she died almost 30 years ago, the artwork of Westfield resident Hazel Finck continues to be sought and collected by art aficionados everywhere.



An oil on canvas by Hazel Finck.



"Orchard in Bloom," watercolor, 1925 by Hazel Finck.

Born in New Haven, Conn. in 1894, Mrs. Finck spent most of her life in Westfield, where she served as president of the Westfield Art Association (WAA).

She was also active in other New Jersey Art Associations, including the Newark Art Club, the Plainfield Art Association, New Jersey Gallery of Art, and the Irvington Art and Museum Association.



Two more examples of Hazel Finck's landscapes.

Mrs. Finck was a student of the impressionist painter Guy Wiggins and the Russian-born Mountainside artist, Sigismund Ivanowski, who came to the United States in 1903 after a career as painter to the Imperial Court of Czar Nicholas II.

Nationally, Mrs. Finck belonged to the American Artists Professional League and the Art Student League of New York.

Continued on Page 19

Arts & Entertainment

Spiritual Journey Led Sood to Write 'Maya'

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

WESTFIELD — Westfield resident, Divya Sood, is busy at work on her second novel. Balancing a fulltime job at Pearle Vision and operating her own photo business, the author still manages to focus on her undying passion for writing.

Her first novel, "Maya," was recently published by iUniverse and Ms. Sood is beginning to enjoy the success she richly deserves.

A graduate of Rutgers University, where she majored in creative fiction, she left the rat race several years ago to begin research for her novel. Frustrated with what she describes as a "dead end job," she took her dog and her laptop computer and journeyed to Calcutta, India.

The author spent six months in a rented room with few amenities, yet returned home with the bulk of her novel written. Her expedition, a spiritual journey unto itself, became the basis and the background of "Maya."

Set in Calcutta, "Maya" explores the rich and often complicated relationship between a troubled woman and a young photographer who rents a room in her flat. An unexplainable and unsettling attraction between the two lost souls begins almost immediately, and the enlightening, but also painful journey begins.

Maya and her new tenant, Arjun, instantaneously connect but cannot explain or even begin to understand why. A widow, Maya struggles with her recent loss, yet cannot justify the odd comfort she finds in Arjun's presence. With the help of a local Holyman, Maya and Arjun discover that they have shared many, many past lives together.

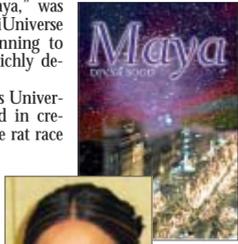
The novel deals with difficult issues such as domestic violence, sexual abuse and even death. However, the ultimate theme of "Maya" is the profound discovery of sharing not only one lifetime, but several lifetimes with another soul.

"Maya" is a wonderful first novel. Narrative is intertwined with prose and episodes of past lives dance onto the page, intermingling with the current action. A love story, ultimately, "Maya" helps us to believe in something that is larger than what we can comprehend in our daily existence.

Ms. Sood hopes that her second novel will touch hearts as well. Tentatively entitled "Miracle's Son," her next piece takes place here in the United States and is somewhat more autobiographical.

When asked what kind of advice she would give to aspiring writers, Ms. Sood replied, "Believe. Believe in the strength and the power of your characters. If you are faced with rejection,

Continued on Page 19



Divya Sood

Former Judge Beglin Rules Operatic Role

By MICHELLE HELEN Le POIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — At the retirement dinner of Assignment Judge Edward Beglin, Jr., the Union County Bar Association made a contribution to the New Jersey State Opera, which led the Westfield resident to accept an unlikely role.

Once the donation was made, Mr. Beglin was then committed to appear as the Super Numerary in the opera company's February 18 and 20 performances of Gioachino Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* at the Victoria Theater at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark.

"I'm really just there as an observer. I come in at the end. It's really an



Edward Beglin, Jr.

interesting process," Mr. Beglin told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* on the morning of February 18.

Although his role does not involve any singing or dancing, he has great admiration for those involved in the production that must take the stage with such skills.

"I'm very impressed with the chorus," added Mr. Beglin. "There are no women, just men and most come from the New York City Opera. The two principals are also well experienced and others are younger artists."

A longtime attendee of performances at The Metropolitan Opera in New York City, Mr. Beglin said of his *Barber of Seville* cast members, "They all have good voices and stage presence."

Having to react to lines being said to him in Italian was one of the most challenging aspects of Mr. Beglin's operatic role.

Although he does not intend to pursue any more parts in the performing arts, he concluded, "I am very appreciative that the bar gave me this opportunity. It has truly been a fun experience."

WHS Students to Present Plain & Fancy Musical

WESTFIELD — *Plain & Fancy*, from a book by Joseph Stein and Will Glickman, is the Westfield High School (WHS) spring musical production.

The early work of Mr. Stein, who went on to write *Fiddler on the Roof*, is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its Broadway premier on January 27, 1955 at the Mark Hellinger Theatre.

The production will be presented on Thursday, March 10, at 7 p.m. and Friday and Saturday, March 11 and 12, at 8 p.m. in the WHS Theatre, located at 550 Dorian Road in Westfield.

The 37-member cast unites two opposite cultures for some old-fashioned fun, a fundamental love story and a look at a simple, more relaxed type of lifestyle.

Set in rural Pennsylvania, on a farm near Bird-In-Hand in the Lancaster area, a New York couple arrives to look over a piece of inherited land.

Ruth Winters and Dan King are the New Yorkers (Emily Greenberg and Chris Hild), who have come to sell the farm. They are welcomed by Hilda Miller (Chloe Zeitounian) who falls for handsome Dan.

Papa Yoder (Daniel Foltz-Morrison) wants the nearby farm as a wedding present for his daughter Katie (Allison Siko), who is to marry Ezra Reber (Steve Markowski). But, Katie is in love with Ezra's brother, Peter Reber (Nick Williams), who has been her sweetheart from childhood.

Peter has been banished from the community for fighting. When he learns of the impending marriage, he returns and asks Katie to remember the promises they made to each other. Seeing Peter, Ezra taunts him and another fight ensues.

As this occurs, the barn on Dan's property is struck by lightning and burns. Papa Yoder sees this as a "hex" by Peter and his is "shunned" by the entire community, including Katie.

An old-fashioned barn-raising begins the second act and Ruth tries her hand at helping with the wedding meal. It is a fiasco and she retreats to her tiny bedroom under the staircase where she finds consolation in a bottle of Scotch. Ezra joins her and gets drunk on the "vegetable juice." He runs off for one last fling at a carnival in Lancaster.

Hilda also runs to the carnival, trying to show Dan her worldliness. Peter follows and rescues his brother from a carnival knife-toting sharpster, thus restoring him to the good graces of the community. A shattered, but wiser Hilda also returns safely after her glimpse of the outside world.

Dan and Ruth find each other and,

as the couples unite, the community celebrates the wedding of Peter and Katie.

One of the most popular songs of 1955, "Young and Foolish" was from this play. Other numbers in the production are "It Wonders Me," "Plenty of Pennsylvania," "Follow Your Heart," "Plain We Live," "This is All Very New to Me," and "I'll Show Him."

Additional cast members are Maurice



FINDING EACH OTHER... Emily Greenberg and Chris Hild play Ruth Winters and Dan King, the sophisticated New York couple who comes to rural Amish farm country and eventually find each other in the Westfield High School spring musical, *Plain & Fancy*.

Blackmon, Stephanie Christiano, Jeff Hogan, Suzanne Toriello and Zal Spialter.

Co-dance captains Kristin Aguero and Jennifer Kujawski lead an ensemble of Kelly Braun, Nick Brennan, Patricia Caruana, Gina Castrorao, Caity Costello, Connor Davis, Ian Devaney, Kristen Dilzell, Aaron Eisenberg, Danielle Frogley, Rachel Gordon, Jeff Greenlaw, James Hooper-Hamersley, Melanie Jackson, Max Lazar, Mat Leonard, Nathan Margolin, Greg Nelson, Mike Noblett, Mia Pafumi, Lindsay Ryan, Annemarie Valentine and Caroline Yost.

WHS is part of the Rising Star Award program, which recognizes outstanding achievements by students and educators.

WHS drama teacher Joseph Nierle, who won Outstanding Director for the 1996 WHS production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, does the musical staging and direction. Bill Mathews is the Musical Director with 2001 WHS graduate Megan Rodd doing the choreography. Greg Ryan is stage manager, assisted by Jonathan Chananie. Roy Chambers is set designer and construction coordinator. Lauren Miceli is costume mistress with Jessica Minsky and Kaylie Spialter in charge of hair and makeup.

Advanced sale of the reserved seats is encouraged and can be purchased from cast members and stage crew. All tickets are \$10.

For ticket reservations and more information, please call (908) 789-4549, extension no. 2.

LOCAL FILMMAKERS INVITED TO SUBMIT WORK Libraries Will Host First Movies in May Festival

By MICHELLE HELEN Le POIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

FANWOOD — The Fanwood Memorial Library and the Scotch Plains Public Library are teaming up to present the first annual Movies in May Independent Film Festival, which invites local students, residents and members of the public to submit their films for consideration.

The deadline for submissions is Friday, April 15.

Noting that the libraries have already received a few submissions and that interest has been piqued in the communities, Fanwood Library Director Dan Weiss told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, "We hope to make this an ongoing event. Both libraries have recently acquired nice projection systems and that was really the genesis of the project."

The festival will be held on Friday, May 6, at Fanwood Library and Saturday, May 7, at Scotch Plains Library. An afternoon Filmmakers Forum, followed by a reception and in the evening, the films screening, will be presented on Saturday.

Each evening will also feature a question and answer session with the filmmakers.

Bill McMeekan, who teaches television production at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, has been encouraging the students to submit their film projects.

He told *The Leader/Times* that he has received three entries so far.

"One is a documentary about surfing, there is another that was a project for class — a spoof on iPod commercials, and there's also a brief piece on bicycling in the area," he shared.

There are other projects "in the works," said Mr. McMeekan, adding that he hopes the students complete them in time for the deadline.

The festival, he believes, will provide students with the unique opportunity to obtain feedback and immediate gratification regarding their projects. They will also be able to network with other students and adults in the area who share their love for filmmaking.

"I just think it's great that we're doing this," he said. "Larger film festivals are so hit or miss, but this will give them the chance to learn and have their work shown on a big screen."

Submissions from residents and other individuals connected to the Scotch Plains-Fanwood area are also encouraged. Entries, which should be sent in a mini DV, VHS or other format, will be evaluated for their appropriateness.

To obtain an official printable entry form, please visit www.fanwoodlibrary.org/filmfest.

All entries should be sent to: Movies in May Independent Film Festival, Fanwood Memorial Library, North Avenue and Tillotson Road, Fanwood 07023.

For more information, please call the Fanwood Library at (908) 322-6400 or the Scotch Plains Library at (908) 322-5007, extension no. 202.

Book Nook With Marylou Morano Black History's Rich Culture Uncovered in Children's Books

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

Black History month dates back to 1926, when Dr. Carter Woodson from Harvard University first attempted to show the Negro as a participant, rather than a passive figure in history. The organizer of the first annual Negro History Week, he chose the second week in February for his event because it coincided with the birthdays of two champions of Negro rights — Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

As the years passed, Negro History Week grew into Black History Month. Today, reading books that honor the lives and times of Black Americans is a good way to celebrate Black History Month. Here are a few suggestions.

Meg Greene has written a historically accurate of the Reconstruction period of American history in her book "Into the Land of Freedom: African Americans in Reconstruction" (Lerner, 2004). The book chronicles the struggles of the freed slaves and their efforts to win the rights and privileges their freedom brought.

Ms. Greene, a historian and historical preservationist has also written "Slave Young, Slave Long: The American Slave Experience" (Lerner, 1998).

African art and culture in its entire splendor is presented in a book by the same name, written by Jane Bingham (Raintree, 2004). Beautiful full color photographs complement the text,

which describes African architecture, textiles, musical instruments and many more examples of art and traditions.

Joyce Hansen and Gary McGowan have collaborated on "Freedom Roads: Searching for the Underground Railroad" (Carus Publishing, 2003). This book goes beyond the legends of quilts and the part they played in the Underground Railroad, and uses artifacts from archaeological digs and information from journals and other written sources to detail the way many slaves escaped to freedom.

Billie Holiday graced the world with her song, "God Bless the Child" in 1941. In 2004, award-winning illustrator, Jerry Pinkney created a picture book that complements Ms. Holiday's simple, yet elegant words with beautiful illustrations. The book comes with a CD of Ms. Holiday singing "God Bless the Child," accompanied by her orchestra. The illustrations won the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor.

Moon Mountain Publishing recently released a book about African-American heroes of the Revolutionary War entitled "The Black Regiment of the American Revolution" by Linda Crota Brennan (2004). This book, which centers around the Battle of Rhode Island, is historical nonfiction at its best. The entertaining manner in which the story is told brings to life an important, yet often overlooked aspect of Black history.

Pianist Gail Niwa to Perform At Mid-Day Musicales Concert

WESTFIELD — The First Congregational Church of Westfield, located at 125 Elmer Street, will host its next Mid-Day Musicales series of free, half-hour, noon concerts with a program by pianist Gail Niwa on Wednesday, March 2. Following the concert a soup and sandwich luncheon will be available in the church social hall for \$5.

Ms. Niwa won high praise for her New York recital debut at Alice Tully Hall, and her recitals at Orchestra Hall in Chicago on the Allied Arts Piano Series and at the Ambassador

Auditorium's Gold Medal Series in Pasadena. She also received outstanding reviews for her solo appearances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in February 1995, performing the Schumann Piano Concerto with Sir Georg Solti conducting.

In 1991, Ms. Niwa became the first woman ever to win the Gold Medal at the Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition. She was also awarded the Audience Prize and the Chamber Music Prize. She has also won major prizes in the International Chopin Competition, the Mae Whitaker International Competition, and the Washington International Competition.

Ms. Niwa, who recently toured Holland as a member of the Het Reizend Musik Geselschap, can be heard in Fantasia 2000 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in Saint-Saens *Carnival of the Animals*. She has also collaborated with violinist David Kim on recordings for the Musical Heritage Society and Teldec labels and with the late bassoonist Bruce Grainger on the Centaur label.

The daughter of professional musicians, she was born in Chicago and began piano studies with her mother and made her orchestral debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at age eight. She earned her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees on scholarship at the Juilliard School.

Ms. Niwa has given master classes in many parts of the world, including Pusan University in Korea, the YCU Clubburn Institute, Brigham Young University and the University of Oklahoma. In 1999 Ms. Niwa joined the faculty of the University of Southern California as an Assistant Professor of Piano.

She is the founder and Artistic Director of Chamber Music at Great Gorge, a concert series in northwest New Jersey, and continues solo and chamber playing.

IKEA to Exhibit Art By County Students

COUNTY — Artwork from various schools in Union County will be showcased for the Art Educators of New Jersey's (AENJ) Youth Art Month, an annual observance each March in the state to emphasize the value of art education for all children and to encourage support for quality school art programs.

Union County's Youth Art Month exhibit will be held at IKEA in Elizabeth on IKEA Drive from Tuesday, March 1, to Monday, April 4. A reception will be held on March 1 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. for all participating artists, their families and friends, and their art teachers.

Artwork from students in grades K to 12 will be displayed and each student artist will receive an award. Participating schools include Franklin and Wilson Elementary Schools and Edison Intermediate School in Westfield, Deerfield School in Mountainside, and Mountain Park, Thomas Hughes and Woodruff Elementary Schools in Berkeley Heights.

Barbershop Harmony Quartets Will Hold Annual Competition

AREA — Barbershop Harmony quartets from several states will perform in the 44th Annual Novice Quartet Competition on Saturday, February 26, at 7:30 p.m. in the Rahway High School auditorium, located at 1012 Madison Avenue in Central Avenue in Rahway.

Sponsored by the Rahway Valley Jerseyaires Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. the program has scheduled approximately 15 newly formed novice quartets from the Mid-Atlantic district states of the singing society to harmonize in competition before certified society judges.

The program will commence with four teenagers, sophomores and juniors, from Cranford High School known as the "Chord Lords" quartet, will be microphone testers for the Jerseyaires novice contest.

The Jerseyaires chorus will present a brief performance, barbershop style,

under the direction of Rich Taylor with Doug Brown assisting.

The 2004 first place gold medal winner will sing a few songs for the audience, present the new 2005 Novice Quartet first place gold medal, second place silver and third place bronze medals with their awards.

The Ben Ackerman Memorial Trophy, which has been passed on since the 38th Novice Contest, will be presented by Ken Friedlander, President of the Rahway Valley Chapter of the 2005 gold medal winner.

The contest is open to the public and admission is free. For more information, please call (888) 262-2478 or visit www.RahwayValley.org.

The chapter's funding has been made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts through a grant administered by the Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs.

Coming Next Week:

- Echofission discusses benefit concert for victims of the tsunami;
- Westfield native Jim Parsons tells Josh Hamerman about his blossoming television news career;
- Michelle Le Poidevin attends the rehearsals for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School spring production of *West Side Story*.

This Is Westfield

May 5, 2005



Call (908) 232-4407

Reserve Your Ad Space Now
sales@goleader.com

Please send all A&E news to: ae@goleader.com