

Arts & Entertainment

County-Sponsored Symposium Enriches Artists All Over State

By IAN FEDERGREEN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

COUNTY—Across the lobby from a silk painting workshop and down the hall from an African drum circle, a queen was being coronated not with a crown, but a clown nose.

"You can't survive without humor, right?" asked artist Grigory Gurevich.

The ceremony was part of an exercise on cultural values called Two Kingdoms, one of seven seminars at last Saturday's Artist Enrichment Symposium, held at the Cranford campus of

ers sharing with musicians — listening to how people think about how they produce their own work. That's one of the fastest ways to grow is to collaborate with an artist different than yourself."

That was the theme of the Two Kingdoms exercise, lead by Artsgenesis Associate Director Christopher Eaves, in which participants created a culture, identified the values of that culture, and created a ceremony to express those values.

"The exercise has been modified to

and interpret it with kids in teaching them how to read and get along and be creative."

She added that the workshop gave her insight into a play she is writing.

Presenter Heather Dunn led a class in silk painting, which was also successful.

"It's always exciting when you're learning something new," said Derek Dent, a multimedia artist from Elizabeth who had never painted on silk before.

"For me that's what being an artist is all about," he said.

Jennifer Bobal, a salon owner from Bloomfield who came to find collaborators for a charity fundraising event, enjoyed the workshop in African drumming.

"Everybody connected. By the end of the class everybody loved each other," she said. Her friend, surfboard designer and deejay Louis Kennedy, agreed.

"A lot of new words, new culture, and I'm going out and buying a drum!" he said.

"To play the drum is empowering and uplifting, raises the spirit and creates wholeness and healing, releases those positive chemicals in the brain," said Maire Tashjian, who presented the drum seminar with music and business partner Amy Schindler.

Other workshops included papermaking, medieval manuscript illumination, and a discussion on the art of critiquing.

"(Students) don't come to these events to be beat down," said musician and scholar Anthony Branker. "They come to be encouraged, inspired. You've got to find some things they can hold onto and feel good about."

Kim Leary, who as Union County Teen Arts Coordinator, had organized similar events aimed at students for years, coordinated the Artist Enrichment Symposium.

"Those people that teach the workshops said to me year after year, 'This is such a great event, we want to go take



IMAGE TRANSFER... Jenelyn Cooling, a retired corporate consultant from Westfield, reads an image to be painted on silk during Saturday's Artist Enrichment Symposium at Union County College in Cranford.

Union County College.

Sixty-five teachers, artists, and teaching artists gathered for a day of collaboration and inspiration.

Keynote speaker Kathleen Gaffney, founder of the arts-in-education organization Artsgenesis, began the day with a talk about "how to kick start your own creativity."

The key, explained Ms. Gaffney, lies in "drinking from other wells." That is, "artists who work as painters sharing with theater artists, danc-

day to focus specifically on integrating different art forms," Mr. Eaves said. "The underlying challenge is for people who express themselves visually to start expressing themselves musically — really to extend their abilities."

"Well it's not something I would have engaged in ordinarily," said Kathleen Rutler, a substitute teacher and mother of five from Wyckoff. "I'm not a performer at all. But it was wonderful. I have so many ideas of how to use that exact workshop



'PULP' FICTION... A science classroom at Union County College became a laboratory for papermaking at Saturday's Artist Enrichment Symposium.



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Citera Awarded By Cricket

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

SCOTCH PLAINS — Brunner Elementary School student Andrew Citera was awarded Honorable Mention by *Cricket* for the magazine's October 2004 Cricket League art competition.

Andrew, 10, told *The Westfield Leader and The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* that his teacher, Michele Mottley, gave him a form from the Illinois-based magazine to enter the contest which required



HONORABLE ENTRY... Andrew Citera, 10, of Scotch Plains entered this winning scarecrow into the October 2004 *Cricket* magazine contest. He earned Honorable Mention.

each student to craft their own Halloween character.

After returning home with his entry form, Andrew busily constructed a scarecrow, using a pole, a pair of old jeans and a black sweatshirt, both stuffed with newspapers, and wrote "*Cricket League*" in white paint. He noted that he used a trick-or-treat pumpkin pail for the creature's head, topped off with a straw hat.

Andrew completed his display with cobwebs spread across the bushes in front of his house and two white tombstones, which read, "I'm A Goner" and "R.U. Next?"

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ENCAUSTIC DEMONSTRATION... Westfield contemporary artist Francesca Azzara demonstrates the modern version of a two-millenia old encaustic (wax) painting during the January 9 meeting of the Westfield Art Association.

West Side Story Production Planned by SPFHs Theater

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHs) Repertory Theater has announced the cast of *West Side Story*, which will debut at the high school on Friday, March 11.

Performances are slated for the evenings of Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 11 to 13, and during the afternoons of Thursday, Friday and Saturday, March 17 to 19.

The show, by Leonard Bernstein,

Stephen Sondheim and Arthur Laurents, tells the story of young love destroyed by the strife of youth gangs in Manhattan in the 1950s.

Leading the troupe will be seniors Christine Deluca as Maria, Abraham Hiatt as Tony and Matthew Capodicasa as Riff. Brian Glassett will portray Bernardo and Sarah Marable will play Anita.

Tickets will be available on Tuesday, February 1, by calling (908) 322-9616.



GRIEVING... For the Friday, March 11, debut of *West Side Story* at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, Christine Deluca, right, and Sarah Marable, left, rehearse an impassioned duet in which they grieve over the death of a gang member beloved of each.



POP CORN™



Meet The Fockers. Doesn't Get It Together

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By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
2 & 1/2 POPCORN

Just the title alone is worth a chuckle: *Meet The Fockers*. If nothing else, director Jay Roach's film informs that we've come to a point in our so-called civilization that says it's okay to put that on the marquee. Whether or not that's progress is another matter. But it's just the sort of thing the story's two patriarchs, Robert De Niro's Jack Byrnes and Dustin Hoffman's Bernie Focker, might debate.

Of course we all know the smirky implication. Don't think scores of SUVs headed for movie theaters all across America have not been loaded down with rambunctious adolescents shouting out their very own pronunciations of the title. But the enthusiasm is bound to be less vocal on the way home. Maybe just a blurt or two.

While Roach's sequel to his much more original *Meet The Parents* (2000) tries hard to reinvent the sheer zaniness of its predecessor, it's just another case of a good idea recruited for formulaic duty.

Where once the true box office coup was to fashion a film that would appeal not only to male and female, but to the 18 to 25 crowd as well as the over 40 bunch, now it's political. Fill those seats with people from blue states and red states and let 'em fight it out on screen. The occasion of impending nuptials, ripe with the egocentric rancor that inevitably attends the joining of two families, is the perfect place to plop your combatant stereotypes.

Therefore, in this corner, representing WASPs as well as the right wing, an ex-CIA agent who doesn't trust anyone, even after he makes them take a lie detector test, Jack Byrnes. He's Pam's dad. And in this corner, representative of everything that is liberal and ethnic, a man so sensitive that he gave up his law practice to become a stay-at-home dad, Bernie Focker. He's Greg's father.

Aiding and abetting on the distaff side, Blythe Danner's Dina Byrnes is Jack's characteristically repressed wife. Whereas Barbra Streisand as Roz Focker, sex therapist and nonconformist personified, is living proof that her sub-culture is all for women's lib.

Oddly, despite such disparate backgrounds, this doesn't seem to have deterred Ben Stiller's Gaylord Greg Focker and Teri Polo's Pam Byrnes from embarking on that most sacred of paths. Even odder, come to think of it, what little they do have in common revolves around their mutual effort to rein in their insane parents.

Sure, it's a farce, and you don't expect the pair to dominate the screen with either a discourse on whether Shakespeare really existed or a debate about the pros and cons of dropping the bomb on Hiroshima. But still, you

suspect if it weren't for the class warfare the Byrneses and Fockers immerse themselves in so slavishly, Pam and Greg would have absolutely nothing to talk about. They were more important in issue no. 1. Here, they're just the kids of crazies.

Problem is, I know crazier, from both sides of the aisle: actual, living, breathing conservatives whose reactionary viewpoints would make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. I also know idealistic, radical freethinkers whose wild-eyed cure for the world could make you swear off trail mix for life. And thus, what the Fockers and the Byrneses say and do hardly abashes.

Doubtless, screenwriters John Hamburg and James Herzfeld know that the sociological polarization angle has worn thin by the time we get to installment no. 2. So in a dire attempt to featherbed the script with the requisite three laughs a minute, they toss in another angle. Jack decides to bring his infant grandson, Little Jack, along to the conclave at the Fockers's Florida digs. This gives both families an opportunity to brandish their opinions on childrearing.

Unfortunately, like the main plot, the subplot turns into a one-joke affair, symbolized for the most part by a more curious than hilarious contraption Jack invents to satisfy his stance on breastfeeding. Some of the Freudian implications bring a giggle or two. But after a while the running gag, beaten like the proverbial dead horse, points up the film's devolution into sitcom insensibilities. The wackiness is too harnessed, too worked, and too indicative of sequelitis.

But wait. If you've read this far you're either on my Mom's payroll or you're an optimist. And assuming it's the latter, there's a dividend to be had. Indeed, director Roach's comedy disappoints. However, there are two performances here that are so pleasant that they are practically worthy of your time in and of themselves. The compliments are intended for Streisand and Hoffman.

Get past the jerry-rigged stereotype, extract Barbra and Dustin from the vaudevillian overstatement, and this is quite a pairing. Exuding a mellowness in their madness, there is comfort in Streisand's confidence and whimsy in Hoffman's equally certain sweetness. They bend the genders without breaking them, and leave us wishing more attention were devoted to them. In fact, they're the only reason you'd want to *Meet The Fockers*.

Meet The Fockers, rated PG-13, is a Universal Pictures release directed by Jay Roach and stars Ben Stiller, Barbra Streisand, Dustin Hoffman and Robert De Niro. Running time: 115 minutes.

Queen of Arts

Craft Projects, Books, and Patterns For All the Year 'Round

Coastal Cooking, Collage, Snow Globes and Cards

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

Perhaps this won't be the snowiest winter on record, but crafters can make it snow with the "Build Your Own Snow Globe" Mega Mini Kit by Alison Trulock (Running Press, 2003, \$7.95).

According to the kit's 32-page booklet, the wintry wonders date back to either 1870 or 1889 and folks have been collecting snow globes in every theme and shape ever since.

This kit provides crafters with the opportunity to personalize their own globe, using the silver glitter, plastic globe and interchangeable pieces included in the box. If you don't like the snowman, house, flower or teddy bear provided in the kit, find your own trinket to encase in the globe at a local hobby shop. Shake it up and let it snow.

Italian chef Lidia Matticchio Bastianich, who can be seen whipping up Mediterranean delights on public television, just published "Lidia's Family Table" (Alfred A. Knopf, 2004, \$35). While emphasizing the importance of family in the cooking experience, her latest volume is a true teaching cookbook, meaning that every aspect of her recipes is outlined for the novice chef.

Before diving into some of the best recipes offered in her book, Ms. Bastianich recommends necessary staples for every pantry, freezer and refrigerator, as well as the pots and pans she uses. As found in her past books, nostalgic photographs are provided in full color and sepia tones, harkening back to the chef's most cherished memories.

Fig Focaccia, Crostata with Chocolate, Hazelnuts and Orange top the dessert recipes, while the book also includes instructions for a hearty Soup with Lentils and Ditalini Pasta,

Warm Broccoli Rape and Yukon Gold Potato Salad, savory sauces to complement key vegetables, methods for cooking polenta, risotto and homemade pastas, as well as a fool-proof recipe for Roast Pork Shoulder with Roast Vegetable Sauce.

Yonghyun Kim has translated Claire Sun-ok Choi's innovative techniques for crafting 60 gorgeous greeting cards in "Designing Handcrafted Cards" (Quarry Books, 2004, \$19.99). Tools and techniques for card-making precede the author's instructions for pressed, window-shaped and embossed cards.

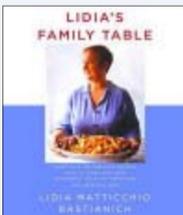
Covering every holiday and occasion imaginable, Ms. Choi introduces paper quilling, piercing, weaving and embossing into some of the most inspiring projects ever published.

For example, the Mother's Day and wedding cards are elaborate, but not overwhelming to the beginning crafter. With tweezers to manage the tiny components of most of the cards and lots of patience, any crafter to conquer these worthwhile projects.

If you don't have "The Coastal Living Cookbook" (Oxmoor House, 2004, \$31.96) in your collection, you're not a true seafood lover. The mouth-watering photographs and snippets from coastal inhabitants offering menu ideas and serving suggestions make this cookbook a great catch.

An extensive fish glossary concludes this volume, which features recipes for Miz Tolliver's Garlic Crabs, Lobster Frittata, Northwest Clam Chowder with Oyster Mushrooms, Lobster Salad with Papaya and Maui Onion, Thai Shrimp and Glass Noodle Salad, Broiled Oysters with Celery Cream and Virginia Ham, as well as Mussel Soup with Saffron and Cream.

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