



Susan Dougherty for The Westfield Leader/The Times

GREATEST SHOW IN KENILWORTH...Director of *Barnum*, Mark Boyd, right, chats with leads of the summer musical that runs from July 28-30 at the David Brearley High School in Kenilworth. With him are Gabriel Rodrigues from Mountainside, Kristen Dilzell from Westfield, Christine Nelson of Kenilworth and Connor Davis, top, who plays the lead role P.T. Barnum.

Westfield Students, Director And Producer Present *Barnum*

By SUSAN DOUGHERTY
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

"There's nothing to do...I can't find a job!" These are all too familiar laments of preteens and teens in the summer. If you ask some Westfield teens and adults, however, they are pretty busy rehearsing for an upcoming musical.

The show *Barnum* which runs from July 28-30 at David Brearley High School in Kenilworth, will star two Westfield teens, a Mountainside teen and other students from nearby communities and will be directed and produced by Westfield adults.

Is rehearsing nightly (in an air-conditioned auditorium) worthwhile? Just ask students and past actors who are now involved and they will say the five-week experience of nightly rehearsals and practices help cement friendships and relationships as well as teach theater basics that translate to life lessons.

Kristen Dilzell of Westfield plays Jenny Lind, one of the leads. Even though she is concurrently cast as the Baker's Wife in a Westfield show, *Into the Woods*, which runs the weekend prior to *Barnum*, she feels her schedule is "not stressful; it's fun."

She explained that this is her second year with C.A.S.T., Community Actors Student Theater and feels very comfortable. "I know kids in the Westfield show from school and I know some of these cast members in *Barnum* from playing Mrs. Darling in *Peter Pan* with them last year," she explained. "Both groups have good work ethics," said the teen who will be a junior at Westfield High School (WHS) in the fall.

Westfield baritone Connor Davis says the most difficult part of playing the male lead in *Barnum* is the memorization of lines. "I'm concerned about the reading of them or the delivery of them and the motivation behind what the character is saying," said the junior at WHS. This is his first major role and he wants to get it right.

He and Kristen played various roles in *Plain and Fancy*, WHS's musical last March.

Gabriel Rodrigues of Mountainside will play *Barnum's* partner, Bailey. He says this is one of the first big productions he has been in so far. "It's a nice big set and stage;

it's an awesome experience just to be a part of it all," he said. Being part of this big of a production, he feels, will prepare him for shows in high school this coming year.

And the director Mark Boyd makes sure they have the basics of acting and being on stage under their belt. The Westfield resident and theater major at the University of Maine in his youth says he stays involved in this community effort for two reasons. "The creative outlet is important," he admits. And secondly, "Few things are more satisfying in life than working with kids."

Boyd has his hands full with a cast of kids ranging in ages from 10 to 19. His vision for this show and other shows is simple. "It is always the same," he explains. "I try to find good vehicles for the talent we have. When you are doing Student Theater, the ultimate is to stretch and grow our student actors."

His ten-year-old son, Matthew, is happy to be in the chorus of the show performing under his dad's guidance.

The newly named producer of the show, Westfield resident Karyn Mack is a product of the shows. "I started out with C.A.S.T. when I was 15," she said. Through the years she has been assistant music director, choreographer, assistant producer, stage manager and now producer.

An integral part of the creative team is Sara Hedgepeth, in her second season with C.A.S.T. She is a freelance pianist who not only teaches piano in Westfield, but also is the director for the famed "McKinley Capers" at the Westfield elementary school. The music director teaches the students the music, rehearses it with them and directs the nine-piece orchestra that combines talent of students and professionals to create "that frantic circus sound."

Her son, Kelly Braun, a sophomore at WHS is also a part of the three-night show.

According to producer Mack, this show is for the whole family. "Come out to the pre-show side show events starting at 6:30 p.m.," she suggests. Curtain goes up at 7:30 p.m. with adult tickets \$10 and senior citizens and students \$8.

In the summertime, what's more fun than going to the circus?



HISTORICAL PRESERVATION...(left to right) Austin Hatch, a Wilson School student, won first prize for third graders in the art category of the Westfield Historical Preservation Commission's 2005 Youth Art and Essay contest. Danielle and Dominique Gillyard, students at Edison Intermediate School, won first prize in the art category for eighth graders. Emily Smith, of Franklin School, won first prize in the essay category for fifth graders. Virginia Caspard, a third grader at Franklin School, won first prize in the essay portion with her essay about the importance of reserving Westfield's historic buildings. Emily Bailey, of Wilson School, won first prize for fifth graders in the art category. The students received their awards from WHPC board member Barbara Burton during the recent awards ceremony at the Westfield Municipal Building.



GET UP AND DANCE...Swingadelic will return to the Sweet Sounds Downtown Jazz Festival on July 19.

More Education News

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Avon Foundation Awards Scholarship to WF Student

WESTFIELD - The Avon Foundation, located in Newark, Delaware, awarded Michelle Morawski, a recent graduate of Westfield High School (WHS) with a 2005 scholarship.

Michelle is one of 100 students to receive an annual \$2000 President's Club Scholarship. The scholarship is available to children and grandchildren of Avon independent Sales Representatives who are also members of Avon's President's Club. Membership in Avon's President's Club is limited to top selling Representatives who maintain minimum annual sales levels of \$10,100.

Scholarship winners are chosen on

a competitive basis according to criteria that includes, secondary school record and recommendations, SAT or ACT scores, extra-curricular activities and community service, as well as a biographical questionnaire. The scholarship can be applied to any accredited four-year degree granting college or university in the United States.

Michelle plans to attend Villanova University to major in Biology/Physical Therapy. Michelle's grandmother, Eugenia Morawski is an Avon Representative.

"Avon takes great pride in recognizing the success of President's Club Representatives like Eugenia," says Bill Singleton, region vice president, sales.



SCOTCH PLAINS... Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School recently held its annual Senior Awards Ceremony. One of the new scholarships being awarded was the "Mary Giraud Memorial Scholarship," named for a member of Evergreen Elementary's staff who passed away this year. The scholarship was given to high school senior Vesper Howard who is planning on studying communications at Edenboro College. Pictured is Vesper (center) along with Mary Giraud's son Matthew and husband John.



RECEIVING AN AWARD... Steven B. of Westfield received the TCI Community Service Award from TCI Teacher Kelly Cue at this year's Graduation Ceremony at The Children's Institute (TCI) in Verona. In addition to participating in the school civic activities, Steven volunteered at a local recycling center near his home. Steven was part of the largest graduating class in TCI's history, 19 in all, who ranged in age from pre-school to 21. Many of the graduates will be returning to their local schools to resume their education, while some will be going on to vocational training schools or full time employment. The graduation took place on June 22 at TCI.

Sweet Sounds Take Over Westfield

WESTFIELD - The "Sweet Sounds Downtown" Jazz Festival, sponsored by the DWC, continues its 9th annual season in downtown Westfield on July 19. The performances will take place on sidewalks and street corners every Tuesday in July and August from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Rain dates will be the following Wednesday evenings at the same time.

The Sweet Sounds Downtown Jazz Festival scheduled for Tuesday, July 19 includes performances by Swingadelic with Make You Wanna Dance, Scarlett Moore, Chris Colenari Quartet and XL Band.

While enjoying the musical performances of "Sweet Sounds Downtown," enjoy dining at one of Westfield's fine restaurants or shop and stroll through downtown. For more information about Westfield and other downtown events taking place, call the DWC at (908) 789-9444 for free a Destination Westfield brochure including a shopping, dining and service directory as well as a 2005 events calendar and Jazz Brochure or visit their web site at www.WestfieldToday.com for further details.



SUMMER ARTS... Westfield resident Katie McGrath is the recipient of the Westfield Summer Employment Grant from the Westfield Foundation.

WSW Awards McGrath Employment Grant

WESTFIELD - The Westfield Summer Workshop, a division of the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts, a non-profit organization, has awarded Katie McGrath the Summer Employment Grant from the Westfield Foundation. The purpose of the grant is to allow a young person in the community to develop skills and expand his or her job experiences.

Katie is a resident of Westfield and a graduate of Westfield High School. She is currently a student at Kean University, beginning her sophomore year this fall. Katie is studying Social Work and hopes to work in an adoption agency one day.

Her employment this summer at the Workshop will allow her to learn the inner workings of an office and develop management skills that will benefit her in the future.

"I think that working in the office has helped me to deal with the public. I have really had the opportunity to develop my communication skills and problem solving ability. I need to think on my feet and juggle a lot of tasks."

Katie will work in the office for the duration of the Westfield Summer Workshop this July.



STARTING TO GET REAL...Rachel Gordon directs the action on set from her director's chair.

Rachel Gordon's 'Big House'

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Thirteen days shy of her eighteenth birthday, Rachel is busy working on the set of a horror movie *Sea of Dust* with director and new WHS English teacher Scott Bunt, along with Peter Paul Basler, former TV tech, shooting the behind-the-scenes footage for the DVD and extras. Rachel wants to direct a feature length screenplay by the end of college. She ultimately wants to win an Oscar and start a production company, unlike the Hollywood companies.

"Everything's a business. I hate that. There are people in the industry that are doing well financially and all they do is they write screenplays just good enough so that big companies will buy them, but they'll never be made."

Rachel sees inherent value in creat-

ing a work of art and doesn't understand halfhearted efforts on anyone's part in the movie-making industry.

"Why would you create this art but not care about it?" Rachel asked. "There are documentary filmmakers who just want to get their messages out there, but they can't because these big businesses are stomping on them."

Rachel said she wants to create a more community-style production company where everyone is working together.

"I want everyone working together to make an amazing movie. It's not my ultimate goal to make a lot of money, my ultimate goal is to make great movies that'll make people think or make them as excited about movies as I am."

Clarkson Memorial Award Honors *Hi's* Eye Advisor

WESTFIELD - An annual award has been founded in memory of Walt Clarkson (1932-2005), who served for 31 years as advisor to the Westfield High School (WHS) student newspaper, the *Hi's Eye*. Funded by his former students, many of whom have risen to prominent positions in journalism and other endeavors, as well as by donations from family, friends and colleagues, the Walt Clarkson Memorial Award celebrates the contribution of a gifted student newspaper advisor to the lives of thousands of student journalists he mentored during his career.

The NSPA's staff will select a high school advisor whose career exemplifies Walt Clarkson's commitment to excellence in student journalism. Selection criteria include the advisor's length of service to the school's journalism program and awards received by the paper during the advisor's tenure. The winner will receive a plaque and a cash prize that they can use to fund projects to improve student journalism at their school. In addition, the winner's name will be inscribed on a plaque on display at the NSPA offices in Minneapolis, and which will be displayed at the annual JEA/NSPA Fall National High School Journalism Convention. Walt Clarkson served as advisor to the *Hi's Eye* for 31 years before retiring from the Westfield Public School system in 1990. A graduate of the school himself, Walt served as *Hi's Eye* editor during his senior year at WHS. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Dartmouth College and earned a master's degree from Columbia University. Between his undergraduate and graduate stud-

ies he served as an officer in the United States Marine Corps. During Walt Clarkson's tenure as its advisor the *Hi's Eye* enjoyed both national and local prominence as one of a very few weekly high school newspapers in the United States. Students on the *Hi's Eye* staff received many awards for the quality of the articles, photographs and other features they prepared under his guidance. Among other honors, the *Hi's Eye* received a record 25 NSPA All-American Awards while he served as its advisor. He was also a swimming and track coach while an English and Journalism teacher at WHS. His students fondly remember him for his unstinting commitment to excellence in student journalism and for his ability to instill in them the importance of writing clearly, concisely and on deadline. The first recipient of the Walt Clarkson Memorial Award for Excellence in Student Newspaper Advising will be announced at the Advisor's Luncheon on November 12, 2005 during the NSPA's Fall National Convention.

Tax-deductible donations to the Walt Clarkson Memorial Award can be mailed to:

Chad Rummel
National Scholastic Press Ass'n.
2221 University Ave. SE
Suite 121
Minneapolis, MN 55414
Please write "Walt Clarkson Memorial Fund" in the memo section of your check. Please email chad@studentpress.org for more information, or call him at (612) 625-4337.

A Kid's Life! to Benefit Children's Specialized

AREA - Three-time Academy Award nominee Steve Kalafer and Peter LeDonne will bring the smash hit *A Kid's Life!* to the Theatre at Raritan Valley on Sunday, July 17, to benefit Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation in a special performance sponsored by Kohl's. Tickets are \$12.00 and can be purchased online at www.forchildrens.org. All ticket sales will go directly to Children's Specialized Hospital.

The show, which recently opened to sold-out audiences at the Brentwood Theater in Los Angeles, California, features upbeat music, dazzling dancing and charming characters who present life's lessons to young children in a way that has the entire audience - from the youngest children to their parents and grandparents - giggling, smiling and singing along. Created by director Keith Markinson, who is joined by a powerhouse creative team, the show was inspired by a need for stimulating, educational, fun programs for young children. Markinson made it his mission to bring happiness and music that matters through a Broadway-class show that would show children how great their lives can be and bring out the inner child in their parents.

A Kid's Life! is filled with upbeat music, enthusiastic choreography and adorable characters that connect with the audience of children, parents and grandparents. "Our characters show the importance of appreciating nature, how precious time is, believing in one's self, respecting others, and

remembering to take a moment to enjoy the magic of a kid's life," Markinson said.

The show opens with Zack, an adorable five-year-old boy, and his best friend, a golden retriever named Starsky, who embark on a fun-filled adventure through their hometown, where they meet Zoe, a spunky yet shy five-year old girl, who is new to the community. As the show progresses, Zack and Zoe become friends and Zack helps bring Zoe out of her shell. During this musical adventure, the children encounter new friends, including a talking clock that teaches the importance of time, a beautiful owl who reminds them that animals have feelings, too, a tree that gives them a deeper appreciation for nature and a shopkeeper who shows the children just how wonderful a child's life can be.

For more information, call Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation at 908-301-5410.

Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation is the only organization of its kind where every contribution has a direct impact on the future of special needs children. All proceeds benefit Children's Specialized Hospital, which is an affiliate member of the Robert Wood Johnson Health System. Children's treats infants, children and young adults from birth to 21 years of age, through a network of services including outpatient services, acute rehabilitation, and long-term care at its sites in Mountainside, Fanwood, Hamilton, Roselle Park and Toms River.