

WESTFIELDER TO STAGE FIRST PLAY TOMORROW

# 'Fireball' Chapman: Destined to Conquer Multiple Mediums

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

WESTFIELD — For years, aspiring authors, playwrights and entrepreneurs struggle to grasp the right opportunities, often surrendering to pessimism and self-doubt. Not Westfield High School (WHS) graduate Veronica Chapman.

A graduate of Spelman College in Atlanta, Ga., she is a published author, who has not only devised her own



Veronica Chapman

game to teach networking techniques, but has written and directed her first play, *Ancestors Inc.*, which will be staged at Kean University's Little Theatre tomorrow, Friday, May 6, at 7 p.m. and Saturday, May 7, at 2 p.m.

Derived from her recently published book, "The Advent of Planet Martyr: An Innovative Social Commentary" (Author House, 2005), *Ancestors Inc.* came about when Ms. Chapman "wanted to find some creative way to encourage people to become entrepreneurs."

While researching her book, which contains poems, a short story, "documentation of different events and sentiments" experienced by Ms. Chapman, as well as the play, she learned about little known historical figures who, by their brave and inspirational stories and strides, serve as ideal role models for current and future generations.

When explaining the plot, Ms. Chapman wrote, "The story of a young boy's coming of age in a present-day setting ... the goal of the play is to motivate people to endeavor to address some of the ills that plague the African-American community by providing them with the knowledge and strength of certain African-American ancestors."

The Elizabeth-based Urban League of Union County Guild, of which Ms. Chapman is a member, offered her a grant after she pitched the idea for the play.

"Veronica is a young woman that reaches for the stars and is so positive

and passionate in everything she does," Lorraine Brooks-Body, President of the Urban League of Union County Guild, told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*.

Working with her for the last eight weeks on the *Ancestors Inc.* project, Ms. Brooks-Body said Ms. Chapman has such an amazing "vision" and persistence that "all we (the Guild) could do was support her."

Ms. Brooks-Body, who has known Ms. Chapman since she was a baby, added, "She makes you want to run with it. She knew what she wanted, took the ball and ran with it, crossed all the 'I's' and dotted all the 'I's' with staging this production. She's a fireball ... and an awesome young woman."

Producing a play has truly "been a learning process," Ms. Chapman told *The Leader/Times*, which has involved hosting auditions at local hotels, advertising for an all-volunteer casts and crew in *Back Stage* newsletter, and recruiting a cousin and one family friend, who were "awesome" enough to fill key roles in the cast.

Her little brother, Gil Scott Chapman, who she calls "a very accomplished pianist," is the musician for *Ancestors Inc.* He is a freshman at WHS.

Mount Teman African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Elizabeth has provided space, free of charge, for *Ancestors Inc.*, where rehearsals are currently underway.

Ms. Chapman reported that the May 6 performance is sold-out, as 150 tickets for each show were printed and the Friday evening tickets were pre-sold.

"Everybody needs something positive," she said when asked about how she hopes the play will impact her audience.

Ms. Chapman does not see producing, directing, writing and starring in her own play as the absolute fulfillment of her potential. She has much more to accomplish — even bigger mountains to climb and conquer.

As the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of her own company, Boxout Enterprises, which she established in October of 2004, Ms. Chapman designed and marketed her own game, "Gotta Get To Know Ya!" for high school and college students to teach networking techniques.

Having learned about entrepreneurship by reviving Spelman's chapter of the Students for Free Enterprise, Ms. Chapman developed the game by printing out business cards containing networking tips. Students must network with one another by finding the con-

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## Get Outta The House

By CAROL F. DAVIS  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Praised by Kris Kristofferson, and with a list of impressive appearances, dynamic contemporary folk artist **John Flynn** will perform at the **Watching Arts Center (WAC)** on Saturday, May 7, at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15. For reservations, please call (908) 753-0190, or e-mail [WACenter@aol.com](mailto:WACenter@aol.com).

Also at the WAC, the gallery is showing artists **Sandra Jordan** and **Mark Zimmerman** through Tuesday, May 31. Ms. Jordan paints abstracts, surreal impressions, as well as actual portraits on shoes, handbags, scarves, clothing, hats, ties, and on occasion even on people. Mr. Zimmerman, a former tennis pro, is showing his "Zodiac" collection of paintings. A reception will be held on Sunday, May 8, from 1 to 4 p.m. Gallery hours are from 1 to 4 p.m., Tuesday to Saturday, and 1 to 7 p.m. on Thursday.

"An Evening with Celebration and Praise," by The Celebration Singers and Children's Chorus, will be performed at two 8 p.m. shows on Friday and Saturday, May 13 and 14, at the Harvest Training Center, 69 Myrtle Avenue in Cranford. Tickets are \$12 to \$15, and are available in advance and at the door. The music will highlight choral classical numbers, as well as spiritual and Gospel songs. The group adds choreography and audience interaction whenever possible. For tickets, please call (908) 241-8200.

Roy Smith, will be at **The Town Book Store of Westfield** on May 7, from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. with his new book, "As Ever, Mac: A Biography of College Frontiersman Kenneth MacKay" (former 25-year Union County College (UCC) President). Mr. Smith was also UCC Acting President, among other administrative roles in his 41-year career there. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the school's scholarship fund. Later, from 2 to 4 p.m., author Steven Richman will be in the store to promote his new book, "Bridges of New Jersey: Portraits of Garden State

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# Arts & Entertainment

## Westfielder Stephen Bohlinger Makes Cottage Living A True Page-Turner

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

WESTFIELD — Westfield resident Stephen Bohlinger has a lot to celebrate these days.

Mr. Bohlinger, the Vice President and Publisher of *Cottage Living*, a new lifestyle magazine that was launched this past September, is thrilled and honored to witness the almost overnight success of the publication.

*Adweek*, one of the leading voices in the publishing industry, recently named *Cottage Living* "Startup of the Year" in its Hotlist Issue. Other magazines that have received this honor include *O: The Oprah Magazine*, *Maxim* and *Lucky*, among others.

Published by Time Inc.'s Southern Progress Corporation, *Cottage Living* stands out among other lifestyle magazines because it reaches out to the readers on a personal level. Providing a definitive guide to comfort, simplicity and style, the publication has a bit of an edge to it. Decorating, gardening and entertaining ideas are interspersed with humor and quirky charm.

The *Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* purchased the current May/June issue and loved it.

The first issue sold over 225,000 copies on the newsstand, and less than a year later, the May/June edition will have an estimated 850,000 readers.

Prior to *Cottage Living*, Mr.

### Local Teens Perform At NJPAC Jazz Event

AREA — Young musicians from Westfield and Fanwood will demonstrate their jazz talent at New Jersey Performing Arts Center's (NJPAC) Wachovia Jazz For Teens Final Concert on Saturday, May 14, at 2 p.m. in NJPAC's Victoria Theater.

Westfield High School student Jonathan Maimon will perform on the drums, while Fanwood residents and Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School pupils Casey Hoynes-O'Connor, Randolph Smith and Stephen Voelker will showcase their talents. Casey and Stephen play saxophone, while Randolph masters the trumpet.

For more information on the concert, please call (888) GO-NJPAC.

Bohlinger was the Associate Publisher of *Cooking Light* magazine. The Birmingham, Ala.-based Southern Progress Corporation, which, in addition to *Cooking Light*, also publishes *Health*, *Southern Living* and *Coastal Living*, among others, chose Mr. Bohlinger to head *Cottage Living* and promoted him to Vice President and Publisher.

Raised on Long Island, Mr. Bohlinger and his wife, Debbie, moved to Westfield in 1990. They purchased their house from former New York Giant Bill Ard and are now raising three children in their beautiful home.

When asked if he was a fan



BOHLINGER BOWLS OVER...Stephen Bohlinger of Westfield thrives as Vice President and Publisher of the new lifestyle magazine, *Cottage Living*. The March edition is pictured at left.



Editor-in-Chief Eleanor Griffin.

"We wanted this magazine to be different than other lifestyle publications," Mr. Bohlinger told *The Leader/Times*. "We wanted it to be fun."

He is thrilled that they have found a huge audience that continues to grow with each new issue.

"*Cottage Living*, while it does offer information on structure and floor plans, is not only about bricks and mortars. It's more of a mind-set," he added.

The May/June issue of *Cottage Living* is currently at newsstands. For more information, please visit [www.CottageLiving.com](http://www.CottageLiving.com).

## Artists Emerge With Varied Depictions of Femininity

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

SUMMIT — The New Jersey Center for Visual Arts (NJCVa) debuted the second exhibit in its "Emerging Artists" Series on April 22 at their Maple Street Gallery.

Entitled "First Look 2005," the show features the work of three photographers: Jacqueline Katherine Hernandez, a photomontage artist; Lorraine Regan, a photo surrealist; and Roger Tucker, a photo collage artist.

Collectively, the artists' work explores the many themes of social taboo, real and imagined barriers, and portrayals of femininity.

Ms. Hernandez, a native of Elizabeth, credits the surrealistic dream sequence of Alfred Hitchcock's movie, *Spellbound* for inspiring her to create photomontages.

According to the photographer, her work reflects social and political themes and employs symbolism to make a point.

"The notion of societal taboo is an artery that runs throughout, although an opening for change and hope also appears," explained Ms. Hernandez.

Her "Ode to Anyone" is representative of this statement. In this montage, the element of hope is expressed by the figures climbing a ladder and making it to the top of a building. The clock that figures predominate in the center of the artwork is representative of the taboos we all face as we try to reach our goals.

Mr. Tucker's work includes traditional landscapes, cityscapes and portraits. According to the artist, his montages suggest an affiliation either through similarity of material, motion, color and location and sometimes via historical links.

"The portrait illustrates the subject's connectedness to his surroundings and provides insights to his frame-of-mind," stated Mr. Tucker, whose work appearing in the exhibit spans over 30 years.

Ms. Regan's contribution to the exhibition comes from a collection of photographs the artist calls "Surrealscapes." She began this series while working in Midtown Manhattan. At the time, she observed daily the many window displays on Fifth Avenue, and noted, in particular, the way they characterized women.

"I was drawn to the beauty and drama of these displays, but more importantly to the way women were represented, and what that meant to me both on a societal and personal level," explained Ms. Regan, a former portrait photographer.

She stated that her images are a mix

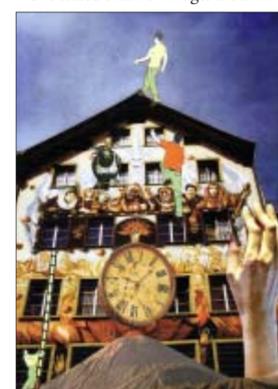


Photo Courtesy of New Jersey Center for Visual Arts "Ode to Anyone" by Jackie Hernandez.

of strong and powerful women, society's portrayal of women, and messages of women known or yet to be known.

The symbolism of Ms. Regan's work is evident in "Undone," which represents the many dimensions of femininity, and in "Marilyn in the Sky," which juxtaposes an image of the sultry Marilyn Monroe in the sky above a row of apartment buildings.

"The work of each artist becomes narrative," explained Mari D'Alessandro, NJCVa Exhibits Coordinator. "Whatever the artists' point of view, the common thread is the undeniable reality that every picture tells a story."

NJCVa's Emerging Artist Series is designed to introduce promising, but under-recognized, artists working in a variety of mediums.

Due to Access to Art, the Center's current renovation and expansion of the 68 Elm Street building, which houses the Palmer Gallery, "First Look 2005" is being presented at the 34-36 Maple Street Gallery in downtown

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## Chansonettes of Westfield Tell Spring Concert Tour Schedule

WESTFIELD — The Chansonettes of Westfield are preparing for their upcoming spring tour, "Fascinatin' Rhythm."

A variety of rhythmic music will be featured, including "Fascinatin' Rhythm," "And All That Jazz," and "Do I Hear a Waltz?" (medley).

The tour will commence on Wednesday, May 11, at Arbor Glen in Bridgewater, continuing at The Chelsea in Fanwood on Thursday, May 12, Westfield Senior Housing Complex in Westfield on Monday, May 16, Ridge

Oak in Basking Ridge on Wednesday, May 18, and Fellowship Village in Basking Ridge on Thursday, May 19.

The Chansonettes are a women's choral group who "sing for the love of singing." Under the direction of Jean Schork and accompanied by Mel Freda, the group welcomes new membership.

For membership information, please call Amy Herrington at (908) 317-5910 or Jane Walsweer at (908) 232-4531.

To book a Chansonettes performance, please call Mrs. Walsweer.

## Juxtapose Show Will Spotlight Jewelry Crafted by Due Sorelle

WESTFIELD — Juxtapose Gallery, located at 58 Elm Street in Westfield, will host a special show featuring the handcrafted jewelry creations of sisters Gena Spil of Piscataway and Tania Spil of California — collectively known as Due Sorelle — on Saturday, May 7, from noon to 5 p.m.

While the gallery has spotlighted Due Sorelle's designs in past shows, Juxtapose Proprietor Gerri Gildea told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* that she hopes this Saturday's show will draw a large audience, especially shoppers interested in finding the ideal last-minute gift for Mother's Day.

According to Juxtapose, "Due Sorelle designs necklaces, bracelets, and earrings, using a combination of pearls, semi precious stones, and glass beads, necklace combined with sterling silver, silk, and 14-karat gold.

All stones are handpicked by the designers for their color and beauty."

"We have currently provided jewelry for the upcoming sequel *Big Mama's House*, and the remake of *The Poseidon Adventure*," said Gena, adding that Due Sorelle jewelry has also been featured on ABC's "George Lopez" and WB-11's "Gilmore Girls."

"We have had a relationship with Juxtapose since the beginning and we are happy to say that they were one of our very first accounts. We have grown together," said Gena.

"They have come a long way since then," added Mrs. Gildea. For more information on the Due Sorelle show at Juxtapose Gallery, please call (908) 232-3278.

Photo Courtesy of Due Sorelle  
**ABSOLUTELY ABALONE...A necklace crafted with shimmering abalone is one of the pieces created by Due Sorelle.**



HELP NEEDED...Father Luke Duc Tran poses with Sister Marie Rose Loan Vu, Provincial Superior of the Holy Rosary Order in HoChiMinh City at the site where the kindergarten school for over 600 children is slated to be built.

## Priest Hopes to Shepherd Students' Educational Needs

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

AREA — When local districts seek to refurbish or build new schools and provide top-of-the-line educational facilities, the municipal government and community pitch in wholeheartedly to bring the tasks to fruition.

However, when the Communist government reneged on an agreement to fund the construction of a kindergarten for 600 poor youngsters in HoChiMinh City, Vietnam, the Holy Rosary Nuns, who have been coordinating the project, turned to Father Luke Duc Tran, a priest at St. John the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Clark/Linden.

Every year, Fr. Luke, the oldest of seven children, who escaped Communist Vietnam by boat to Thailand in 1980, returns to his native land to minister to the lepers, disabled children and poor. Very often, his parishioners and those in local American and Vietnamese parishes flood the rectory with donations of clothing, books and other supplies to help the needy who are so near and dear to Fr. Luke's heart.

He told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* that he and St. John's Monsignor

Richard McGuinness have united to form Vietnam Social Health Education Projects, Inc. or VNSHEP to seek approximately \$150,000 in tax-deductible donations to help defray the costs of the kindergarten's construction.

"Unfortunately, after we began the project we were informed by the local government that they could not abide by their original agreement because the national government will not issue the deed for the land where the school is located to a religious organization," wrote Sr. Loan Vu.

"Without this document, we could not use our land as collateral to borrow money from the government bank. With the construction of the school already on the way, we do not have sufficient funding without the loan from the government bank to complete the project," added Sr. Loan Vu.

Further details about Fr. Luke's project are available by calling him directly at (908) 486-6363 or e-mailing him at [Luketran56@yahoo.com](mailto:Luketran56@yahoo.com).

Tax-deductible donations may be sent to VNSHEP, Inc., P.O. Box 3007, Linden, 07036 or dropped off at the rectory of St. John the Apostle Church, 1805 Penbrook Terrace in Linden.

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