



POPCORN™

Greatest Game Ever Played: Fore!...As in Seen It Before

By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
2 & 1/2 popcorns

The Greatest Game Ever Played, a predictable but often seat-edged account of the 1913 U.S. Open Championship, calls to mind a prophecy. I have been regularly assured by those who have seen the light that, before I go to that big multiplex in the sky, I will play golf.

If you've already arrived at this avocational Nirvana, chances are you'll forgive director Bill Paxton his standard, metaphor-steeped, David vs. Goliath story. That also means looking the other way when the script by Mark Frost (who also wrote the book it's based on) lands in the same old sports movie sand trap, righteously pumping the tale for the greater egalitarianism message at its core.

But bear in mind the PG-rated film is a Buena Vista Pictures release. That's Disney. Hence, this may be Junior's first film experience with lessons about a level playing field for all of mankind and such. If so, then *The Greatest Game Ever Played* is allotted a handicap. Let's say, 1/2 of a popcorn kernel more.

The Great Unwashed, however, are not apt to be quite so magnanimous. Unlike Junior, they'll recognize the stencil, applied since time immemorial to endless yarns about football, baseball, track and field and, most recently, horseracing (*Seabiscuit*).

So while the saga about two destined-to-compete golfers with working class roots—one the old pro, the other the bright-eyed neophyte—imparts a socially valid message, it will still strike the jaded filmgoer that this is where he came in. The fine performances and rather competent depiction of the period offer some compensation.

Particularly good is Stephen Dillane as Harry Vardon, subject of the British Empire, great golfer and son of a gardener...but not necessarily in that order. Not per the bluebloods who've ostensibly made him their boy, Harry knows this hard fact of life all too well.

But just the same, hope springs eternal. Behind his experienced, knowing eyes, the sportsman harbors a telltale glint of childlike aspiration. Maybe, just maybe...if he wins just one more tournament, he'll be asked to join London's most exclusive golf club...made a gentleman among gentlemen. Never mind that he's already won just about every major golf tourney there is to win, including the U.S. Open thirteen years ago.

Across the pond, we're made privy to the American version of a dream in progress. Raised in Brookline, Mass.,

Last of the Red Hot Lovers Continues

WESTFIELD — Neil Simon's comedy hit, *Last of the Red Hot Lovers* at Westfield Community Players (WCP) continues Friday and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. on October 14, 15, 21, 22, 28 and 29 with all reserved seats at \$15.

The WCP Theater is at 1000 North Avenue, West in Westfield and the box office can be reached at (908) 232-1221.

In this comedy about love, sex and the ensuing complications, Neil Simon gives us Barney Cashman, who yearns for a passionate affair to relieve the tedium of his humdrum life. Using his mother's empty apartment, he embarks on a series of encounters with three wildly different women to see what he is missing.

Starring John Correll of Winfield as Barney, the women he pursues are Elaine Navazio, a cynical chain smoker played by Tracey Fama of South Bound Brook, Bobbie Michelle (played by Debbie Barr of Edison) an uninhibited soul and Jeanette Fisher (played by Ellen Dooley of Westfield), a nervous, depressed woman.

WCP now has reserved seating and requires a theatergoer to make his or her preference known when calling the box office for seats at (908) 232-1221. Working with Ms. Correll are Producer Kay Macrae and Stage Manager Stephanie Simons-Neal, with Bob Murray handling lights.

FW Arts Council Announces Fanny Wood Poetry Winners

FANWOOD — The Fanwood Arts Council has announced the winners in the Third Annual Fanny Wood Poetry Awards. Ten winners were selected from more than 400 entries by judges Tom Plante and Alex Pinto.

First Place: Edwin Romond of Wind Gap, PA ("To My Lifelong Friend Going to Prison");

Second Place: Susan Rothbard of Livingston ("The Dog Speaks with Compassion");

Third Place (tie): Therese Halscheid of Haddonfield ("My Father's Ceasefire");

Third Place (tie): Anna Evans of Hainesport ("Not by Design");

Honorable Mention no. 1: Penny Harter of Summit ("Snapshots");

Honorable Mention no. 2: Madeline Tiger of Bloomfield ("The Mockingbird in May");

Honorable Mention no. 3: Gwen T. Samuels of Rahway ("Colored Girl Valentine");

Honorable Mention no. 4: John

golf caddie Francis Ouimet, played handsomely by Shia LaBeouf, knows everything there is to know about Harry Vardon. Golf occupies his every waking thought. Well, that and the pretty daughter of a Brahmin country club bigwig who particularly enjoys reminding Francis of his place.

Save for the actual depictions of golf, the focus switches back and forth from the narrow-mindedness of the landed gentry in England, the lifelong bugaboo that plagues Mr. Vardon, to the trickier, much more hypocritical version through which our American is just learning to wade. When they ultimately meet, the Revolutionary War is replayed in principal.

Of course it all filters down to the title event. Even the least banal of this cinema species always has things lead to the big game. And if you troll the Internet a tad, there's argument from more than one sports pundit that the 1913 U.S. Open very well may have been the greatest game ever played.

Now, making golf exciting for the unenlightened is a challenge. But, as witnessed in almost all recent movies of an athletic bent, the ever-improving technology keeps adding a new punch to the doings, if you will. And director Paxton makes full use of the effects they afford.

By the 19th hole it's evident that *The Greatest Game Ever Played* is inspiring, if not groundbreaking. It may even be enough to make some moviegoers want to golf. Still waiting for the epiphany, for now I'll just settle for the baggy plaid pants.

The Greatest Game Ever Played, rated PG, is a Buena Vista Pictures release directed by Bill Paxton and stars Shia LaBeouf, Stephen Dillane and Marnie McPhail. Running time: 120 minutes.

Art in the Gardens Kicks Off At Gardens

ELIZABETH — Art in the Gardens, a monthlong celebration of the arts, began last weekend on Friday, October 7 at Jersey Gardens, New Jersey's largest outlet mall.

Jersey Gardens is located on Kapkowski Road at Exit 13A of the New Jersey Turnpike and features more than 200 stores all under one roof.

For more information about Art in the Gardens and other programs and services of the Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, contact the Division at 633 Pearl Street, Elizabeth, 07202 or call (908) 558-2550. New Jersey Relay Users dial 711 or send e-mail to culturalinfo@ucnj.org.

Edwin Romond to Read Poetry in Fanwood

FANWOOD — The Fanwood Arts Council will sponsor a free poetry reading featuring award-winning poet Edwin Romond tonight at 8 p.m. in the Patricia Kuran Arts Center on Watson Road, next to Fanwood Borough Hall.

Edwin Romond is a native of Woodbridge and the author of "Home Fire" and "Macarons," was awarded the first-place prize in this year's Fanny Wood Poetry Awards for his poem, "To My Lifelong Friend Going to Prison."

Before retiring in 2003, Mr. Romond was a public-school educator for 32 years, during which time he received the Princeton University Distinguished Secondary School Teaching Award and the New Jersey Governor's Teacher Recognition Award. Garrison Keillor on National Public Radio read his work recently.

Mr. Romond's poetry awards include fellowships from both the New Jersey and Pennsylvania State Arts Councils and from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, DC.

An open reading will follow the featured poetry reading. Local poets are welcome to read one of their poems during the open session.

Chorazy of Montclair ("My Father's Garden");

Honorable Mention no. 5: Michael Szweczyk of South River ("After Coffee");

Honorable Mention no. 6: Gerri Black of Ocean City ("Elvis Applies for Social Security at 67");

The first place winner, Edwin Romond, a native of Woodbridge, will be the featured reader in the Carriage House Poetry Reading Series on Thursday, October 13 at 8 p.m. in the Kuran Arts Center in Fanwood. Admission is free.

All winning poets have been invited to read their poems at a reception hosted by the Carriage House Series on Thursday, December 1, starting at 8 p.m. in the Kuran Arts Center on Watson Road, off North Martine Avenue, next to Fanwood Borough Hall.

The public is invited to attend. For more information call Arts Council directors at (908) 889-5298 or (908) 889-7223.



THANK HEAVENS...The first annual TGIF (Thank God its Fall) Festival took place on Saturday, hosted by MyWayHome, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping first-time and repeat home buyers in the sometimes threatening process of buying a home. Providing workshops, seminars and one-on-one coaching, Saturday was a way for new and longtime residents of Westfield to meet and talk in a casual environment as their children played. With the music of Primitive Soul a funky blues band, it attracted people from all over Westfield. Drummer Tim Rufi of Primitive Soul gets his licks up top and below, Quinn Nolan of Westfield enjoys a sunny day at the park playing Frisbee.

New Rock Workshop Begins at NJ Workshop

WESTFIELD — An exciting instructional and performance opportunity awaits area guitarists, bass players, drummers, keyboard players, singers and songwriters who would like to take part in the Rock Workshop, sponsored by the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts.

The Rock Workshop will emphasize ensemble work, performance, musicianship, improvising and recording. Participants will learn to read, write, play and record rock 'n' roll music in a professional studio environment located in

the conclusion of the Rock Workshop, each student will receive a demo CD.

Instructors for the Rock Workshop are E. J. Gaub and Pontus Gunve. Mr. Gaub has composed, recorded and produced his own original rock and pop songs. His experience spans more than 500 live performances playing drums and guitar, and singing background vocals on over 200 songs. A music teacher at the NJWA Music Studio, Mr. Gaub was the instructor for this past summer's rock 'n' roll Workshop.

Mr. Gunve holds a Master of Music degree from New York University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Ramapo College. He is currently working as a sound designer and composer for film, commercials and multi-media projects.

For more information and a brochure on the Rock Workshop, visit the NJWA office at 150-152 East Broad Street in Westfield or call (908) 789-9696. Additional information on all NJWA programs is available the web at www.njworkshopforthearts.com.

Hail A Cab To The Railway Arts Center

RAHWAY — The Cab Calloway Orchestra, directed by Cab's grandson, C. Calloway Brooks, swings into the Union County Arts Center on Friday October 21 to open the UCAC's 2005 - 2006 season. The evening will feature a meet-and-greet reception with Mr. Brooks himself upon conclusion of the evening's performance.

Through dance, music, language, dress, attitude and many other cultural developments, the Swing Era is recognized as the period in which America first discovered its own multi-cultural voice on a global scale. Cab Calloway became the cultural epitome of the American Swing Era.

Tickets are \$25 (meet-and-greet tickets are \$40) and may be purchased by calling (732) 499-8226 or online by visiting the website at www.UCAC.org.



ROCK ON...From left to right, E.J. Gaub and Pontus Gunve will conduct three levels of the NJWA Rock Workshop.

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The music program, which offers lessons for beginner, intermediate and advanced students in a two-hour, eight-week session, commences on October 21. Beginners, ages 10 to 13, with little or no experience, will meet on Fridays at 5 p.m. or Saturdays at 9 a.m. The fee for these students is \$40. Intermediate students, ages 12 to 15, with some experience, will meet on Saturdays at 11 a.m.

Tuition for intermediate students is \$480. Those on advanced levels, ages 14 and older, will rehearse on Fridays at 7 p.m. for a fee of \$520. At



LOVE FEST...Tracey Fama (left), Ellen Dooley (back center), Debbie Barr (right) and John Correll (center) star in Neil Simon's comedy *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, presented by the Westfield Community Players.

THE STUDENT VIEW

The weekly column written by local high school students

Student Returns To 50s At Ellen Stardust Diner

By KATE MCGEE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Walking down Broadway in the 21st century, you know that you are in the 21st century. Billboards are digital, people are seen everywhere using iPods and cell phones. We now live in a digital world unlike any other. Who would have thought there would be a place that would bring you right back to the era of poodle skirts?

Ellen's Stardust Diner, located on the corner of 51st and Broadway, is a 1950's diner unlike any other. When you first walk in, you immediately feel like you are from the 1950s. Greeted by a friendly waiter who is dressed in 50's style outfits, you are seated in a shiny, metallic red booth as you take in the vibrant feel of the diner.

The décor is fantastic. On one wall there is a drive-in-sized screen where 50's movies and shows like *The Sound of Music* or *I Love Lucy* are shown. The movies also are seen on '50's style televisions. The walls, covered with 50's memorabilia, show off old Frank Sinatra and Elvis albums, posters of the 50's idol, Marilyn Monroe, a large mural of a drive-in scene, and, of course, a train that circles the entire restaurant.

The food at the Stardust Diner is

also delicious. Imagining it was the 1950's, I ordered a Black Cow, which, although it's just a simple root beer float, was unlike anything I had ever tasted. The cheeseburgers, decked with lettuce and tomato melted in your mouth, and were served with french fries and a juicy pickle. Although it was a little expensive for three teenage girls, the meal was totally worth it.

If that doesn't seem like a perfect meal, the singing wait staff makes the meal twice as fun. When Sinatra isn't blaring from the speakers, the waiters and waitresses are singing 50's tunes. Those who work at the Stardust are usually starving actors and actresses, working at the diner in order to make some extra money for voice lessons, auditions and the expensive task of living in New York.

The staff had beautiful voices, and it opens your eyes to how much talent there is in the world, and how hard it is to really make it in the music industry. A personal favorite was "Happy Together" by the Turtles, when the waiters stood on top of booths, danced around and even, jokingly, sang to my friends and I. Altogether, it was another awesome experience seen only in New York City, which I recommend to all.

Author Charles Granata Explores Jazz, Broadway

MOUNTAINSIDE — Area residents are invited to explore the history of jazz and Broadway musical standards with author Charles Granata at the Mountainside Public Library on Thursday, October 27 at 7 p.m.

Record producer, music historian and Sinatra specialist, Mr. Granata will share his intimate knowledge of popular musical styles, composers and performers in a special evening entitled "American Pop Standards." The audience will be treated to the special sounds of artists, such as George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong and other greats.

Charles Granata is the author of the award-winning "Sessions with Sinatra: Frank Sinatra and the Art of Recording," and "Wouldn't It Be Nice: Brian Wilson and the Making of the Beach Boys' Pet Sounds."

He is also the producer and director of Sinatra's Columbia recordings and is currently at work on a book about legendary record producer Phil Ramone.

The Friends of The Mountainside Public Library are sponsoring the free program.

To register, call (908) 233-0115 or visit the Mountainside Public Library at Constitution Plaza, Mountainside during regular library hours.



PUMPKIN OF THE WORLD...On October 7, Tamaques School held its annual Mum & Pumpkin Sale. Pictured are 4th grade students shopping during recess. Younger students were treated to a special pumpkin patch, set up in front of the school.

'Four Centuries' Weekend Booklets and Maps Available

COUNTY — Booklets and maps are now available for "Four Centuries in a Weekend 2005," the annual heritage festival that takes visitors on a journey through Union County's history.

This event is scheduled for Saturday, October 15, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, October 16, from noon to 5 p.m.

The free booklet features photographs and information about the 23 participating historical sites, their historic significance and a list of special activities to be held that weekend.

Five thematic clusters will be presented to create the context for four centuries of Union County history.

The sites in each cluster will relate life and events during a particular era. By learning the history of the clusters and looking at them collectively, it is hoped the Four Centuries visitor will understand and appreciate life in Union County today. Because buildings have changed to meet developing needs and styles, some sites appear in more than one cluster.

To obtain a free copy of the booklet and map, please contact the Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, 633 Pearl Street, Elizabeth N.J. 07202, or call (908) 558-2550 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. NJ Relay Users are asked to dial 711. Individuals also may e-mail: culturalinfo@ucnj.org.

UCC To Hold First Holiday Boutique In Mid-November

CRANFORD — Union County College, Cranford Campus, is offering its first Holiday Boutique on Friday, November 18, from 2 to 8 p.m. Sponsored by the Union County College Alumni Association, the event will be held at The Commons (a main area and section of the college). Some of the items to be sold by crafters and vendors include: handmade crafts, accessories, jewelry, beauty products, antiques, books, candy, music, toys, Longaberger baskets, Pampered Chef, Creative Memories, PartyLite, Southern Living and Lillian Vernon.

Shore author and columnist Kelley Anne McGee is scheduled to attend and will sell and sign copies of her book "Great Jersey Shore Jaunts." A visitor's guide to the Jersey Shore, the book features maritime highlights such as lighthouses, museums, seaports, dockside tours of today's commercial fishing, the celebrity ship from the

movie "The Perfect Storm," the blessing of the Fleet Ceremony, N.J.'s official tall ship, riverboat cruises, boat parade and shows and seafood festivals.

The author attended Union County College's Cranford Campus for a period of years as a part-time student, where she majored in Communications and was recognized by the College's English Department with an Award for Excellence in Creative Writing in June of 1986, just before she relocated to the Jersey Shore. Some of the monies raised from the event will help to benefit eligible students for the Union County College Alumni Association Scholarship Fund. The event is open to the general public, all are welcomed with free admission and plenty of free parking available both on and nearby off campus. For additional information such as directions, contact (908) 709-7505 or visit its website at: www.ucc.edu.