



Arts, Entertainment and Education



Former WF Resident Dr. Lewis Schragar Writes 'Ghost' Story

By SUSAN M. DOUGHERTY
Specially Written For The Westfield Leader and The Times

Although curiosity may have killed a proverbial cat or two, it has undoubtedly given birth to many a budding writer or playwright. Dr. Lewis Schragar, a former resident of Westfield, and son of Dr. Gloria Schragar and the late Dr. Alvin Schragar, attributes ideas for his plays to his innate curiosity.

One of his plays, *Levy's Ghost*, recently premiered aboard the *USS Constellation* in Baltimore's famed Inner Harbor. The story depicted in the two-act play was spawned by Dr. Schragar's piqued interest while on a family outing.

"In 2002, my family and I were leaving Jefferson's home, Monticello, when I noticed a lone headstone resting on a gravel path," he said. Dr. Schragar recognized the Hebrew date of death and the Jewish name Rachel Levy inscribed on the stone.

He raced into the bookstore on the property to ask if they knew anything about the Jewish girl buried there.

With the purchase of a book came the unfolding of the saga of Rachel, mother of Uriah Levy, and his fascinating story. *Levy's Ghost* celebrates the life, battles and accomplishments of the 19th century American-born Jew and unsung naval hero, Uriah Phillips Levy.

Dr. Schragar uncovered the story of this little-known historical figure who led the fight to abolish flogging in the United States Navy; overcame religious persecution to rise to the high rank of commodore in the Navy, and was responsible for the rescue, purchase and restoration of Thomas Jefferson's home.

The sold-out play ran Sunday nights throughout the summer. "We were excited that it was so well received," said Dr. Schragar. Because of rave reviews, more performances were added to meet the demand.

Since the play is what Dr. Schragar calls historical fiction, he feels it doesn't get the attention of the producers or artistic directors of theaters who sometimes are looking for avant-garde pieces.

Levy's Ghost, however, seemed a natural selection to be performed on the spar deck (the top, open deck with a canopy) of the 1854 sloop-of-war

Flamenco Sí Comes To Crossroads in Garwood

GARWOOD—Spanish dance is coming to Union County on Sunday, September 11, at 5 p.m. (doors open at 4 p.m.) when Flamenco Sí stops at the Crossroads in Garwood.

This authentic monthly Spanish dance performance series, as presented by TEATRO SÍ, promises to continue to bring audiences the best of the spirit of Spain every second Sunday of the month.

The host, singer and guitarist David Castellano, will bring together the best dancers and musicians to celebrate Iberian dance and music form at this intimate setting.

Attendees are encouraged to arrive early for these special monthly performances. A select variety of Spanish tapas (appetizers) will be served. Also available is a selection of sangria, wines and beers. A full service bar is also available.

Tickets are priced at \$20 and can be reserved by calling the Crossroads at (908) 232-5666 or TEATRO SÍ at (908) 301-9496. For more information visit them online at www.teatrosi.com and www.xroads.com.

USS Constellation, the last all-sail warship built by the United States Navy and the only Civil War era vessel still afloat.

"The play deals with prejudice, injustice, separation of church and state—all themes that touch people's lives," Dr. Schragar told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-*



Dr. Lewis Schragar

Fanwood Times in a recent interview. Many people think creativity in writing doesn't just gush forth unexpectedly, but has a deep source that probably had its roots in early childhood.

Yet this 1973 Westfield High School graduate speculates that most of his classmates would not know of his love of writing from his involvement at WHS.

With the exception of writing a few features for the school newspaper, *Hi's Eye*—with his journalism teacher and track coach Walt Clark being an influential figure in his high school career—he said he really just concentrated on his academics.

"But I've always been interested in writing," he said of this seemingly new aspect of his life. As an undergraduate at Johns Hopkins Univer-

Choral Art Society Invites Local Singers

WESTFIELD—Singers, all voices, are invited to join The Choral Art Society of New Jersey. Rehearsals are held weekly on Tuesdays from 8 to 10 p.m., September to May, and take place in the choir room of the Presbyterian Church in Westfield, located at the corner of Mountain Avenue and East Broad Street.

The season's first rehearsal is on Tuesday, September 6, with registration and music purchase starting at 7:30 p.m. Singers interested in joining are invited to attend a rehearsal and meet with James Little, the Society's musical director.

The fall semester will be spent preparing for the Saturday, January 21, 2006 performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's Magnificat in D and, like father, like son, The Magnificat in D composed by his son, Carl Phillip Emanuel Bach.

Rehearsals for the winter/spring semester, which starts Tuesday, January 24, 2006 rehearsals, will be set for the Saturday, May 20, 2006 performance of Rutter's *Mass of the Children*. Both the January and May concerts are to be held at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield.

On Friday, December 9, the Choral Art Society will be hosting its annual Messiah Sing starting at 8 p.m. at St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church, located at 1600 Rahway Avenue in Westfield.

sity, he completed a master's program in writing.

One might ask how a physician can find time to write. "Just don't see patients," quips the doctor, whose specialty is researching infectious diseases.

He also admits to getting up at 5 a.m. to write for an hour or so. "You can get an amazing amount done at that time of day," he noted. Married and the father of two, he learned the format of writing plays by attending the North Bethesda Writers' Center near his home in Maryland.

Dr. Schragar is looking forward to his second world premiere in October. Executive Director Barbara Brooks at the St. Paul, Minn. Jewish Theater Company is scheduled to produce his two-act play, *Shadow of the Valley*, the title of which is a takeoff on the 23rd Psalm. Set in modern day Jerusalem, it revolves around the gripping interaction of an Israeli and a Palestinian.

Along with curiosity, Dr. Schragar enjoys a more heightened sense of the world. "The process of writing has made me much more observant," he said of his passion.

WF Art Association's Group Holds Exhibit

WESTFIELD—Members of the Contemporary Art Group of the Westfield Art Association invite Central Jersey residents to Artistic Harvest, their first annual exhibition. Taking place at the Watchung Arts Center in Watchung, the show runs through Friday, September 30. Visitors will have a chance to peruse fine art in diverse media, with styles and subject matter ranging from the traditional to the avant-garde.

Everyone is invited to attend the artists' reception, which will be held on Sunday, September 11 from 1 to 4 p.m. Musical entertainment will be provided by Pam Purvis and Bob Ackerman. Light refreshments will be served.

The Watchung Arts Center is located at 18 Stirling Road on the Watchung traffic circle. Gallery hours are 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, and 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursday.

Admission is free. The Gallery is open to the public and is handicapped-accessible. For further information, contact Sheila Lenga at (908) 687-2617 or the Watchung Arts Center (908) 753-0190.

Town Book Store Hosts Two Meet and Greets

WESTFIELD—The Town Book Store of Westfield will be hosting two interesting Meet & Greet events during the fall. On Saturday, September 17, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., New Jersey native K.M. Soehnlein will be in the store to promote his new novel, "You Can Say You Knew Me When."

A New Jersey native, Mr. Soehnlein has lived in New York City, Tucson and San Francisco, where he currently works as a freelance writer. He is also the author of the novel, "The World of Normal Boys."

Then, from 2 to 4 p.m., local talent Will Staeger will be in the store to promote his new novel, "Painkiller." Mr. Staeger has worked for ESPN as an executive producer of original entertainment, and in Hollywood as a feature-film development executive. He lives with his wife and children in Connecticut.

If you are unable to attend these events, feel free to call and reserve an autographed copy. If you have any questions, please call The Town Book Store at (908) 233-3535.

www.goleader.com



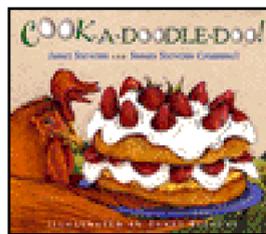
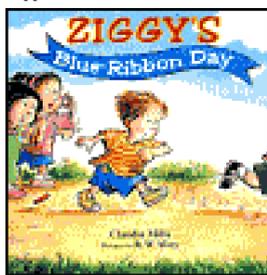
LEVY'S GHOST...On top, the three leads stand at the bow of the *USS Constellation*, the venue for *Levy's Ghost*. From left to right, they are: Tony Colavito (as Uriah Levy); Claire Dorsey (as Amanda/Sally Hemings); and Tim King (as Thomas Jefferson). The lower picture shows the three on Monticello, at the graveside of Rachel Levy, Uriah's mother.

Book Nook With Marylou Morano Inkpen's Kipper Comes Up With New Alphabet Twist

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

Big Brown Rooster is tired of plain old chicken feed and dreams of eating delicious strawberry shortcake, just like the one his grandmother used to make. So he finds his grandmother's recipe book and gets to work in "Cook-A-Doodle-Do," written by Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel. This Harcourt Inc. re-release (2005) is the recipient of numerous awards. Valuable cooking hints appear alongside the text, explaining various cooking terms. Included is a recipe for strawberry shortcake, just like the one Big Brown Rooster bakes. Recommended for readers ages four to eight.

Just when you thought there couldn't possibly be another creative way to write about the alphabet, along comes "Kipper's A to Z: An Alphabet Adventure" by Mick Inkpen. You won't believe what Kipper, and his friend, Arnold, comes up with for the letter "X"! The book, published by Harcourt, Inc. (2005) received *Publisher's Weekly's* Best Book of the Year award, among other accolades. "Kipper's A to Z" is a great addition to the other books in the Kipper series.



The universal theme of a parent's unconditional love for his or her child gets an Artic twist in "Mama Do You Love Me?" written by Barbara M. Jooose and published by Chronicle Books in 1991. The back of the book contains a lot of information about Native Artic People that young elementary school aged children will find fascinating.

Claudia Mills, creator of the "Gus and Grandpa," series has recently published "Ziggy's Blue Ribbon Day" (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), a delightful story of a boy who really doesn't care for track-and-field day. Ziggy's not too good at sports, but he loves to draw. See how he wins not one, but five blue ribbons in this charming story, which every child will relate to.

Jackie French Koller, author of "One Monkey Too Many" has re-

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Get Outta The House

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

The *Fall 2005 New Jersey Film Festival* will take place from Friday, September 9 through Friday, November 18 at Rutgers, New Brunswick. See the more familiar films such as *Star Wars: Episode 3-Revenge of the Sith*, or go for the more obscure, indie films such as *Andy Warhol's Screen Tests*, or the documentary film, *Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room*. It'll cost less than your typical blockbuster. For times, tickets, and location, call (732) 932.8482 or visit www.njfilmfest.com.

The Town Book Store, 255 East Broad Street in Westfield, will host two authors on Saturday, September 10. Journalist Helen Chantal-Pike will sign her new book, *Asbury Park's Glory Days: The Story Of An American Resort*, from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. The book chronicles the city's heyday—the 90-year period between 1890 and 1980. Later, from 2 to 4 p.m., meet Tom Canavan, and check out his new book, *I Don't Have Time For This: My Battle With Cancer*, the story of a busy editor who, after being diagnosed with lung cancer at age 41, refused to surrender any part of his life while waging war against his illness. Call (908) 233-3535 for information, or to reserve your copy of either book.

The *32nd German Heritage Festival 2005* will be held on Sunday, September 11 at the PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel. Activities will include: folk dancing, exhibits, bands, a chorus, a soccer tournament, and, of course, authentic German food and beer. Parking is free, and for a discount admission offer visit: <http://www.ghf-nj.org/Ticket.htm> or call (908) 561-4382.

The *New York Renaissance Faire in Tuxedo* comes alive with period games, crafts, theatre, costumes, food, and a unique atmosphere of days gone by. Dress up and drive up to Sterling Forest, 600 Route 17A, on Saturdays and Sundays through September 25. Log onto <http://www.renfair.com/NY/index.php> for information and discount coupons, or call (845) 351-5174.

On Sunday, September 11, the Frelinghuysen Arboretum in Morristown will have a free, family-friendly all-day program, *Focus on Mexico*, with a variety of activities including a demonstration on Aztec pharmacology, salsa-tasting, crafts, workshops and lectures on both vanilla and chocolate. There is a registration form and more information at: <http://www.arboretumfriends.org/index.php>.

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