

Arts & Entertainment

Mountainside's Hetfield House - Rich in History, Low on Funds

BY LINDA B. CONDRILLO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

MOUNTAINSIDE — It's not easy keeping up with the Joneses, or the Miller-Corlys, for that matter. And unless an awful lot of pennies fall from heaven or from the original

In 1985, the busy highway closed down to accommodate the home's move to Constitution Avenue, adjacent to the Mountainside Public Library.

Hetfield House is now owned by the Borough of Mountainside and maintained by the Mountainside His-

quires maintenance."

Both Mr. Daniels and Ms. Clark are active members of the Mountainside Historic Preservation Committee and are committed to raising money to restore the home.

As painting, a new roof, an alarm system and porch repairs have been underway, Mr. Daniels reported that the committee is also in the process of acquiring more furniture to match each of the three sections of the house with period pieces, and more notably, to restore the beehive oven.

Mrs. Clark said the Watts Foundation has contributed generous grant money. The grant money has helped to fix one of the three chimneys. Ms. Clark told the newspaper that the house now has an operational fireplace, but "there is still a long way to go."

Ms. Clark noted that the Westfield chapter of The Questers, a group of men and women interested in antiques, historic restoration and preservation, has also donated money for improvements to the Hetfield House.

The site is home to the annual geranium and mum sales and raises funds through raffles. Proceeds from the sale of Harry Devlin's artwork, available for purchase at the Hetfield House, also help fund improvement projects. The late Mr. Devlin and his wife Wende are well-known artists who lived in town. Mr. Devlin's pen-and-ink renderings are also on display at the Mountainside Library.

In addition, the Historic Preservation Committee is raising money to update the written history of Mountainside by the sale of bricks, which will line the path to the home and bear the name of the family or person who purchases them.

Connie McNamara is authoring the "new" history book, which will encompass the years 1945 to the present.

Ms. Clark told the newspaper that although the Hetfield House is showcased in Union County's Four Centuries during a weekend celebration in the fall, the house doesn't receive as many visitors as staffers would like during the rest of the year.

To learn more about the Hetfield House and how you can help the efforts of the Historic Preservation Committee, visit mountainsidehistory.org, or visit them the old-fashioned way - take a leisurely stroll and stop in unannounced.



Linda B. Condrillo for The Westfield Leader and The Times
A TREASURE TROVE...Local residents often overlook The Deacon Andrew Hetfield House, circa 1760, which is located on Constitution Avenue in Mountainside.

owner, ambitious repairs won't be made anytime soon to the Deacon Andrew Hetfield House.

In the meantime, the Mountainside Historic Preservation Committee is relying on private donations from the community to help renovate the Georgian Colonial style residence, including its latest home-improvement project: the restoration of a beehive oven.

Entered onto the National Historic Register in 1989, the single-family home, circa 1760, received two more additions sometime around 1815 and 1830. Before being moved to its current location, the structure was located on an island in the middle of Route 22 and was used as an antique store known as The Dutch Oven.

toric Preservation Committee for use as a museum and meeting place for the people of Mountainside.

Records indicate that a distinguished minister, Deacon Andrew Hetfield, whose grave rests in the Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Westfield, originally owned the house.

Hetfield was a soldier in the American Revolution. His family came from England settled in Elizabeth in the 1600s. According to the Historic Preservation's website, mountainsidehistory.org, the house was owned by Hetfield descendants until 1946.

In an interview with *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times* at the home of Mary Heckel Clark, Scott Daniels said, "Like any other house, it re-

Cranford Author Writes Historical Summer Read

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

CRANFORD — Cranford author, Naomi Desiderio says she didn't like history when she was attending school in her hometown of Blairsville, Pa.

So what made her set her first book, a novel for young adult readers titled "Hell at Sea," against the backdrop of World War II and German U-Boat history?

"I had always wanted to write a book," she explained, "but I couldn't find a subject until the 1980s, when I read 'Iron Coffins' by a former German U Boat Commander named Herbert A. Werner. It is a book about the German U-boat Battles of World War II."

Reading "Iron Coffins" inspired Mrs. Desiderio to learn more about World War II naval warfare, and eventually to write "Hell at Sea," the story of an 18-year-old American nursing student taken prisoner aboard a German U-115 off Sandy Point, Long Island.

"I could see and hear those guys as I was reading 'Iron Coffins.' It was that close to me," she said.

Shortly after reading Mr. Werner's book, Mrs. Desiderio met the author, who lived in New Jersey. The meeting further validated her desire to write a novel centered around U-Boats.

"We spoke for three hours. The history he spoke of moved me," she said. "Hell at Sea" turned out to be a 23-year-long project.

"I changed it about a hundred times,

and as I wrote, I was constantly learning new things," said Mrs. Desiderio, who wrote in the mornings between 5 and 7 a.m., and then spent the rest of the day taking care of her three children, now all adults.

"I knew God was with me, but I am definitely thrilled that my mission is accomplished," she said.

As part of her research for the book, Mrs. Desiderio attended U Boat reunions and memorial services, both in the United States and Germany.

In language that is both fast-paced and compelling, Mrs. Desiderio takes the reader through Mary Ann Connor's abduction, the four weeks she spent aboard the U-boat and her eventual release. Mary Ann's faith plays a large part in her dealings with the U-boat's captain and crew.

Although the story is fiction, it is based on an actual occurrence off the East Coast after the invasion of Pearl Harbor.

Born in Pittsburgh, Mrs. Desiderio received an undergraduate degree from Seton Hill College in Greensburg, Pa. and a Master of Arts degree in Literature from Indiana, University of Pennsylvania. She has also been a member of the New Jersey "Tin Can Sailors," U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II, Verband Deutscher U-Bootfahrer e.V. (German Submariners Association) and other historic naval organizations.

"Hell at Sea" is published by Tate Publishing and Enterprise in Oklahoma. It is available in all local bookstores.



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KRISTEN DILZELL

Dilzell Receives Foundation Grant

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Foundation has awarded Kristen Dilzell the Summer Employment Grant for 2007. She will work at the Westfield Summer Workshop, a division of the non-profit New Jersey Workshop for the Arts.

This grant enables a student from the community to develop skills for the workforce through summer employment at the Westfield Summer Workshop.

Kristen, a recent graduate of Westfield High School, will attend Cornell University this fall. She is currently working with the directors, cast and crew at the Workshop productions of "Pirates of Penzance" and "Thoroughly Modern Millie."

In the productions, Kristen helps block scenes and paint sets. She will also be stage manager for both shows, assisting with choreography and helping to organize many other aspects of the productions.

The Westfield resident sings, dances and acts with various performing arts companies in the area.

For more information on the Westfield Summer Workshop, call (908) 518-1551.



NO TIME WASTER...Westfield High School graduate Sam Vitale penned her first novel at age 16. See story below.

Time Not 'Wasted' With Vitale's First Novel

BY GEORGIA MIERSWA
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — Many 16-year-olds spend their summers sunbathing on the beach, escaping to camps across the country or working at monotonous minimum-wage jobs.

However, Sam Vitale, now 18, took on a considerably more ambitious summer project in 2005 than most when she wrote "Wasted Time," a children's fantasy book that was published last month by Publish America.

Sam, who arrived to her interview via motorcycle, is as full of energy, originality and humor as her novel. One of seven people to graduate from Westfield High School's Class of 2007 with a perfect 4.0 GPA all four years, the young author considers her "serious writing" to have started in eighth grade when she wrote poetry and plays and filled journal after journal with "whatever (she) had an excuse to write about."

"Wasted Time," her first published work, is a 50-page novella about three young orphans, Henry, Bret and Lily Mulligan, and the human form of Time, who is weakened and limber because so many people continue to waste him. The adventures begin when the children travel to the Past, Present, and Future to convince people to stop "killing time."

Sam said the idea to have Time as a character came to her one night and in only a week she had sketched out a detailed outline of the story. "My past stories have sort of fizzled out without that kind of organization so I thought it was really important to do that this time. And actually, it was my favorite part," she said.

As a result of her consistent work every night and help with editing from her parents Dale and Laurie

Vitale and her younger sister Alex, it only took the summer for Sam to finish writing the book. "The key is to stop working at a good spot where you want to keep writing. Stopping when you hit a dead end is pretty difficult because you're not in a hurry to go back to it," she said.

Sam said her interest in fantasy and adventure stories spawns from her desire to "never grow up," but it is obvious that as a writer she is far from juvenile. The plotline of "Wasted Time" is so clever and varied that not even an older reader would find it predictable. She also tends to alternate her tone by adding a dark, suspenseful edge to the end of each chapter, as the children must return from each time period before 12:00 or they will be trapped there forever.

Moments in the book are reminiscent of Edward Eager's "Half Magic" because of the spontaneous time-traveling, amusing and realistic banter between the siblings and lighthearted toying with language: "The whole place smelled rather bad; like rotten eggs that someone had tried to scramble anyway."

One of the most endearing aspects of "Wasted Time" is how much of Sam's personality shines through, especially through the character of Lily. Sam's love of all animals (she aspires to be a veterinarian and a novelist) is apparent when she describes Lily's disgust at seeing decorative stuffed birds in a house during the Present and when she justifies a dragon's destructive tendencies in the Past.

Sam is currently working on a second novel entitled "The Fairy Forest." To get a taste of her unique spin on fantasy fiction now, "Wasted Time," suggested for 9 to 12-year-olds, can be purchased at amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com.

Scotch Plains' Road to Hope Brings Back Old Memories

By SARAH QUELLER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — Seniors from the Jewish Community Center (JCC) of Central NJ enjoyed comedian Danny Curtis' presentation of "The Road to Hope" July 11 at Congregation Beth Israel in Scotch Plains.

Thirty-three Union County seniors attended "Hope," which starred Danny Curtis as Bob Hope, Michael Wright as Bing Crosby and Rebecca Lee Lerman as Dorothy Lamour.

Mr. Curtis, who has been featured on ABC TV's "America's Funniest People," described Bob Hope as "one of the most prolific performers of our time." Nan Statton, director of Senior Adult Services at the JCC, chose the "fun and entertaining program" because it was "familiar to the people who are watching."

"Hope" was presented as part of the Senior Adult Program, which is funded by the Union County Division on Aging. The program includes summer classes on art, current events, Jewish culture and other topics. A cook provides Kosher meals three days per week, and the program provides transportation for those who need it. "Hope" was a convenient choice, explained Ms. Statton, because it is "easier to bring a show to people than to bring people to the theatre."

Mr. Curtis quoted Bob Hope on aging: "I finally got my head together, but my body fell apart."

Mr. Curtis began the show by warming up the crowd with jokes to recreate the atmosphere of the live radio shows of the past.

He and Mr. Wright, as Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, then sang "The Road to Morocco" from the famous film of the same title. Mr. Curtis and Mr. Wright sang "Buttons and Bows" from the 1948 film "The Paleface" and "Swingin' on a Star," among others. Ms. Lerman belly danced and sang as Dorothy Lamour, who co-starred with Hope and Crosby in their Road films.

The actors donned many outrageous costumes, including kilts for "Hoot Mon" from the "Road to Bali."

As Bob Hope, Mr. Curtis recreated the exact script of one of Hope's 1943 radio shows from the Hollywood Canteen, which included commercial jingles and appearances by other performers, portrayed by Mr. Wright and Ms. Lerman.

Mr. Curtis also impersonated Mr. Hope's heartfelt visits to the troops during WWII, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. "We lived through that," said Etta Sauerberger of Mountainside.

"It brought back old memories," agreed Westfield resident Blanche Jacob. The show concluded with Bob Hope's signature song, "Thanks for the Memory."

"I enjoyed every bit of it," said Westfield resident Bernice Kaufman, who added that the performance made her day.

British-Born Evans Closes Carriage House Season

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

FANWOOD — Poet Anna Evans recently closed the Carriage House Poetry Series (CHPS) season with a reading of her work at the Kuran Arts Center.

Mrs. Evans' presentation emphasized formal poetry, a type of poetry near and dear to her heart. While many different interpretations of formal poetry exist, Mrs. Evans sees it as "poetry that uses meter...[and is] written according to a recognizable pattern of strong and weak stress patterns in the language."

Many of Mrs. Evans' poems recall the past and leave the reader/listener with a sense of longing for the innocence of days gone by. Relationships feature largely in Mrs. Evans' poetry as well. In "Backwards Through Wet Grass," a formal poem written in iambic pentameter lines, she relates the poignancy of first love. The poem is dedicated to Anthony Hecht, a well-known "formal" poet who died on the day Mrs. Evans wrote the poem.

In "The Lal Jomi," also written in iambic pentameter lines, Mrs. Evans steps back in time to "before the children thinned your hair and thickened me..."

"It was a privilege and a delight to be invited to speak [at the CHPS] on formal poetry... and to give a reading of my own formal work," Mrs. Evans commented. "There is a particular joy in reading metrical and rhyming poetry out loud to an appreciative audience because of the aural and rhythmic qualities of such poems."

Born in England, Mrs. Evans relocated to the United States in 2000. She is now a permanent resident.

Mrs. Evans is a former president of

the Burlington County Poets and a founding member of the Quick and Dirty Poets, a poetry-writing group also based in Burlington County. She has published over ninety poems in numerous print journals and e-zines, Center.

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Light Bulb Players Bring Animal Crackers to Stage

WESTFIELD — The Light Bulb Players are bringing George S. Kaufman and Morrie Ryskind's classic play *Animal Crackers* to life in a production directed and produced by high school students.

Originally written for the Marx Brothers with music and lyrics by Bert Kalmar and Harry Ruby, *Animal Crackers* will be presented on Saturday, July 28 at 3 and 7:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Westfield, located at 170 Elm Street

in Westfield. *Animal Crackers* is the story of an exclusive upper-class party that quickly takes a turn for the worse when the guest of honor, elephant hunter Captain Jeffery Spalding, arrives to tell them of his plan to leave the party. Soon after, a priceless masterpiece that was to be unveiled at the party goes missing. Capt. Spalding and his new musician friends are the only people

who can save the party. Billy Geltzeiler, a senior at Westfield High School, will play Captain Spalding. The show also stars Westfield residents Dan Berman, Pami Marks and Natalie Narotzky and Scotch Plains residents Matthew Forman, Michael Mietlicki, Kelly Merrick and Andrea Redmount.

The Light Bulb Players are a division of The New Jersey Workshop for the Arts dedicated to the hands-on theater education of high school students. Founded by Michael Mietlicki and Natalie Narotzky four years ago, the company is completely run by high school students aged 14 to 18. This production is directed by Mr. Mietlicki and choreographed by Kristen Dilzell. Billy Geltzeiler and Andrea Redmount are assistant directors.

Tickets will be available at the door at \$10 for adults and \$7 for students. For more information, contact the NJWA at (908) 789-9696.

WATTS UP...Members of the Light Bulb Players, from left to right, Tony Mowatt, Mark Roberts, Michael Mietlicki, Dan Berman, Billy Geltzeiler and Andrea Redmount, rehearse for a production of the Marx Brothers classic *Animal Crackers*.

who can save the party.

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Animal Crackers

July 28th 2007

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First Baptist Church of Westfield

170 Elm Street

Westfield New Jersey

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