



COFFEE TALK...*Leader/Times* movie critic Michael Goldberger, left, speaks to Ira Lewis after the screening of *Chinese Coffee*, as *Leader/Times* arts and entertainment writer Susan Dougherty takes notes.

CONTINUED from 24

IRA LEWIS - CHINESE COFFEE

tinged for the Rialto," quipped Mr. Lewis.

On June 19, however, it will be released on DVD in a boxed collection of Pacino's most personal work.



Tim Boyle purchased Chinese decorations for the special occasion.

Dialogue is Mr. Lewis' forte. Norman Mailer encouraged him years ago to write a novel, but the playwright balked at the thought. "I



Tim Boyle, above, and brother, Chris, co-owners of the Trattoria, prepared and provided food and decorations.

have a gift for dialogue; You have to have the touch of a poet to write narrative fiction."

Guests for the afternoon premiere came from all over to see the film and meet the local celebrity.

Mr. Lewis' friends Dan Carter and wife Cheryl Hartley from Manhattan came to support him. "We're happy to be here to celebrate with Ira," Ms. Hartley said.

"We've known Ira forever," continued the actress/dancer, who has performed readings of his plays and was directed by him in a production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Mr. Carter, a Broadway musician and composer, has written music for Mr. Lewis' work.

Former Westfield resident Gino



Attendees get ready for *Chinese Coffee* to begin.

Jannotti shared, "Carol (Lepore) and I met Ira here at Trattoria, and the ideas of the screening percolated. We were just sitting here at the bar and were interested in his work, his artistry."

The main character of the film, very loosely based on Mr. Lewis, confesses to his friend in the film, "All I ever wanted to do was write what was in my heart."

And Mr. Lewis echoes that sentiment in real life. After much thought, he said he felt his purpose in life is, "To be able to produce an enduring work."

Amatangelo Demonstrates Art of Container Gardening

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

WESTFIELD - Approximately 30 people gathered at Williams Nursery on Tuesday evening, May 22, to watch Master Gardener Sue Amatangelo demonstrate the art of container gardening and to try their hand at creating one or two container gardens of their own.

Earlier in the evening, Ms. Amatangelo signed copies of her recently published book, "Absolutely Beautiful Containers: The ABCs of Creative Container Gardens."

Using many ideas found in her book, Ms. Amatangelo showed workshop attendees how to create containers using light requirements and color as guidelines.

She incorporated a variety of both annuals and perennials in her demonstration shade container, and plants in several shades of pink in her color container.

"The main thing is to be creative," Ms. Amatangelo advised. "When it comes to container gardening, there's not a lot you can do wrong."

She stressed that sometimes this type of gardening can be a process of trial and error.

"Not every plant you put into a container is going to make it," she said, reminding the audience that plants are living things that don't always grow and thrive as we would like.

"If you need to remove a plant, then replace it, or nestle something like a [small statue] in its place," she said.

Dave Williams, owner of Williams Nursery, was impressed at the outcome of the container gardening workshop.

"There wasn't one container gar-

den made that I wouldn't want at my house," he said.

Joanne Krueger of Scotch Plains, a container gardener for 25 years, came away with many new ideas for her containers, which she places on her deck and railing.

"I never thought of mixing annuals and perennials," she said, adding that the workshop was "exciting" and "inspirational."

Trish Cheek of Westfield made two container gardens to place on her back porch.

"We all saw the same demonstration, yet each person's container is unique," she said. "The workshop was well worth it."

"Absolutely Beautiful Containers" contains directions for creating 200 containers, including hanging baskets, window boxes and arrangements in everyday household objects. Each container design outlined in the book includes a plant list, planting diagram and color photograph of the finished product.

Ms. Amatangelo, who resides in St. Charles, Ill., is the national retail accounts manager at Ball Horticultural Company, and the winner of the Illinois Outstanding Master Gardener Award.

She is also the horticulture superintendent of the Kane County, Ill. Fair; plan commissioner for St. Charles, Ill.; and a board member for Garden Centers of America.

Williams Nursery, located at 524 Springfield Avenue, has a limited number of copies of "Absolutely Beautiful Containers" that have been signed by the author. For more information on how to obtain a copy, stop by or call (908) 232-4076.



Due Sorelle Show Offers Spring Jewelry Designs

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

WESTFIELD - Those searching for last minute Mothers' Day gifts found an abundance from which to choose at the Due Sorelle Trunk Sale held at Juxtapose Gallery on May 12.

Due Sorelle, which in Italian means "two sisters," is a company that literally lives by its name, as it is owned by sisters, Gina and Tania Spil.

The company offers distinctive, one-of-a-kind pieces of jewelry, each of which is made by hand by one of the company's two employees.

According to Gina Spil, the May trunk sale consisted of a wide array of Due Sorelle's ever-expanding line of necklaces, earrings and bracelets.

"Our new pieces are of sterling silver and vermeil, and feature colorful and muted iced tones," she said. "Also new this spring are clear quartz crystal and bohemian styles with leather and ethnic beads."

One of the benefits of attending a Due Sorelle trunk show is the

customer's ability to try on different styles and mix and match designs.

Often, this non-pressured, leisurely way to shop for jewelry is what brings clients back each time Juxtapose Gallery holds its twice-a-year Due Sorelle trunk show.

"We have a following," said Gina Spil.

Wendy Miller of Scotch Plains is one of Due Sorelle's repeat customers who particularly likes the different necklace color combinations.

"I get many compliments on my Due Sorelle jewelry," she said. "People literally stop me on the street to say how nice it looks."

The warm weather and holiday weekend also brought many new customers to the trunk show.

"It's been our best Due Sorelle trunk show ever," said Gerri Gildea, proprietor of Juxtapose.

For those who missed the sale, Juxtapose, located at 58 Elm Street in Westfield, carries a selection of styles year-round.



SEEING HIS SHADOW... Josef Klein's exhibit, "Light and Shadows," begins Thursday, June 28, with a reception from 6 to 8:30 p.m. to meet the artist at The Les Malamut Art Gallery in Union. Above, Mr. Klein appears with his photograph "Evening in Lambertville." See release below for details.

Former FW Resident Addresses Digestive Illness

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

FANWOOD - A passion for motivating others to care for their own physical well being - especially their digestive health - is the inspiration behind a book written by former Fanwood resident Russell Mariani.

It's not an easy job, as the subject matter discussed in "Healing Digestive Illnesses: Root Causes and Solutions" is often one that people often don't care to discuss.

Yet, according to one study cited in Mr. Mariani's book, a whopping 69 percent of respondents claimed to have suffered from at least one digestive problem within the last three months.

Statistics such as these drive home the message that Mr. Mariani wants to convey - anyone can be more proactive when it comes to taking charge of digestive health.

"Healing Digestive Diseases" details Mr. Mariani's "Intestinal Regeneration Program," which allows readers to work towards digestive relief in three distinct phases. The book also contains testimonials from people who have successfully used Mr. Mariani's program since its inception in 1980.

Mr. Mariani's interest in digestive health stems from a personal experience he had in 1973 when, at the age of 18, he was misdiagnosed with colon cancer.

"What I really had was ulcerative colitis," Mr. Mariani explained. "At the time, it was thought to be precancerous."

Believing he didn't have very long to live, Mr. Mariani went to the library to study the digestive system. "I didn't know anything about health or nutrition, so I looked up everything," he said.

It took him seven years to "piece it all together." When the small changes he started to make in his own diet and lifestyle improving his colitis, he "knew I was on the right track."

To acquire more information, Mr. Mariani attended the Kushi Institute in Beckett, Mass., where he studied macrobiology, a dietary approach to various diseases. He also carefully assessed the connection between diet, lifestyle and the disease process.

"Very gradually, I put into practice the full spectrum of the Intestinal Regeneration Program. I did it from a holistic perspective," Mr. Mariani said.

While the concept of holistic health is well known today, Mr. Mariani experienced some resistance to the term when he first began advocating it.

"At that time, holistic was considered a 'hippy' term. It was considered 'extreme,'" he laughed.

Mr. Mariani holds a bachelor's de-

gree from Rutgers University and a master's degree in Nutritional Counseling from Norwich University. He is pursuing a doctorate degree in digestive wellness.

Mr. Mariani is presently in private practice as a Health Educator and Nutritional Counselor at The Center for Functional Nutrition in South Hadley, Mass., which he founded in 1999, and where he serves as the director of client services.

While South

Hadley may be a distance from his childhood roots, Mr. Mariani has fond memories of his days in Fanwood.

The annual Memorial Day Parade, summer days at LaGrande Park, attending St. Bart's grammar school and Union Catholic High School and spending time with his neighborhood friends all bring to mind happy days for the author.

"Six houses and families all connected by our backyards, each household with three or four children, all around the same age. It was kid heaven for many, many years, and a very safe, warm, friendly and supportive environment to grow up in," he said.

To reach Mr. Mariani for a phone consultation to discuss a digestive concern, call (413) 536-0275 or e-mail him at russellmariani@verizon.net.

To purchase "Healing Digestive Diseases," visit Mr. Mariani On-line at russellmariani.com

Les Malamut Presents

Josef Klein's Exhibit

AREA - The Les Malamut Art Gallery will present an exhibit titled "Light and Shadows" by photographer Josef Klein of Clark, beginning Thursday, June 28, with a reception from 6 to 8:30 p.m. to meet the artist. The exhibit will end September 14.

Mr. Klein studied photography while attending Stevens Institute of Technology, as well the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry, where he was awarded a grant in neurophysiology. Here, he developed skills in both micro and macro photography.

Recently, Mr. Klein has expanded his vision to include digital technology utilizing Photo Shop.

He prefers large prints, 24 by 30 inches. Much of his work involves landscapes and still life, but he enjoys portrait photography as well.

His work is displayed in the permanent collection of the Perth Amboy Gallery and he has been a guest artist at the Art Works Gallery in Metuchen.

The Les Malamut Gallery is located in the Union Public Library, located at 1980 Morris Avenue in Union.

For more information, call (908) 851-5450.

POPCORN™ Chinese Coffee: Definitely not Decaf



By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD - *Chinese Coffee*, one of Al Pacino's rare directorial stints (along with *Looking for Richard* [1996] and the yet-to-be released *Salomaybe?*), got me to thinking about some advice I occasionally dispense, sometimes even solicited. It's to kids who inform me that they are smitten by the roar of the greasepaint and the smell of the crowd.

They want to be artists, performing or fine. Is it a good idea?

Thus I pose a scenario: OK, it's 40 years from now. You've acted off as well as off off. Did dinner theater. Maybe whole bunches of summer stock. Some big deal folks in the industry even know you by name. You've been to their children's bar mitzvahs. All well and good.

But to support your dream, to keep hearth and home, you've always had to work at something else, menial or otherwise. That is, you've never really made it big. Now you're thinking back. Forty years, mind you. Is it OK? No regrets? Better to ask yourself now.

Harry Levine and Jake Manheim, the deeply troubled, middle-aged protagonists in *Chinese Coffee*, are just getting around to asking themselves, and each other, that very question. Harry, portrayed by Mr. Pacino, is the writer. Well, he's published two books.

But like Jerry Orbach's Jake, whose life of artistic pain and suffering has been in the photographic field, he's never made much money at it. Living in a stereotypical Bohemian's garret, only it's a basement apartment in New York, as the film opens he's just been fired from his doorman's job at a French restaurant. He wasn't servile enough.

Doubtless, Harry sees the ironic, self-effacing humor in the verbal pink slip.

All the same, and though probably not for the first time, his world has come asunder. Gosh, just to think...such aspirations he had. It's insult heaped upon injury. With only \$1.50 to his name, self-doubt is having its way with him.

The wiry little guy runs into the big street, alone amongst the eight million, maybe more a survivor than even he knows. But right now he's at the bottom and needs approbation, friendship. Maybe a little magic wouldn't be so bad either. He charges down to Jake's apartment. It's past 1 a.m.

His storming, fuming entrée, he rationalizes, is that Jake owes him money. But his fellow struggling artist just doesn't have it. He barely has coffee to offer the intruder. Thus begins the thrusting and parrying that will occupy Messrs Orbach and Pacino's thespic attentions for most of the next 99 minutes. Call it *My Dinner With Andre* (1981), but with the gloves off.

Adapted for the screen by Ira Lewis from his play that starred Al Pacino at the Circle in the Square, the first half of the movie deals with exposition. The two old acquaintances (are they really friends?) swap anecdotes, allegations, justifications and recriminations.

Flashbacks, showing them younger if not always fancy free, aid the characterization. They went here...they went there. Both had pretty women who got away.

Blame it on money. To have it or not to have it. Maybe that's the question. Or at least they find it easy enough to hold the poor almighty dollar responsible for their romantic bankruptcies.

Harry cites two examples. But the one that still means something is Joanna, very nicely realized by Susan Floyd. We empathize when he emotes the anguish he felt whenever he saw her wearing a tattered jacket. Not that she was complaining. She wouldn't. And that probably only served to heighten Harry's self-deprecation.

However, his prime complaint this bitter, telling night is not with Joanna, but with Jake. How come he hasn't read Harry's latest book, for gosh sakes? He values his opinion. What he really wants to know: Is there still hope for redemption in this late hour?

That question asked, they dance around the bonfire of disputation some more, not necessarily crying over spilled milk, but rather trying to make some sort of sense out of it...their version of the human quandary.

In the process, no literary allusion is safe from the two smart fellows who quote the great authors with effortless recall whenever they feel a bon mot will prove a point. They one-up each other, jockey for position, take turns at diatribes and veritably turn their perceived predicaments back to front.

Then it comes out...what really sets the two a-sizzling. Not only has Jake read the manuscript, but he also has a definite opinion.

And therein, among the story's several debates concerning love, friendship, art and money, lies the screenplay's epicentral dilemma. Of course, this review won't divulge how those last ingredients brew. Just suffice it to note, it's a big part of what makes *Chinese Coffee* dark, brooding and ultimately uplifting.

Chinese Coffee, rated R, is a Fox Searchlight film directed by Al Pacino and stars Al Pacino, Jerry Orbach and Susan Floyd. Running time: 99 minutes. Note: While it has been shown at several film festivals since its completion in 2000, whether or not *Chinese Coffee* will be released to theaters was uncertain at press time. It is scheduled to be released June 19 as part of a DVD boxed set featuring works by Mr. Pacino.



By VICTORIA McCABE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

"At first, when I see you cry, it makes me smile, yeah it makes me smile. At worst, I feel bad for a while, but then I just smile."

Ouch. There's a lesson to be found in the first track off "Alright, Still" - don't wrong Lily Allen. The 22-year-old British singer wastes no time in informing a cheating ex that she finds comfort in his misery.

And she wastes no time in asserting a unique attitude - both lyrically and musically - that carries through her entire album. "Alright, Still" is a fast, clever debut that's sassy and original.

Allen's sound is British pop with plenty of hip-hop beats and loads of energy, and her creativity leads to a set in which the only two songs that really sound alike are "Smile" and "Smile (Version Revisited)," Mark Ronson's alternate mix of the song at the end of the album.

In the Latin-horn-infused "LDN," she takes a stroll down a London street, seeing through the normal-looking people she passes. Despite all the unsavory characters she encounters, she muses, "Sun is in the sky, oh why oh why would I want to be anywhere else?"

The breezy (and sarcastic) "Everything Is Wonderful" benefits from Allen's best voice work - a number of

layered vocal harmonies mingle and support her as she bemoans the bureaucracy that holds bad credit against her even though she's got the money to mortgage a flat. Society's impossible standards aren't safe either: "I want to be able to eat spaghetti bolognese and not feel bad about it for days and days and days."

"Take What You Take" cleverly inverts clichéd advice. "A picture paints a thousand words, as one door closes another door opens, two wrongs don't make a right," she recites before questioning the adages and offering her own wisdom: "say what you say, do what you do, feel what you feel as long as it's real."

She's sometimes quite crass, but her brutal sense of humor is hilarious and always sharp. In "Knock 'Em Out," Allen rattles off excuses for blowing off a guy who's trying to get her phone number in a club, each line funnier than the last, while a tight snare rhythm drives the dance-floor cut.

Other highlights are "Friday Night," which has one of the album's best beats and melodies, and "Alfie," in which Allen whimsically pokes fun at her little brother's antisocial habits.

So excuse the blush-inducing language that pops up from time to time. There's an intangible excitement that pervades "Alright, Still" - it's Allen's own personality, and it's definitely worth getting to know.

JUXTAPOSE GALLERY

Creative Custom Framing

Design Consultation & Creative Matting
Needlepoint • Mirrors
Box Framing • Shadow Boxes for Memorabilia

JUXTAPOSE GALLERY
58 Elm Street, Westfield 908-232-3278
www.juxtaposegallery.com

the farmhouse store
like no other store in Westfield

Pottery Jewelry Metal
Glass Textiles Wood Paper
www.thefarmhousestore.com
221 North Ave East, Westfield 908-654-0444