

Arts & Entertainment

John List Autobiography Offers New Theory For 1971 Murders

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

WESTFIELD – Scores of books have been written about Westfield's most notorious citizen, John List, and his reasons for murdering his wife, children and mother. Now, a new theory explaining the motives behind the occurrences inside the mansion at 431 Hillside Avenue on November 9, 1971, has recently surfaced, and it is offered by the only family member still alive: the murderer, John Emil List himself. Mr. List recently published his autobiography, "Collateral Damage: The John List Story," in which he states that he was suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSS) at the time of the murders and that the PTSS greatly contributed to his infamous deeds.

Before Mr. List explains in exact detail how he plotted and executed the murders, he first chronicles his

Arts Orgs Can Protect Intellectual Property

AREA – A workshop entitled "Protect Your Intellectual Property" will provide arts and history non-profit organizations as well as individual artists with information about the pro bono legal services available to participants through New Jersey Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (NJVLA).

The workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, March 28, from 6:30 to 9 p.m., at the Liberty Hall Museum Carriage House, located at 1003 Morris Avenue in Union.

Tracey Batt, Esq., executive director of NJVLA, will be the speaker. The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs in the Union County Department of Economic Development sponsor the workshop. Admission is \$10 and registration is required by March 23. To request a brochure or to register, to request assistive services or to learn about other programs, services and volunteer opportunities, contact the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, located at 633 Pearl Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202; or call (908) 558-2550; or e-mail: culturalinfo@ucnj.org. Relay users dial 711.

Town Book Store Hosts Adventuresome Authors

WESTFIELD – The Town Book Store in Westfield will host two authors on March 24.

Appearing from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. is author Jennifer Troulis, a resident of Dunellen and author of "Penelope and Priscilla and the City of the Banished," the second book in her middle-grade children's series, the Penelope and Priscilla series.

In this book, readers are taken on a magical adventure with identical twin sisters, Penelope and Priscilla, as they face challenges related to growing up, as well as battling evil forces.

Appearing from 2 to 4 p.m. is Bruce Harris, a resident of Scotch Plains, and the author of "Sherlock Holmes

childhood, his failed attempts to hold a job and his life as a husband, father and son.

Additional chapters cover his life as the fugitive "Robert P. Clark" and his day-to-day life in the New Jersey State Prison in Trenton, where he is serving five consecutive life terms for the murders.

One part of his past that Mr. List delves into quite deeply is his involvement in World War II. He was a member of the 86th Blackhawk Division that was involved in combat action in Germany for 41 days. He was also a prisoner-of-war for two days.

According to Mr. List, it was the PTSS resulting from his time in the service that greatly contributed to the murders.

Mr. List receives no monetary compensation from "Collateral Damage," which was written with the help of a former army buddy and CIA case officer, Austin "Red" Goodrich.

Mr. List's reason for writing the book, which is published by the print-on-demand publisher iUniverse, is to "set the record straight." And anyone who truly cares to dive into the mind of the Westfield murderer will relish reading Mr. List's side of the story.

Many readers, however, will be appalled to learn that Mr. List considers himself as much a victim as Helen, Patricia, John, Frederick and Alma List.

Be forewarned: Mr. List's book is full of misspelled words and other typographical errors.

To contrast Mr. List's side of the story as written in "Collateral Damage," readers may wish to refresh their memories by reading *The Westfield Leader* online archives of the List murders (goleader.com/list), which contain an extensive collection of newspaper clippings dating back to their discovery.

One may also wish to read one of the many factual third-person accounts written about the events.

"Righteous Carnage: The List Murders" co-written by Mountaineer resident Timothy Benford and James P. Johnson is among the most accurate.

"'Collateral Damage' [is] a belated excuse for why List murdered his family," said Mr. Benford, who added that Mr. List originally told the truth about the murders in the long confessional letter to his pastor, which he

left at the murder scene.

"Collateral Damage: The John List Story," and "Righteous Carnage: The List Murders" are available at Town Book Store in Westfield.

While everyone, Mr. List included, is entitled to tell his side of the story, most readers will find "Collateral Damage" to be yet another painful reminder of a story that just won't go away.



UNLISTED...Anne Woodward Laird, right, proprietor of The Town Book Store, and Marylou Morano, book reviewer for *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, preview John List's autobiography, "Collateral Damage: The John List Story."



POPCORN™

300: Hype Outnumbers History

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By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
2 and 1/2 popcorns

In the event you make a wrong turn in your mad rush to bone up on the Battle of Thermopylae (480 B.C.) and, instead of the Princeton seminar you planned to attend, wind up in a theater showing *300*, beware of filmmakers bearing myths. Herodotus, this is not.

On the other hand, since Hollywood's take on history hasn't distorted your vision of civilization's pageant yet, what's one more embroidered leap into the breach? A cutting edge amalgam of fact and fancy, if director Zack Snyder's interpretation of Frank Miller and Lynn Varley's graphic novel primes the pump of scholarly interest, then therein lies its value.

As for those who couldn't care less about the lessons of history, but do so enjoy several beheadings per minute in their brutal, often gratuitous depictions of warfare, they, too, may find themselves in the right place. The body count in *300* is enough to turn John Rambo green with envy.

Adding a curiosity quotient, the controversy surrounding Warner Bros.' fictionalization is the stuff of which box office dreams are made. Because Sparta's King Leonidas (Gerard Butler) conducts his war against the Persians without benefit of government approval, some say the film is anti-George Bush.

Yet, just to make you scratch above your laurels, Leonidas is clearly the hero of the tale, the Braveheart of his era, battling the wicked, slaveholding imperialists in the name of the nascent democracy then evolving in Greece. As of this writing, no one has ventured who in the cast might represent Vice President Dick Cheney.

But we have heard from an oil-rich country. Sources inside the Middle Eastern hotspot formerly known as Persia have relayed Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's displeasure. Indeed, the ancient world's superpower is portrayed as the ultimate evil empire, lorded over by a decidedly effeminate, egomaniacal Emperor Xerxes (Rodrigo Santoro).

The movie is all process, a phantasmagoria of high-tech f/x commanding each moment, whether cataclysm or nuance. Perhaps it's the perceived way to attract an audience plagued by attention problems and media bombardment.

Michele LaRue Presents Historical Anti-Suffrage Satire in Fanwood

By CHRISTIE STORMS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

FANWOOD — Times have certainly changed for women since "the year Grand Central Station went up and the Titanic went down," according to Michele LaRue, who recently presented a humorous anti-suffrage monologue at Fanwood Memorial Library.

Dressed in period costume, Ms. LaRue performed "Someone Must Wash the Dishes," a satire originally written and performed by women's suffragist Marie Jenny Howe in 1912.

The monologue poked fun at how "disastrous" it would be for society if women earned voting rights. Its original intent was apparently to stir up the ire of its mostly female audiences and

gain support for the right to vote.

"I am only a weak, ignorant woman," Ms. LaRue's character shrugged innocently, exaggerating the ridiculousness of that statement. She said it must be true because "men have told me this."

She presented similar "logical arguments," such as how women would be incapable of "complicated" tasks like marking a ballot and dropping it in a box. If allowed to go to the polls, instead of quickly casting their vote and leaving as men know to do, ignorant women would spend all their days there and neglect their families.

They would only vote as their husbands do anyway. They couldn't possibly understand politics or facts and statistics without it taxing their brains severely and rendering them ill.

The sizeable audience at the Fanwood Library laughed often at such statements during the short performance.

"She said a lot in 24 minutes," Barbara Knapp of Fanwood said, commenting that she enjoyed the show.

Julie Murphy, also from Fanwood, brought her 14-year-old daughter to

see the monologue.

"It's interesting to open a window on what times were like back then," Ms. Murphy said, citing that she thought her daughter would learn more from a performance than just reading dates, facts and figures.

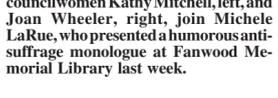
The Friends of the Library, who presented the show, also provided lemonade and cookies during a brief intermission.

Afterwards, Ms. LaRue stepped out of character to hold a brief discussion period, answering many questions about women's suffrage. "I thought she was wonderful,"

Fanwood resident Cena Pollit said. Ms. LaRue has acted for more than 20 years and appeared courtesy of the East Lynne Theater Company, which specializes in American plays of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

She said she's always been interested in the Victorian time period and frequently performs another historical short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper." She has enjoyed performing "Someone Must Wash the Dishes" since 1995 and hopes to continue to do so "as long as the costume still fits."

GET OUT THE VOTE...Fanwood councilwomen Kathy Mitchell, left, and Joan Wheeler, right, join Michele LaRue, who presented a humorous anti-suffrage monologue at Fanwood Memorial Library last week.



Christie Storms for The Westfield Leader and The Times

TAKE THE STAGE

No Snoozing on This SP-F High School's Mattress

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

SCOTCH PLAINS – Since its Broadway opening in 1959 and the TV special with comedienne Carol Burnett, *Once Upon a Mattress* has seen Broadway revivals, the last of which starred Sarah Jessica Parker of TV's "Sex and the City" fame.

Normally, *Mattress* requires a superstar in the role of tomboy Princess Winnifred and not much else. Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School's (SPFHS) Repertory Theatre production of the Hans Christian Anderson tale of "The Princess and the Pea" however, has that superstar and an array of supporting stars to make it an ensemble effort.

A minstrel (Vangelis Dimopoulos) welcomes the audience to a puppet version of "The Princess and the Pea" and then whisks us off to a medieval castle where bossy Queen Aggravain (Elizabeth Minski) and mute King Sextimus (Eric Williams) rule over the kingdom that is longing for a suitable princess for gutless Prince Dautless (Martine Baruch).

A pregnant Lady Larken (Kristen Barry) is anxious for the prince to marry someone, for no one in the kingdom is allowed to marry before he does. She confesses to her lover Sir Harry (Justin Berger) that she'll have to disappear to have the baby if he doesn't find a princess in record

time. Enter Princess Winnifred (Ally Rome) who swims the moat of the castle to get to see the prince she's to marry. The fly in the proverbial ointment of the nuptials is the test set up for Winnifred by the interfering queen mother.

With her saccharine mellifluous speaking voice that drips condescension and superiority, Elizabeth Minski as the scene-stealing queen of mean is delightful. Ms. Minski is quite the theatrical diva as this domineering monarch.

To counterpoint the dominant royal, her mute husband, played perfectly by Eric Williams, has great fun with his miming in "Man to Man Talk" where he needs to "talk" to his son Dautless, who is well played by Martine Baruch.

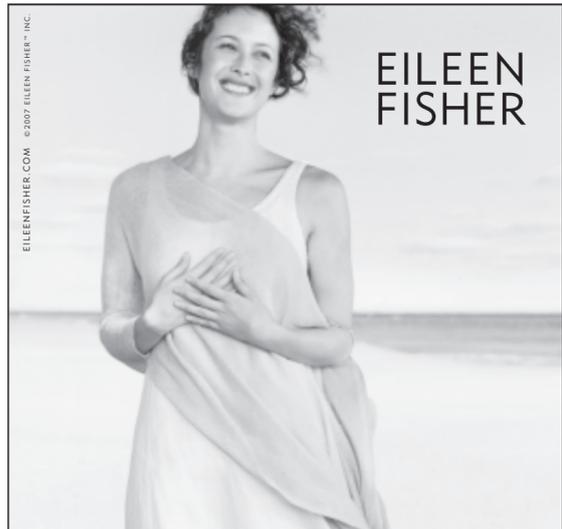
Kristen Barry as Lady Larken has a professionally trained soprano voice that matches her lovely face. She looks comfortable on stage whether dancing, singing or acting.

The princess herself, Ally Rome, wins us over at her first entrance with an exaggerated, affected laugh. Ethel Merman belt in "Shy" and vocal and dramatic versatility in a wistful rendition of "Happily Ever After."

The cleverly staged "The Minstrel, the Jester, and I," displays the har-



LOVING FRED...The ensemble of *Once Upon a Mattress* falls in love with Fred, Princess Winnifred, played by Ally Rome.



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