

# Arts & Entertainment

## CAS Program Concludes With Williams' Plea to 'Grant us Peace'

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

WESTFIELD — With pride, emotion and waving arms, James Little directed an impressive concert presented by the Choral Art Society of New Jersey on Saturday, May 12, at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield.

The lengthy program was divided into two sections: Franz Joseph Haydn's "Theresienmesse" and Ralph Vaughan Williams' arrangement of juxtaposed poetry about war and peace, entitled "Dona Nobis Pacem."

The orchestra drove the beat in "Kyrie," the first section in Haydn's six-part mass. Soloists soprano Andi Campbell, mezzo-soprano Sharon Morrison, tenor Axel Anderson and bass Howard Thompson executed accurate and refreshing control over their voices, allowing level harmony between the singers.

Though at times the orchestra seemed louder than the choir, the choir wove through the music in one voice, void of individual standouts.

In "Gloria," the choir transitioned with ease between staccato and legato sections, and allowed the orchestra to shine during moments when the chorus rested.

Ms. Morrison contributed excellent diction and a precise accent during her solos, though she was sometimes overpowered by Ms. Campbell's strong vibrato and Mr. Thompson's forceful projection.

The chorus was especially deft at dynamics, creating dramatic and breathtaking crescendos, then plunging into a whisper in pieces like "Sanctus" in Haydn's



WAR AND PEACE...On Saturday, May 12, the Choral Art Society of New Jersey, under the direction of James Little, held a program divided into Franz Joseph Haydn's "Theresienmesse" and Ralph Vaughan Williams' arrangement of juxtaposed poetry about war and peace, entitled "Dona Nobis Pacem."

"Theresienmesse."

The soloists' voices were impressive and strong; they often drove the chorus, using its members as backup singers to create a fuller effect. The Choral Arts Society successfully mixed the wholeness of the chorus with the talented soloists' individual voices.

In the last of Haydn's pieces, "Agnus Dei," the orchestra used the minor tone to capture the eerie mood of the lyrics, which, translated into English, begin, "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us."

Luckily, the Choral Arts Society did need the audience's mercy, as its members were bombarded with fitting, enthusiastic applause before intermission.

Soprano Ms. Campbell and bass Mr. Thompson returned as soloists in Williams' "Dona Nobis Pacem," which Ms. Campbell began by singing the title song. Though Ms. Campbell's voice was at some points piercing, it was poignant and filled with emotion, as it slid up and down the scales. The chorus showed its range by executing dramatic crescendos and strong staccato sections.

The chorus then sang three arrangements of Walt Whitman poems about war: during the poem "Reconciliation," Mr. Thompson sang with dignity and expression, "For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead."

To create the effect of musical war poetry, the chorus and orchestra collaborated to create a powerful whirlwind of sound and intensity as first violinist Svetoslav Slavov's music ached with the aftermath of war. The chorus emphasized more powerful lines by using varying levels of volume.

Between pieces, Campbell led

"Dona Nobis Pacem," a reminder of the message: "Grant us peace."

In Williams' final piece, a collection of passages from the Bible, the combination of soloists' strong voices, the resounding tone of sweet violins and the chorus building created an emotional ending to the concert. The many shifts in music made the piece exciting, and the audience could see the feeling in the singers' voices, as they softly sang the last line sans piano.

## SP Author Feather Foster Writes for New Audience

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

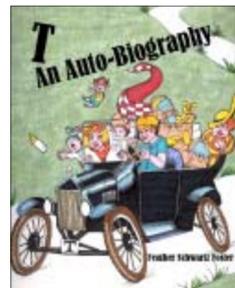
SCOTCH PLAINS — Scotch Plains author and presidential historian Feather Schwartz Foster recently released a new book entitled "T: An Auto-biography."

Like "Garfield's Train," Ms. Foster's critically acclaimed historical novel about the death of President Garfield in Long Branch in 1881, and "Ladies: A Conjecture in Personalities," her historically accurate account of the lives of American First Ladies, "T: An Auto-biography;" is also a historically based book.

However, Ms. Foster's loyal readers will notice that unlike her two previous books, which are targeted to adult audiences, "T: An Auto-biography" is unmistakably a children's book.

However, even though it was written for children ages 8 to 12, it is also a book that adults will enjoy.

Without talking "down" to young readers, Ms. Foster chronicles the life of a Model-T Ford from assembly line birth to "retirement" at the



"Old Car Home" — the junkyard.

The book's ending will leave both child and adult reader satisfied.

"I believe in happy endings," said the author.

Ms. Foster's refreshing writing style, consisting of a fast-paced plot peppered with plenty of conversation, makes "T: An Auto-biography," like the two books that came before it — historical "winners." "T: An Auto-biography" stands out as a book all readers will come back to over and over again.

Whimsical illustrations by Kathe Gogolewski complement the text, and helping bring the Model-T Ford's history to life.

At a recent book signing at the Scotch Plains Public Library, Ms. Foster explained that her background as a songwriter for children's shows made for an easy transition to writing a book for children.

"In a way, I have always been a children's writer," said Ms. Foster. The author was born in Jersey City, and has lived in Scotch Plains for more than 25 years.

In addition to writing historical fiction and songs, Ms. Foster is also a playwright.

Prior to launching her career as a book author, she spent 35 years in advertising and public relations, both with her own business as well as with other firms.

She is currently at work on a book about presidential marriages.

"T: An Auto-biography" is available at Town Bookstore in Westfield. For an autographed or inscribed copy, visit the author's website at featherfoster.com.

mas, which was based on one summer day in downtown Westfield on the set of the movie starring Queen Latifah and Terence Howard. Their comedic timing and candor were stupendous.

Mr. McMeekan offered *Deep Water*, an action-packed three-minute trailer for a documentary he is working on about the SPFH Girls Swimming Team battling a season fraught with injuries and obstacles, yet breaking through to win two consecutive state titles. He said he is still conducting interviews to complete the film.

Angelique created perhaps one of the most compelling films, *Where I'm At Now*. The filmmaker gave viewers a candid and sobering perspective of the life of a teenager struggling with drug abuse. The subject answers her questions without reservation and the answers, (such as the young man's admission that he doesn't expect to live past 30) and the list of drugs with which he has experimented, are riveting.

Hope Weinstein, speech therapist for autistic children, and John Fazio educated the audience (young and old) with their 17-minute film, *Healthy Bear Cooks With Care*. The cooking show featured Scotch Plains and Fanwood residents, and offered healthy and easy recipes for youngsters to try

with the assistance of grown-ups. The "Healthy Bear" character depicted in the film, as well as Ms. Weinstein's own character changes, brought wide grins to the smiles of youngsters attending the festival.

Also that afternoon, the festival included Nick Pavano's hysterical 20-minute *Due Date II*, a sequel to last year's festival submission about a dysfunctional father and husband trying to get his life under control. Rachel Gordon presented the two-minute short, *Study of a Relationship*, which focused on the relationship between two people in a very intimate sense.

Before viewing the world premiere of Peter Paul Basler's *As Cool As Jennifer II: New Beginnings*, Ignacio Lopez explored the angst of an elementary school playground in his one-minute, 30-second piece, simply entitled, *Playground*. Also, the comedic filmmaking talents of Aaron and Will Eisenberg returned with the two-minute commercial spoof, *Vagicare*.

Mr. McMeekan said he hopes some of the PSAs and films shown during this year's festival will also be aired on Scotch Plains Television. For more information, call the Fanwood Memorial Library at (908) 322-6400 or visit fanwoodlibrary.org/filmfest/.



ALLIANCE...At the third-annual Movies in May Festival, film enthusiasts created public service announcements promoting the Scotch Plains and Fanwood libraries' alliance. Pictured, from left to right, are Dan Weiss, director of the Fanwood Memorial Library; Jeremy Cimafonte, winner of the PSA contest; William McMeekan, Jr., director of operations for Scotch Plains Television; and Angelique Ibarra, third place in the PSA Contest. Not pictured are Hannah and Eliot Clark, who earned second place.

## Russell Delivers Cold, Hard Facts on Global Warming

By MEREDITH MANNINO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

MOUNTAINSIDE — Gray Russell, environmental coordinator for the township of Montclair, recently spoke about global warming at the Trailside Nature and Science Center.

Just last year, The Climate Project selected Mr. Russell to participate in an in-depth training program led by former Vice President Al Gore and a team of scientists and environmental educators.

The environmentalist also studied energy efficiency in Britain at the Institute of Energy and Sustainable Development.

About 20 people, including mostly Union County residents and Freeholder Chairwoman Bette Jane Kowalski, attended Mr. Russell's compelling and informative presentation, which included a series of photographs that lucidly illustrated the damage global warming is inflicting upon nature.

The term "global warming" refers to the increase in the average temperature of the earth's near-surface air and oceans that has occurred over the past several decades, and its projected continuation and effects.

While many environmentalists and biologists concur that global warming is a result of humans' excessive use of CO<sub>2</sub>-emitting cars and other noxious gas-producing materials, many in the scientific field believe that global warming is an uncontrollable cycle of nature.

However, Mr. Russell believes the changes are controllable and points

to the fact that the earth's temperature has risen by about 1 degree over the last century.

According to Mr. Russell, the United States, which comprises a mere 5 percent of the world's population, contributes approximately 30 percent of the world's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Europe contributes a high percentage of these dangerous gases as well, while Africa and India have a "very low carbon emission rate per person."

He added that "Japan has the best fuel economy and greenhouse gas emission standards around the world."

Mr. Russell illuminated wildlife population changes occurring as a result of global warming.

According to an article by Ker Than entitled "How Global Warming is Changing the Wild" (posted on Live Science.com), polar bears are thinner and less healthy than they were 20 years ago. Many fish species are moving northward in search of cooler waters.

A fruit fly gene normally associated with hot, dry conditions has spread to populations living in traditionally cooler southern regions, and the Amazon Rainforest is rapidly disappearing.

Despite the impact of global warming on the planet and its ecosystems, Mr. Russell is optimistic. He thinks more and more Americans are realizing global warming is real, and are starting to make positive contributions to help preserve the earth.

"This can be our time. This is our era; right now, we need to do it," he declared.

Mr. Russell hopes that Montclair's successful establishment of a greener municipality — the town was actually given an award from the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBP) for its clean energy leadership — will be a model and an inspiration for other communities.

He provided many examples of what Montclair has done to save the planet, and hopes that other towns will begin to adopt some of these practices.

For example, Mr. Russell said that many Montclair residents shop at the local farmers' market. Supporting local farmers helps conserve energy because less gas and refrigeration time is used by the farmers as they transport their produce locally.

Montclair's environmentally savvy ways are also evident when examining the cars driven by the town's parking-enforcement team. The meter readers of Montclair drive Honda Civics, which are fueled by compressed natural gas, and "are super-low-emission vehicles," Mr. Russell said.

Another innovative and earth-friendly change that Montclair has integrated is the use of light-emitting diodes (LED) for its streetlights. The LED's use less energy, and also save money, Mr. Russell said. The New Jersey Clean Energy Program granted the town an \$8,600 rebate after it installed LED traffic lights.

He encouraged attendees to install solar panels in their homes and to be diligent about recycling and composting. He also supports "clean"

### Dominic Chianese Sings in Summit

AREA — On June 16, Dominic Chianese, who plays "Uncle Junior" on HBO's series "The Sopranos," will perform original Italian/Neapolitan and popular songs with his band, The Cement Sidewalkers, at Congregation Beth Hatikvah, located at 36 Chatham Road in Summit.

All monies raised from this event will benefit The Lustgarten Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research. Doors open at 7 p.m., with hors d'oeuvres and drinks served.

The concert will start promptly at 8 p.m. Tickets, which are \$75, are general admission, and will be sold at Keller Williams Realty, located at 488 Springfield Avenue in Summit.

Checks should be payable to The LCK Pancreatic Cancer Fund. Tickets may also be purchased by sending checks to The LCK Pancreatic Cancer Fund, c/o Keller Williams Realty, 488 Springfield Avenue, Summit, N.J. 07901. For further information, contact Cathy Richman at (908) 591-0926 or CathyRichman@kw.com.

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