



Viewing Venice as She Sleeps

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Part II of my trip to Italy.
CRANFORD — "It's a good time to see Venice. Tourists will not be out yet," extolled the hotel clerk as I stepped aboard the 8:15 a.m. shuttle boat from Giudecca Island to San Marco on July 3. I had planned to spend two hours exploring the ancient city before attending a press conference for the tourism trade.



Venice as she sleeps – its golden snapshots, empty streets, quiet St. Mark's Square and glimpses of gondoliers as they ready for the day's fares – is a view not many experience.

The bell tower is a beacon that I had arrived at the square, and, having passed the Doge's Palace, the Basilica San Marco engulfs the entrance. The church's gilt mosaics telling tales of St. Mark shine in the early morning light, winking "Buongiorno" (good morning). To the left of the Basilica stands the clock tower, Torre dell'Orologio, tall and proud to keep time for Venice. The Madonna and baby Jesus peer down toward the square; her thoughtful gaze kindles a calm across the piazza. Lounging above her against a cobalt blue starry sky, the great winged St. Mark's Lion reads an open book, a sign of peace, translated it reads "Peace unto thee Mark my Evangelist."

As I came upon the centuries famous Caffé Florian to order my anticipated Venetian breakfast of a cappuccino and brioche, I was informed that they open at 10 a.m., over an hour away and minutes before I had to meet my boat.

So I sat on a leather bench and took in the expanse of the elegant square before venturing into one of the now nearly empty, narrow streets to explore the cityscapes, window shop, gaze at the faded silk lagoons and the sun casting bullion onto the ripples, and sneak peaks at the gondoliers reading the day's news or buffing their boats to a high black sheen. I wandered into the center of the square, Florian's stage, and glimpsed some pigeons pecking at the pavement gobbling up some feed a German man had sprinkled on the herringbone brick ground.

On my way back from wandering through the winding walkways, I finally had my breakfast at Florian's neighbor, Quadri's, and was the only patron when it opened at 9:30 a.m. The coffee was strong and the foamed milk airy; the brioche snowed in my lap as a burst of orange jelly livened up my mouth. I paid the lavishly high bill and took off for my shuttle.

During my lunch break, I boated across the shadowy green Giudecca canal to the Zattere, a promenade eclipsing one side of the lazy Dosodura island, to order Italian gelati, a ritual among strollers. It is common to order two or three flavors at once, so I went for a scoop of pistachio and a scoop of amaretto in a cup, which put me back a mere 1.60 Euro (\$2.50) at Gelati Nico. The smooth globes of ice cream and "fresca" flavor were a refreshing treat as I ate on the go and took in the sights while walking down a wide thorough-



ART ON DISPLAY... "Do You Know?", the latest painting by pastel artist Jeri Greenberg, is now being shown at Juxtapose Gallery, located at 58 Elm Street, Westfield. For more information, contact the gallery or the artist directly.

fare shaded with trees and lined with flowers that lead over the Grand Canal into San Marco by way of the Accademia Bridge. Here, tourists snapped away at long views of the cherished canal with sights of gondolas slipping through the mottled waves, ripened villas and the beehemoth mustard-colored Istituto Veneto, while sounds of a gondolier's accordion drifted through the sultry air.

After 9 p.m., the heartbeat of Venice

originally concocted in Venice, in the famous Harry's Bar, once owned by Giuseppe Cipriani.

The streets at this hour were quiet, with only sounds of the water lapping against the docks and a crowd of young people sitting outside the hostel.

The hotel bar was quieter still, giving us a chance to chat up the head bartender, Walter Bolzonella. He told us that this is the only Cipriani bar to make the Bellini with fresh white peaches (a few days later, my colleague ordered a Bellini at Harry's Bar and he confirmed Harry's version was made from a pre-processed mix). The powerful infusion of peach and wine and pulpy texture hit my tongue and the cool bubbles of Prosecco danced in my throat.

Walter had bid us good night in his own cheery way with a sampling of another concoction – the Buona Notte (Good Night), served with a wide little straw to suck up all of the crushed bits of lime, ginger, bitters, cucumber peel and sugar, mixed with vodka and cranberry. He explained that he enlisted George Clooney to name the drink when he was a hotel guest while attending the 2005 Venice Film Festival, where his movie *Good Night, and Good Luck* screened.

Though I had little time to see inside the sites that have stood in Venice for ages, I was blessed by seeing Venice at rest. To make it just a little sweeter, on my last night in Venice, a blood-orange sunset radi-

again slowed to a resting rate, at least on Giudecca, a lagoon island of Venice where I stayed at the Hilton Molino



Stucky. The previous night a colleague and I walked over to Hotel Cipriani to taste a Bellini, a drink made of white peach juice and Prosecco (a sparkling white wine),

ated a velvety blue sky only the Venetian painters could recreate so vividly. It was an awe-inspiring view that was a perfect nightcap to my whirlwind tour.

WESTFIELD FOOD 4 THOUGHT



Summer Edition: Duck, Duck...Duck?

By JAYNE SALOMON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Barbecue or grill? We use these words interchangeably, but their meanings are quite different. What most of us call barbecuing is really grilling.

Grilling is done quickly over a medium to high flame. Barbecuing is a far more tedious process requiring hours of slow cooking over a low flame.

Hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken and steak are generally grilled. Things like turkey, roast pig and brisket are usually barbecued. Barbecuing requires more skill than grilling and, thus, is done less frequently.

At this point in the year, the barbecue grills are well broken in since it's been a relatively good season for grilling. The weather has been mostly accommodating, but by now, I'm getting pretty tired of hamburgers and hot dogs.

Granted, they are quick and easy on hot summer nights. I know summer is about easy living, but I think it's time to get a little bit creative about what to put on the grill.

Duck is not often the first thing that comes to mind when considering what to grill for dinner, but why not? It's tasty and delicious and has certain health benefits. Although it is a fatty fowl, it is high in protein, and when the fat is removed, the remaining meat is actually very lean.

John's Meat Market in Scotch Plains usually stocks high quality ducks. They are frozen, but they will gladly order you a fresh duck with a few days notice. Ask them to cut the ducks in half. This will eliminate some of the fattiness.

Boil the duck before grilling and then stab it several times with a fork. Not all the fat will be removed but it will help.

Watch the duck carefully as it grills because it will easily burn when the fat starts dripping. I recommend staying close to the grill. I usually grab a book and pull up a chair. Keep the grill lid covered most of the time but open frequently to check.

Although the grilling methods are the same for these two recipes, the flavors are, of course, quite different. The first recipe has a French influence

with a fusion twist while the second recipe has a distinct Asian flair.

Unlike chicken or turkey, there isn't much meat on a duck. One five pound duck will just about feed two average eaters; forget about growing teenage boys, so plan accordingly and go heavy on the sides.

DUCK L'ONION

*Note: Use any store-bought French onion soup in lieu of homemade. Whole Foods carries a 32-ounce size organic brand, called Pacific, which is quite good.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 5-pound duck, cut in half
- 4 cups French onion soup*
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- Dash pepper
- 1/4 cup flour
- Garnish: Sugar snap peas and shredded carrots

PROCEDURE

In a large pot, boil the duck for 1 hour. Stab the duck all around after it has boiled for 45 minutes. Remove and let cool. Meanwhile, pour the soup and

orange juice into a medium pot. Add the lime juice, garlic and pepper. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes. In a small bowl, add enough water to the flour to make a paste and slowly stir into the pot to thicken. Let simmer for an additional 20 minutes. Stir frequently. When the proper consistency is achieved, strain the sauce and serve separately. Put the duck on the grill over a medium high flame. Grill, for 20 minutes turning several times and watching carefully. Plate and serve with the sauce.

HONEY SOY DUCK

INGREDIENTS

- 15-pound duck, cut in half
- 1 cup honey
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger

PROCEDURE

Boil the duck in a large pot of water for one hour, stabbing it after 45 minutes. Remove and let cool for five minutes. Mix together the honey, soy sauce and ginger. Grill the duck over a medium high flame for 20 minutes, turning several times. Liberally brush on the honey mixture and grill for an additional five minutes.



Jayne Salomon's Honey Soy Duck

Performers Display Heart, Courage, Brains in *The Wiz*

By KATIE ROGERS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — On July 29 and 30, The Westfield Summer Workshop staged performances of *The Wiz*, based on the age-old classic *The Wizard of Oz*. With a cast of nearly 20 youngsters, the magical tale of Dorothy and friends was brought to life with a new twist. A tornado sweeps up Dorothy

played by Connor Wynne.

The *Wiz* agrees to grant the wishes of his newfound friends but only if they manage to destroy the wickedest witch in Oz, Evillene, played by Danielle Karacsony.

The evil witch takes the four scheming friends hostage in her castle and forces them to work for her. Dorothy licks out once again by accidentally

(Maggie Tanji) from her Kansas home and brings her to Oz, where she meets her timeless friends – the brainless scarecrow, played by Claire Dorwart; the flamboyant lion, played by Brian Pollock; and the ladies' man tin man, played by Kevin Morris.

All four are in search of something they lack and are led to meet the *Wiz* by Glinda the good witch's wacky magician sister Addaperle, played by Emily Norwine.

The foursome can't help but delight audiences throughout their journey when breaking out *Wiz* classics such as "Ease on Down the Road."

The choreography was endearing and very age-appropriate. However, the characters face challenges along the way, such as battling Kalidahs – fictional characters created by L. Frank Baum that have tiger heads and bear bodies – and dealing with the play's best-kept secret, the pint-sized *Wiz*,

pouring water on Evillene, killing her and helping her friends get the wishes they desire.

The lion gets his courage, the scarecrow gets his brains, the tin man gets his heart; yet, Dorothy seems trapped in Oz after the *Wiz* leaves her stranded without a way home following the musical number, "Y'all Got It!"

However, Glinda, the good witch, played by Courtney Weisse, helps Dorothy find

her way by magically clicking her heels three times and, more importantly, believing in herself.

Director Kenneth Horn's production was a crowd-pleaser and couldn't help but have audiences dancing in their seats and rooting for the four lead characters. Maggie, playing Dorothy, has a powerful voice for such a young age and is supported beautifully by a solid core cast for a trip to Oz audiences will not soon forget.



Photography by Christina M. Hinke

WF Library Features Fuess' Floral Show

WESTFIELD — The heat of August can't wilt the flowers of artist Jim Fuess of Berkeley Heights. On display at the Westfield Memorial Library through September 30, "The Floral Show" depicts abstract colors, shapes and forms of flowers. They are rendered on canvas with liquid acrylic paint using a technique that involves squeeze bottles with different viscosities of liquid paint, two brands of paint and a number of interchangeable nozzles of different apertures.

Mr. Fuess has had over 100 group shows and 40 solo shows in his career. He is the former curator of the Watchung Arts Center and the founder and director of the 15-year-old New Art Group. His work can be previewed at jimfuessart.com.

For more information call (908) 789-4090, visit the library's Web site at wmlnj.org, or stop by the library at 550 East Broad Street in Westfield for a copy of the quarterly newsletter. During the summer, the Westfield Memorial Library is open Monday through Thursday 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., Fridays 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

'Young at Art' Exhibit Showcases WF Student

SUMMIT — The Visual Arts Center of New Jersey's (VACNJ) second annual Young at Art exhibition is showcasing the work of young students through August 22.

Cassia Harting-Smith, 8, of Westfield had work chosen for the exhibition.

Young at Art features the work of 46 students, ages 6 to 16. Mediums range from paint to ceramics, from charcoal to collage. All work was created throughout the 2007-2008 year in the classes and workshops offered by the Art Center.

"It's most important that these young students have an opportunity to enjoy

the creative process and explore the wonderful world of art," said Bonnie Jaffe, an Art Center trustee.

Young at Art coincides with the center's Members Show, showcasing the work of students of all ages in the Art Center's Gallery Space.

VACNJ is celebrating its 75th anniversary of "bringing art and people together." Fall offerings are available for children ages 4-17 in a wide variety of media. New teen offerings include fashion drawing and digital photography.

For further information, visit artcenternj.org



POPCORN™ The Dark Knight: Casts Shadows of Doubt

One Popcorn, Poor • Two Popcorns, Fair • Three Popcorns, Good • Four Popcorns, Excellent
By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
3 popcorns

It is dark, indeed. And complicated through the first act when director Christopher Nolan dabs in blacks and grays for the gloomy exposition of his Batman reprise. It's Gotham, yet it might as well be postwar Vienna on paranoiac-inducing hallucinogens. But great irony is at work here. And it saves *The Dark Knight* from its overindulgences.

Sadly, it also again affirms that real life is stranger than fiction. For adding the darkest note of all as evil personified, Heath Ledger's stellar interpretation of The Joker is right up there with Javier Bardem's Oscar-winning portrayal of Anton Chigurh in *No Country for Old Men* (2007). Don't find yourself on a bus with either of these guys.

Naturally, you can't help but wonder how much Mr. Ledger's untimely death from a prescription drug overdose earlier this year influences your evaluation. But after due contemplation, it's obvious that no amount of sympathy could make the awesome intricacy of his ranting madman seem quite this spectacular.

While practically everyone in the ensemble cast – a rarity in films of such grandiose proportions – puts in a solid stint, it's Ledger who adds a much-needed definition. The script – by director Nolan and his brother, Jonathan Nolan – deals in shadows and conjectures of all shades, even concerning Batman. The Joker is the crazy invariably.

Trust him to do bad. Where and when is another story. When we meet him, he is reading the riot act to a motley assemblage of organized toughs: work for me or else. When they don't all agree, he makes it a little clearer. And in the process, Nolan ostensibly asks, "Who says comic book characters can't get shot in the back of the head?"

This is tough stuff, fully earning its PG-13 at every interstice and juncture. But its mood and sense of despair, barely contained by the parameters of the plot, prove its toughest devastation. It'll make you hope even more that Bruce Wayne of Wayne Manor, a.k.a. Batman, will save the day.

But it's not so easy. Pessimism grips strife-torn Gotham. We're not sure if the population needs Batman, an exorcism or a complete analysis of its mass funk by Schopenhauer.

Christian Bale's ever-brooding Batman is most certainly the perfect hero for this troubled, shove-you-down and push-you-around town. Talk about shades of gray and equivocation. Gothamites aren't even sure they want a superhero. Come to think of it, Bruce isn't exactly certain he wants to be Batman.

Trying to keep the caped crusader's

mask screwed on through a lot of high-minded, low-act dithering, Michael Caine returns as Alfred, loyal family retainer, moral conscience and once-upon-a-time storied adventurer. Also in his corner, the keeper of the bat signal, Gary Oldman is splendid as Lt. James Gordon, the put upon yet dedicated public servant.

Trying as well to stop The Joker's reign of terror is Aaron Eckhart's golden boy D.A., Harvey Dent. While he seems too good to be true, he has nonetheless won the heart of Maggie Gyllenhaal's Rachel Dawes, the assistant D.A. who will still always love her former sweetie, Batman. Many surprises await. In the meantime, everyone is so confused.

Except for The Joker. He knows exactly what he wants. Regaling terrorized victims, before dispatching them, with rotating ditties about his demonic dad and the dreadfulness from whence he sprang, his virulent disgust with humanity knows no bounds. He is the epitomic battered child, finding release through the chaos he so painstakingly plots.

Spreading dysfunction across the Gotham cityscape, The Joker has turned the populace into the spineless towards his vanity insists they are. Putting their willy-nillyness to the ultimate test in one of many, no-holds-barred scenes, he plays one boatload of fleeing refugees against another, each with a bomb detonator.

Wisely, when *The Dark Knight* isn't trying to inject Freudian psychology and Nihilistic Philosophy 101 into the doings, it unleashes the usual set of thrilling diversions more common to popular culture. Which means beaucoup d'explosions, incessant battles, wholesale killings and chase scenes featuring the Batmobile.

Problem is, Nolan jams the excitement in-between the somber layers of meditation like hard-packed ice cream. True, leaving us little opportunity to catch our breath heightens the action and suspense. But while the director has certainly added a textual verisimilitude to the big summer blockbuster, he hasn't quite reinvented dramatic structure.

I like a little comedy relief with my bemoaning of mankind's fate. Though supplied in left-handed manner by Ledger's Joker, it is nevertheless odd when a lunatic's vitriol proves a movie's brightest light. Stranger still, when exiting the theater, is the urge to consolingly grab *The Dark Knight*'s shoulder and advise, "Hey, you're only a comic book...lighten up a little!"

The Dark Knight, rated PG-13, is a Warner Bros. Pictures release directed by Christopher Nolan and stars Heath Ledger, Christian Bale and Aaron Eckhart. Running time: 152 minutes.