



New Jersey Youth Theatre
2012-2013 Performing Arts Classes
 — FOR STUDENTS AGES 8 TO YOUNG ADULT —
 ACTING, IMPROVISATION, SCENE STUDY, VOICE, MUSICAL THEATRE, BALLET, JAZZ, TAP
 CLASS REGISTRATION: 4-8 PM, Wed. & Thur., SEPTEMBER 12, 13, 19 & 20
 Studio Location: 172 West Westfield Avenue, Roselle Park, NJ 07204
 Classes begin October 9, 2012
 For further information call 908-233-3200 / E-mail wyactnj@verizon.net



Arts & Entertainment

Former Westfielder Sally Cook's New Book Hits A Home Run

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

WESTFIELD – Over the years, many magical moments have been associated with the New York Yankees. For example, there is Reggie Jackson's hitting three home runs in one game in October 1977. There is Ray Negrón's transformation, at the hands of George Steinbrenner, from a graffiti-spraying teenaged thug into a valued member of the Yankees organization. And then there is Brett Gardner's first inside-the-park homer in the new Yankee Stadium in 2009, an event forecasted by a young woman waiting for a heart transplant in a local hospital.

These stories, and similar ones, are recounted in "Yankee Miracles: Life

with the Boss and the Bronx Bombers," a recently-released book written by Mr. Negrón and former Westfield resident, Sally Cook.

Ms. Cook is also the author, along with James Charlton, of "Hey Batta Batta Swing! The Wild Old Days of Baseball," a book filled with trivia and little-known facts about the sport. Mr. Negrón's insider knowledge of the Yankees, and Ms. Cook's experience writing about baseball make for a fine writing collaboration.

In addition, Ms. Cook is also an advisor for Project Sunshine (PS), a nonprofit organization that provides free social, educational and recreational programs for children with medical challenges. As such, she arranges for well-known children's

authors to visit seriously ill children and read to them from their books.

When Ms. Cook called Mr. Negrón and asked if he could bring a member of the Yankees to a hospital near the stadium, he arranged for Yankee Centerfielder Brett Gardner to visit on May 15, 2009.

As the Yankee was leaving, a young patient, Alyssa Esposito, handed him a Project Sunshine bracelet that said, "Shine" on one side.

"If I give you this bracelet, I bet you'll hit a home run tonight," she told him.

Ms. Cook recalls that Mr. Gardner was nervous because he is not a home run hitter.

"That night, Brett hit the very first inside-the-park homer in the new sta-

dium and the first inside-the-parker for the Yankees in ten years," she explained.

As if that were not miracle enough, at the very same time Mr. Gardner was hitting his home run, Ms. Esposito was receiving a new heart.

"Ray and I really believed that we had witnessed a 'miracle,'" said Ms. Cook.

A few weeks later, Mr. Negrón, the author of "One Last Time: Goodbye to Yankee Stadium," approached Ms. Cook with the idea of collaborating on a book about the Yankees.

The result, "Yankee Miracles," was two years in the writing.

Ms. Cook has worked as a reporter for the Associated Press and an au-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19



CAST YOUR VOTE... Philip Mills as Stephen and Cara Ganski as Molly in the New Jersey Premiere of *Farragut North* at Premiere Stages at Kean University. Photo courtesy of Roy Groething

Premiere Stages' Latest Play Exposes Political Backstabbing

By SUSAN MYRILL DOUGHERTY
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

UNION – If you want to see the fireworks that happen behind the scenes on the fictional road to the White House, then venture out to Premiere Stages' latest play offering, *Farragut North* by Beau Willimon. You don't have to be a political junkie, however, to appreciate the politics-based play running at the Zella Fry Theatre at Kean University for the next two weekends.

This is a fascinating tale of a presidential candidate's budding staff member who learns about the dirty tricks of partisan politics the hard way. The lights come up in a hotel bar and half way through one drink, the audience can sense that the camaraderie of the four people sitting in a booth masks their mutual exploitation. This is the night before the 2008 Democratic Caucus in Des Moines, Iowa where Stephen Bellamy (Philip Mills), a boy – wonder press agent who, at only age 25, has built an unimaginably stellar political career that men twice his age might kill to achieve.

In an almost "too tight to call" presidential primary race, young Stephen's power collides with backroom politics of more seasoned professionals. He exhibits strong signs *hubris*, the classic kind that causes his inevitable fall. Stephen succumbs to a secret rendezvous with the campaign manager of a major opponent, Tom Duffy (Steven Hauck). Add to that mistake a one-night stand with a provocative 19-year-old intern Molly (Cara Ganski), and the seesaw determining his career teeters on the brink of destruction.

Campaign aides/workers/volunteers that see the play will recognize the artful ways in which Stephen tries to manipulate the press. Journalists will certainly appreciate the deadline-fueled pressured atmosphere presented. A sample line from reporter Ida (Roya Shanks) of *The New York Times* sums up the stakes for him: "I've got to file by 4 o'clock. You've got until then to make up your mind." When the press agent Stephen and *The Times'* reporter have a confrontation, he asks her why she would print something that would hurt him. "I thought we were friends," is his naive comment. She's flabbergasted that he would think that their symbiotic relationship is anything more than career bolstering for the both of them.

The theme of people using each other for political gain echoes loudly throughout the play. When Stephen and his boss Paul (Paul Bernardo) get into a battle of ideals, there is no clear-cut winner. The biggest winner of the night, however, is the audience that will witness top-notch acting by the Equity Actors and newcomers alike.

Most impressive is Mr. Mills. He is terrific especially when paired with his opponents. The phone conversation between Mr. Mills and magnificent character actor Mr. Hauck is a riveting, World Class ping pong game. Mr. Mills holds his own in screaming matches between the attractive, ver-

satile Ms. Shanks, as well as with Ms. Ganski. Ms. Ganski steps on the stage as young actress (a junior in the BFA in Theatre Performance at Kean), but she's definitely a girl who will make a name for herself.

Director Michael Barakiva shows he knows how to place and motivate this marvelous cast. The incredible fast pace he takes is necessary for the high-powered profile of the characters and what each one faces daily.

If the politics in this two-act play ring true to the public's perception of that world, it's because playwright Willimon worked extensively on campaign staffs of Senator Chuck Schumer, Senator Hillary Clinton, Senator Bill Bradley and Governor Howard Dean. He knows this business inside out.

Adding visual zip to the show is the bank of TV screens on either side of the stage with footage from CNN and CBS (Projection Design by Kevin R. Frech). Veteran Lighting Designer Nadine Charlsen works her magic illuminating Joseph Gourley's intimately crafted stage that opens to a variety of locations.

Premiere Stages' Producing Artistic Director John Wooten calls this production a "Collaborative Premiere" because the play is presented in partnership with Kean University's Center for History, Politics and Policy. I call it great theatre.

The League of Women Voters will be at all performances to register patrons to vote. The 3 p.m. Sunday matinees feature talk-backs with non-partisan speakers. For tickets, call the Kean Stage Box Office at (908) 737-7469.

Premiere Stages offers air-conditioned facilities with close, free parking adjacent to the Vaughn Eames Building. Free or discounted tickets to patrons with disabilities are available. Tickets are \$30 for standard, \$20 for senior citizens and \$15 for students.

Farragut North runs Thursdays and Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.

Town Book Store Hosts Author Sally Cook

WESTFIELD - The Town Book Store will be hosting Sally Cook, co-author with Ray Negrón of "Yankee Miracles: Life with the Boss and the Bronx Bombers" on Saturday, September 15, from 2 - 4 p.m.

"Yankee Miracles" is the story of that pivotal moment and its remarkable aftermath. The book creates a portrait of baseball that is unapologetically affectionate told by someone, a baseball insider, who was given a very unique second chance.

Meet Sally Cook at The Town Book Store located at 270 East Broad Street in Westfield (corner of East Broad and Elmer Streets). If you are unable to attend this event, feel free to call The Town Book Store at (908) 233-3535 to reserve an autographed copy of Yankee Miracles.

"I'M A COP WITH 3 BULLETS IN MY BODY. BUT WORSE THAN GETTING SHOT WAS THE PAIN FROM MY HERNIATED DISC. THE HOSPITAL PERFORMED SUCCESSFUL SPINE SURGERY. STILL HAVE THE BULLETS, BUT NOT THE PAIN."

- Quentin Hayes
Westfield, New Jersey

NO SURPRISE, IT'S OVERLOOK.

When Quentin Hayes was in such pain he couldn't even make it 10 feet from his car to the restaurant for his birthday dinner, it was time for Overlook. No surprise. Overlook Medical Center is part of the largest spine program in New Jersey. And it's one of only 39 hospitals in the U.S. to receive the Gold Seal of Approval from The Joint Commission as a spine center of excellence. The board-certified neurosurgeons performed a successful minimally invasive spinal procedure. And Quentin walked out of the hospital an hour after the procedure, minus the troublesome disc fragment and without the pain.



For more surprising Overlook stories, visit www.NoSurpriseItsOverlook.org

Sept. 28-29
Friday 7:00pm
Saturday 2:00pm & 7:00pm
 Union County Performing Arts Center's Hamilton Stage
 360 Hamilton Street
 Rahway, NJ



4 Flavors
 a sampling of four works displaying the range and talent of the award winning company - featuring LIVE MUSIC
www.arballet.org