

Premiere Stages Announces Camps for Theater Artists

UNION – Premiere Stages, the professional theatre in residence at Kean University, announced that registration will begin on Saturday, February 1, for Camp Premiere, the annual theatre program for middle and high school students. The camp runs for two, two-week sessions, each of which feature a performance-based curriculum, providing students with a vital creative outlet in a nurturing, competition-free environment.

Campers perform monologues, as

Curtain Up at WCP Playwriting Showcase

WESTFIELD — Westfield Community Players is pleased to announce *Curtain Up at WCP*, this year's new addition to the Theater's programming and fundraising efforts.

Curtain Up at WCP, an evening of one-act plays and monologues, is a great opportunity for playwrights to showcase their talent.

Westfield Community Players is accepting original scripts through Friday, February 21, for this showcase. Four to six one-act plays will be chosen from submitted scripts. Additionally, two to three monologues, three to four minutes long, will also be chosen.

Submitted plays must be no longer than 15 minutes in length, and need to utilize minimal set pieces and props. There is no entry fee, and finalists will be selected by a committee. Selected plays will be performed at the theater on Saturday, June 7, which promises to be an evening of great entertainment.

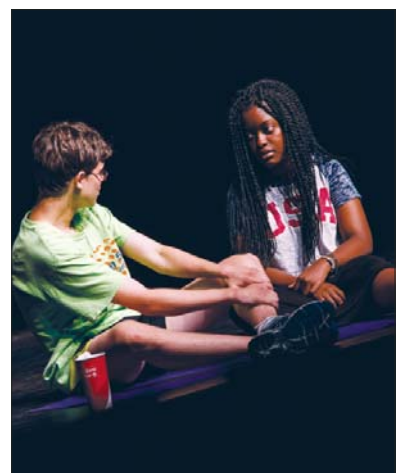
Submissions can be emailed to westfieldcommunityplayers@gmail.com, or can be mailed to the theater at Westfield Community Players, 1000 North Avenue West, Westfield, N.J. 07090 Attn: Gail Smith.

For more information on Westfield Community Players visit <http://westfieldcommunityplayers.org/>

well as scenes from original plays that have been developed through the Premiere Stages Play Festival. This camp session culminates in a public performance of the monologues and scenes, followed by a certificate presentation and reception for the participants. Camp runs Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., and the final showcase will be performed on Friday, August 1.

The cost for each session is \$295. Scholarships are available, with preference given to Union County residents. Campers who register before April 1 will receive a \$50 discount on camp tuition. For more information or to request an application, contact Clare Drobot, Premiere's Producing Associate, at cdrobot@kean.edu or (908) 737-4092.

Interested students should submit a completed registration form, a brief "Camp Expectations" statement, and a \$25 application fee to Premiere Stages at Kean University. The fee ensures inclusion in the camp and serves as the initial tuition payment. Rolling registration will begin February 1 and will continue through June 3; space is limited and early registration is encouraged. More information and application forms are available online at www.kean.edu/premierestages.



SUMMER FUN...Actors rehearse a scene during Premiere Stages' Camp Premiere, the annual theatre program for middle and high school students.



CALLING ALL ACTORS...The Pineda Conservatory's Center Stage Program for talented high school students is holding auditions for its five-week summer program that includes fully staged productions of Jonathan Larson's *Rent* and a musical revue entitled *A Road Trip*. Pictured above, the cast from a previous production.

Pineda Conservatory Announces Teen Auditions

CRANFORD — The Pineda Conservatory's Center Stage Program for talented high school students is holding auditions for its five-week summer program that includes fully staged productions of Jonathan Larson's *Rent* and a musical revue entitled *A Road Trip*.

The Center Stage program begins Monday, June 30, and runs Monday through Friday, 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Cranford Dramatic Club Theatre in Cranford.

The training program includes acting, dance, vocal and audition training. The staff includes choreographer Christopher Johnson (*Radio City Christmas Spectacular, Chicago*), Ra-Sean Holloway (*A Chorus Line, Radio City Christmas Spectacular*), director Juan Pineda (Broadway's *Miss Saigon*), vocal coach Valerie Pineda (Manhattan School of Music), director and choreographer Fausto Pineda (*King and I, Grease*) and vocal coach Patricia Pineda.

Enrollment to the tuition based program is limited and acceptance is by audition only. Applicants may apply for scholarship. Former Pineda Conservatory students have been accepted into some of the nation's leading college theater programs and conservatories and have gone on to appear in professional theaters and opera houses around the country.

Auditions are being held on Saturday, March 1, Sunday, March 2 and Sunday, March 8, by appointment only for students entering ninth grade and up. Appointments can be made by calling (908) 731-1377 or by online sub-

mission at pinedaconservatory.com/Audition-Request.html.

Prepare 16 bars of a musical theater up-tempo and 16 bars of a musical theater ballad that show range and acting ability. Vocal auditions will be followed by a group movement and dance call. Bring dance clothing (comfortable clothes and dance shoes/sneakers). All students should dress professionally for the audition. You will be given time to change. The audition process will take approximately two hours.

If necessary, call backs will be scheduled on Sunday, March 9. Students selected will be given one week to accept their spots. *A Road Trip* is a musical tribute to the USA. This show includes everyone selected for the program, and features those who do not have leads in *Rent*. The show is written specifically for the students featured and has two fully staged performances.

Everyone in the program also participates in the main stage production of *Rent*. Some roles may be double, triple or quadruple cast. Be advised that the production of *Rent* deals with mature themes and all students participating will be required to submit a permission slip prior to auditioning.

The Pineda Summer Conservatory also holds a five-week morning program for middle schoolers featuring a production of *Shrek the Musical* and for students in elementary grades 2-5 with a production of *Aladdin Kids*. For more information visit pinedaconservatory.com or call (908) 731-1377.

Washington School to Perform Pandora's Box

WESTFIELD — Washington Elementary School's Annual Show comes to the stage on Friday, February 7, and Saturday, February 8, with three scheduled performances of *Pandora's Box*. All performances will take place at Roosevelt Intermediate School, 301 Clark Street, Westfield.

Pandora's Box draws from Greek mythology for a creative, contemporary and comedic spin on the age-old story of "Good vs. Evil." The tale follows three Washington School kids who find the mythical box and, unable to resist the temptation to open it, unwittingly unleash four mischievous villains from Greek mythology: greedy Midas, jealous Medusa, vain Narcissus, and intolerant Ares.

The adventure unfolds as these four immortals wreak havoc by spreading their vices throughout Washington School, spoiling a classroom party with greed, infecting an art class with jealousy, tainting a talent show rehearsal with vanity, and corrupting a peaceful playground with intolerance and hate. Led by Zeus, King of the Gods, the kids endeavor to return the immortals and their evil traits back into Pandora's Box and restore peace and harmony to their beloved school.

Lucky for them, help arrives in the form of four "good" mythological characters that provide the antidotes to each of the evils: Prometheus offers generosity; Lakshmi, a Hindu goddess provides gratitude; Arachne, a spider who was once human, teaches humility; and Cupid demonstrates that love conquers all. But the vices will not go quietly and an epic battle ensues between these forces of good and evil. Can the kids remove the stains of greed, jealousy, vanity and intolerance from Washington School...this time for good? For now, only the gods know how the story ends.

"Every kid is going to encounter these issues in their lives," said Julie Shanebrook, writer of *Pandora's Box*. "My goal was to remind them that if they keep the 'antidotes' around, they can positively deal with situations where negative human qualities emerge."

Combining a timely, kid-friendly storyline with lively music ranging from top 40 hits to show tunes, year after year the Washington School Show continues to delight and impress audiences of all ages.

"This is not your amateur talent show," said Liz Mulholland, one of this year's four show producers. "I am always amazed by the amount and quality of talent that emerges out of our small community."

An annual tradition since 1948, "the show," as it's affectionately called

by the Washington School community, is an original production that is written, directed, produced and, with the exception of one "teacher's number," performed solely by parents. The show is the school's largest fundraiser and all proceeds are allocated by the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) for classroom resources, teacher grants, school enhancements and additional programs to enrich the educational environment for Washington School's 300 plus students.

"We are so grateful to the dedicated parents and teachers, as well as the local merchants, for all they do to make the show such a tremendous success," said Kip Brindle, Washington School PTO co-president.

Tickets are on sale now. All seats for each performance are \$12 and can be reserved online. Visit the Washington Elementary School home page at www.westfieldnj12.org/Washington—click on the "2014 Washington School Show" link in the left, then "Ticket Order Form." Tickets ordered online and prepaid can be picked up at the door 30 minutes prior to each performance.

Town Book Store to Host Karen Gloeggler

WESTFIELD — The Town Book Store will host quilter and author Karen Gloeggler on Saturday, January 18, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Quilting inspiration flows from the only quilt Jane Austen made and from her six novels. In 1811, the novelist Jane Austen wrote that she had spent entirely too much money on fabric. Every quilter can relate to that.

Austen fan and avid quilter Karen Gloeggler went as far as England to see firsthand the only quilt known to have been made by the popular novelist. She recreated Jane's quilt, and then created a quilt design representing each of Jane's six published novels.

The resulting 11 pieced quilts appeal to everyone. Her book, "Jane Austen Quilts Inspired by Her Novels" includes how-to photos which help non-quilters, who love all things Jane, to become quilters. This is a book that will end up on Jane Austen fans' shelves simply because it includes fascinating clips from Austen's letters, which are as much a joy to read as her novels.

Karen Gloeggler has over 30 years experience working in fashion-related fields. She attended the Fashion Institute of Technology while working for Elizabeth Arden cosmetics. Upon graduation, Karen joined the Executive Training Program at Bloomingdale's. Karen taught Image Consulting I at Parson's School of Design. She formed her own bra and panty company, which led to Technical Design positions at Jones New York Intimates and Macy's. She is currently a Senior Technical Designer for Sears/Kmart.

Karen finished her first quilt when her son was born, and has not stopped quilting since. She lives and quilts in central New Jersey.

Meet Karen Gloeggler 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 "Jane Austen Quilts Inspired by Her Novels."



S.O.S...Westfield's Contagious Drama Workshop (CDW) teens are set to open in S.O.S. (Stories of Sandy) at Westminster Hall on Friday, January 17, and Saturday, January 18, at 2 and 7:30 p.m. The piece is a collection of original short plays written for the CDW teens. Tickets are \$5 students/seniors and \$8 adults. A donation will be made to a Staten Island family who suffered great losses after Sandy hit last year. Pictured are: Catie Barry, Connor Wynne, Colin Barry, Matthew McGowan, Elijah Fields, Julian Mone, Joseph Stokes, Anna Bloomfield, Calvin Nemeckay, Matthew Schuman, Lexi Nelson and Jarred Graber. Not shown are Casey Murphy and Ally Morgenthal.

'Art from the HEART' Exhibit at Freeholders Gallery

ELIZABETH — The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders will present an exhibit of artworks from the "Art from the HEART" fine arts program. The exhibition is a partnership between The Visual Arts Center of New Jersey and Sage Eldercare in Summit. The Freeholders Gallery is located on the 6th floor of the Union County Administration Building, Elizabethtown Plaza, Elizabeth. Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday. The exhibit will run through Friday, January 31.

The "Art from the HEART" is in its thirteenth year. Led by instructor Lela Kometiani, the program encourages self-expression, increases self-esteem by recapturing the joy of creativity, and helps keep participants' minds sharp. "Art from the HEART" is made possible in part by a HEART (History, Education, Arts Reaching Thousands) Grant from the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders. Additional funding is provided by the Summit Area Public Foundation.

The Visual Arts Center of New Jersey is the state's largest institution dedicated exclusively to viewing, making and learning about contemporary art, comprising a renowned studio art school and a thriving education, exhibition and programming schedule. Its service mission includes a commitment to creating access to the arts for a range of constituents, from at-risk children and youth to people with special needs and senior adults. To learn more about Art Center programs, visit www.artcenternj.org

or call (908) 273-9121.

For further information about this exhibit or to find out about exhibiting at the Freeholders Gallery, please contact the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, 633 Pearl Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202; telephone, (908) 558-2550; or email: culturalinfo@ucnj.org.

Regrets Only

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anyway? The setting is 2006, not too very long ago, but eons ago as far as the country's views of same-sex marriages.

The maid, Myra Kesselman (Leslie Riccio) has a few funny bits, but because her character sashays in and out of the living room spouting various accents each time she enters, it almost gets predictable. The playwright has not given her character enough of a back story as to why she feels the need to do that and does not give the owners of the apartment any reaction to such strange, crazy behavior.

On the bright side, Doris Dias' costumes provide pizzazz in the ladies' gowns. Loads of one-line zingers from Ms. Hoffman hit the mark. And Mr. Faver's touching Hank elicits recognition. Director Maurice J. Moran gets the most from his capable actors, but with a vehicle that is not as snazzy as the Park Avenue penthouse, it is an uphill climb on a bumpy road to nowhere.

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POPCORN "Grudge Match"

Takes Good-natured Jabs at Golden Agers

One Popcorn, Poor — Two Popcorns, Fair — Three Popcorns, Good — Four Popcorns, Excellent

2 and 1/2 popcorns
By MICHAEL S. GOLDBERGER
Film Critic

Director Peter Segal's "Grudge Match," starring Robert De Niro and Sylvester Stallone as deeply rancorous former boxers who never fought that ultimately deciding bout some thirty years ago, serves up an inconsequential but pleasant fantasy for Baby Boomers. A happy audience of said species on the night I viewed it laughingly attested to the ready market for such demographically empathetic fare.

Reasonably engrossed in the sentimental doings, and surprised to find that an old daydream of my own in the personage of Kim Basinger hadn't let time douse the reverie, I wasn't insulted when six teenagers abandoned the theater. After all, they had probably just seen their grandparents over the holidays. Plus, they didn't know these guys, pals from the old neighborhood, perfectly cast and capable of smoothing over even the weakest parts of the predictable script.

So what if they've gained some wrinkles and need a few pills daily to control their blood pressure and cholesterol. Thanks to the enamoring magic of fiction and film, Henry "Razor" Sharp, portrayed by Mr. Stallone, and Robert De Niro's Billy "The Kid" McDonnen, have still got it, or so they entertainingly wish to prove.

Dante Slate, Jr. (Kevin Hart), the son of the scurrilous promoter who gave both fighters short shrift back in the day, looking to vindicate the family name and make a killing in the bargain, is the catalyst to the pugilistic reunion referred to by the title. Dangling the chance of redemption, revenge and a big payday to the dramatically antithetical prizefighters, the ever jabbering gadfly acerbically makes with the senior citizen jokes.

But the bulk of such humor is sprinkled good-naturedly via smartly effective, self-effacing jests that philosophically chant the bittersweet acceptance of the aging process. Both men, endearingly irascible in a neo-"Grumpy Old Men" (1993) way, while hardly as classical in their comic delivery, nonetheless make their otherwise polarized characters credible enough for the film's farcical purposes.

Henry, soft-spoken, modest, retiring and beholding to no man, walked away from the ring with very little of his winnings intact for reasons to be divulged later. He toils in a factory and doesn't like it when his co-workers call him champ. "The Kid," however, a publicity hound, debaucher and high-living braggart, parlayed his career into a substantial fortune that includes a famous Pittsburgh restaurant and an auto dealership. To indelibly reaffirm, the two hate

each other. And, though she doesn't have everything to do with the underlying enmity, count Kim Basinger's Sally, the love interest — yep, even after all these years — as the biggest reason. Others tossed into the melee, and forced to take sides when the feud is revived, comprise the great Alan Arkin as Henry's manager, Louis "Lightning" Conlon, and a game cast of supporting players populating each pug's corner. Jon Bernthal is B.J., Sally's son and a physical trainer at Pitt, who seizes the opportunity to bond with dad. Can you guess who pop is?

Arkin calls in his chips as thespian emeritus in order to play Louis, the proverbial dirty old man, with shameless schmaltziness. Representing the Old, Old, the cantankerous cuss with a heart of gold has been bounced from one nursing home to the next. "Recalled to life" like Dickens's Dr. Manette, but with a much saltier vocabulary, the loyal corner man is hoping to stave off the shackles of decrepitude.

Of course, this life-begins-at-80 illusion isn't the movie's most far-fetched pipedream. Rather, it's the idea that two men, one 67, the other 70, can rigorously train for and actually take part in a fully legitimate light heavyweight boxing match, that beseeches your complete suspension of disbelief.

Custom built to please a pleasant little conceit, it's a bit like shelling out the shekels to rent a fantasy ride in a Ferrari...a momentary reprieve from reality. But just as you leave that experience in a vehicle costing somewhat less than \$300,000, the niche audience for whom this film was constructed will, for the most part, still exit the theater as Medicare card-carrying folks in good standing.

All in all, though, the concept is much more preferable than that virtual reality thing made available as consolation to oldsters like Edward G. Robinson's Sol Roth in "Soylent Green." And let's face it, popcorn, Raisinets, and Sno Caps are a lot better gustatory accompaniment than the mystery stuff they ate in that 1973 sci-fi classic.

Problem is, even if you're amenable to taking this make-believe trip, the box office will be wanting real money. Considering the points your internal movie-deciding judges will have to therefore subtract may render "Grudge Match" a split decision, with the smart money deferring until it plays the small screen.

"Grudge Match," rated PG-13, is a Warner Bros. release directed by Peter Segal and stars Robert De Niro, Sylvester Stallone and Kim Basinger. Running time: 113 minutes