

Arts & Entertainment



Photo by Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader and The Times
BALLERINA BEAUTY... Gleaming in the sunshine, this float by UPS was deemed an award winner in the "Most Beautiful" category at the Rose Parade on New Year's Day in Pasadena, Calif. Comprised of totally natural items like seeds, bark, ground herbs and husks as well as flowers, this entry was entitled, "Books Keep Us On Our Toes."

Westfield's Gingerbread House Contest Winners Announced

WESTFIELD—The winners of the town's first gingerbread house contest have been announced.

Grand Prize: Best Across All Categories went to the gingerbread creation of the Westfield Train Station.

Family/Group Effort went to Saint Nick's Church. Iconic Building/Location, went to the depiction of the Watcher House.

The gingerbread depiction of the building where Michael Robert Construction is located, as well as Elm Street, received Honorable Mention.

The winning prize for the Under 14 Kids Only category went to Edison School, and Little House received Honorable Mention.

The gingerbread creations are on display in the windows of local businesses: Edison School is at Sole Shoes, the Westfield Train Station and Michael Roberts are in Savory Spice Shop, Saint Nick's Church is in Patricia and

Paul, Elm Street is in the side window of Columbia Bank, Little House is in Blende, and The Watcher House is at the Salad House.

Sponsors of the contest were Northfield Bank, Bovellas Pastry

Shoppe, Erin Ben-Heyon and David Realty.



Grand Prize Winner Westfield Train Station



Family/Group Effort Winner Saint Nick Church



Under 14 Kids Only Winner Edison School

Taking Time to Smell the Roses (and See the Rose Bowl Parade)

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

CALIFORNIA — "It's on my bucket list." I heard that statement dozens of times when telling friends that I had signed up for a package tour of the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California. In *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy and her friends are told, "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain," but sometimes it's interesting to peek into what goes on "behind the curtain" in a parade of this magnitude. With that in mind, I scheduled the four-day trip that included a behind-the-scenes look at actual float construction. The side trip to the Rosemont Pavilion, one of the float construction hangars, two days before the parade, proved to be fascinating.

In the hangar, we were first greeted by the specialty cars that were to chauffeur celebrities like Grand Marshal Chaka Khan. They featured saddle bags of flowers overflowing on the front and back and sides of the car in shades of purple, fuchsia with bright green accents. The floral designer, J. Keith White, was there adding finishing touches to the shiny black 1920s roadster's décor.

Many of the floats, we learned, are built by professional float building companies that take practically a year to design and construct. Mechanical engineers draw up blueprints and work closely with the sponsor of each float to satisfy the organization's vision.

One of the exceptions to this general plan was the float designed and constructed entirely by students from California Polytechnic Universities of Pomona and San Luis Obispo campuses. Their floats have been built entirely by the students since 1949 and often win prizes for their ingenuity. This year's design, a colorful, whimsical float projected the "Melody of Life" theme of the parade. It featured two astronauts surrounded by little green men who were playing

musical instruments. The work was titled, "Far Out Frequencies." The guitar held by an astronaut was comprised of coconut, palm bark, lettuce seeds, onion seed and melaleuca bark.

The arch and rocks on Cal-Poly's float were a combination of golden flax seed, crushed flax seed, millet and crushed almond shell. The flower foliage used aspidistra and anthurium. Their spider flowers, made up of dark purple statice and light statice, were held in place with a special white



SMELLING THE ROSES...Arts & Entertainment Leader writer/photographer Susan Dougherty gets a tour of the behind-the-scenes production of the Rose Parade floats in Pasadena, Calif. These gigantic white flowers, which were made of seeds and dried flower parts, were a part of the float that was sponsored by Blue Diamond Almonds.



Photo by Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader and The Times
MUSIC IS INTERGALACTIC...The float from Cal-Poly Universities utilizes the theme "Far Out Frequencies" for their entry in the 130th Rose Parade in Pasadena, Calif. on January 1.

A Guide to Maple Sugaring By Fanwood Resident Talcott



Dean Talcott tapping his sugar maple tree in preparation to make syrup.

By DEAN TALCOTT

FANWOOD—When I tap into my silver maples in winter 2019, it will be my seventh year of maple sugaring. Last year I made about one gallon of syrup, my best season ever! Before I started maple sugaring, I researched the topic and spoke to a person who did this at a nature enter.

Sugar maples are the best tree to tap, but there aren't many around this area. I use my 2 to 30-inch diameter silver maples. I've also tapped my neighbor's two red maples, but, for whatever the reason, they didn't yield as much sap.

The process is simple. The tree should have a minimum diameter of 10 inches. I use a 3/8-inch drill bit and drill about two inches into the tree around chest high. Then I place a "stipe" into the hole and tap it lightly with a hammer to secure it. For every additional 10 inches of diameter, you

can install another stipe. It works best on the south side of the tree. Local nature centers sell stiles.

The time to tap into the tree is usually the end of January. I've done it as early as mid-January. The weather should be freezing at night and above freezing during the day. The period for maple sugaring lasts about four weeks. After that time, there is less sugar in the sap. I use new paint cans that have been sanitized. When the sap is running it drips. It usually runs for a couple to a few days then stops. There's four or five runs a season.

The time-consuming part is boiling the sap to evaporate off the water. My first year, I used the side burner of my propane grill. It took six hours. My second year, I bought a 30,000 BTU burner. It only takes three hours.

I boil four gallons of sap down to a pint of syrup. I pour the syrup through two layers of cheesecloth. When the season is over, I pour the syrup into clean mason jars and store them in a refrigerator.

This is not an economical thing to do. It is my mid-winter hobby and I always look forward to it. Besides having delicious

maple syrup, I get to talk about it when I'm teaching fourth-graders for the Rutgers Master Tree Stewards. If you would like to find out about the Master Tree Steward program, please contact Jim Nichnadowicz at Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Union County at (908) 654-9854 or by e-mail at jnichnadowicz@ucnj.org.

glue. The volunteers, who were at various spots in the hangar, explained that there were no fewer than 15 types of glue that adhered the substances to the figures and shapes.

Glue proved important for this year's event when meteorologists predicted Santa Anna winds might gust up to 50 mph just in time for the 8 a.m. parade. Luckily, those predictions didn't pan out and the parade itself saw bright blue skies and chilly, 40-degree temperatures. The bleachers, packed with thousands of people, provided its own heat because of the tight quarters.

With a new appreciation for the time, energy and manpower that went into this international production that is presented each New Year's Day, I watched the parade with its total of 90 floats, marching bands and equestrian units make its way down the 5.5-mile route.

Writer's Note: The correct name of the parade is the Rose Parade or the Tournament of Roses Parade. Many of us erroneously refer to it as the Rose Bowl Parade because it happens the morning of the Rose Bowl!

Westfield Community Players Opens The Foreigner on Saturday

WESTFIELD -- *The Foreigner*, a comedy by Larry Shue, opens Saturday, January 12, at 8 p.m. at Westfield Community Players (WCP).

The show will run January 12, 19, 25, 26, at 8 p.m. and January 20 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$22, and for military and students, \$10.

Requests for tickets are now available via internet at www.westfieldcommunityplayers.org or Box Office (24 Hour Ticket Tape), by calling (908) 232-1221.

The two-act comedy is directed by Linda Correll, produced by Kay Macrae, and stage managed by Lynn Lampariello

WCP is located at 1000 North Avenue West, Westfield.

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