

Ready to meet challenges

(Continued from Page 1)

Union County's health services to our neighborhoods and our schools. It is our goal that by the year 2000, every child who is about to start school in Union County will get a healthy start by receiving all of the necessary immunizations from childhood diseases.

The voters of Union County chose the Democratic Freeholder Board because they believe, as we do, that a strong government has a vital role to play in the lives of our 500,000 citizens. They understand that this board has chosen a careful balance of services, investment, important areas and fiscal responsibility.

They understand that in Union County, we have a long history of quality public and world-class businesses. There is a place for the arts in the lives of our residents. There is a focus on computer training, education and many other fields for our citizens.

A very freeholder had an impact on the success of 1998 and I am confident that each will use their talents and experience to put their own stamp on the building a reputation as a great place to live, work and raise a family. This board has a

commitment to the nearly 500,000 people who call Union County their home to do our absolute best for their representatives.

This is Union County's last reorganization meeting in the 20th century. Our next reorganization will take place in January of the year 2000.

To commemorate the coming century, I have asked Freeholder Linda Steiner to chair a Millennium Celebration Committee that will preserve our past and celebrate our future.

We have offered the residents of Union County the opportunity to have forward. We bring them a vision of what the future could hold if the promise we can offer our children when we leave this county to them.

Our hope, our goal, as we begin the year 1999 as your Board of Chosen Freeholders is to work with you to build a county that will meet the challenges of that century. On behalf of this board, I pledge our hard work, energy and creativity to meet these challenges.

A resident of Linden, Nicholas J. Scutari is chairman of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

COUNTY NEWS

Monthly meeting of legal secretaries Tuesday

The Union County Legal Secretaries Association will sponsor its regular monthly dinner meeting Tuesday at Bluebel's Restaurant on Springfield Avenue. The meeting will be a friendly gathering, symphony at 6 p.m. and dinner will be promptly served at 6:30 p.m.

The guest speaker for the evening will be Deputy First Assistant Prosecutor Richard Redburn of the Union County Prosecutor's Office, who will speak about the 2000 computer age and the Prosecutor's Office.

UCLAAs party to the level association involving legal support staff as well as affiliated with the New Jersey Association of Legal Secretaries as well as the National Association for Legal Secretaries.

Officers and networking opportunities will be available. You do not have to be a legal secretary, clerk, receptionist, typist, office manager, auditor and government employees jobs are welcome to participate.

People can attend without any obligation to become a member. Full-time students pursuing a law-related career, part-time student memberships are available for a fee of \$10 a year.

For more information regarding this monthly meeting, membership, the annual scholarship program, contact local Membership Marketing Chairman and Vice President Susan Mack at the law offices of Kruger, Nelson, Sakitt & Salter, P.A., 120 Park Ave., Second Floor, P.O. Box 2333 or you may write to Mack at P.O. Box 24, Kenilworth, NJ 07033-0024.

Financial management workshop scheduled

Financial Management Services will present one of the best ways to achieve financial security. The Personal Financial Management Workshop, set for Jan. 28, Feb. 4 and Feb. 11 from 7:30-9:20 p.m. at the Cranford campus of Union County College, and an accompanying 150-page comprehensive workbook.

The workshop will focus on understanding the world of money—everything from saving smart and profitable investing to retirement planning and estate management. The financial management workbook will be used during the workshop and given to attendees to take home.

Workshop seating is limited and early reservations are advised. Call Union County College at (908) 609-7400 and ask for Continuing Education. The course code is AEFO36, section 147. The course is \$50 and the workbook is free as well as a 2-hour free consultation in addition. Financial Management Services assures that no specific prerequisites will be offered.

Blood drives scheduled throughout Union County

The Blood Center of New Jersey will sponsor blood drives throughout Union County this month.

- Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at VW, Box 335, 479 South Ave., Cranford. Free T-shirts will be given to all donors at this drive.
- Tuesday, 3-9 p.m. at the Masonic Lafayette Lodge, 6550 Irving St., Newark.
- Friday, 3-7 p.m. at Lincoln High, 40700 Clatsop Hill Road, Union.
- Saturday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the

Linden Fire House 4, 2400 St. Wood Ave., Linden. T-shirts and special retreatments will be available for all donors for this type "O" drive.

- Saturday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Masonic Carmelitean Bryan Lodge, 622 E. Elizabeth Ave., Linden.

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 Dreams Come True Weight Loss and Nutrition Center <http://www.dreams-come-true.com>
 East Orange Chamber of Commerce <http://www.eastorange.com>
 Essex Court Clerk <http://www.essex.com>
 First High of Meadowood Scout Group <http://www.firsthigh.com>
 Glen Ridge Educational Foundation <http://www.glen-ridge.com>
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Cynhla Ross models a reproduction of Mary Todd Lincoln's rose-embroidered dress, in 'Abe Lincoln in Illinois' at The Elizabeth Playhouse.

An 'honest' president is honored at playhouse

In keeping with the historical theme that marked the beginning of its 60th season, The Elizabeth Playhouse opened a touching production of "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" this weekend. "A personal look at the penative, yet physically imposing and determined president of the Pulitzer Prize-winning play chronicles the life of Honest Abe from the 1830s until his election to the nation's highest office 20 years later."

Theater View

By Jacquie McCarthy
Associate Editor

The story begins in the frontier town of New Salem, where then-Postmaster Lincoln is well-known for his easy-going manner and kindness to everyone who walks into his store. His popularity and people skills have not escaped the notice of local members of the Whig Party, the party which to retain the party line yet appeal to voters and seek a candidate who attracts the two C's — conservative and common. Lincoln fits the bill, if not the cut. Policymakers come to discover that Lincoln's strengths include a third C — contrarianism — and the play tells the story of how this quiet, solitary statesman is brought to heel, while making his ideals of unity and freedom a reality.

Fine performances can be expected from this cast. Notably, Bernie Weintraub is endearing and funny as a drunken soldier. Lyn Adams gives an offbeat performance as Elizabeth Todd Edwards, sister to the future Mrs. Lincoln, neatly portrayed by Cynthia Ross. A hearty round of applause is due R. Spivey who is believable as abolitionist Abraham J. Bly. Holman James Brudnick makes a

New York comedian brings his talent to the Garden State

By Jacquie McCarthy
Associate Editor

An aspiring comedian from New Jersey typically encounters few opportunities for affordable, accessible training in the Garden State, while an abundance of classes and workshops are just across the border in New York City. Summit Area Community School currently boasts a New York-trained improvisational comedian, Christopher Hoyle, who is teaching an improvisational comedy workshop, beginning Jan. 26 for 10 Tuesdays at Summit High School.

Hoyle, a resident of Chatham, is no stranger to Union County. A native of Michigan, Hoyle's family moved to New Providence for the last two years of his high school education. After graduation from New Providence High School, Hoyle went on to major in drama at Kirtley College in Gambier, Ohio.

"No improv at that time, but I acted in a few plays and got some good background and training there," Hoyle said.

Although an acting major, Hoyle's intended career was songwriting. "I always wanted to play away as a singer-songwriter," he said. "How I was going to make ends meet, I don't know. The singer-songwriter thing is my love of love, and my first love in terms of creative stuff. Acting seems to be more money flows, more friendships are formed. Some people say my skills are more marketable as an actor than as a singer-songwriter guy," Hoyle said with a wry smile.

Hoyle was introduced to the world of comedy through a summer job at a pizza restaurant in Summit during his freshman college. The owner of the pizza restaurant, known as Max, also was a stand-up comedian.

"He would take me along with him where he would go. Catch a Rising Star, Dangerfields," Hoyle said. "I met Sam Kinison, and Gilbert Gottfried when they were on their way up and saw Robin Williams and Rodney Dangerfield. Once in a while, I'd even get on stage at the clubs and play a couple of folksy songs."

Max introduced Hoyle to Chicago City Limits, the New York City branch of the Second City improv school in Chicago.

"When I got out of college, I did some 'their workshops,'" Hoyle said. "I found his first improv troupe, New York Improv Squad, in 1984, with two other CCL students Tom Soter and Jeff Clintenbender, who was our laugh-getter, our comic jokehouse."

The Improv Squad was eager to entertain, but new to the games. "When you first see a group of people doing it professionally, it's elec-



Commedia Del Jersey improv troupe, from left, 'Big Steve' Worowski and Christopher Hoyle. Hoyle will teach an improvisational comedy workshop as part of the Summit Area Community School curriculum.

trifying. We were just blown away. For us, it was like 'The Beatles at Shea Stadium.' Hoyle said of his 'CCL training.' "We looked up to the group that was doing it, and our teachers well, so we followed in their footsteps. We weren't sure we could do that, but we loved it and got into the workshops, and the workshops are as much fun as watching the show. Then came that point where we stepped out and tried it on our own, and it worked."

"We started performing at a little club called 'The Triple Inn,'" Hoyle said. "We were performing on the street, we performed at the Improvations, warming up for the comedians."

The Squad was well-received by New York City audiences for many years, although Hoyle's improv gigs did not become lucrative. "When you don't do it for the money, you do it more to cause a stir and get your own out there," Hoyle said.

Hoyle continued to cause a stir with Falling Rock Zone, which performed mainly at colleges.

"We could have made our living playing college gigs," Hoyle said. "It was not for the quality of audience feedback. College audiences can get so touchy, you walk away saying, 'What, am I doing?'"

Dealing with audience feedback is just one of the skills Hoyle uses to teach his Summit improv class. In improvisational comedy, actors spontaneously build scenes around audience suggestions.

The first skill you hone in any

school of improv is just spontaneity," Hoyle said. "It takes a while to get that skill sharpened, because in real life we have to censor ourselves all the time, and it takes a little time to untarn that censoring in a workshop."

My school of improv is more scene-based, but even if your school is improv is joke-based, you have to learn to go with your first thought best thought."

Should aspiring improv comedians have acting experience, as Hoyle does?

"It's not necessary," Hoyle said. "It's probably good for an actor to have studied improv even before taking an acting class."

Hoyle is also a Web site writer and project manager for day for Michael J. Motiv Advertising and Public Relations in New Providence, and improv teacher by night. It is not too late to sign up for what may be Hoyle's last New Jersey improv class at Summit High School. For information, call (908) 273-1141.

Having taught at Summit High School for the past year-and-a-half, he has noticed a difference in what local improv students expect from the class.

"Hoyle also has a given up on the Big Apple. He is a regular at the Sunday Night Improv show at Homecoming Theater, Broadway and 90th, New York City, hosted and produced by former New York Improv Squad member Soter.

But he may not be a New Jersey resident for much longer.

"I'm thinking of going back to New York," Hoyle said, saying that he may move back into the city to be connected.

Until then, Hoyle is a Web site writer and project manager for day for Michael J. Motiv Advertising and Public Relations in New Providence, and improv teacher by night. It is not too late to sign up for what may be Hoyle's last New Jersey improv class at Summit High School. For information, call (908) 273-1141.

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Opportunities to play a significant role in the continued renovation of the theater are available. With your tax-deductible gift, an inscription of up to 30 characters will be displayed on the back of your seat. Your inscription can be a friend or a loved one, or express your lasting concern for the future of the arts.

With your help, every seat in the house can be the best seat in the house! For information on how to get involved, call the arts center at (908) 499-8223, or send your donation and inscription request to UCAC, P.O. Box 779-D, Rahway, NJ 07065.

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Statement of Condition
December 31, 1998

ASSETS	
Cash on Hand and in Banks	6,036,296.85
U.S. Government Securities	254,837,864.19
Other Bonds	115,268,458.11
Stocks	7,24,082.44
Real Estate Mortgage Loans (net)	155,691,036.11
Collateral Loans	2,498,757.01
Other Loans	19,600,250.00
Furniture and Fixtures	1,996,830.69
Banking Premises	1,669,830.37
Debits Accrued on Investments	7,589,733.24
Other Assets	3,716,172.30
Total Assets	\$764,792,102.46

LIABILITIES	
Due Depositors	\$ 697,927,454.37
Official Check Outstanding	558,218.30
Depositors' Escrow Accounts	372,299.75
Other Liabilities	4,197,566.23
Surplus & Reserves	119,028,563.83
Total Liabilities	\$ 824,882,122.46

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Theater takes on off-Broadway fav

Community theaters today are burdened with a problem when picking their season. They want to have a nice mix of known shows, so they can keep their doors open, but they also want to blend in the well-written, non-so-known material to keep the art of theater alive. So when a theater picks a show like "Prelude to a Kiss," they are taking quite a risk. Some people may know it from its quite successful Off-Broadway run, or from its modest run on Broadway, or from its (less successful) movie. Others may not know it at all. When all is said and done, a community theater should be applauded by opting to put "Prelude" on its slate.

The plot is your everyday love story. Boy meets girl, boy likes girl, girl likes boy, they "click," fall in love and get married. After their wedding, a mysterious man appears. Of course, the one recognizes him, and all he wants to do is wish the bride good luck. With a kiss —

After the kiss, Ruth — played by Tracey Battinelli — is "different." She suddenly stops drinking. She doesn't use salt anymore. She runs

Theater View

By Michael Monaco
Correspondent

and plays and breathes life in. Before she was an innocent, now she sleeps like a baby. She has gone through a complete transformation from the woman she was — the woman that Peter, played by Federico Cuzzo, fell in love with — to this new woman.

The play focuses on two questions: What if you had a second chance at life? Would you do anything different? And more importantly, it explores the meaning of true love and the "physical" is just that: the body is only a shell, and what's underneath is what makes the person, and when you lose that, who is left to love?

Kudos to George Straley for his portrayal of the Old Man. His performance was believable, honest and had a lot of heart. Watching Straley's final scene was worth the evening. One of

the key elements of making this play work is the relationship between the young couple. As the evening progresses, so should their relationship, and as an audience, we should fall in love right along with them, and that doesn't happen here. The actors made a valiant effort, but there was always something lacking between them.

Ken Webb has directed some of the finest work I have seen in Community Theater, and I respect him greatly. But this particular piece, while it had a decent flow, unfortunately missed the mark on some character choices. One of the biggest problems occurred after the "kiss." It was as though Webb felt the audience would be bored if the things would eventually find out at the play unfolded, by making Ruth very masculine by kicking off her high heels, and by making her dress very feminine in Act One. And then dressing her in men's clothes for act two. So when the actual "exchange" was found out, there was no surprise and no one cared.

I would not say this show was terrible, it has some positive things, unfortunately, knowing the group, and the work of the people involved; I expected more.

Broadway tickets are offered at bargain prices to students

New Jersey students can enjoy over 6,000 bargain-priced tickets to some of New York's hottest cultural events this season — theater, music, dance and film, and reduced-price admissions to the city's top museums — on sale now to junior and senior high school students by High Five Tickets to the Arts, the award-winning program that aims to create new audiences by making the arts affordable for the young.

High Five tickets, available exclusively to teenagers, can be purchased in New Jersey at 33 Ticketmaster outlets in 10 counties throughout the state, as well as 100 participating Ticketmaster outlets within New York's five boroughs. Tickets must be bought by teens, in person, with either a junior or senior high school ID. A transportation pass of proof of age from 13 to 18. While weekend tickets are \$5 each, Monday through Thursday events are two for \$5 and an eligible teen may bring a friend or family member of any age. High Five's daily museum admissions are also two for \$5.

High Five's current catalog lists over 400 arts events teens can attend through January. The catalog is available free of charge at participating Ticketmaster outlets, as well as participating public libraries and select Barnes & Noble bookstores in New York City. It also is available in the lobby of High Five's executive offices at One East 53rd St., Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The catalog can also be viewed online at www.highfivetix.org. By phoning (212) 311-5-TKTS or (212) 445-8587, callers can add their names to the mailing list for future High Five catalogs, and information on special High Five events.

Among High Five's top offerings this season are the American Ballet Theater and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater at City Center; the New York Philharmonic and Jazz at Lincoln Center; the inaugural season of Canada's Stratford Festival at City Center and England's Young Vic production of "Grimm Tales" at The New Victory Theater. Also in Manhattan are performances at Carnegie Hall, The Apollo Theatre and the 92nd Street Y.

In Brooklyn, teens can enjoy the First Annual Brooklyn Phil Festival, in Queens, the Queens Theatre in the Park, in the Bronx, the Bronx Opera Company, and in Staten Island, the Staten Island Symphony. Also featured this season is a Festival of the Works of Federico Garcia at INTRAC, Hispanic American Arts Center and performance of the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre.

For art lovers, High Five offers two for \$5 admissions to some of the hottest museum shows in town: the Jackson-Pollack retrospective at MOMA, and Mark Rothko at the Whitney and Walker Evans at the International Center of Photography, while at the Jewish Museum on Fifth Avenue teens can see new art from Israel, and at The Guggenheim Museum SoHo, contemporary architecture and design from France.

Teens can e-mail high5jan@highfivetix.org to sign up for an e-mail newsletter, chat with other High Five users, and find out the latest information on High Five events.

Documentary chronicles history of comic books

The Video Detective

The film delves into underground comics as well as interviewing the creator of the cult character "Zippy" and also looks at the work of comic icon Robert Crumb. Even if you never picked up a comic book, you'll still find "Comic Book Confidential" interesting.

A resident of Mountaineer, Jim Riffel is the author of "The Video Detective's Guide to the Top 100 Films of All Time."

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FINNAGEL'S
The place to get away from the winter blues.

By ToniAnn Antonelli
Staff Writer

If you're looking for a warm haven to take away the winter chills and satisfy a hearty appetite, Finnagel's Restaurant located on North Broad Street in Elizabeth offers that and much more in a casual atmosphere.

The inviting ambience of the dining area made us feel instantly relaxed and ready for the meal to begin. Finnagel's also offers a variety of other salads that are perfect as an accompaniment to one of their satisfying meals, or as a main course. Some of the choices include a Cajun chicken salad, grilled chicken salad, chef's salad or a plump tomato-stuffed with tuna.

After finishing our salads, which were heavily enough to eat a meal on their own, my dining companion and I then selected the mixed sampler from the restaurant's abundant selection of appetizers. The platter consisted of hot, juicy chicken fingers; golden mozzarella sticks bursting with gooey cheese and tangy buffalo wings — my personal favorite. Other appealing appetizers include shrimp scampi, spaghetti, breaded mushrooms, bar pizza, nachos, french onion soup, jalapeno poppers and potato skins.

Our main course was then served by our attentive and friendly server, Elise. Enjoying a delicious entree of chicken scampi served up a platter of yellow rice. The expertly prepared dish, lightly breaded and sautéed with garlic and spices, was juicy and cooked to mouth-watering perfection. My dining companion feasted on a half rack of baby-back ribs smothered with a tangy, spicy-sweet barbecue sauce and served with a side of fries or choice of potato or rice. The ribs were some of the meatiest he had ever seen, making it a challenge to finish the whole serving at one time.

Some other highly recommended dinner selections include Finnagel's prime rib of beef, wide assortment of steaks, shrimp scampi, pork loin, fajita and Chicken Elizabeth — bonless chicken topped with sautéed mushrooms and mozzarella cheese. They also offer a wide variety of seafood dishes as well as daily specials and a complete children's menu.

Those who choose to have lunch at Finnagel's will be pleased their lunch menu, which includes an assortment of steak, seafood and poultry as well as pizza and a variety of burgers and deli-style sandwiches.

Established in 1981, Finnagel's also has a game room, a bar, and a cocktail lounge. Both with large-screen televisions for sports fans and a pool table. Where five pool tables provide and play regularly. An additional banquet room on the premises can also accommodate parties of up to 50 people.

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REUNIONS

- Roselle Park High School Class of 1954 is planning a reunion for February 1999. For information, contact Jean Castello Mangini, 2120 Villa Way, New Smyrna Beach, Florida, 32169.
- A luncheon for Union High School alumni is scheduled for March 27 at Holiday Inn, Boynton Beach, Fla. For information, contact Jack Jordan at (561) 966-8555.
- Former crewmen of USS Ketchikan, D. Bailey will have a reunion in the spring of 1999 in Jacksonville, Fla. For information, contact Robert Levine at (904) 327-3286.
- Coast Guard veterans of the USS Cambria will have a reunion in the spring of 1999 in Laocaster, Pa. For information, contact Mike Neumann at (561) 288-0545 or David Solt at (419) 738-3786.
- Former crewmen of USS Fargo will have a reunion in April 1999 in Hickory, N.C. For information, contact Fred Huntington at (757) 490-5079.
- Former crewmen of USS Pawcatuck will have a reunion in April 1999 in Detroit, MI. For information, contact Richard S. Jean at (413) 569-5294.
- Former crewmen of USS Purdy will have a reunion in April 1999 in San Antonio, TX. For information, contact Larry Dipasquale at (610) 433-4787.
- Former crewmen of USS Tarawa will have a reunion in April 1999 in Hickory, N.C. For information, contact Cliff Gardner, at (404) 539-1149.
- Former crewmen of destroyer USS Gaffin will gather in Norfolk, Va from April 16-18, 1999. For information, contact Walter Heilop at (513) 382-2269.
- Scott Plains High School Class of 1989 reunion is scheduled for April 16, 1999. For information, contact Reunions Unlimited, Inc. at (732) 617-1000.
- Meatloaf in Hefernan, Ill. as part of 800th AAF, 5th ASG US, 3rd SIG Svc Bn are planning a reunion for April 22-25 in Nashville, TN. For information, contact (615) 682-9440.
- Barton High School of Elizabeth City, N.C. is planning a reunion for April 30-May 1, 1999. Contact Joan Gleason Abbott, 3 Westminster Drive, Livingston, 07039. (201) 952-9456; 7-2-95.
- Barton High School Class of 1949 reunion is scheduled for May 1, 1999 at Wyndham Hotel, 901 Spring St., Elizabeth. A meet-and-greet is scheduled for April 30, 1999 at 7 p.m. at the hotel. Breakfast will be served May 2, 1999 at 7 a.m. at the hotel. Deadline for registration is March 1, 1999. For information, contact Liz Ray at (908) 241-5090.
- Westfield High School Class of 1979 reunion is scheduled for July 17, 1999. For information, contact Reunions Unlimited, Inc. at (732) 617-1000.
- Union High School Class of 1979 reunion is scheduled for July 31, 1999. For information, contact Reunions Unlimited, Inc. at (732) 617-1000.
- Thomas Jefferson High School in Elizabeth, Class of 1939 is planning a reunion for October 1999 in Atlantic City. For information, write 10274 Cass of 1949 reunion, 826 Garden St., Elizabeth 07232.
- James Caldwell High School Class of 1979 reunion is scheduled for Nov. 30, 1999. For information, contact Reunions Unlimited, Inc. at (732) 617-1000.
- Union High School Class of 1974 reunion is scheduled for Nov. 26, 1999. For information, call Reunions Unlimited, Inc. at (732) 617-1000.
- Union High School Class of 1989 reunion is scheduled for Nov. 30, 1999. For information, call Reunions Unlimited, Inc. at (732) 617-1000.
- James Caldwell High School Class of 1978 reunion is planned for Nov. 27, 1999. For information, contact Reunions Unlimited, Inc. at (732) 617-1000.
- Linden High School Class of 1978 reunion is scheduled for Nov. 26, 1999. For information, call Reunions Unlimited, Inc. at (732) 617-1000.
- Scott Plains High School Class of 1949 reunion is scheduled for 1999. For information, contact Reunions Unlimited, Inc. at (732) 617-1000.
- Scott Plains High School Class of 1979 reunion is scheduled for 1999. For information, contact Reunions Unlimited, Inc. at (732) 617-1000.
- Sammitt High School Class of 1989 reunion is scheduled for 1999. For information, call Reunions Unlimited, Inc. at (732) 617-1000.
- Westfield High School Class of 1974 reunion is scheduled for 1999. For information, contact Reunions Unlimited, Inc. at (732) 617-1000.
- If you served with the 168th Infantry Regiment, contact John Schlichtbeck at (610) 279-6533 about a Spring 1999 reunion in Nashville, TN.

The year in film has worldwide import

There is a piece of dialogue in "You're Not That Man" which not only summarizes this latest film written and directed by Nora Ephron, but perhaps the general theme of the year's output. It occurs when a rich but disaffected Tom Hanks tells an attractive but struggling Meg Ryan he is bringing her over despite their competitive stance in contemporary New York City: that people like to buy coffee in Starbucks because they got to make decisions that are followed by validate their like. "I'll take a tall skim milk latte." "Last you think this is a bit of a thin response, just pause even for a moment." "This year's best films focus on how the time is between decisions and relationships, and self-justifying self lies. It is also interesting to note that all of the ten best films in 1998 discussed below are distinguished by the creative force behind them.

Starting at the top, the best film of the year is the Italian "Life Is Beautiful" (1998). A funny and sad tale of the Holocaust conceived of by a director and star, Roberto Benigni. A clown in the style of Chaplin and Keaton, his great talent makes us laugh and cry in his journey through powerlessness and responsibility where there is still love and humanity. The establishing of television against overwhelming odds is a great individual triumph whether the setting be in a small town in Massachusetts or at Auschwitz. Winner of the Italian top prize for film making, "Life is Beautiful" deserves its title.

The best female performance of the year is Meryl Streep's in the Irish "Dancing at Lughnasa." While the best male performance is by Jeremy Irons in "Chinese Box." The interesting thing about these designations is that both actors are 40 almost unqualified talent and each had another superior performance this year in "The Iron Lung" for Streep and "Lush" for Irons - but had the film and the creative product of another else - a great playwright - Brian Friel in the Irish drama, and contemporary journalists, forces in the Hong Kong story. They each respectively examine the frail life story of characters against the destructiveness of life's cruelty and events. In a like manner, the British film,

On The Arts

By Jon Platt

"Mrs. Dalloway" features an always brilliant Vanessa Redgrave, but relies on the superb dramatic and subtle character delineation between protagonists and epiphanies portrayed by the nation's Virginia Woolf. And Mark Levin's "Slam" works because this independent filmmaker places his sights and moving story about a contemporary black urban culture solely within that culture.


Four epic American movies search for meaning among contemporary life's promise and inadequacies. The Cuban brothers have finally made a movie I can thoroughly get into: "The Big Lebowski." Its characters stumble about Los Angeles looking to make contact in a big melodrama, where some seems possible in much the same manner that Woody Allen's collected of stars and personalities seek love and self-realization, while destroying themselves and others in the dazzling "Celebrity."

During this time of seeking relevance in a confusing modern life in which actual values often are conducted by violence and pop culture, is Steven Soderbergh's "Out of Sight" from the Chicago Leonard crime novel. And Steven Spielberg gives his personal valor and purpose in his world was in "Saving Private Ryan," with perhaps the most perfect first 10 minutes of a film since "Fahrenheit 9/11."

Finally, at the end of this year has come a classic film in the tradition of great literature from England, "Shakespeare in Love." Co-written by Tom Stoppard, this ironic, eventually funny scenario and suggests the beginning of the modern age in Shakespeare's art. In doing that, it affirms that as much as the truly beautiful Nicole Kidman's subtle and engaging performance on the stage this fall in New York City in "The Merchant of Venice" has once again demonstrated the power of the theatrical medium.

Jon Platt is a resident of Summit.

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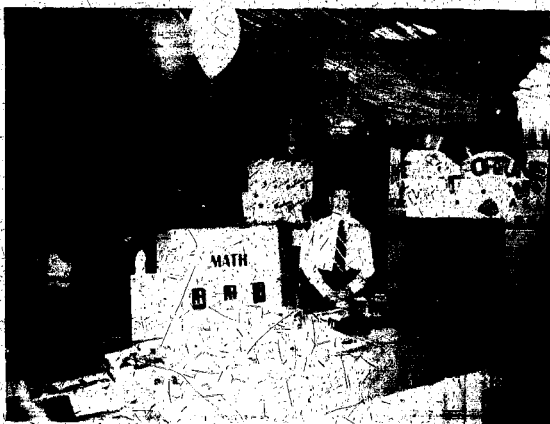
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Career & Education



Student Graham Maetar shows off the sixth grade curriculum at St. James the Apostle School.

St. James students maintain a strong faith in their future

St. James the Apostle School in Springfield joins thousands of Catholic schools across the United States in celebration of Catholic Schools Week during the first week of February. St. James School is among the 8,400 Catholic schools nationwide to participate in this celebration recognizing the contributions they make to the communities they serve.

The theme of this year's celebration, "Faith for a Brighter Future," reflects the philosophy that focusing on the basics and demanding excellence helps to prepare children both spiritually and intellectually for the

future. In fact, a higher percentage of Catholic-educated students continue their education in college.

St. James the Apostle School will highlight its theme at a Knowledge Fair to be held on Jan. 31 from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the school auditorium. Preschool through 8th grade students will be teachers for a day, as they orient parents and visitors to their everyday curriculum. The Knowledge Fair is open to the public, free of charge, and registration of new students will occur at this time. For additional information, contact the school at (973) 376-5194.

Human relations essay contest offered

The 19th annual Philip H. Hoffman Human Relations Essay Competition sponsored by the Metropolitan New Jersey chapter of the American Jewish Committee has officially begun, as announced by Susan Kogan of Short Hills and Joan Kiehl of Summit, co-chairs of the competition's committee. Other members of the committee are Thelma Fleish of West Orange, Bee Hoffman of Verona, Nancy Lasser of New Vernon, Barbara Levinson of Mountainside and Jeanette Pakter of Livingston.

A distinguished panel of the following judges will select the winning essay: Dr. Vividh Anand, NJ State Civil Rights commissioner; Professor David Berry, executive director of the Community College of Humanities Association; Shubert Han, representative from the Organization of Chinese Americans to the NJ Stamp Out Hate Coalition; Dr. Ruth Legoss, assistant adjunct professor of English at Rutgers University; and Alan Zegas, president of the Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers of NJ.

All high school students in Essex, Morris, Union, Bergen and Passaic counties are eligible to submit entries on the following topic:

No one is born hating. Psychologists have found that our respect for individuals is strongly influenced by our notions about the groups to which the individual belongs. These groups may be created by differences of age, sex, race, nationality, religion or by physical appearance.

Share an experience that you have had or witnessed, in which prejudice has been overcome. What motivated the change of attitude? How would you promote a more tolerant climate in your school or community?

Present your views through whatever written medium you prefer: personal essay, short story, letter, poem or play.

Competition deadline is March 21. The winners will receive awards of \$500, \$300 and \$100. The school listing the first prize winner will be given an engraved plaque. An honorable mention will be awarded to the

student with the best essay from a high school submitting 10 or more essays. Prizes for other prize has been awarded to a student in that high school.

Entries of the essay competition announcement and further information can be obtained from AJC at 225 Millburn Ave., Suite 301, Millburn, NJ 07041, phone (973) 789-7444, e-mail: New Jersey@AJC.org.

Inaugurated in 1981, the competition was established to honor Philip H. Hoffman, a founding member of the chapter and former national president of American Jewish Committee, who served as U.S. Representative to the U.N.-Human Rights Commission.

Founded in 1906, American Jewish Committee is the oldest human rights agency in this country. It is dedicated to building bridges of mutual respect and understanding among all religious, racial and ethnic groups. Lawrence J. Friedlich is president of the Metropolitan, NJ Chapter and Allyson Gail is NJ area director.

Encyclopedia helps parents find the answers

Your daughter needs to know where President Clinton went to high school and where Bosnia Herzegovina is. Your son wants to know the state motto of Idaho and who was Pope in 1492.

Tough questions, especially when

they are asked the night before an assignment is due.

Happily, for parents who believe the definition of smart is not necessarily knowing the answer as much as knowing where to find the answer,

there's good news. An appealing, affordable and convenient on-line encyclopedia has been published, called "The Family Encyclopedia." Oxford University Press contains over 13,000 entries, including 2,500 biographical profiles.

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Career & Education



Benedictine Academy senior class members Lauren Walker and Kellen Smith greet Sheila Jones, mother of David Eric Bolden, during her recent visit to the Academy.

Academy seniors raise funds for youthful cancer patient

Benedictine Academy senior class members Lauren Walker and Kellen Smith greeted Sheila Jones, mother of David Eric Bolden, during her recent visit to the Academy. Last July, Bolden was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. When Kellen, whose mother is a former coworker of Jones, heard about the situation, she decided to do something to help not only him but also his family.

With medical costs astronomical, she asked Adele Kryninski, principal, if there could be a collection among the student body to raise money to help defray some of the medical costs. Since the beginning of the school year, students have been donating what they can, when they can. Small fundraisers have been held, helping the total to steadily increase.

It was hoped that Bolden would be able to visit with students who have come to know him and his situation. Through Kellen's efforts, she has made them aware of the potential tragedy facing the family. The form of cancer that Bolden is suffering from, antrix, painful glioma, is very rare and considered incurable. Due to his weakened condition he was unable to accompany his mother to her visit to the Academy, located in Elizabeth. She thanked the girls for their generosity and most of all their much needed prayers.

Seniors discover computers at Chatham center

Discovery Center, located in downtown Chatham, has taken the suggestion of one of its customers, Ruth VanDerpeet of Morristown, and is offering a 10 percent discount to all customers over the age of 65.

Any Smarter, an instructor at the center commented, "The older people who come here are a joy to work with, and it's terrific to see them getting started on the computer. They're smart, funny, and they have a great time."

PC Discovery Center offers classes for the true computer beginner — as well as for the more experienced user

and its policy of offering unlimited free retakes for a year virtually guarantees success.

Seniors often have different uses for the computer than younger adults. They're more likely to be exploring their family's genealogy and history, tracking their investments and charitable giving, and using the Internet to research medical and drug questions.

Former Student Lane King of Louisville is currently transcribing in Microsoft Word the letters her father wrote for her further when he was stationed at Europe during World War I.

PC Discovery Center offers six

week courses and one-time, three-hour seminars in Microsoft products: Windows, Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint and Publisher, as well as seminars on America, Online, Netscape, Quicken and Quick! Books. Courses are offered both days and evenings, with new courses starting every week. Seminars and classes are available mornings, afternoons and evenings. There is also a lively after-school program for kids ages 4-12.

PC Discovery Center is at 10 East amount Ave., Chatham, (973) 615-2202. Also the Web site at www.pcdiscoverycenter.com

Students gaining ground in math, science

More and more young people are improving their 2-3s along with their A-B-Cs.

A national panel made up of political and educational experts reviewed data that they believe, showed many students in the United States making significant gains in math and science.

The panel, the National Education Goals Panel, recently released its annual report, "The National Education Goals Report: Duplicating a Nation of Leaders." The report details the progress the schools in the United States are making in science, and math.

For example, the 1997 report showed 22 states had higher achievements in mathematics compared to the prior year's report and 47 states increased the percentage of students who received degrees in mathematics science.

The report confirms what we've

known all along — that challenging students to meet high standards of excellence is the key to better achievement," said United States Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley.

It also shows that our public schools have turned the corner and are headed in the right direction.

Panel Chairman Governor James B. Hunt IV of North Carolina said, "We also know there is much more work to do."

The panel also offered the following goals that may help continue educational improvements:

- Keep schools safe, discipline and alcohol and drug-free.
- Parents need to participate in school programs.
- Teachers should continue learning by taking professional development courses and seminars.

The National Education Goals Panel is a bipartisan body of federal

and state officials made up of eight governors, four members of Congress, four state legislators and two members appointed by the president of the United States.

The 1997 National Education Goals Report and Summary are available free from the panel by faxing a request to (202) 632-0257, by e-mail to help@nsd.noe.gov or at the panel's Internet web site at <http://www.nep.gov>. Requests can also be mailed to the National Education Goals Panel at 1255 22nd St. NW, Suite 502, Washington, D.C. 20037. You can also call (202) 324-0015.

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 • **Seasonal Stalky Walk:** Explore the woods and fields using your senses.
 • **My Beavers:** Discover smaller animal neighbors such as weasels, muskrats, chipmunks and shrews. April-October only.
 • **Animal Detectives:** Investigate the diversity of animal calls, coverings, taxidermed members of the bird and mammal groups. Tour Trailside's

Museum to get a classroom at some sizes and shapes.
 • **Busy Bees:** Explore the world of busy bees using games and stories. Observe a live hive in action.
 • **Snowflakes:** Discover fun facts about snow! Create a snowflake hunt and draw your own snow scene. December-February.
 • **Rock 'N' Roll Rocket, Planetarium Show:** Join Rodney the Rocket in a musical tour of the planets! Explore the moon, Venus and Mars. Learn planetarium basics, constellations and the planet song.
 • **The Sky Inside:** Planetarium Show. Learn what causes the day/night changes from daylight to darkness, what causes the phases of the moon, and about the composition of stars.

First Grade and Up.
 • **Seasonal Light Walk:** Explore trees and fields to find out how plants and animals adapt to the changing seasons.
 • **Animal Neighbors:** Find out about the mammals, birds and insects that share our suburban neighborhood. We'll look for clues that tell us about animals living in the "Reserve" and play "Who Am I?"
 • **Birds: A Walk of Facts:** A walk, presentation and activities about birds adapted to the season. Spring: birds always fall migrants-winter feather molts.
 • **Equity of the Sun:** Planetarium Show. Learn about the planets of the solar system and see close-up photos

taken by spacecraft! Includes a song about the planets, dazzling special effects and lasers.
 • **Third Grade and Up:**
 • **Insects:** Learn about these creepy-crawly neighbors and search for them in the woods and fields.
 • **4th Grade:** Learn "How did the first Americans live?" Find out about their customs, food and games!
 • **Thirteenth and Space:** Planetarium Show. Learn about light waves, the speed of light and general relativity through movies, slides, lasers and planetarium special effects. Learn more about the constellation with laser levelators.
 • **Following the 45-minute program,** parties may be held outside at the

picnic tables behind the museum. This area is covered by a canopy and is an ideal site in the spring, summer and fall months. During the winter of inclement weather, the party room in the lower level of the museum, the auditorium in the visitor center or the upper level of the museum can be rented for 30 minutes. Advance registration is required and rentals are subject to availability.

Editorial deadlines
 Following are deadlines for news, Church, club and social: Thursdays from
 • **Emeralds:** Friday noon
 • **Sports:** Monday noon
 • **Letters to the Editor:** Monday 9 a.m.
 • **General:** Monday 8 p.m.

Upon request, some group programs can also be adapted for birthday parties. Please advise in advance if your group has special needs. To schedule a birthday party call Trailside at (908) 789-3070, weekdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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