

The South Orange Gaslight



Rhyming Teens

express themselves at library open mike nights

Melissa Montalvo remembers the first time she ever read her own poetry out loud. "I was extremely nervous, but after the first time, I couldn't sit down."

Now a senior at Columbia High, Montalvo is a regular at the South Orange Public Library's Open Stage Poetry series. On the third Thursday of every month, from September to June, teens from ninth grade and up attend the sessions. "We get a respectful crowd; they're pretty serious," said Montalvo.

Librarian Ellen Columbus, who initiated the series in 1998, said its popularity may be rooted in rap music. "Poetry [like rap] is very personal." Also, "There's a lot of open stage and spoken word going on in various places," namely, Columbia High on special occasions, and in night spots around town. South Orange Library is simply hip to the trend.

Poetry "is my way of dealing with emotional problems," says Montalvo. "I get it down

on paper and suddenly I know exactly what to do."

Columbus says the series encourages teens to try their talents and find their voices in a comfortable, nonjudgmental setting. "They express themselves on any subject, from love and relationships to war, oppression and prejudice." Attendees can share their work or simply listen and hang out with friends.

Sometimes poets will ask for feedback and a discussion ensues. At other times the audience simply claps. Small tables are set up to encourage conversation, and always there are refreshments.

Langston Simpson, a CHS graduate, now studying at County College of Morris, is another regular. He's been writing poetry "probably for a few years on and off. It helps me express myself and it helps me to have an understanding of others - where they're coming from."

In his leisure time, Simpson reads a lot of his friends' poetry and occasionally the work of famed poet Langston Hughes.

Neither Simpson nor Montalvo is published yet, but both aspire to do so. "That's my biggest dream ever!" says Montalvo, "my main goal in going to college."

Upcoming open stage poetry sessions will be Dec. 15 and Jan. 19, from 7 to 9 p.m.

For more informa-

tion, contact Ellen Columbus at (973) 762-0230, or ecolumbus@sopl.org. ▲



New! Businesses

■ **Night and Day Apparel** at 70 Taylor Place off Scotland Road is "Clothing for the fashionable woman." Owner Derwin Bing, a Village resident, opened his store in mid-November, offering dresses, tops, slacks, tees and jeans. "The store can be a personal closet," he said. "I try to pick pieces that would fit in anybody's wardrobe. Whether you're dressing for day or night, it's one-stop shopping."

■ **Village Cellar Restaurant** opened on Nov. 18 at the site of the former Lot 15 Restaurant. Giacomo Ortiz and Franco Delbarba, former Lot 15 owners, have partnered with Patrick Barragan and Dr. Dave Principe. Diners will enjoy contemporary American cuisine and a special tapas room for small tastes of many dishes. The newly renovated restaurant at 19 Valley Street features wrought iron décor, a custom-designed walnut bar and brown leather banquettes. Guests can enjoy the wine bar or use the wine lockers to store personal favorites for special dinners.

■ **The Orange Tree** at 10 West South Orange Avenue is a gift store selling the handcrafted items of artisans from across the country, predominantly New Jersey and the northeast. The store opened in late November.

Manager Nancy Boylan said the shop will be partially staffed by clients from JESPY House, a support service for people with developmental disabilities. JESPY will train its clients as a stepping stone to future long-term jobs in retail.

The Orange Tree is open daily except Sundays and Mondays. ▲

The Gaslight is published 10 times yearly for the residents & business community of South Orange Village.

December
2005

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Heisler Williams leaves helm of Community Coalition

New director sought

Barbara Heisler Williams, the high-energy leader of the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race, has been hired as executive director of the Fund for an OPEN Society, the only national nonprofit group devoted to building racially balanced communities.

"The only way our country may heal its social wounds and become whole is to do this work in many, many places," said Heisler Williams, who remains "firm in my belief that people want to live in towns like ours."

OPEN is a civil rights organization started in the 1960s. Current headquarters are in Philadelphia, and Heisler Williams, who was asked several times to be its leader, agreed to take the job after OPEN pledged to relocate to Maplewood. A six-month office transition is in the works.

"It makes sense for OPEN to be in a community that's come to be a model for the work that it does," she said.

Since 1997, under Heisler Williams' leadership, the Community Coalition has garnered local, state and national awards and has become a model for communities nationwide. The coalition aims to build a suburban community free from racial segregation in housing patterns and community involvement. Its volunteers educate realtors and conduct community tours for prospective home buyers. They host forums and discussion groups, tackling issues such as the achievement gap in local schools. One program, "Two Towns, One Book" uses an annual reading selection to galvanize the community and generate discussion.

The Community Coalition is seeking a new executive director to take over in January.

Candidates must have nonprofit management experience and must believe strongly in the organization's mission. For more information, visit www.twotowns.org. ▲



Barbara Heisler Williams



Carole Anzalone-Newman

Kinder-enrichment

Sign-ups for the fall 2006 Kinderenrichment class at The Baird will take place Monday, Feb. 6. Names of prospective students will be taken. Program brochures will be available at the office window.

Remembering Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING

S.O. Civic Organization hosts Rev. Sandye Wilson

Rev. Sandye A. Wilson, rector of St. Andrew and Holy Communion Episcopal Church in South Orange, will speak at the 36th annual Martin Luther King Program on Sunday, Jan. 8, at 3 p.m., at South Orange Middle School. The South Orange Civic Organization is sponsoring the event.

Wilson, known as a commanding presenter, creative liturgist and contemplative activist, will speak on "Building on the Legacy of Those Gone Before."

The Elmwood Presbyterian Church Choir will perform several selections and The Beloved Community Award, recognizing work that perpetuates the ideals of Dr. King, will be given to three South Orange residents.

Main Street hires Anzalone-Newman

A former ad agency art director with voluntary nonprofit experience has been hired as the new executive director of Main Street South Orange. Carole Anzalone-Newman took the reigns on Oct. 16, following the two-year tenure of former director Todd Leavitt.

Anzalone-Newman is a 16-year resident of South Orange who worked in New York and San Francisco as an art director, and later as a freelance graphic designer. A mother of two girls, she served for years on the executive board of the South Orange/Maplewood PTA, and as a religious school board member. She also volunteered for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of New Jersey and ran the Main Street South Orange Farmers Market for the last two years.

"There are exciting projects on the horizon for South Orange and Main Street will be there helping to improve the Village's appearance, image, reputation, and economic vitality," said the new director. "I look forward to meeting residents and business owners and implementing innovative solutions."

Founded in 1991, Main Street is a nonprofit organization that uses volunteers to build a vital economy in the Village's downtown sector. ▲



Rev. Sandye Wilson

◆ Carol Barry-Austin, a founder and executive board member of the Community Coalition on Race, will be awarded for her leadership there and in various PTAs, the Home and School Association, the School's President Council and the Columbia High Scholarship Fund.

◆ Nancy Heins-Glaser, founder of the nonprofit South Orange Productions/Film Collaboration Group, spearheaded a four-year project to create the documentary "Once Upon A Gaslight ... A Walking Tour of South Orange." She also serves on the Village's Cable TV and Community Relations Committees and the Community Coalition.

◆ Mila Jasey, now in her second term on the Maplewood-South Orange Board of Education, has a long history with the League of Women Voters and for 20 years was a leader in the La Leche League.

Community Coalition holds interfaith MLK event

The 5th annual MLK "Making It More Than a Dream" celebration will be held Monday, Jan. 16, at 1 p.m. Hosted by the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race, the interfaith gathering reflects on the work of Dr. King and will be held at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in South Orange. The post-service program will focus on ways to eliminate the "academic achievement gap" in local schools. ▲

Two puppet shows this winter

• **Fidget and Loon**, a fast-moving, zany show filled with puppets, bubbles, music and magic will be performed on Tuesday, Dec. 27, at 2 p.m.

Professional clowns and puppeteers Kim Winslow and Therese Schorn delight audiences of all ages with their misbehaving puppets and bubble magic. They have performed with The Big Apple Circus and toured the globe.

• Mark your calendar for the **Peter Rabbit Tales**, to be performed by Tucker's Tales Puppet Theater on Feb. 22, at 2 p.m. Beatrix Potter's classic tales will be presented in irresistible style with clever scenery and turn-of-the-century costumes. Included will be The Tale of Peter Rabbit, The Tale of Benjamin Bunny, and The Tale of Mrs. Tittlemouse.

Tickets for both performances are \$8. Call (973) 378-7754, or visit geocities.com/pennypretzelplayhouse. ▲



Jazz pianist Jon Regen performs Jan. 14 at The Baird

The Washington Post calls Jon Regen "one of the best young jazz pianists in the world," and Variety says, he "takes cues from forebears like Randy Newman...both in the sardonic bent of songs like the wry 'Only My Credit Card Remembers Where I've Been' and the laconically elegant tenor of 'Hold Out Your Heart.'"

On Saturday, Jan. 14, Regen, a Maplewood native, returns to his roots, for a one-night performance with his trio at The Baird.

Jazz enthusiasts will remember Regen's early career as a sideman for Jimmy Scott and Kyle Eastwood, and as a leader with three critically-acclaimed CDs under his own name. These days, he fronts a dynamic band that has played around the globe.

The January concert is the first in the five-part "Jazz at the Baird" series. Through May, the concerts will take place on the second Saturday of the month, at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$12 for Friends of the Arts, levels 2 and 3; \$15 in advance; and \$17 at the door. ▲

PIERRO GALLERY
OF SOUTH ORANGE

Jan. 22 - Mar. 19

Colorful Abstract Works

*Opening Reception, Jan. 22, 3 to 5 p.m.,
with a gallery talk at 2 p.m.*

■ Chris Koep, Hampton, NJ - acrylic paint and mixed media.

■ Carol Radprecher, Brooklyn, NY - figurative and nonrepresentational paintings.

■ Joseph Gerard Sabatino, Paterson, NJ - mixed media.

Visit www.pierrogallery.com, or call (973) 378-7754. ▲

SOMEF Quiz Bowl, Feb. 12

Help support grant programs for local teachers by participating in the second annual South Orange/Maplewood Education Foundation Quiz Bowl, to be held Sunday, Feb. 12, from 1 to 6 p.m., at South Orange Middle School.

Jeopardy lovers of all ages are invited to form teams of three to five people to answer questions in categories ranging from hurricanes to history to hodgepodge.

Thanks to Quiz Bowl and other SOMEF fundraising projects, more than 75 district teachers will see their dreams become realities with grants for classroom projects they will carry out this spring.

The Quiz Bowl registration deadline is Jan. 20. For more information, go to www.somef.org or call (973) 378-2055. ▲



Independence Day recording now available

The live recording of South Orange's July 4th composition, "An American Dale," is now available for a suggested donation of \$10. The limited edition CD commemorates the Independence Day composition premiered on July 3 as a tribute to the diversity of South Orange and Maplewood.

Entitled "An American Dale: Becoming A Place For All People," the 12-movement composition blends classical, jazz, rock and gospel music. Composer Janet Albright developed the suite and directed 200 local musicians in the performance.

The South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race developed the program.

For a copy of the CD, use the order form at twotowns.org/TTIH_donation_form.pdf. For information, call (973) 761-6116. ▲

Help light up New Year's!

Since early December, block captains for South Orange Productions have been selling New Year's Eve luminaries for \$2 each. All proceeds will be used to fund the company's videotaped oral histories of South Orange residents. For information on buying luminaries, call (973) 761-5970. ▲

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To submit
information for
*The South
Orange
Gaslight*,
send to Editor
Robin Patric,
c/o Village Hall

Villager of the Month

Nancy Denburg

Nancy Denburg believes in empowering people to make their own decisions. "I would never tell somebody what they 'should' do," she says.

Her passion for investing in others was triggered many years ago by a story about a mother who was embarrassed by her teenage daughter's rape. The mother drove her daughter to a hospital in the next county to avoid encountering anyone she knew.

"I kind of realized that rape was not a dirty subject but it really needed experienced people to advocate for the victim," said Nancy. The story inspired her to help develop the Sexual Assault Support Services unit at St. Barnabas Hospital, and soon she became its chairman.

The experience "gave me a sense of making a difference in someone's life. It was something I'd always been questing for."

Through the year's, Nancy's bounteous volunteerism has been largely devoted to sociological causes. She sits on the Child Placement Review Board, a group charged with overseeing children in foster care and making recommendations to family court judges in Newark. The position requires extensive ongoing training.

She spearheads a county initiative called Smart Alternatives aimed at convincing women who are drug or alcohol dependent to consider programs that will alleviate the addiction before having a family.

In 1999, she was influential in setting up the South Orange Domestic Violence Response Team and became its co-president. She also developed the first county-wide symposium on domestic violence and drew an audience of 250 police, DVRT groups and care-giving agencies.

"I am very active," she says, "but sometimes there are lulls."

A South Orange native, Nancy has also woven herself into the community fabric throughout her 67



years. "My love of the Village has dictated much of my volunteer life." For instance she is vice president of the South Orange Library's Board of Trustees, and a reader for the Electronic Information & Education Service, a statewide, South Orange-based agency that works with the blind.

"South Orange has always been my home, both literally and in my heart. Where else could my four children have had many of the same teachers I had? Where else could my kids have learned to love Grunnings and regret the closing of the Townhall?"

Sadly, Nancy and her husband Sheldon will be leaving South Orange next spring for a smaller home in Parsippany. But our loss will be Morris County's gain. Nancy will be empowering people and making a difference in her new home, just as she's always done here. ▲

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Library Events

Call (973) 762-0230

Thursday Lectures

All sessions at 1 p.m.

- Dec. 8 – "Shakespeare's Holiday Plays," with Seton Hall English and Humanities Professor John Sweeney.
- Dec. 22 – annual holiday party.
- Jan. 5 – "Alternative Medicine," with Dr. Donald Ken, physician and Drew University professor.

- Jan. 12 – "Satellite Radio," with Hugo Bianco, writer/researcher for Joe Franklin's Productions, Bloomberg Radio.
- Jan. 19 – "The New Communication Technology," with Shawn Grain Carter, professor of marketing at E.I.T.

- Jan. 26 – Feminine Geography: A look at the Southwest as seen in the works of artist Georgia O'Keeffe and writer Leslie Marmon Silko's "Ceremony." Speaker: Elizabeth O'Brien, assistant professor of English at Drew University.

Regular Programs

Please note: New time for Star Book Group! Now meeting the third Thursday of every month at 3:45 p.m.

- S. O. Book Review Group (adults) – Jan. 2, 7:30 p.m., 2006 book selection session to determine reading choices for the coming year. Feb. 6, 7:30 p.m. "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," by Thomas Hardy.
- Star Book Group (6th grade and up) Jan. 19, 3:45 p.m., "Ink Heart," by Cornelia Funke. Feb. 15, "Eldest," by Christopher Paolini.
- Open Stage Teen Poetry Reading (9th grade and up) – Dec. 15 and Jan. 19, 7 p.m.

Township of South Orange Village South Orange, NJ 07079



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