

Arts & Entertainment

R&B Diva Roberta Flack Plans Performance At Arts Center

RAHWAY - The Union County Arts Center in Rahway will present rhythm and blues singer Roberta Flack on Saturday, November 13, at 8 p.m.

Ms. Flack is known for her songs, "Killing Me Softly With His Song," "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," "Where Is The Love," "Feel Like Makin' Love," and the dance classic, "Uh-uh, Ooh-ooh, Look Out!"

Reserved concert seating is available at \$40, \$35, and \$28. For more information or ticket availability, please call the Box Office at (732) 499-8226 or after 5 p.m. at (888) ETM-TIXS.



Roberta Flack

Recent Multi-Cultural Festival In Fanwood Deemed Huge Success

FANWOOD - Despite a day of teeming rain, the Fanwood Cultural Arts Committee went ahead with its multi-cultural festival on October 10 and presented a full afternoon of performances by musicians, singers and dancers.

The program's purpose was to showcase a sampling of Fanwood's cultural heritage as the borough moves forward into the new millennium.

Although outside activities were curtailed by the weather, the Patricia M. Kuran Arts Center was filled with performers, colorful costumes, music and dance.

According to Committee Director Adele Kenny, "The weather may have dampened our side-walks and streets, but it didn't dampen the performers' enthusiasm or the size and participation of our audience. Over 300 guests attended throughout the day."

The festivities began when

Fanwood's millennium banner was raised by Millennium Committee Chairwoman Pat Plante, followed by presentation of a Union County Freeholders resolution by Freeholders Nicholas P. Scutari and Linda d. Stender. The resolution acknowledged and congratulated the Cultural Arts Committee.

The festival, made possible in part by a H.E.A.R.T. Grant (History, Education, Art Reaching Thousands) from the Union County Freeholders and a donation by Merck & Co., Inc., included Tai Chi demonstrations, Italian music, Indian Bhangra folk dance, Hispanic dance, Klemer music and Chinese dance and vocal music.

Residents who were unable to attend may view a program on Fanwood's Channel 35, currently in production. Copies of the committee's season schedule are available at the Fanwood Library.

For information, please call Ms. Kenny at (908) 889-7223.



WINTER WONDERLAND...The Presbyterian Women of The Presbyterian Church in Westfield will hold the annual "Silver Snowflake" Christmas Sale on Saturday, November 6, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Assembly Hall of the church. Pictured are some of the handmade quilts, ornaments, baked goods and stocking stuffers that will be available for sale.

'Silver Snowflake' Sale On Tap At Presbyterian Church in Westfield

WESTFIELD - The Presbyterian Women of The Presbyterian Church in Westfield will hold the annual "Silver Snowflake" Christmas Sale on Saturday, November 6, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Assembly Hall of the church.

The sale features handmade items, including ornaments, quilts, baked goods, stocking stuffers, baby items

and more. A variety of items provided by international organizations that help support artisans from economically disadvantaged regions of the world also will be available for purchase.

Patrons can enjoy a light lunch or coffee at the Snowflake Cafe.

For additional information, please call the church office at (908)-233-0301.



NEW MEMBER...The Westfield Glee Club "sang in" new member Sherman Feller of Fanwood during a Monday evening rehearsal for the winter concerts on Saturday and Sunday, December 11 and 12. Pictured, left to right, are: Director Thomas Booth, Mr. Feller, Sid Trebitz and Accompanist George Lachenauer. For more information, please call Dale Juntilla at (908) 232-0673.

Popcorn: The Story of Us

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Katie's turn, they offer something to affirm the family unit's solidity. But alas, it's a sham and has been for a while. The truth only comes out after the offspring excuse themselves from the table: with school soon out and both pre-teens off to camp, the Jordans are separating. They have until summer's end to tell the kids.

What follows is Messrs. Reiner and Zweibel's sophomoric anatomy of a marriage, replete with sitcom sensibilities to depict the peaks and soap opera melodramatics to represent the valleys. This includes players serving as a Greek chorus of kibitzers, their words and actions singing hackneyed paeans to the institution of matrimony.

A la Bruno Kirby and Carrie Fisher in *When Harry Met Sally*, but not nearly as funny, Rita Wilson and Rob Reiner are the ill-starred couple's best friends/sounding boards, Rachel and Stan.

Happily, we are treated to much better supporting performances courtesy of Betty White, Jayne Meadows, Tom Poston and Red Buttons. The troupers appear in a fantasy sequence which humorously demonstrates one Freudian marriage therapist's contention that there are always six people in bed: the married couple as well as both sets of parents.

A truly inspired moment, the minilesson in comic timing is a nostalgic tickle. Even Pfeiffer and Willis seem invigorated by the veteran foursome, forcefully working the initially light-hearted scene to its surprisingly devastating conclusion. But such moments are rare.

Synthetic disharmony is stenciled all over this ready-made turmoil. And the prevalence of faux shtick is equally obvious. Of course, that's not to say that a foothold in reality is a prerequisite for this film phylum.

For example, *The War of The Roses*, an outrageously black tale of marital collapse, is wonderfully beyond belief. Yet it has something *The Story of Us* is sorely lacking: originality.

Pfeiffer as the detail-oriented crossword puzzle editor wears her off-the-rack character much too com-

fortably —without nuance or edge. Willis, as the loose-leafed comedy writer, finally has the chance to do that agonizing, misunderstood spouse he crafted so well way back in scene study class.

Reiner, whose heart-on-the-sleeve style can be effective under the right circumstances (*Stand By Me, Misery*), attempts a slick little bit of propaganda here. Knowing the script isn't exactly *Hedda Gabler*, his mission is to cloak *The Story of Us* in pro-family aphorisms, proffering Mom and apple pie.

Hence, though Ben and Katie are barely more than cardboard characters, solely out of principle we wind up cheering and hoping for them not to make their break-up final.

In short, we are hoodwinked into compassion without even knowing if this couple should be with each other in the first place.

As if to underline the director's sneaky tactic, a maudlin background score with the words "I'm sorry" echoing ad nauseam throughout the doings is meant to give the impression that enmity among wedded folk is a cruel phenomenon with a life all its own; and woe are the careless couple who allow themselves to drift into marital discord.

Thus, with such a fatalistic vision at its core, it's no wonder the tale isn't driven by the characters but by the paltry narrative instead.

But aside from the bits of anguish from column A and the smatterings of joy from column B that comprise this movie, we can't help but wonder what day-to-day life was like for Ben and Katie over the last 15 years?

Unless we are gods on Mt. Olympus, these are the sort of things we mere mortals need to ascertain in order to empathize with the lovers in question.

Considering what little we really know about them, *The Story of Us* isn't much of a story at all.

The Story of Us, rated R, is a Universal Pictures release directed by Rob Reiner and stars Michelle Pfeiffer, Bruce Willis and Rob Reiner. Running time: 94 minutes

Teen Arts Exhibit Tours County; Several Area Artists Featured

The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders is currently sponsoring the 1999 Teen Arts Touring Exhibit at Plainfield City Hall in Plainfield until Wednesday, November 10.

Work of local artists Christopher Orosz of Centennial High School in Westfield, Katrina Blasi of Deerfield Middle School in Mountainside and Edward Saridaki of Park Middle School in Scotch Plains will be featured.

The exhibit consists of 31 pieces of art selected from 513 visual artworks shown at the 1999 Union County Teen Arts Festival held in March at Union County College.

This annual event is sponsored by the Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, Department of Economic Development.

The tour will travel to sites throughout the county through March, 2000. The exhibit is open to the public. For assistive services or more information, call the Union County Divi-

sion of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, 633 Pearl Street, Elizabeth, 07202, (908) 558-2550. Relay users please use (800) 852-7899.

Holiday Craft Fair

Planned at Vo-Tech

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Union County Vocational-Technical Schools (UCTVS) will hold their eighth annual Holiday Craft Fair on Saturday, November 6, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the Raritan Road Campus.

Crafters from New Jersey and other states will feature their wares.

All proceeds will benefit deserving UCVTs students.

Admission is free. Raffles and other specialties will be featured.

The Ladies Philoptochos Society's

1999 Annual Merry Market Holiday Boutique & Craft Show

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