

# SUGAR LOAF TIMES

Sugar Loaf Community Foundation Newsletter

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WINTER 2009

## Santa to Stop By Sugar Loaf for Holiday Festival

By Shary Denes

Santa Claus will be arriving in style by horse and carriage to the small hamlet of Sugar Loaf, N.Y., on Dec. 12 to spread holiday cheer and listen to Christmas wishes. He'll be arriving just in time for the hamlet's annual tree-lighting celebration.

Sponsored by the Sugar Loaf Community Foundation, the festivities begin at noon, as carolers with the Warwick Middle School Choir, and the S.S. Seward Women's Select Choir stroll along the hamlet throughout the afternoon, bringing a melodic lilt to the celebration with joyous holiday songs.

Enjoy an old-fashioned horse-and-carriage ride to the Lycian Centre and stop by the Barnsider Tavern for some apple cider, donated by Roe's Orchard, and holiday cookies. The carriage ride and refreshments are complimentary.

Then, just as daylight slips into dusk, children can gather for the tree-lighting celebration beneath the fresh, pine-scented Christmas tree next to the Barnsider. Evergreen boughs and twinkling lights will illuminate, with luck, the snow-crested scenery.

Santa will arrive around 3:30 p.m. and the tree lighting will begin soon after.

Topping off the holiday fare, the Lycian Centre for the Performing Arts will present "A Christmas Carol" that evening, a long-standing tradition of heralding in the holidays at the theater (for other holiday shows at the Lycian, also see pages 9 and 10).

Spending holiday time in the charming arts and crafts village of Sugar Loaf renders an old-fashioned nostalgia throughout the season. Historic homes and resident artists harken back to the days of horse-drawn carriages and candle-lit roads.

Colorful decorations festoon the shops and sweet holiday scents lace the air. Visitors to the many shops and galleries are greeted with warm, welcoming smiles, and the handmade crafts and art works add a special touch to gift-giving reminiscent of days long gone by.

The quaint hamlet of Sugar Loaf is a picture-perfect setting for glad tidings and yuletide cheer throughout the holiday season.



Santa will make a special stop in Sugar Loaf Dec. 12.



cherfoto images

Nick Zungoli

## Gifted Young Pianist Wins Arts Council Award

by Shary Denes

Oriane Rosner's dream is to attend the Royal Academy of Music in London where she would major in piano accompanying so that she can achieve her ultimate career goal: to become an accompanist for opera performers, chamber groups and orchestras. She attends the preparatory division of Mannes College, a classical music conservatory in Manhattan, and recently returned from a two-week stint at a prestigious chamber music festival in Viana do Castelo, Portugal.

Oriane was recognized for her artistic excellence at the Orange County Arts Council Annual Awards ceremony Nov. 20, winning the council's "Youth with Exceptional Promise" award.

Oriane turns 17 this month.

The daughter of Yaron and Kiki Rosner, proprietors of Rosner Soap in Sugar Loaf, N.Y., Oriane, was nominated for the Arts Council award by Rachel Bertoni of Bertoni Gallery, also in Sugar Loaf. Bertoni heard Oriane play the piano at a recital in May and said she was "blown away by the talent of this young lady. The quality of her piano playing at such a young age was astounding."

When Bertoni heard about the Arts Council's youth award she was certain Oriane would win, and asked her to submit a brief bio and a CD with two of her piano pieces to give to the judges. "I really had no doubt she would win," Bertoni said. "You can't pass up talent like that. You have to hear it to believe it."

The awards selection committee agreed. "The committee chose her hands down because she really did shine and truly came across as a 'youth with exceptional promise,' and I emphasize the 'exceptional promise.' She's amazing," said Susan Linn, executive director of the Arts Council.

Oriane said she started playing the piano when she was six years old and knew by the time she was in 6th grade that the piano was her life's calling. "It was something I really loved doing, so I wanted to keep doing it," she said.

That was also the year she set her sights on attending the Royal Academy of Music.

To that end, she has set a grueling schedule for herself to graduate a year early from Warwick Valley High School so that she can spend what would be her senior year preparing for auditions to a number of world-renowned music conservatories. Of course the Royal Academy is at the top of the list, but Oriane also wants to audition for acceptance to London's Royal College of Music, and Guildhall School of Music & Drama, as well

as Juilliard, and Mannes College in New York City, and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. She also is considering a music school in Italy, but hasn't decided which one yet.

Although technically a junior this year, Oriane is carrying the load of two school years. She is taking senior-level classes, one in economics, and the other in criminal law and justice, plus two English classes, one a high school honors class and the other a college-level course.

She also is taking environmental science and American history, and has "doubled up" on her gym classes. She took sophomore-level math classes her freshman year, so math isn't on the roster this year, although she is in the women's choir and accompanies the

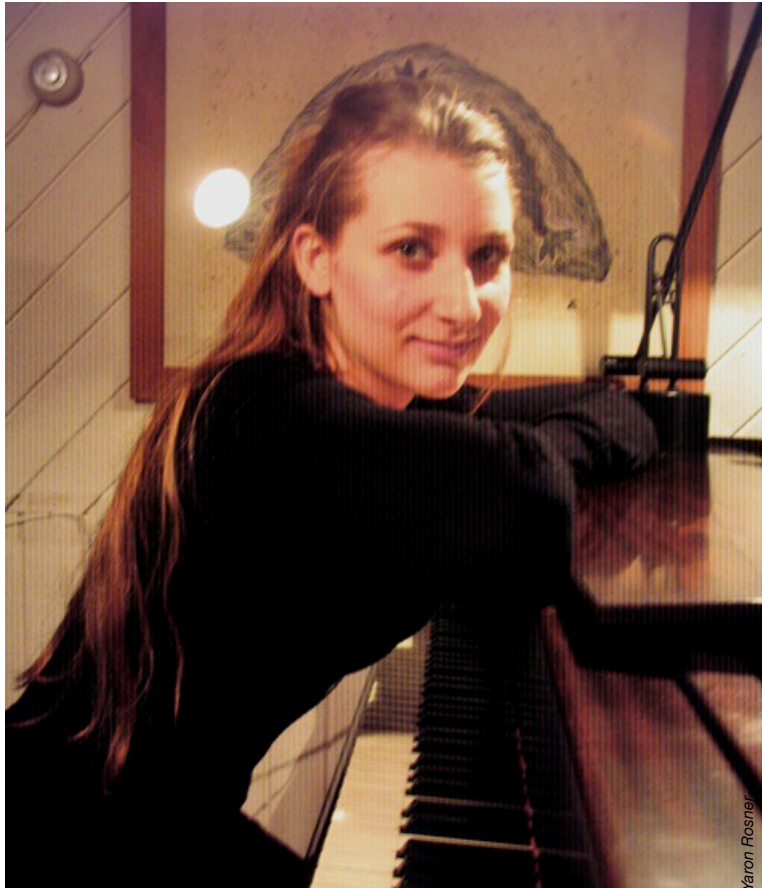
Meister Singers of Warwick Valley at their concerts.

This lineup, however, is just her week-day schedule. For the second year, Oriane spends her Saturdays attending Mannes College's preparatory program from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., where she studies ear training, music theory and conducting. She also sings in the senior choir and takes piano lessons.

"If I pass all my classes this year [in Warwick], I'll be completely out of high school," she said.

That's when the real work starts. "The requirement for the auditions is playing for one hour," Oriane said. And with auditions slated for January, February and March at many music schools, that means one thing: "Practice, practice, practice," she said. "I need to prepare. I need a good repertoire."

*cont. pg. 3*



Oriane Rosner

## Gifted Pianist *cont. from pg. 2*

Oriane already has an impressive repertoire, a selection of which she listed for the Arts Council as part of the biographical requirements for the nomination: Frédéric Chopin's *Fantasia Impromptu*, *Scherzo*, Op. 131, No. 1, and *The Revolutionary Étude*; Claude Debussy's *Arabesque* No. 1 and *Clair de Lune*, *Passepiéd*; Beethoven *Sonata*, Op. 2, No. 1; Robert Schumann's *Aufschwung* (*Soaring*); and Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Prelude* Op. 3 No. 2.

"I really love playing with other people; being a part of something" she said. "I like performing, but I don't think I could live the life of a soloist. Accompanying an opera singer would definitely be my dream; or a violinist." She said she also enjoys accompanying her sister Mai, 15, who plays the violin.

Once past the auditions, Oriane said she'd like to take a trip to Paris, where she was born: "My aunt lives there. I could stay with her. She has a piano." Or she may travel to Israel, where she lived for a few years as a child, to visit her grandmother and her best friend.

She's already been to Portugal this year. Oriane and another student were selected by one of her teachers at Mannes to go to the Viana do Castelo International Music Festival in August. The festival is a two-week summer course on chamber music and solo repertoire aimed at gifted young musicians from leading music schools around the world.

To raise funds for her trip, Oriane decided to hold

## Sugar Loaf Celebrates Hanukkah

*By Shary Denes*

Sugar Loaf will celebrate Hanukkah on the front lawn of the Lycian Centre for the Performing Arts on Dec. 16. Rabbi Meir Borenstein of Goshen will lead the celebration, which will begin outside with the lighting of the menorah, then move inside to continue the festivities.

Everyone is invited and welcomed to take part in the celebration, the rabbi said. "The lights represent community," he explained. "The concept is to give the community a chance to celebrate the beauty of Hanukkah."

Starting at 6 p.m. the outdoor activities will begin with a welcome, followed by a blessing and the lighting of the menorah, Borenstein said. Song sheets will be handed out so that everyone can join in on such well-known Hanukkah songs as "Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel" and "Chanukah, Oh Chanukah."

The group then will move into the Lycian Centre, where hot chocolate, along with latkes and fried donuts, will warm cold hands and continue the tradition of eating foods fried in oil. The oil signifies the small flask of consecrated olive oil that was only supposed to last one day but instead lasted eight. The children then will line up to receive Hanukkah gifts.

"People mingle and talk; then everyone says good night," Borenstein said. "It's very nice."

This is the fifth year that Sugar Loaf will have a public lighting of the menorah. The idea started in 2005 when Sugar Loaf residents Beth and Steve Mindes noted that many surrounding towns celebrated Hanukkah as a community and asked, why not here? So the Mindeses approached Lycian owner Richard Logothetis, who agreed

two piano recitals in May, one in New Paltz for former classmates, parents and friends from Mountain Laurel Waldorf School, where she had attended elementary and a year of middle school, and the second in her home in Sugar Loaf. Some 100 people attended the two concerts to show their support.

Once at the festival, Oriane spent the next two weeks immersed in music. "There was lots of music," she said. "Music from morning 'til night."

Included in her eight-hour days of classes were private piano lessons and preparation for public concerts. "Every day there were two concerts," she said. "The kids played at five thirty [in the afternoon] and teachers played at nine." Students had to audition for the performances. Oriane said she performed in two concerts, one accompanying a chamber music ensemble and the other playing a solo piece.

Back in Sugar Loaf, she is hunkering down on her classes and looking to the future. The Arts Council's youth award is the first award she's received for her piano playing, but then again, "I haven't tried out for any others," she said.

Her teacher at Mannes is preparing Oriane for a Schumann, and possibly a Beethoven, concerto competition, she said. "It looks good on a resume," Oriane explained. "The concertos that catapult you to fame, most people don't even think about until their 20s."



*Beth and Steve Mindes, Rabbi Borenstein, Steve and Rachel Neuhaus and Richard Logothetis celebrate Hanukkah at last year's festival.*

to hold the celebration in front of his theater.

"We decorate for Christmas, why not for Hanukkah?" Logothetis said of his decision to hold the annual event at the Lycian. "We have many Jewish patrons and it seems one more good way to serve the community." He added that it's fitting that he hold the commemoration of a holiday also known as the Festival of Lights at his theater, given that Logothetis also manufactures stage lighting.

"Hanukkah is the celebration of light: the oil they had should have lasted only a day but lasted eight," he said. "My main work is making light. The good luck I have had doing that is the main reason we have the theater. To celebrate light is natural for me."

Logothetis also provides the menorah. Rabbi Borenstein said he brought the menorah to the Lycian the first year, but Logothetis has provided the candelabrum ever since. The rabbi continues to supply the refreshments and the children's gifts.

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**Hanukkah** *cont. from pg. 3*

"Every year it's a beautiful event," Borenstein said. "Music and Hanukkah songs; it's a very nice celebration. It shows unity of community. Even though it's freezing, people come out."

He added that it's not just the latkes and hot chocolate that draw people in. It's the story and meaning behind Hanukkah that makes it such an inclusive holiday. The rabbi said the holiday represents freedom of religion, explaining that when the Jewish army fought and con-

quered the far mightier Seleucid Empire 2,000 years ago, they reasserted the Jewish religion and rededicated the Holy Temple after it was desecrated under the ruler Antiochus IV. It was then, of course, that the hallowed olive oil used to fuel the eternal flame in the Temple lasted eight days, the amount of time it took to make a new batch.

That's why "Hanukkah is a holiday for all," Borenstein said. "It's a symbol of freedom of religion for everyone."



Steve Denes

**Festival of Trees Light Up Lycian Pavilion***By Shary Denes*

The Pavilion at the Lycian Centre for the Performing Arts in Sugar Loaf, N.Y., transformed into a winter wonderland November 20 and 21 for the second annual Festival of Trees. Gaily decorated trees grabbed center stage as their shimmering lights softly illuminated the room and showed off their colors to outside passersby.

The embellished trees, displayed for the enjoyment of the community, are decorated by local businesses and auctioned off to raise funds for the Lycian Centre's nonprofit King's Theatre Co., which presents and produces a majority of the shows at the Lycian.

A gala preview was held November 20, where guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and local wines while listening to jazz music by Robert Kopec Trio and admiring the imaginative, one-of-a-kind trees.

The festivities continued into the next day, when the community was invited to view the ornate trees and get into the holiday spirit. Santa Claus stopped by, lending an ear to eager children with a list of wishes for the holidays. The children also had great fun at the crafts table, where they kept busy making frames for the pictures that had been taken of them while sitting on Santa's lap.

Kacey of the "Mike & Kacey in the Morning" radio show on WHUD also was on hand to chat with visitors and share the goings on with her listeners. Specialty vendors offered jewelry, ornaments and floral design for early holiday shopping, and more than 100 area businesses

donated a number of gift items that visitors could buy at a discount. The day topped off with the raffle of a 40-inch LCD television, making the joy of gift-giving particularly joyous for one lucky winner.

In the spirit of spreading holiday cheer, the Lycian also collected gifts for Toys for Tots during the two-day event. Live music and refreshments rounded out the festivities.

"While the Festival of Trees is a fund raiser for Kings Theatre Company, it is also an opportunity to bring community organizations and businesses together," said Dawn Ansbro, director of organizational development for the theater.

"There has been a tremendous outpouring of support from local businesses and other nonprofits as we prepared for this event. We had trees decorated by Warwick Girl Scout Community, Literacy Orange, Orange Regional Medical Center Foundation, and Parents Run Autism Move-A-Thon of Orange County.

"It has been a great experience working with all of these people to put the Festival of Trees together, and we appreciate all they have done for us to help make this event a success."

*Kings Theatre Co. at the Lycian Centre for the Performing Arts, Sugar Loaf, N.Y., 845-469-2287, [www.lyciancentre.com](http://www.lyciancentre.com)*



## COUNTY ROLLS OUT NEW PAVING FOR SUGAR LOAF

Finally! After years of waiting, Kings Highway received a new coat of blacktop on Nov. 2. The Community Vision Committee had put the county project on hold for years with hopes of having infrastructure improvements such as central water, buried utilities and sidewalks in place before the paving. With none of the aforementioned close to being a reality, the CVC met with Orange County Executive Ed Diana and Highway Deputy Commissioner Chuck Lee earlier in the year to discuss how to make the most out of the planned resurfacing.

Normally the county highway department budgets asphalt for the road with a three-foot shoulder, but with Diana's approval, additional parking lanes were added to the project. The week before the paving took place, Lee walked the street to determine where additional safe parking places could be added or existing spaces improved, which greatly benefited the hamlet.

In some areas the shoulders of the road couldn't be improved due to berms or walls that impeded passenger doors from opening or there was no room for water drainage. These areas will require major engineering work to resolve the issues.

Initially the CVC was in favor of striping the shoulders of the road to include designated parking spaces. However, when the county informed the committee that parking spaces must be 22 feet long, the committee decided to forgo designated markings as it would have reduced the number of available parking spaces.

Certainly our little hamlet is much better off with the new blacktop and extended shoulders for parking, but our sidewalk problems are far from resolved. The Town of Chester continues to hold an \$80,000 federal grant designated for sidewalk improvements in Sugar Loaf, but seems reluctant to move forward as the grant stipulates \$20,000 in matching funds. It's shaping up to be an interesting 2010.

-- Nick Zungoli



Newly elected Chester Town Board member Matt Kannon, Chester Town Supervisor Steve Neuhaus and Orange County Executive Ed Diana stop by to watch as workers pave Kings Highway in Sugar Loaf.



Photos: Nick Zungoli



Nick Zungoli

Artist owner Cheryl Simpson of Simpson Originals

## Angel Art Shop Strives to Inspire

By Shary Denes

Just about everyone has laid in the coolness of the green grass on a lazy summer day, looking up at the sky for figures and shapes formed by billowing white clouds. It's a favorite childhood pastime and stock for happy memories.

When Cheryl Simpson looks to the sky, she sees angels floating above her and captures the wafting cloud formations in photographs. She also devotes much of her shop in Sugar Loaf to the celestial beings.

**Visitors to her shop are welcomed** by a large angel cut-out. And the sign bearing the store's name, Simpson Originals, is followed by the words "awakened by angels," "because I was," she said.

Simpson said the path that took her to her Sugar Loaf shop came by way of her previous job with International Paper Co., in Tuxedo, N.Y. It was there that she noticed the formation of angels in clouds while looking out the window and started to take photographs of the wispy wonders.

"I look into clouds and see angels; it can be jaw dropping," she said. "They are described as being a skin thickness away. If you see them in the clouds, you have to ask yourself, 'is it or isn't it?'"

**Simpson had been working** as a senior lab technician, troubleshooting for paper mills and fielding client complaints, when in 1998 she moved to the digital imaging group, where her team worked on formulating paper for digital photography.

"My life started to shift when I went to the digital imaging group," Simpson recalled. "I got to travel and make presentations. I had to move out of my comfort zone from a job that was becoming more tedious, almost boring, into a place I was unsure of, other than the fact I felt I would be more recognized for any work that I did. And I was. This is when my life began turning more into my destiny."

After four years with the imaging group, and 28 years with the company, Simpson was laid off in 2001, but it seems her angels were with her. It wasn't long before she met a woman in Goshen, N.Y., who had a store de-

voted to all-things-angelic in memory of her son. The woman asked Simpson if she'd be interested in renting a small space in her store, and Simpson jumped at the offer. Not only could she devote more time to her artwork, but she also had an opportunity to learn the retail business while selling her angel photographs, prints and poetry. Simpson called her new business "Mystical Mentors."

**Three years later** the owner closed the store, and Simpson decided to strike out on her own. She came across a small shop in Sugar Loaf in Romer's Alley, and finding the space to be affordable, she moved her angels and other artworks in, opening Simpson Originals in May 2005.

Simpson was in her store for a year when one side of what was then a two-shop building on Kings Highway became available, and Simpson went to check it out. A small chandelier hanging near the back of the store caught her eye, and she knew the place was for her. "I saw that chandelier and I thought it added class to the place," she said.

Simpson moved in to the new store, but already had an eye on the shop next door. When that shop keeper moved out a couple of months later, Simpson Originals expanded, taking over both spaces.

**Simpson carries the theme of angels** throughout her store, not only with her cloud photographs, but also through her numerous paintings, inspirational books and other items of enlightenment. "The cloud angels resonate with everybody because sooner or later everyone lies in the grass and looks up at the clouds," she explained.

Also on display are her many nature photographs. She finds great wonder and enchantment in nature, and said her camera often picks up impressions she never saw with her eye. Simpson patiently points out the unexpected treasures revealed by the camera lens.

**In a photograph of a fallen tree**, the base of the trunk conceals the hidden "faces" of several woodland creatures, the most remarkable being that of a hawk's head. While at first glance the viewer may not see the bird (or the other small figures), much like the Magic Eye images, once the figure reveals itself, it's impossible to overlook.

"I like taking pictures of things. You've captured that minute," she said. "If something stops you long enough to take a picture, it will stop someone else, because there was a reason it stopped you."

Simpson also is a prolific and imaginative painter, with her works spanning an array of mystical subjects, from archangels and cherubs to shifting images of a wolf and a woman, a dragonfly and a fairy, to mythical, magical figures.

**Many of her paintings are inspired** through meditation, she said. Except the fairies. "The fairy paintings are just fun," she said. In addition, her shop is filled with fairy dolls and teddy bears, unicorns and candles, inspirational cards and ceramic figurines.

Angels are her biggest sellers, however, especially around the holidays. "I think the store resonates with the true meaning of Christmas; of giving things that are meaningful and representative of the season," she said. *cont. pg. 7*

**Angel Art** *cont. from pg. 6*

"I love Christmas," she added. "There's a warmth and a love in the season. It's not necessarily about giving gifts to family and friends. Family and friends are the gifts."

Whether it's the holiday season or the middle of July, Simpson wants those who visit her shop not only to enjoy her paintings and photographs, but also to take inspiration from the wonder and mystique that nature bestows.

"When people come into my store I want them to be inspired, to see the beauty and a bit of the magic that surrounds us," she said. "I want them to realize that, from the angel formations in the clouds, to the many ways nature and its creatures present their story to us, we have the opportunity to learn the wisdom of Mother Earth, to know ourselves and the masters that we are."

"I want them to be open to where life takes them, and trust that it will lead them to their greatest joy," she added. "That's how I got here, after being awakened by angels."

*Simpson Originals, 1379 Kings Hwy., Sugar Loaf, N.Y., 10981; 845-469-1222, www.mysticmentors.com*



*Artist owner Kelly Leen of Kelly Jane models a sampling of her handmade bags and hats.*

## Chance Visit to Hamlet Leads to Thriving Business

*By Shary Denes*

When Kelly Jane Leen strolled through Sugar Loaf with her two daughters on a cold December day two years ago, the farthest thing from her mind was opening her own store and selling her custom-made accessories in the small hamlet. She had on a previous trip checked out what she thought was an empty shop to hold her many fabrics and to serve as a work space, but the building turned out to be a house for sale, so she dropped the notion. No, this trip was for window shopping and holiday browsing.

But when she and her two young daughters came across a small place that was available in Romer's Alley, her oldest daughter, Caitlin, then 10, piped up, "Ma, why don't you rent this shop?" Leen recalled. So Leen called about the particulars, and finding the rent reasonable, moved in.

Up to that point, Leen had been working out of her garage, where she sewed her sizeable collection of fabric belts, head wraps, hand bags and other accessories that she sold at craft shows and boutiques and through her online business.

"I went into it as a work space," she said of the Sugar Loaf shop. The idea was that she'd display her merchandize, "and if people bought something, that would be great, but mostly it was to keep my work space and home separate," she explained. With the move, she also changed the name of her business, from Billy NY ("I knew a girl named Billy and thought it was a cool name.") to Kelly Jane, her first and middle names.

The plan worked well, until business at her shop took off. "At one point I was sewing for the shows, the online business, the shop and the boutiques," she said. "It was just too much sewing for one person!"

Plus, she had three small children waiting for her when she got home: Caitlin, now 12; Dannielle, 9; and Kieran, 5. So Leen decided to taper off, forgoing the boutiques and craft fairs, and concentrating solely on her shop and online business. "I didn't want to hire help," she said of her decision to cut back. "I want to do it myself. I'm too critical."

Aside from a young woman who helps out by pre-cutting the fabric for some of her accessories, Leen sews all of the cloth items she sells, which, between her online orders, customized requests and store inventory, can translate into a legion of articles. She buys fabric in yardage only, never by the bolt, so the items she makes are always limited edition.

"I don't make ten of an exact thing," she said. "That's not unique, not as different. People like to pick their own fabrics, that way it goes with their outfits."

It wasn't long before Leen's business was doing so well that she outgrew her small space. So when a larger shop became available on the main road, she relocated.

Leen describes her new place as "rustic meets chic." One of the many original buildings in the nearly 300-year-old hamlet, her new space shows off the rustic

*cont. pg. 8*

**Kelly Jane** *cont. from pg. 7*

with wood floors and wall panels. Wooden stairs lead up to a loft, where she has set up homey accommodations for her children when they stay with her while at work, complete with a refrigerator, couch and computer desk. The addition of a television is still being negotiated, she said.

Although the floors and walls reflect the past, the shop is decidedly contemporary and modern. Leen clearly has an eye for design, and her love of bright colors and mixed patterns bring a distinct warmth and cheerfulness to her shop.

"I try to make it cozy and comfortable and inviting with all the color," Leen said of her store design, conceding that she "definitely likes all the girly fabrics."

"I definitely go in the direction of summer, of bright and happy. Especially now that it's fall and winter is coming," she added.

This confection of candy colors and trendy wares cuts a swath across customer lines. While the fabric accessories appeal to the older set, the younger crowd is drawn in by the cool hues and hip jewelry that Leen also sells.

"Girls twelve, thirteen, fourteen [years old] come in with their new cell phones and little new bags and act like they're little women," she said with a laugh. "I try to keep my prices lower for that reason."

But her biggest fans are her daughters. "They love the idea of what I do," she said. "They always wear my stuff and come in to shop for their girlfriends."

It's hard to imagine, given her accomplishments, that Leen is not a seasoned seamstress or businesswoman. In fact, she's only been sewing for five years, and that's because of a random conversation she had with a relative one Thanksgiving. She and her sister-in-law were discussing the comeback of striped ribbon-band watches and belts, "and I thought, I could do that," she said.

So she bought a small sewing machine and went to work sewing watch bands and belts. The limited variety of striped ribbon materials prompted her to branch out to other fabrics, which in turn inspired other accessories: reversible belts with buckles, head wraps and handbags, checkbook and cell-phone covers, tissue holders and eye-glass slips.

"I kept making stuff out of fabric, anything I could think of, and I just kept sewing," she said. "Then I got a new sewing machine, and nothing could stop me!"

Of her move to Sugar Loaf, Leen said, "I like everything about being here because it works for me. It's relaxing and everybody is really nice; there's no better place to be for artists."

*Kelly Jane, 1371 Kings Hwy., Sugar Loaf, N.Y., 10981; 845-728-0482, www.KellyJaneNY.com*

## Students 'Feel' the Moment in Innovative Acting Class

*By Shary Denes*

A visitor randomly arriving a half hour into class at the Kings Theatre Co.'s youth workshop would have stepped into this scene: eight teenagers sitting in a circle on the floor, eyes closed and heads bowed, beating fists and drumming fingers on the floor, vocalizing in a chant-like rhythm punctuated by an occasional scream. The scenario, at first blush, is mystifying, and a bit startling, but as the class goes on the rationale slowly reveals itself.

Turns out, before the baffled visitor arrived, the students were asked to describe a moment's experience, and then to portray through movement and sound what they physically felt in that instant. For instance, the student who periodically let out a piercing scream was re-enacting her experience at the movie theater when she went to see the science fiction thriller, "The Fourth Kind," and someone in the audience shrieked during a suspenseful part in the movie and ran out of the theater.

Another student was tapping out the fear she felt earlier in the day when she had to have her wisdom teeth pulled. Other "moments in time" being interpreted through fist pounds and low moans included taking the SATs, watching the gruesome barbershop movie, "Sweeney Todd," standing for more than three hours to see the Veterans Day parade in the city, going shopping with the family, getting good marks on an assignment, and comfortably watching an old movie in bed.

At the end of the exercise, the instructor, Paul Ellis, asked each of the students, "Where were you? What

did you feel physically?" Ellis later explained that he wanted the students to recall the space they were in during their particular moment. Was it a classroom? A movie theater? Their room? The basement? The mall? What did it feel like to be sitting on a hard classroom chair, standing for hours in a crowd, trying to get situated on a defective couch or lying on a cozy bed?

While each student was conveying a distinctive motion and sound, in fact, the overall effect was surprisingly cohesive and unified. That was the intent.

"You want them to hold their own role, but they have to fit into the overall piece of the play," Ellis said. "You can't have people running off doing their own thing. These kids are learning to work as a unit and respect each other's individuality."

For the next exercise, the students paired off and, taking turns, attempted through gesture and movement to communicate to their partner what they felt in their moment. The second student mimicked her partner's actions then changed over to her own moment and gesticulation, which her partner then copied, and so on.

The idea was for the student not only to act out his own experience, but also to articulate it through body language to his partner. One student who received a good mark on her assignment twirled in glee, while the student who stood for hours at the parade went all noodle-leg and swoony.

Ellis then asked the students if they thought their partner really "got" what they were trying to express. The student with the pulled wisdom teeth didn't think so. She recognized that while she mimed the Novocaine needle

*cont. pg. 9*



Shary Denes

Paul Ellis leads student actors

## Acting Class *cont. from pg. 8*

coming toward her face, this did not convey the fear she'd felt at that moment, only the dentist's action.

Next up was scene reading. Ellis handed each of the partners a scene from four plays: "The Glass Menagerie," "Long Day's Journey into Night," "The Hostage" and "Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds." Some of the students had read the play they were handed, but others had no idea what was going on in the scene or anything about their character.

After each reading, Ellis asked the students who were not familiar with the play to infer what was going on based on the scene they'd just read. Reading a scene cold from an unfamiliar play elicited a multitude of speculative analysis. The next week's assignment: read the play and memorize the character's lines in the scene.

The workshops, which are held at the Lycian Centre Pavilion and convene once a week for 10 weeks, are different from most acting classes in the area, Ellis said. "I'm directing the workshop as a process. Each kid becomes an individual as part of a larger group; that's what plays are anyway."

So rather than handing out a script at the beginning of the session and spending the next few weeks preparing to put on a show, Ellis concentrates on the acting process itself. The current workshop delves into scene study, while past courses have focused on the nuances of one-act plays, improvisation, monologue and performance.

Ellis does not require prior theater experience to join the workshops, just a desire to act. "I'll take anyone at any level as long as they give me five or 10 minutes to interview them," he said. The crux of the interview is one question: "Do you seriously want to be in the business of acting?"

Most of the students in Ellis' class have taken his other workshops as well, which to date have been based on the study of comedy. This fall workshop is the first to focus on drama, and that's just fine by the students.

"I like to do dramatic acting more than comedy and Paul is a really good teacher," said Siobhan Hill, 16. "I've worked with him for over a year and enjoy the way he lets us learn."

Hill noted that the diversity in workshops help her stretch her acting abilities. "I want to broaden my horizon and gain more experience in different acting ways, like

seriousness and comedy, and how to move my body to fully express how I feel at that moment."

Emma Delia, also 16, agreed. "I normally do comedy so I want to learn how to act seriously as well," she said. "I really would like a career in acting," she added. "I love entertaining people."

A penchant for acting is what compelled Sarah Wilson, 14, to sign up for a second workshop. "I really love acting and theater and want to become a better actress," she said, adding that she hopes to gain "more skill, more experience and a good time" from the workshops.

Most of the students want to pursue a career in acting. "I want to act all the time, whether it is on stage, musicals, in movies, or to teach others how to act," Hill said. "Either way, I hope acting is in my future, professionally or not."

Wilson's career goal is musical theater, while Delia said, "I just want to perform, make people laugh. That makes me happy."

As for future workshops, Hill had some suggestions: "Singing and dancing classes, like musical theater, or set design. Maybe filming and directing classes."

Delia is happy to leave the topics to Ellis: "Whatever classes Paul has to offer are good by me!"

*For more information about the Kings Theatre Co. youth workshop, contact Dawn Ansbro at 845-469-2285.*

## Scrooge, Singing Toys and '40s Swing in Lycian Holiday Lineup

The Kings Theatre Co. at the Lycian Centre for the Performing Arts in Sugar Loaf, N.Y., is combining tradition and family-oriented entertainment with its showing of two holiday classics: "A Christmas Carol" and "Babes in Toyland."

Ebenezer Scrooge and his three visiting spirits, along with Tiny Tim and the rest of Charles Dickens' time-honored characters, will take the stage Dec. 12. Transforming the theater into Victorian London, the merry musical tells the tale of the grumpy curmudgeon's enlightenment to the meaning of Christmas in song and dance.

On Dec. 19, the Kings Theater will present "Babes in Toyland," a one-hour musical that evokes all the joys of a holiday musical through a delightful storyline complete with walking, talking, singing soldiers and such memorable songs as "March of the Toy Soldiers" and "Toyland, Toyland, Toyland."

For an early holiday treat, the theater, presented "Swing for Victory" Dec. 6, the story of The Four F's quartet who, on the eve of V-Day in 1945, embark on a marathon radio performance to "jazz up" support for the soldiers and the nation with such timeless tunes as "In the Mood," "Sentimental Journey," and "Dancing in the Streets."

*For additional information or to buy tickets to the Lycian Centre's holiday shows, call 845-469-2287; [www.lyciancentre.com](http://www.lyciancentre.com)*

## SUGAR LOAF HAPPENINGS

### DECEMBER

**Dec. 6:** *Swing for Victory*, 3 p.m. Enjoy the sounds of the Four F's quartet as they swing to such classics as "In the Mood," "Sentimental Journey" and "Dancing in the Streets." Lycian Centre for the Performing Arts, Kings Highway, Sugar Loaf, N.Y., 845-469-2287, [www.lyciancentre.com](http://www.lyciancentre.com).

**Dec. 12:** *Sugar Loaf Holiday Festival*, noon to 5 p.m. Santa Clause will be making a special stop in Sugar Loaf to help usher in the holiday season. Join in the tree trimming and sing along with the carolers as they stroll through the historic arts and crafts village. Enjoy the beautiful hamlet in all its holiday regalia.

**Dec. 12:** "A Christmas Carol," 8 p.m. The holidays would not be the same without a viewing of this time-honored Dickens classic that turns a sour Christmas curmudgeon into a life-long believer. Lycian Centre for the Performing Arts, Kings Highway, Sugar Loaf, N.Y., 845-469-2287, [www.lyciancentre.com](http://www.lyciancentre.com).

**Dec. 19:** "Babes in Toyland," 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. A delightful holiday extravaganza woven together from Mother Goose nursery rhymes, complete with dancing toy soldiers and other magical playthings. Lycian Centre for the Performing Arts, Kings Highway, Sugar Loaf, N.Y., 845-469-2287, [www.lyciancentre.com](http://www.lyciancentre.com).



### WINTER PERFORMANCES at the LYCIAN CENTRE

**January 31:** *Cabaret*, 3 p.m. Spend the afternoon with cabaret performer Sally Bowles and the seemingly hospitable master of ceremonies at the Kit Kat Club in 1929 Berlin.

**February 6:** *Food Fight! A Musical Comedy for Waist Watchers*, 8 p.m. Set in a women's health club, this hilarious new musical revue explores the pleasures and hang-ups so often associated with food, dieting and exercise through catchy parodied lyrics to popular songs.

**February 21:** *The Little Mermaid*, 1 p.m. Based on Hans Christian Anderson's classic tale of the little mermaid who is willing to give up her life in the sea for the love of a prince, this entertaining adaptation is filled with adventure and surprises.

**February 27:** *Yesterday and Today*, 4 p.m. Savor the music of the Beatles through this new interactive concert in which the audience creates the playlist for the night.

**March 21:** *Cirque Le Masque*, 4 p.m. Bathed in spectacular color and adorned in brilliant costumes, the gravity-defying artists in this avant-garde circus theatre perform spectacular mid-air feats and breathtaking acts of balance, grace and strength.

For additional information about performances at the Lycian Centre call 845-469-2287 or visit [www.lyciancentre.com](http://www.lyciancentre.com).

*This is not a complete listing of events and activities in Sugar Loaf, as new performances, classes and activities are regularly added. Please check the Web sites of the Lycian Centre for the Performing Arts, the Sugar Loaf Chamber of Commerce [[www.sugarloafnychamber.com](http://www.sugarloafnychamber.com)] and individual stores in Sugar Loaf for the most up-to-date listings.*



Nick Zungoli



Nick Zungoli

Frozen winterberry in Sugar Loaf

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### Make a Difference in Your Community. Join the Sugar Loaf Community Foundation.

What better time to become a member of the Sugar Loaf Community Foundation than today. The SLCF is undertaking a number of exciting projects as part of its overall mission to preserve the character and significance of this historic arts and crafts village. To join the SLCF, please send your name, address, phone number and e-mail address, along with a check, to Sugar Loaf Community Foundation Inc., P.O. Box 330, Sugar Loaf, NY 10981. For additional information about membership, call Alex Jamieson at 845-469-8320.

SLCF 2009 Memberships:      Individual: \$25      Business: \$50      Corporation: \$100

All contributions are fully tax deductible and are used for SLCF projects only. Established in 1979, the foundation is an entirely volunteer, grass-roots organization and does not pay out any salaries, bonuses or consulting fees.

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*Happy Holidays*

