Drilling Waste Causes Concern

By Sue Smith-Heavenrich

Two months ago the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) asked drillers to stop hauling their waste fluids to publicly-owned wastewater treatment plants. The reason, said DEP secretary Michael Krancer, is the high levels of total dissolved solids and bromides that flow into plant effluents and from there into rivers that serve as drinking water for cities downstream.

By itself bromide is non-toxic, but during disinfection at the water treatment facilities bromide combines with chlorine, forming trihalomethanes. Studies link ingestion of other trihalomethanes to cancer and birth defects.

So why is the Auburn wastewater treatment plant still accepting drilling waste fluid? That’s what the Cayuga Anti-Fracking Alliance wants to know through a FOIL request. Terry Cuddy, one of the group’s founding members, obtained documents that clearly show Auburn continues to accept drilling waste fluids. And making a lot of money by doing so.

Cuddy says from June 2009 to July 2010 the City of Auburn raked in $900,000 for treatment of 16.5 million gallons of drilling waste fluids. This year, unfortunately, the drilling wastewater only generated $300,000, said Cuddy, but most soy-based proposed budget reflects $1.2 million of projected revenue coming from treatment of drilling wastewater.

A 2009 letter to the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) from city assistant civil engineer Bruce Ross listed four companies as sources of the wastewater.

Parade Prowler

The Seski Karate dancing lion entailed young and old during the Ithaca Festival Parade, which kicked off the annual community celebration on June 2.

Class Studies Local Energy Needs

By Eric Banford

Our energy future is currently being debated in town hall meetings in Ithaca, in government agencies and among ordinary citizens. There are varying opinions on whether we have already passed peak oil production, which is often used as an argument for developing renewable energy sources. There are also differing opinions as to whether or not our natural gas can remain as our primary source of energy for the future.

Renewable energy seems promising and safer than fossil fuels or nuclear, but has not overcome the technological barriers that keep it from mass deployment. Thus, our energy future is unclear.

Last fall, Cornell earth and atmospheric science professor Larry Cathles and Town of Caroline resident Milton Taam engaged a group of Cornell engineering students in a course designed to explore various energy paths, and to specifically look at Tompkins County and what it would take to generate all of its needed electricity locally. The class’ findings are now available for the general public to consider at http://sites.goo- gle.com/site/fingerlakesenergycor-
ces.com.

The class is called Energy and Resources of the Earth, and this year’s project focused on how AES Cayuga’s Milliken Station coal plant on Cayuga Lake could be replaced, since company CEO Paul Hanrahan announced in February that AES was selling its New York coal plants.

Milliken is Tompkins County’s primary source of electricity generating roughly 258 megawatts of power while emitting some 2 million tons of CO2 annually. Groups within the Cornell class each explored a different energy source—wind, solar, gas and nuclear—and then summarized their findings in a presentation.

“The basic idea was to look at the Earth’s resources in general, whether there were any contradictions that would curtail development, and if so what they were. We looked at related issues like free trade, policy, environmental aspects, global warming etc.” Cathles says. “Our project this year was to look at Ithaca, and if we were going to replace Milliken Station, what would you replace it with? Part of the motivation is Marcellus gas drilling. Maybe we don’t like natural gas, but maybe we don’t like other things more. So we set out to compare the alternatives.”

The group studying solar panels concluded that the technology is currently not cost effective, and would require eight square miles of land to generate enough electricity to supply the county’s needs. The other energy options came out at roughly the same cost, but each took up different footprints, and had differing environmental consequences. For example to meet our local power needs, 700 wind turbines would be required, covering 59-squares miles. Gas extraction would cover 710 acres, assuming one-five-acre pad per square mile, and would require 2.3 million gallons of water per day for drilling.

An interesting idea that came out of the class was to use excess wind power to pump water uphill to a storage reservoir in Lansing, and then release it when the wind was not blowing. The reservoir would be a half-square mile, 20-feet deep, and would store 4,000 megawatts hours of energy, the same as 12 hours of AES Cayuga’s output.

Taam points out that, “Hydro storage like this is a unique opportunity of the Finger Lakes region. A difficult issue with renewables is that once you pass a certain point, you can’t store it. But if you have a large source, there hasn’t been a cost effective solution to storage.”

This solution could offset that issue. Another idea Taam suggested was to develop hydropower at Ithaca Falls. The energy production there was only about 1 megawatt, but it would be a cost effective addition to our energy mix, and would require very little maintenance over the years, according to Taam.

Please turn to page 14
By Sue Henninger

June is an exciting month for the many students who are saying goodbye to the schools where they’ve spent the majority of their youth. All over Tompkins County graduation ceremonies are being held and diplomas handed out, confirming that teens have met the requirements to graduate from high school and signaling the beginning of a future that offers all sorts of promising opportunities.

But there’s another group of teens who are also graduating, those who are homeschooled. Though these students’ educations occur in a different space than their peers, completing their high school requirements is just as memorable and exciting for them and their parents.

One organization that offers homeschooling families a site to hold a public graduation in is Loving Education at Home (LEAH) (www.leah.org). Holly Phillips, New York State’s LEAH Upstate commencement coordinator, explains that each year LEAH holds a commencement ceremony for any homeschooled students who live in New York State and whose families are members of LEAH, a Christian organization.

For the last four years the event has been held at the Riverside Convention Center in Rochester, this year attracting 120 graduates and upwards of 2,100 guests. The graduation ceremony is similar to that found in many traditional high schools: Phillips. The average age of the students is 17 and they wear caps and gowns and walk up on the stage just like their high school counterparts. There’s also a commencement speaker; someone who is nationally recognized in the homeschool movement. Phillips notes that this year they added a Pine Writers Award, and the winner, Lydia Putney, read her essay; “20 Generation: Why I will Choose to Homeschool,” to the audience. LEAH’s narrator, Jaime Cole announces each graduate by reading a short biographical sketch submitted by the student, a scripture verse that the teen selects that’s been meaningful to them and a description of their future plans.

Unlike at public high schools, parents play a key role in LEAH’s ceremony, meeting their son or daughter onstage and handing them their diploma acknowledging that they’ve completed a “satisfactory course of study,” inscribed with their name and the date by a calligrapher, and signed by their parents.

Phillips explains that LEAH has the parents come up on stage not only because they are the ones who have put in the work, but also because, “It’s important to recognize them as well. They’ve put so much dedication and sacrifice into the educational process.”

Who are the parents who choose to homeschool their children day in and day out? Though she and her husband Steve both attended public schools and she was trained as a teacher; Gail Felker of Ithaca decided to homeschool all four of her children. It was a decision that the couple didn’t make lightly; doing a lot of research as well as observing other homeschooling families first. “It’s a real commitment. I had the advantage of having a teaching background and felt that ultimately I knew my kids strengths, weaknesses, and interests better than anyone else ever would,” Gail says.

Felker’s family belongs to LEAH and her two oldest children, Ben (23) and Rachel (21), were past participants in the Rochester ceremony. For Felker, the LEAH graduation was an amazing thing to be a part of, with a real feeling of camaraderie. “We’ve all done this; we made it and here are 100 kids ready to take on the world!” she says. However, as her third child Lydia (17) was approaching her graduation this year, the family decided to stay local, joining six other home-school students from the Ithaca Community LEAH group at the Reach Out for Christ Church in Freeville on May 14 for a celebration designed by the teens themselves.

Felker found the personal atmosphere of Lydia’s graduation very moving. She notes that not only did the students put together a PowerPoint presentation of their years growing up as homeschoolers, but that also there was time for anyone else ever would,” Gail says.

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The Tompkins County Workers’ Center (TCWC) recently released a Tompkins County Restaurant Owner’s Manual and marked the publication’s debut with press event that also noted the enactment of the New York State Wage Theft Prevention Act.

Speakers included Vilda Vera Mayuga, director of the New York State Department of Labor’s Bureau of Immigration Workers’ Rights; Carol Chase, senior public health sanitarian of the Tompkins County Department of Health; and Martha Robertson, chairwoman of the Tompkins County Legislature.

The 16-page manual was compiled by Linda Holzbaur, community organizer with the TCWC, and was approved by the Tompkins County Health Department (TCHD) and the New York State Department of Labor (NYS DOL). The forward was written by Nathan Shinagawa, county legislator, and the introduction was written by TCWC staff.

Laurie Lynn, president of the design and marketing firm Communiqué and former board chairwoman of the Tompkins County Restaurant Center (TCWC), explains that the law about uniforms is one that many restaurant employers and workers aren’t familiar with. The law is: “If you require employees to wear a specific uniform, you must provide them with the uniforms, replace them when necessary, and pay the cost of their cleaning, or a weekly uniform maintenance allowance, whichever is higher. The uniform maintenance pay is due now to all workers, not just those paid re minimum wage or close to it.”

In 2009, the Workers’ Center encouraged the NYS DOL to do a sweeping investigation of 22 local restaurants that resulted in the discovery that $69,000 was owed to a total of 94 restaurant workers. “We still get calls from restaurant workers, about 300 a year,” says Meyers, “and there are still a lot of restaurants in the area that are cheating their employees.”

Guidelines Offered for Restaurant Owners

Nicole Hartmann, a server at Taste of Thai Express, Pete Meyers, Workers’ Center coordinator, and Linda Holzbaur, community organizer with the center.

The manual doesn’t address food safety regulations in New York State. Instead, “It’s a user-friendly restaurant guide for workers and employers to simplify the language and explain immigration laws, tips, overtime, wage laws, payroll, uniform forms, shifts and breaks, hourly rate laws [and] unemployment insurance, to name a few important topics,” says Chase. “It’s interesting how many people don’t know what their rights are when they’re employed at a restaurant. A lot of the population has blind faith and trusts that their employers know the law.”

“Math and Arts Conference,” a two-day event to be held Saturday and Sunday, July 23 and 24, at Ithaca College, will show teachers how to use music to inspire students K through 12 to develop skills in mathematics.

The cost for attending the workshops is $100. Virtual interactive sessions are available for $50. Interested participants may register online at www.ithaca.edu/sac/summercamps/mmu/. The deadline is June 22. Two continuing education credits are offered. “This conference is an excellent opportunity to help teachers reach young people through the creative medium of music and help them develop self-confidence in math,” said Dani Novak, associate professor of mathematics at Ithaca College and conference presenter. “Our goal is to empower teachers to teach in a way that will motivate their students and allow them to shine.”

The conference will include workshop presentations such as “Music and Math” as well as GeoGebra, Simulations, and other software programs. The presentations will be held in Williams Hall on the Ithaca College campus. The interactive virtual classroom can be accessed online.
The Community Foundation of Tompkins County (CFTC) and the Community Foundation of Broome County (CFBC) have presented preliminary budget recommendations for the 2012 fiscal year, with input from department heads and division managers. The budget process aims to meet the fiscal targets approved last year, which included a reduction in spending by 7.8 percent. The recommendations include funding for grants, with a focus on young children, the environment, and the arts. The county legislators emphasized the importance of maintaining essential services and programs, and urged department heads to work collaboratively to achieve the levy goal and maintain service levels.
Down Economy Impacts Summer Camps

By Patricia Brhel

Even summer camp, the joy of vacationing children everywhere, has been affected by the economy. While prices for everything including snacks have been rising, donations are down and requests for scholarships are up, by 30-50 percent.

Middle class families who used to casually write the annual camp check, looking at it as a child’s well-deserved recreational adventure, as well as a welcome break for mom, are thinking twice about the expense, signing up for fewer weeks or less expensive camps. Lower income families, who depend on the school system during the winter for child care while they work are now hard pressed to come up with even the lowest camp fees charged by camps such as the one offered in Brooktondale at $40 per week.

Camp directors are afraid that it will be a lone summer for some children, separated from their friends and perhaps even home alone as families struggle with rising costs and look for somewhere to cut back.

Karen Coleman of Tompkins Youth Services laid out the problem faced by the Enfield Community Council Summer Camp and others in Tompkins County. “Especially in areas where there are a lot of low income students, it can be hard not to lose money, let alone run a profitable camp,” she says. “Staffing costs are the biggest expense and the biggest concern. A high ratio of staff to campers is a must.”

Vera Howe-Strait, director of the Enfield Community Council Summer Camp, says, “We have a lot of families who are asking for scholarships than ever before, but some families don’t even apply because they don’t want to ask.”

Some campers are afraid that their attendance from the Department of Social Services (DSS) will put a stop to their fun. Coleman cautions, “Parents need to do the paperwork and camps should check to make sure that the child’s family is registered.”

Coleman suggests that summer camp is more available than many parents think. While parents are encouraged to pay what they can, some camps offer partial scholarships, including Brooktondale and Enfield. Many camps, including Brooktondale, Enfield and GIAC, will help with the paperwork and families who qualify can get assistance from the Department of Social Services (DSS) and other agencies.

If a parent is working or going to school, he or she will often get assistance from the DSS, as many camps can be used as daycare substitutes. Coleman cautions, “Parents need to do the paperwork and camps should check to make sure that the child’s family is registered.”

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Summer is important for some children, especially those who might have a stressful home life. We try to get the word out through the schools with the teachers and social workers, but I know that we still have a lot of silent families, those who haven’t come to our attention. Some don’t know about the programs available, some are embarrassed to ask for help, though they shouldn’t be. A job loss or other issue could happen to anyone.”

Enfield, like Brooktondale, runs an informal scholarship program. “We don’t have money set aside specifically for scholarships, unless someone donates or we get a grant to cover it,” Howe-Strait says. “What we do is work with the parents to pay as much as they can and allow the children to attend, even if our costs aren’t covered. We hope that the families that can afford to pay the full amount will help keep us in the black and depend on donations to help make up the difference.”

Contributions for summer camp scholarships are greatly appreciated. Send donations to the Brooktondale Community Center, P.O. Box 135, Brooktondale, NY 14817; or to the Enfield Community Council Summer Camp, P.O. Box 214, Jacksonville, NY 13080.

County officials last week continued gathering information on potential options as they consider whether the county should continue to operate its Certified Home Health Agency (CHHA), now that New York State has eliminated its financial support for such agencies.

The county must decide whether the local property tax subsidy needed to operate the agency can be reduced or eliminated, or if the subsidy should be sold or transferred to another home health provider.

Tompkins County Legislature’s Health and Human Services Committee heard the perspective on the CHHA operations from representatives of Home Care of Rochester (HCR), a private, employee-owned company; HCR president Mark Maxim and Elizabeth Zicari, HCR’s vice president of clinical services, answered questions related to their experience with such transitions.

Among questions raised was how quality of care can be assured in a private organization. Zicari responded that all such agencies, public or private, are regulated by the New York State Department of Health and are held to the same standards. She also said that if an agency focuses only on the bottom-line, it would not survive in that regulatory environment.

Maxim added that private organizations have the economies of scale to spread overhead cost over more many patients than a county can do, to support cost of keeping up with changing regulations and new technology. On the issue of whether private agencies “cherry-pick” (denying cases because of financial considerations or complexity), the representatives responded that does not happen in their organization—that financial aspects are not considered and that they have not experienced people who need care being “left behind.”

Zicari disavowed, however, that some patients require too high a level of care to be cared for at home. Zicari reported said that in counties where HCR acquired a county CHHA, her company met with affected staff, most applied for positions, and the agency hired all. Wages and benefits overall, she said, were comparable, though the company could not duplicate the public pension.

The Health and Human Services Committee may offer a recommendation to the legislature on the CHHAs future at a June 14 meeting.

County Gets Input on Privatizing Home Health Care
and adds to financial and administrative burdens. Local police departments have to shoulder additional costs associated with S-Comm, including those associated with those whose deportations until they are in ICE custody. Police chiefs from around the nation have come out in opposition to Secure Communities because it strains already limited police resources and generates fear in non-English-speaking communities, which undermines the ability of the police to provide safety and security for everybody.

Civil rights groups have expressed great concerns about racial profiling and the erosion of due process rights that affects all of us. Many of the deportees are in mixed-status families that include U.S. citizens, who are then either deported with their parents, or if no one else can care of them here, are placed in foster care.

Deportations are tearing families apart and traumatizing millions of people in this country every year. In the last two years alone 600,000 people have been deported, a sharp increase since the Bush administration. The combined price tag for detailed information on deporting people is $7 billion a year ($2 billion and $5 billion, respectively), which ultimately comes out of taxpayers’ pockets.

The current enforcement-only policy also fails to address the underlying causes of immigration. What we need in this country is comprehensive immigration reform, but until we get it we need to make sure that the rights of all people in this country are protected, as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights.

The Tompkins County Immigrant Rights Coalition (ICRC) has been working to keep families together and for being beacons of light in the national immigration debate.

The Tompkins County Immigrant Rights Coalition applauds Governor Cuomo and the Common Council of Ithaca for taking a stand against these communities and for being beacons of light in the national immigration debate. The Governor’s press release can be found at www.governor.ny.gov/press/06012011FederalSecureCommunitiesProgram-CityCouncil-resolution/www.cityofithaca.org under Boards and Committees -Common Council-Common Council Minutes-June 1, 2011.

June Ritz-Deutch of Ithaca is on the steering committee of the Tompkins County Immigrant Rights Coalition and is the coordinator of the Ithaca Chapter of Amnesty International.
United Way Offers Service Scholarships

United Way of Tompkins County announces the fourth year of its Stephen E. Garner Summers of Service Scholarships.

This employment and learning opportunity, funded primarily by Cornell University’s Student United Way Campaign, will provide five paid summer internships for local high school students (first priority to those entering their senior year) at one or more of United Way of Tompkins County’s member organizations.

The internships are named in memory of Stephen E. Garner, president & CEO of Tompkins Trust Company, and former United Way of Tompkins County campaign chair and chair of the board of Directors.

The $1,500 annual internships give high school students the opportunity to learn firsthand about the health and human services sector and make an important difference in Tompkins County.

For the past three summers, students have gained a wealth of knowledge about the programs and services offered to individuals and families from our communities, in addition to learning more about United Way of Tompkins County. After the completion of the summer internships, and as a result of the positive experiences, several students have become volunteers with local nonprofit organizations.

Position descriptions and the job application can be found online at www.uwtc.org/summer-internships under Community Impact-Student Engagement, or picked up at United Way of Tompkins County. Applications are due by Friday, June 17.

For more information call 272-6286 or email Carmela LoRusso at clorusso@uwtc.org.

Gay Nicholson is President of Sustainable Tompkins.

Sustainable Tompkins is a citizen-based organization whose mission is to promote the long-term well-being of our communities and region by integrating social equity, economic vitality, ecological stewardship, and personal and civic responsibility. Visit www.sustainabletompkins.org to learn more.

Submit your question to Street Beat. If we choose your question, you’ll receive a gift certificate to GreenStar Cooperative Market. Go to www.tompkinsweekly.com and click on Street Beat to enter.

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- Kate Booth, Ithaca

“One of the things about yard sales is they have the potential to invite community. Include an activity that invites community, like an acoustic jam or children’s activities.”

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The Exceptions to the Rule

By Arthur Whitman


Granted, this column hasn’t been too kind to summer superhero flicks. To see a muddled contrap- tion of a movie like Thor as some- how “pretty good” is, to this critic’s mind, to reveal stunningly low expectations. Buried as we are in an avalanche of Batmen and Supermen and Watchmen and Fantastics and Spidermen and Iron Men and, soon, Green Lanterns and Captain Americas, it’s fair to wonder—just how much spandex induces oxygen starvation to the brain, anyway?

Of all the franchises based on Marvel or DC Comics, the X-Men series has been the least bad and occasionally even good (X2: X-Men United). Even the least of the series, such as 2005’s X-Men Origins: Wolverine or 2006’s X-Men: The Last Stand, was partly redeemed by performances by Hugh Jackman (a guy who, by his credit, never less than “all in” no matter how preposterous the material).

Jackman doesn’t star in Matthew Vaughn’s X-Men: First Class, but it still belongs on the positive side of the ledger. True, this is another soufflé with way too many cooks in the kitchen (there are, count ‘em, six screenwriting and story credits here). It’s also another cynical attempt to sidestep sequel-fatigue by producing an “origin story” of several of the series’ signature characters. And once again, the series’ theme—that Thou Shalt Celebrate Difference Instead of Fearing It—is wielded with all shoulder-tapping earnestness of the most preachy of episodes from Star Trek: Generations. Yes, yes—nobody who is different, whether purple, green, webed, or (and get set for the message here, folks…) gay, Jewish, colored, or “differently abled”, deserves anybody’s scorn. We get it. Can we get back to resent- ing perfectly ambulatory people using handicapped spaces at the mall?

I still liked First Class because the cast is first class, and because the screenplay by Ashley Miller, et al. gives them scope to show their strengths. We get Michael Fassbender (who did a memorable turn as a British spy in Inglorious Basterds) as the young, svelte Magneto, the mutant who can move any metallic object with his brainwaves. He’s more James Bond here than caped crusader, swimming onto the yachts of his nemeses and peeling off his wet suit to reveal a tuxedo. He even looks good in a turtleneck. We also get James McAvoy as an early-days “Dr. X”, the telepath who later becomes the villain cruising the globe in a groovy, shark-lined submarine that seems more Austin Powers than superpowers. Alas, it’s none too clear what Bacon’s exact talent is—something to do with “absorbing energy,” or maybe the facility with accents to transition from ruthless Nazi apparatchik to ruthless arms contractor with a drawl. (Wouldn’t you think his superpower would lie in being only six degrees of separa- tion from any given individual on the planet?) He, likewise, gets into the mad Men groove when, at a key moment in scheming with his gal pal Jones, he tells her that his drink “needs ice.”

As comparatively painless as the X-Men films are, I can’t help won- dering if it’s helping to raise a whole generation of evolutionary illiterates. No, Virginia, the vast majority of genetic mutations are not good things. Most are either neutral or harmful. Even a really cool-sounding mutation, like a working pair of wings, would actu- ally be bad if it meant the mutant was would more likely to die in a fly- ing accident before he could pass on his gift.

But of course, a mutation with truly Darwinian implications—like a guy with hyper-potent super-testi- cles who can outbreed everybody else, or extra wide female hips for safe birthing—don’t necessarily lend themselves to spandex treat- ments. Maybe the most biologically plausible mutant isn’t January Jones, but some even more fecund version of Christina Hendricks. X-Men, anyone?

**Contact Nicholas Nicoastro at nicoastrobooks.com.**

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Lake Monitoring Cruise Planned

The Cayuga Lake Floating Classroom will host a citizen lake monitoring cruise on Sunday, June 26, from 2-5 p.m., open to all water- shed residents and visitors. Volunteers with the Community Science Institute will demonstrate sampling techniques and share their experiences working to pro- tect streams throughout the region. See floatingclassroom.blogspot.com, or call 697-0166 for reserva- tions.

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**Movie Ratings**

4 4 4 4

by Arthur Whitman

**X-Men: First Class.**

James McAvoy and Michael Fassbender begin their game in X-Men: First Class.
Hangar Plays on Field of Young Dreams

By Ross Haarstad

Rounding Third by Richard Dresser, Hangar Theatre.

The fields of boyhood dreams and nightmares—in this case Little League baseball—are the well-plowed yet still fertile ground for explorations of American manhood. From the child-centric view, no one chronicled it better than Charles Schultz in just four simply drawn panels of Peanuts.

With Rounding Third, playwright Richard Dresser takes on the flipside of this dreamscape, the tribulations of the father-coaches, still haunted by their childhood games. His odd-couple comedy pits Don, the perpetual jock, winning is everything, high-octane coach whose son Jimmy is the team’s star pitcher, against the new assistant, Michael, who wants the game to be fun for the kids no matter who wins, and whose son is forever losing his glasses and dropping the ball.

Rounding Third dabbles with issues of male loneliness, competitiveness, dashed expectations, infidelity, and fatherhood as the reliving of boyhood, but never risks peeking beneath the surface.

The dialogue is moderately humorous in the vein of an extended SNL sketch, making the most of the oil and water nature of these two poles of American manhood, with a dollop of class difference thrown into the mix (beers vs. lattes, for instance.) To move his plot along, Dresser awkwardly drops in major character revelations whenever an emotional climax seems called for. That this facile, low-risk sketch is widely produced (bro-comedy, two actors, one minimal set) is unsurprising, especially given the economics of theater in this country. That the Hangar launches its season with it is surprising.

Fortunately, the season past the opener is much more exciting with the complexities and vigor of the musical Ragtime, a brand new play (Ever So Humble), more of the great August Wilson (Gem of the Ocean) and the pop-culture hijinks of The Rocky Horror Show to whet our appetites.

The Hangar production itself displayed high craftsmanship—brisk, bright and elegantly designed. Aaron Roman Weiner gave a full throttle rendering of the slightly outrageous Don, a continuing car-wreck of take-no-prisoners attitude with gleam of mania in the eyes.

As Michael, Sidney Williams, was a perfect foil: a usually gentle, slower-paced, naïve Pillsbury dough boy. Director Stephanie Yankwitt kept the pace up, and the staging simple.

The real delight this time out was the design. Jennifer L. Adams managed to pour character into simple little costume changes (abetted by set changers in baseball uniforms), while scenic designer Brian Prather, lighting designer Matt Richards and sound designer Andrew Wilhelm went to town creating summer outdoors in a sometimes dusty, sometimes muddy field and other venues. Prather put a central element of movable stadium seating against a cyclorama of Normal Rockwell sky and a faded, forced-perspective ball field. Richards lit this subtly yet romantically, with an especially appealing dreary day of rain, a few flashes of stadium lights, and a glowing late summer dusk. Wilhelm’s soundscape was thick yet very lightly laid in, with bats cracking against balls, murmuring sheets of rain, distant crowd cries, punctuated by witty pop songs in the transitions.

On to better material for the rest of the season, but with hopes that the craft of the designers holds to the standards of this opening quartet.

Sidney Williams and Aaron Roman Weiner are Little League coaches in Rounding Third at the Hangar. Andrew Wilhelm went to town creating summer outdoors in a sometimes dusty, sometimes muddy field and other venues.

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Hangar Plays on Field of Young Dreams
A Different Perspective on Still Life

By Arthur Whitman

Bulbous, abstracted forms populate Jessica Warner’s still-life paintings. Drawn from setups of peppers, beads and fragments of tree branches, her work distinctively evokes landscape: rocks and mountains with finely checked areas (perhaps tablecloth) suggesting partitions of farmland. The viewer looks down, as if from a bird’s eye view—one wants to swoop in and out.

The pieces have a refreshing airiness; the white of the paper is left mostly uncovered and areas of shading are minimal. The linework, done primarily in gouache with a narrow stick, is slightly stiff and richly calligraphic, the colors bold and opaque. Combining in some images with pencil lines, they form an intricate linear tangle. The shading, done with a brush, is watery, adding a subtle left to the line drawing, which tends to dominate.

Warner, a local artist, is showing nine of her watercolor and gouache paintings (including one diptych) at the Community Arts Partnership’s ArtSpace gallery in Center Ithaca. The work that comprises “Peppered” has a strongly consistent approach. This consistency extends here to the format and presentation of her pieces. Most of them are about 21 inches in their dimensions, not precisely square. Behind glass, on matching black frames, the sheets of paper are attached to the matting only at their dimensions, not precisely square. Behind glass, the view’s perspective of farmland. The viewer looks down, as if from a bird’s eye view—one wants to swoop in and out.

The major failing of most of this work though, to a greater or lesser extent, is the color. There are many colors in most of these pieces and they often seem willfully chosen and juxta-posed. Bright pink and cyan strike needlessly discordant notes when placed against more naturalistic tones—often reminiscent, indeed, of absurdist quality of Guston’s late figurative painting. The first two resemble comical robed figures, looking down through long binoculars. The third, the largest and frontmost rock-formation, sprouts a head like a tube of toothpaste, arced downwards. These “figures” float, like gods, above a delicate landscape of hills and fields. The landscape on the right-hand sheet is similar but its anchor, a mountain with a dotted tassel, seems pasted on rather than integral.

Warner’s still life as landscape as abstraction has a rich historical pedigree. The artist cites the abstract expressionist painters Joan Mitchell and Philip Guston as sources. The mor- dent, absurdist quality of Guston’s late figurative painting is particularly strong point of ref- erence (strong in both senses), especially so for his omnipresent piles of suggestive and repeti- tious objects. As well, the delicacy and openness of her rendering and composition are broadly in the tradition of Paul Cezanne, the pioneer of modernist still life.

“Peppered,” despite its flaws, is an engaging show, filled with moments of surprise and pleas- ure. The approach is sophisticated; it twists a familiar genre in unexpected and experience- expanding directions.

The show is up at the CAP ArtSpace through June 29. Warner will give an artist’s talk there on June 20 at 6:30 p.m.
The metamorphosis of the Commons continues. Last Monday Downtown Ithaca, the City of Ithaca, Tompkins County Area Development and the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency welcomed the addition of the latest downtown restoration project at the site of the former Plantations building located at 130-132 the Commons.

The event marked the completion of Downtown Ithaca’s most recent addition, Mia, which will open for business later this month.

Downtown Ithaca Alliance executive director Gary Ferguson says, “This undertaking was two years in the making. It was a lot of work and we’re very excited to add it to our already impressive lineup of business establishments here in downtown. It’s very attractive and many people are of the opinion that it really has a feel of Greenwich Village or Soho to it, and that’s a great compliment.”

This latest project, located on the west end of the Commons, incorporates a ground floor restaurant featuring high-end Pan-Asian cuisine, a function room, office space and eight units of housing.

“The apartments are as nice as the restaurant and they’ve already been rented out,” Ferguson says.

With a total price tag in excess of $3 million, the centrally located building looked like 50 years ago when it was in need of extensive repairs. Twenty-one years ago he arrived in Ithaca, where he started his first restaurant. Mia is a result of Lex Chutintaranond’s constant drive to create new and exciting food concepts and his desire to reflect with his roots and the food he grew up with in Thailand and India.

“Here we’ve saved an important building. It probably would have fallen down without this renovation,” says Ferguson.

The project was funded in part with a grant from the Restore New York Program and both state and federal Historic tax credits. The project was funded in part with a grant from the Restore New York Program and both state and federal Historic tax credits.

“Pretty much everything had to be replaced because things like all the original floor joists and supporting beams were really old and cut wrong and it needed a new roof. That’s just for starters. Let me just say that this endeavor was much more than applying a coat of paint,” Lex says.

“It has been extensively renovat- ed in order to facilitate continued growth downtown, provide affordable housing, office space and a 60 person capacity banquet room for which we already have bookings and we’ve made it much safer structurally. We have installed fire-walls and sprinkler systems, which makes our neighbors on either side of us very happy,” he adds.

In addition, Lex notes that this project is creating much-needed new jobs which many people are interested in, as evidenced by the stacks of applications on the restaurant’s elegant tables, which currently serve as Lex’s temporary office. “We’ll be employing between 18 to 25 people full and part time,” he says.

He also has respect for the history of the building and kept that in mind during the restoration process. “Holt Architects did a great job of researching what this building looked like 50 years ago and we were able to incorporate features of the old look back into this, such as extending the front of the building to where it once was,” the businessman says.

Getting back to the restaurant, Lex said that in Mia, as well as his other eateries, he tries to give patrons more than just a place to sit down and eat. “People work hard, they have many pressing pri- orities, so when they come to my place I want them to enjoy not only the food and service, but the ambience as well. I want them to have a wonderful experience that they will remember.”

Gary Ferguson weighed in on the new restaurant, too. “I predict Mia will be Lex’s culinary master- piece,” he says.

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www.diversityconsortium.org.

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Ali-Avon. Meeting open to anyone affected by another person’s drinking. 7pm, Dryden Methodist Church, 212 Center St., Dryden, 2292 ext 123 or dek22@cornell.edu.


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Animal Feeding, Cayuga Nature Center, 6799 Little York Rd., Trumansburg, 5-6pm, 119 W Court St., Ithaca.  info@tioherotours.com.

Art and Artists in Cascadilla Gardens, Free, 2011 Days of the Dead, 6pm-9pm, Taughannock Falls, 1299 Trumansburg Road, Route 118, Trumansburg, 615-796-2037.

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Continued from page 1

**Waste**

Cuddy is concerned that the drilling wastewater may contaminate the wastewater treatment plant. “It’s also detrimental to those down stream,” he says. The treatment plant discharges effluent into the outlet of Owasco Lake, where it flows into the Seneca River, a source of drinking water for Baldwinsville.

Currently there’s no problem, Cuddy says. He’s concerned that if Auburn continues accepting drilling wastes that New York State could have the same water quality problems that Pennsylvania is dealing with. “Pennsylvania has it worse. We can’t let their plants accept drilling wastewater. Why are we? Auburn is one of two public plants in New York that treats drilling waste fluids; the other plant is in the Village of Sherburne. According to the DEC that plant also treats vertical drilling wastewater.

Cuddy and the Cayuga Anti-Fracking Alliance are requesting that the Auburn City Council ban hydraulic fracturing within the Owasco watershed and enact a moratorium on accepting drilling wastewater fluids at the city’s treatment plant. A petition drive has generated 1,300 signatures supporting the moratorium, and on June 2 close to 150 citizens gathered for a rally outside city hall. About two dozen farmers, doctors and other residents spoke at the city council meeting that evening.

The council voted to send a message to Governor Andrew Cuomo asking that he ban hydro-fracking in Auburn and the Owasco watershed, Cuddy reported. But they took no action to halt shipments of drilling waste fluids at the city’s treatment plant.

“The mayor is in favor of gas drilling wastewater,” Cuddy said. “Our government should protect the common good. What’s next, the common good? What’s next, the common good. What’s next, the common good.”

**Energy**

Continued from page 3

The class concluded that in the short term, a mix of wind and gas could meet our energy needs, and that a slow transition away from gas to more wind turbines, with continued research into other renewable resources, would meet electricity needs in the long run.

Cathles suggests that any conversion to renewables must be gradual. “We have seven billion people on the planet that are looking to have a better life, to have the standard of living that we have. Torpedoing that with a crash conversion from X to Y could have very negative consequences,” he says. “For example, you look at the food riots in Mexico, which happened in part because we diverted food corn to ethanol production. We are one step away from doing that, and it would be operat- ing in an isolated sphere.”

Gas exploration using horizontal fracturing comes at the expense of industrializing the landscape, and has risks associated with the chemicals used in the process. Wind turbines can cause health issues for nearby residents, can impact bird and bat populations, and many people oppose them because they impact their views.

Nuclear power comes with huge risks, as we have recently witnessed following the tsunami in Japan, but newer designs like pebble beds, reactors using thorium instead of uranium, don’t risk meltdowns and cannot be used for nuclear weapons. Balanced on all of these factors is not easy, and is key to setting a hopeful energy path, class participants conclude.

**Graduation**

Continued from page 2

each parent to speak about their teen’s personal and educational growth.

Some other memorable moments included speeches given by three of the graduates about “Past, Present, and Future,” remarks from the chapter leader, Meghan McComb, and the students presenting all of the flowers, including a list of the “Worthies.” “It was very special and unique,” says Felker, adding that the ceremony concluded with the choir students playing instruments and singing a song together.

Like many other families, the Felkers then took their out-of-town family and other friends and family to a place they’d never been to, which she found too crowded. “It was a wonderful graduation to others that she’s been to, which she found too crowded and impersonal. One of her favorite parts of her ceremony was when her father read her a poem that he had written in her honor.

Like many other graduates, she’s looking forward to college and will be attending Ashland University in Ohio in the fall for fashion design. “I’ve been thinking about it to all my friends and to Ithaca,” she adds.

**Snug Planet Earns Business Award**

Local business Snug Planet LLC was honored recently with an SBA Small Business Development Award. The U.S. Small Business Administration and the New York Business Development Program hosted the 13th annual luncheon to recognize the achievements of local small business owners. A company nominated Snug Planet, for the award.

Snug Planet offers tutoring or training in energy audits, installations, and a small personal savings account, Jon has started Snug Planet out of his residence in 2006. Snug Planet is a customer-focused business committed to helping home and business owners in Tompkins County make their homes more comfortable and energy efficient.

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