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NEW BRITAIN
HERALD

Serving the Communities of Central Connecticut

VOL. 153 NO. 198

NEWBRITAINHERALD.COM WEEKEND EDITION, AUGUST 17/18, 2024 \$2.50



Lou Perillo
Southington officials excited to welcome Five Below to town

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SOUTHINGTON — City leaders are excited to learn that a Five Below location is planning to open in town. Five Below is a chain of specialty discount stores which is aimed at “tweens.” The store has most of its products priced at \$5 or less, along with a smaller assortment of products priced at up to \$25. Lou Perillo, economic development coordinator, confirmed the national brand has recently applied for a sign permit for the ShopRite Plaza at 755 Queen St. Their intention is to open in the former CVS building, an 8,555 square foot space which Perillo said closed two years ago. Perillo said he is looking forward to seeing

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Free haircuts for city school boys

CLAUDIA HILARIO
 @NEWBRITHERALD

NEW BRITAIN — As the first day of school draws near, New Britain Schools announced the fourth annual Back 2 School Hair Cut Event, a community initiative aimed at providing free haircuts to elementary school boys.

This year, three local barbershops are teaming up to provide free hair-

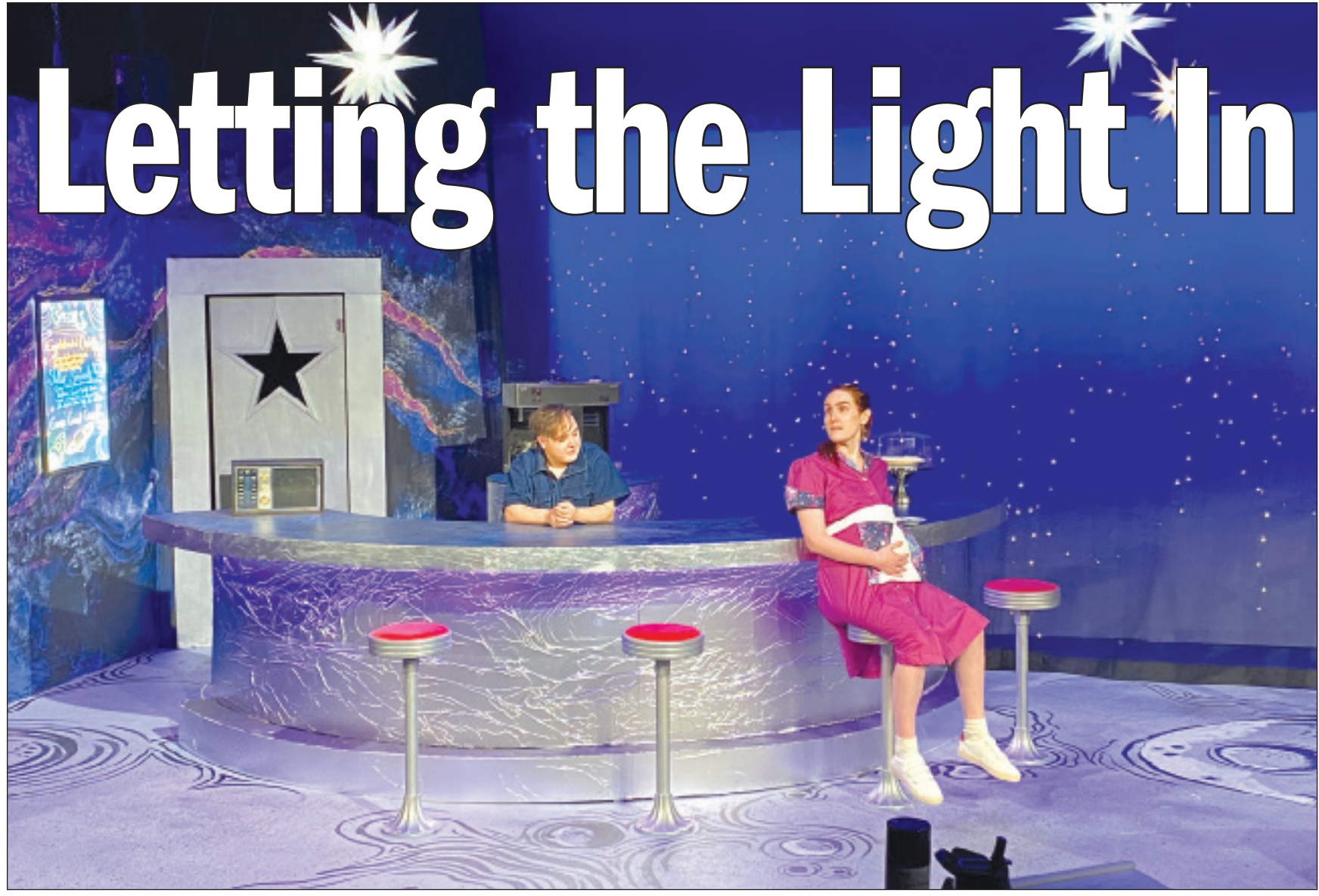
cuts to three elementary school boys, ensuring they start the school year looking and feeling their best. The schools included are Chamberlain Elementary School, Smalley Elementary School and Holmes Elementary School. The event has been scheduled for Monday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., ensuring it's convenient for everyone to participate at

their own pace and time, at participating schools across the district. This initiative, which has grown in popularity over the past four years, is designed to support families and foster community. “A fresh haircut can boost a child's confidence as they head back to school, and we're grateful to the local barbers donating their time and talent

See FREE ON PAGE 4



A student receives a haircut from a volunteer barber during last year's event in New Britain.



Letting the Light In

“Always Plenty of Light at the Starlight All Night Diner” is a play that mixes science fiction and romance genres. It will be performed at Hole in the Wall. Maina Durafour

New play set for Hole in the Wall

MAÏNA DURAFOUR
 @NEWBRITHERALD

NEW BRITAIN — Stepping into the room where the play takes place could transport you to another dimension. It's a small, intimate space, where the scene and the public seats

are close to each other. The colors are vibrant pinks and purples, with a roof full of stars. A reminder of how magical theater can be. The play will take place at Hole in the Wall Theater, but due to illness from some members of the theatrical group, the play has been

pushed to August 23, 8 p.m., for the premiere. “Always Plenty of Light at the Starlight All Night Diner” is a play that mixes science fiction and romance genres. It's about four people discovering that an asteroid on Earth will end all forms of life. Their only escape route

is to time travel back to dinosaurs' time. It's a story about different types of relationships and what is important in them. The play was written by Darcy Parker Bruce, a Connecticut author, and is being produced in the author's home state for the

first time. The director, Matthew Horowitz, knows Parker Bruce and offered him to stage the show at Hole in the Wall last year. He thought the show was a perfect fit for the small theater. “Our slogan for the last

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The Hospital for Special Care celebrated its annual Joy of Art Juried Exhibition recently.

HFSC unveils winners of Joy of Art Juried exhibition

CLAUDIA S. HILARIO
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NEW BRITAIN — The Hospital for Special Care (HFSC) announced the winners of its annual Joy of Art Juried Exhibition during the organization's annual Meeting & Donor

Reception at the Bristol Event Center. The event was a celebration of the invaluable support from the HFSC community, a crucial part of their mission to provide care to those in need, the hospital said. This edition's award

recipients were Overall Best in Show Sylvia Sarzynska with Painting Grays; First Place Photography Sydney Bryan with Cyanotyp-ed Watercolor III; and First Place Art Patricia Trapp with Colorblind. Honorable mentions

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Barcode and ISSN information: 08805 93121 1



One Liberty Square,
New Britain 06050

New Britain Herald is published each morning Monday through Saturday except on federal holidays by Connecticut News Media Inc. Copyright 2022, Connecticut News Media Inc.

CIRCULATION

For Circulation issues or questions, call 7:30 am to 4 pm. Monday-Friday and 8 am to 10 am Saturdays. 860-423-8466 ext 1 or email our circulation department at delivery@thechronicle.com. Closed Sundays.

We do not publish a print edition on federal holidays. We publish an e-edition in its place.

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POSTAL INFORMATION

The New Britain Herald, pending periodical #25570, is published 6 days per week excluding Sunday. Periodicals postage paid at New Britain, CT. Post office address: P.O. Box 229 Willimantic, CT 06226 Postmaster: Send address changes to New Britain Herald, P.O. Box 229 Willimantic, CT 06226

RATES

Single copy:
Monday - Friday \$2.00
Saturdays \$2.50
SUBSCRIPTION:
One Year: \$375

Joy of Art Juried exhibition winners

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were awarded to John Wheat with For Medicinal Purposes; Annmarie Goenne with Snowy Owl Stare; Christine Ivers with Contemplating Isabella; Shirley Mae Neu with Each Day is a Gift; and Frederick James Cliff with Plane Schematic.

The exhibition's jurors, including Brett Abbott, a renowned specialist in American photography and director and CEO of the New Britain Museum of American Art, and Woon Choi, a celebrated artist in traditional Korean Sumi ink painting and Royal Joseon Porcelain ceramics, brought expertise to the selection process.

Abbott has curated over 30 exhibitions and

contributed to numerous publications, earning accolades such as the 2010 Lucie Award for Curator of the Year and the 2012 Ansel Adams Fellowship.

Choi is celebrated for her work in traditional Korean Sumi ink painting. Choi's artistry has been recognized in various exhibitions and she is actively involved in teaching and volunteering at HFSC.

The Joy of Art! program is a cornerstone of HFSC's holistic approach to patient care. Through exhibitions, art groups and activities, the program helps patients engage with the community, express their emotions creatively and find joy during their hospital stay.

Free haircuts for boys in NB schools

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to make this event a success," said Tony Gasper, superintendent of New Britain Schools.

Hours and locations

Chamberlain Elementary School: Hosted by The Lost Art Barbershop from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Chamberlain Elementary at 120 Newington Ave, New Britain.

Smalley Elementary School: Hosted by Buzz'n Barber Shop from 12 p.m.-3 p.m. at Smalley Elementary, 175 West St, New Britain

Holmes Elementary School: Hosted by volunteers from The Lost Art Barbershop, The Barber's Factory and Industry Hair Studios from 1 p.m.-3 p.m. at a private location

Letting the light in

Continued from Page 1

20 years has been 'letting in the light,' and since 1972, it's been a small stage where big dreams are possible," Horowitz said.

As the director, he is the one who chose the cast and the crew involved in the project, like Jill Dvorsky.

She is the stage manager of the show, and her role is to check all the props and sets needed. She has to make sure they are where they should be to facilitate the actors' play. She also checks with each actor that they have all the props they need on the set.

"All of the stuff that you see, I have looked over and arranged before the show goes on," she said. "I'll do that every night before the show."

She joined the project through her husband who is one of the actors, playing the role of Dr. Moxi. At first, she was just hanging around, but they needed a stage manager. Having previous experience in that role, she jumped in.

"It's my favorite job to do with the theater," she said. "That's why I wanted to do it. And the show is amazing. And the actors; it's a wonderful story. It's queer science fiction. It's exactly what we need right now."

Robert Ecker, who plays Dr. Moxi, describes the character as a MacGuffin, something that is necessary to the plot and the other characters but is unimportant itself.

Dr. Moxi is an eccentric physicist who has discovered a way to time travel.

Ecker said he is "boisterous and loud and completely lives in his head, and his ideas, but he really does think well of everyone around him, although he's not sure why they're actually there."

To him, the play in which he performs is worth seeing, because it's local and it has not been widely shown. But also because it's well-written.

"It's a very queer show and that itself is just such a refreshing thing," he said. "It

kind of takes the subtext out of it and brings it into text. And I like that. It's a very honest show."

Ecker has been doing theater since he was a young kid and has never stopped since. One of his favorite things about theater is the collaborative aspect, something he particularly enjoyed in this play as well.

"You have to work with a group of people, you have to listen as much as you speak. So much of the play is not what's being said, but how people are behaving around it," he said. "So, for a while, you think about everything and then you stop thinking about everything and you just let it happen. And it's completely magical."

A lot of work is put behind the construction of a play and lots of people play a role in creating a show that will be entertaining and beautiful.

Hole in the Wall Theater is a small theater located on Main Street, in New Britain. There, all the workers are volunteers, passionate about theater and about making the place lively.

Maranda Gallo is the president and head of marketing of the theater. The theater chose the plays it is going to present by a general membership vote.

"Yearly, we have our annual meeting, and just like all of our meetings, anyone who attends is automatically a voting member and can help us shape our season," she said. "Not a lot of theaters do it like that, but it lets us make sure that our season is full of shows that people are really excited about"

About two months before the show opens, the director and producer of the show are assembling their producing team with which they meet to organize auditions.

"That's when all the real fun begins, auditions start, sets get built and all the chaos turns into the incredible shows that we get to put on," Gallo said.

Once the auditions are done, the actors start learning

their text and the producing team works with them to teach them exactly where they should move and what they are supposed to do.

"Bit by bit, over six weeks, it evolves until everyone feels natural and knows exactly what they should be doing," Dvorsky said.

Three days per week, the actors and producers are doing a three-hour rehearsal to make the play come to life. The set is unique and does not move, which makes it easier, and allows the team to put more effort into the set.

"We were able to make this kind of imaginative set to make you feel like space and a little disconnected from regular reality," Dvorsky said.

Dvorsky believes theater is underrated and wishes more people would come to productions. It's a different experience than a movie theater.

"Unlike when media is filmed or recorded in some way, all of the magic happens in real-time," she said. "And so, the audience and the actors are working together to create a feeling in the room and it can't really be recorded or reproduced. It's a singular thing that happens in real-time."

To her, plays are important because they gather the audience together. It's an important feeling, especially nowadays, when society is fragmented and people have so many disagreements.

"I love this play for that in particular because it's about different relationships that look differently than we think of regular relationships and how important that they are."

For Horowitz, the director "people should come see this play if they enjoy lovingly crafted art that tells stories of found family, impossible science, sapphic yearning, difficult phone calls, dinosaur identification and infinite cups of coffee."

The playwright's first night will occur on August 23 at 8 p.m. and will be performed until September 7.

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Five Below on Queen St.

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that storefront occupied again.

"It is great to see the space filled," he said. "And it is great to see that a national retail brand is still interested in coming

to Southington. That bodes well for both Queen Street and the Southington market in general."

Perillo said he has not yet received information about the exact date that Five Below plans to open.

Five Below also has locations in Plainville, in the Connecticut Commons plaza, and Bristol, in Bristol Plaza.

The Bristol location celebrated its grand opening this July.

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