



LITCHFIELD COUNTY LUMINARIES RECENTLY TURNED OUT EN MASSE AT CARNEGIE HALL TO HELP THE NEW YORK POPS CELEBRATE ITS 18TH YEAR, A TESTAMENT TO THE LINK THEY'VE FORGED TO NEW YORK'S VENERABLE ARTS SCENE



'A PLACE OF PEOPLE'

WRITTEN BY BARBARA MEHLMAN ♦ PHOTOGRAPHED BY M. J. FIEDLER
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A FULL moon hung suspended in the cloudless, ink-blue sky. The air was crisp in New York City, and a gentle breeze ruffled through the hair of the rich and generous as they entered The Plaza Hotel on Monday evening for dinner, dance and conversation, all having paid between \$500 and \$1,500 per person for the privilege.

And a privilege it was. This exquisite event represented the culmination of a benefit for one of New York's quintessential institutions, The New York Pops, and all 800 guests were supporters of this worthy organization.

This was the second half of an evening that started hours earlier, when guests were treated to a gala concert that brought the stars of Broadway, Hollywood and television to the stage of Carnegie Hall — considered by many to be one of the greatest concert halls in the world.

The show, honoring New York City Schools Chancellor Harold O. Levy, included featured guest artists Reba McEntire, Linda Lavin, Ben E. King and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's favorite singing cop, Officer Daniel Rodriguez, and was co-hosted by syndicated journalist Liz



Smith, among others.

Proceeds from the event help fund the Pops' extensive education programs and the series of free Summermusic concerts in New York City parks — causes that bring out the generosity in supporters of the arts.

Geographically, rural Litchfield County in neighboring Connecticut seemed far removed this evening, but its New York influence was strongly evident in the staunch show of support from the Litchfield Hills. And as the evening unfolded, a number of these arts angels revealed the impetus for their generosity.

It's not unusual for wealthy individuals to patronize the arts. But what is remarkable is that Litchfield County residents are among the Pops' — and Carnegie Hall's — most prominent and philanthropic supporters.

The reason they are can be found right in New Milford. Two of Litchfield County's most civic-minded residents, Skitch and Ruth Henderson, are essentially the "mom and pop" of The New York Pops. And their neighbor and

Please turn to 5H, CONNECTION

COUNTY CONNECTION Under the direction of New Milford's Skitch Henderson, inset, The New York Pops presented a Salute to Music at Carnegie Hall on Monday. Above, Litchfield County supporters who attended the gala included, in back row, Jim Scott of New Preston, a Pops founding member and president of Scott Pools; Ruth Henderson of New Milford, Pops president and co-chairman of the New Milford Hospital Foundation; Arthur Johnson of Watertown; Ellie Rittman of New Milford. Seated: Carol and Bob Lenz of South Kent, Junie Freemanzon of New Milford and Susan Scott of New Preston.

INSIDE PANORAMA



HOPE FOR HAITI

The small Caribbean nation of Haiti looks to tourism to salvage a failing economy. But some wonder, if they build, who will come?

Page 8H

STARTUP.COM

A new film follows two friends through the start and finish of their Internet venture.

Page 3H

ALSO INSIDE

- Stage 2H, 6H
- Greenwald 2H
- Screen 3H, 6H
- Arts Beat 4H
- Travel 7H, 8H

THEATER: WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE



Jamison C. Bazinet / Republican-American

Joanne Woodward with Christopher Plummer, right, and Gene Wilder as she unveils plans for Westport Country Playhouse's 2001 season.

Westport Theater Readies For a Sizzler of a Season

By Joanne Greco Rochman
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Judging from the number and brightness of the celebrities positioned at the Westport Country Playhouse, there is no doubt that the theater's 71st summer season will not only be star-studded, but a virtual constellation.

Shining brightest will be Joanne Woodward, who took over the reins of the Westport theater last year. At a recent press conference announcing the theater's 2001 summer season, Woodward was flanked by actors Gene Wilder and Christopher Plummer. Nearby were the hottest new director to light up the theater world, Darko Tresnjak, and the playwright David Wiltse.

Following the conference, the Republican-American was invited to the theater's Green Room and

spoke privately with Woodward, Wilder and Tresnjak about their summer plans. Plummer, who will be doing a special benefit performance at the Playhouse this summer, stayed long enough to say "hello" to everyone before leaving, and playwright Wiltse had to hurry off to a book signing — he is a novelist as well as a playwright, and his latest thriller was just off the press.

Woodward, who will be directing Richard Greenberg's play, "Three Days of Rain," said she was attracted to the work because of the three young people in the play and its focus on architecture. The play is about three adults living in their parents' shadows, who find an intriguing family journal that leads to unexpected revelations and consequences.

Please turn to 4H, STARS