

Former Le Moyne pitcher now a college coach

As the venerable Philadelphia Phillies and the upstart Tampa Bay Rays begin their historic World Series showdown this week in the City of Brotherly Love, a former Syracuse SkyChiefs pitcher prepares for a new career as a college coach.

Cassidy leads Generals

Former Syracuse SkyChiefs hurler Scott Cassidy, an alumnus of Liverpool High School and Le Moyne College, was chatting with his former Triple-A pitching coach, Rick Langford, at Alliance Bank Stadium after the Chiefs' final game of the season on Labor Day (a 4-2 victory over the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees).



Russ Tarby
Downtown After Dark

Langford, who had a lengthy and productive pitching career with the Oakland Athletics, had coached Cassidy at the Triple-A level when the Le Moyne grad hurled for the Toronto Blues Jays' farmhands here in Syracuse.

Having retired from baseball this past spring after pitching with major-league teams the Milwaukee Brewers, San Diego Padres, Boston Red Sox and Toronto Blue Jays, Cassidy was glad to report to his mentor that he has accepted a head coaching position at Sullivan County Community College in the Catskills. Cassidy celebrated his 33rd birthday on Oct. 3.

Regional champs

The Sullivan Community College Generals baseball team won the NJCAA Region XV Championship last season with a 12-3 win over Dutchess CC. The 2008 Generals (17-17), coached by Mike Marra, went a perfect 3-0 to win the school's first-ever baseball championship. Sullivan Community College dropped its baseball program after the 1986 season and started it back in up in 2006. Marra now works as head coach at Monticello High School, opening up the opportunity for Cassidy to lead the Generals.

Sullivan CC is located in Loch Sheldrake, just east of Liberty and north of Monticello. It's an excellent career move for Cassidy whose status as a former major-league hurler gives him a leg up when it comes to recruiting and communicating with his junior-college players.

Dennis on the drums

Those big Bosphorus cymbals will crash and clang in perfect time to the music of the Central New York Jazz Orchestra when drummer Dennis Mackrel performs as guest artist at 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 25, at the Carrier Theater, at the Mulroy Civic Center at OnCenter, 411 Montgomery St., in Syracuse. The concert is presented by the CNY Jazz Arts Foundation.

Having made his professional debut at age 10 in Anchorage, Alaska, Mackrel, who's now 44, has blossomed into one of the most versatile and highly respected musicians on the international jazz scene.

Not only has Mackrel mastered the trap set, he's also become a gifted composer and arranger. His work has been recorded

and performed on Grammy-winning recordings by the Count Basie Orchestra, the Dizzy Gillespie All-Star Big Band and the McCoy Tyner Big Band, for starters.

For info, visit dennismackrelmusic.com.

Ticket prices range from \$19.50 to \$27.50, and students and CNYJAF donors and JASS members receive a \$5 discount. For tickets, call 435-2121. For CNY Jazz Arts info, dial 479-JAZZ, or visit cnyjazz.org.

Subsequent performances in the CNYJO schedule include appearances Feb. 8, 2009 by Nicole Henry at Hotel Syracuse's Persian Terrace; and, back at the Carrier Theater, trumpeter Michael Philip Mossmann on March 28 and baritone saxophonist Gary Smulyan on May 16.

'Black Lagoon' Monday

The 1954 horror classic "The Creature from the Black Lagoon" will be screened in 3-D at 7:30 p.m. Monday Oct. 27, at the Spaghetti Warehouse, 689 N. Clinton St., near the Inner Harbor. The film was the first of three featuring "The Gill Man," an amphibious being from deep within a South American backwater. Monday's screening is part of the Syracuse Cinephile Society's fall film series, which runs through Dec. 1.

Admission to each movie costs \$3, or \$2.50 for Cinephile members. For information, call the Spaghetti Warehouse at 475-1807.

Russo released in Japan

In September 2008 Vivid Sound Corporation (a major Japanese record label) released two CDs by Johnny Russo & The East Hill Classic Jazz Group. The discs will be available throughout Japan.

A mainstay on the Ithaca scene, Russo plays piano, trumpet, sings and composes.

These two discs — *Swingin' Happy* and *Swingin' Sweet* — showcase songs such as "Chinatown" and "La Vie En Rose," respectively. Each CD has 13 tracks.

East Hill's most recent domestic disc is *I Have Dreamed* which includes a few standards like "Getting to Know You" and originals such as "In Satch and Django's Day."

The two Japanese discs represent a retrospective of Russo's musical partnership with guitarist Doug Robinson. Johnny said this dual release in an Oriental market may well be the greatest achievement of his 51-year career. And that's coming from a cat who has played Carnegie Hall!

For East Hill band info, including an overview of the Vivid discs, visit watershed-arts.com/.

Harmonious duo

The new husband-and-wife duo Dick Ward and Carol Bryant harmonize from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Saturday Oct. 25, at Cora D's, off Hinsdale Road, in Camillus.

Ward, a terrific finger-picker, is one of the founders of the local chapter of the Guitar League while Bryant is a vibrant vocalist who adds plenty of personality to every performance. They present an eclectic mix of standards and originals, great guitar work and rich vocal solos and harmonies.

"Cora D's has a terrific menu and is just starting to feature music in their swank little cocktail lounge," Ward said. "It's a



Dennis Mackrel hits the skins with the CNY Jazz Orchestra Saturday Oct. 25, at the Mulroy Civic Center; 435-2121.

great place for a nice dinner or drinks." Check out the menu at mysite.verizon.net/vze4xyc9/corads/index.html.

The crooning couple returns to Cora's on Nov. 15 and 29. For reservations, call 488-9593.

Oberlin sings Yip in NYC

Next Wednesday Oct. 29 in New York City, Westcott Nation expatriate Karen Oberlin will reprise a show she debuted last year at Syracuse's Jazz Central. The award-winning cabaret singer will perform "The Wizard of Words: Yip Harburg's Songs of Wit & Wisdom," at the Metropolitan Room, 34 W. 22nd St. Showtime is 10 p.m., and costs \$20 plus a two-drink minimum; (212) 206-0440.

Then, on Nov. 1, Oberlin will sing at the Mabel Mercer Cabaret Convention at Rose Hall at Lincoln Center.

The sultry chanteuse is the daughter of former Syracuse Symphony Orchestra principal flutist John Oberbrunner and Carol Oberbrunner, a talented violinist, pianist and vocalist. Oberlin is an alumna of Nottingham High School. Visit her at karenoberlin.com.

Half-century of hot jazz

The Bear Cat Jazz Band, led by 88-year-old cornetist Dick Ames, will celebrate its 51st anniversary from 4 to 7 p.m. on Nov. 9, at McNamara's Pub in Camillus, playing compositions by Jelly Roll Morton, Joe "King" Oliver, Duke Ellington and Sidney Bechet.

Principal percussionist for the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Herb Flower, has signed on to play drums that day for the Bear Cats.

The concert is hosted by the Jazz Appreciation Society of Syracuse, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and presentation of traditional New Orleans jazz. For JASS info, call the society's president, Bobby Morris, also a talented trombonist, at 652-0547.

Herd at Syracuse Stage

Sudanese clay cows are available during the run of *Tales from the Salt City*

By PennyMaria Jackson

Sudanese clay cow figurines will greet people in Syracuse Stage's lobby during its run of *Tales from the Salt City*.

Made locally by the "lost boys of Sudan," the Sudanese Clay Cow Project is organized by St. Vincent De Paul Church, which has a congregation of about 150 Sudanese refugees, said Carl Orpallo, director of the church's refugee ministry.

"I think it's a perfect match with a young man who is a Sudanese 'lost boy' being a part of the play, and having one of their cultural crafts to be displayed at the same time," Orpallo said. "People can see some of the Sudanese culture."

Tales from the Salt City is based on seven Syracuse residents' immigration and adjustment to life in Central New York.

Besides Sudanese Lost Boy Lino T. Ariloka, the cast includes Gordana Dudevski from Macedonia, Rebecca Isabel Fuentes, who grew up in Tijuana, Cuban immigrant José Miguel Hernández, Cambodian



These cows come in all shapes and sizes and colors.

refugee Emad Rahim, Syracuse native Albert Marshall and Jeanne Shenandoah from the Onondaga Nation.

Ariloka has been a Syracuse resident since 2001. That year, some 4,000 Sudanese "lost boys," who fled fighting in Sudan's lengthy civil war and grew up in refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia, were granted refugee status and

allowed to immigrate to the U.S. Ariloka said the Syracuse Stage production is important for the entire community.

"It reminds people of how diverse Syracuse is," he said. "People do not know there are as many communities as they'll see in the show."

Ariloka said that children in Sudan make clay cows for toys. The Syracuse "lost boys,"

now men, began to create the clay cows after a church refugee worker saw a similar project at the Arizona Lost Boys Center and suggested it might work here.

"The idea was to use whatever donations we receive for the Sudanese young men to pursue their educational plans," Orpallo said.

The church has been able to continue the clay cow project with assistance such as the Syracuse Ceramic Guild's offer of clay and a kiln for firing the figurines.

Other venues throughout Central New York, such as Auburn's Schweinfurth Memorial Art Center, have also sold the cows.

Ping Chong, who directed and co-wrote *Tales from the Salt City*, said fundraising often occurs during the run of his plays, which he creates to encourage communities to embrace members who may be different from them.

"It's a good opportunity for them to raise money," Chong said.

Syracuse University student

Lora Scarson attended Friday's opening night performance. She said she enjoyed the show, which moved her to purchase one of the Sudanese Clay Cows.

"It's for a good cause and I wanted to give back a little something," Scarson said.

Ariloka, who is grateful he can continue his education in America, said he hopes people continue to support the Lost Boys.

"The mission for the clay cows is to help us get to school," he said. "The money we get from them can help us buy books, to say the least. So it turns out not to be just toys but something of value."

Tales from the Salt City runs through Nov. 2 and the clay cows are on sale throughout that time.

PennyMaria Jackson is a Goldring Arts Journalism Masters student at Syracuse University. She is very interested in the power of art to transform communities. Reach her at pmjackson@syr.edu.