

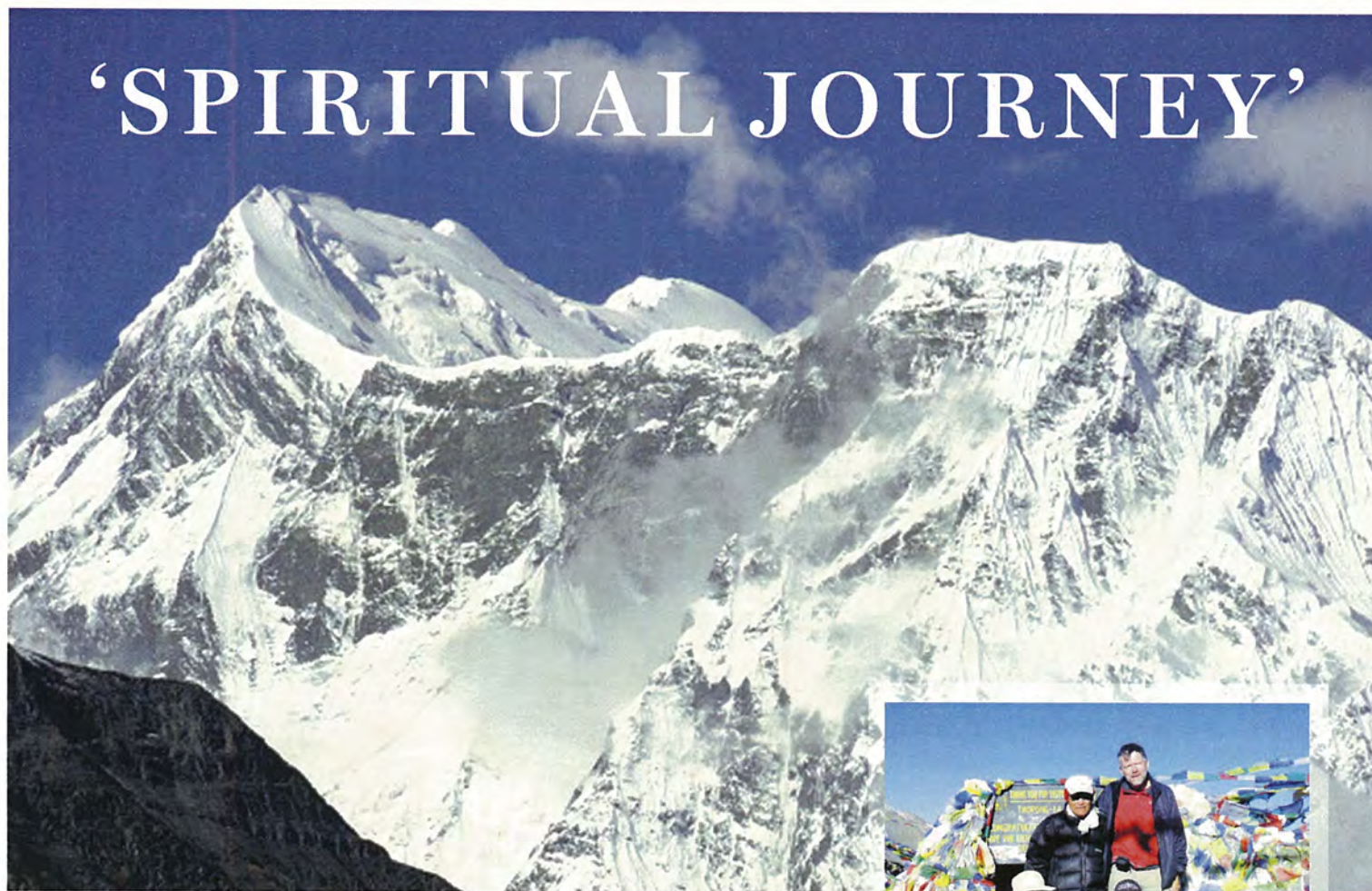
ARTS & MORE

METROWEST & BEYOND

INSIDE SECTION C

Movies..... C2, 6-7
 Travel..... C8
 Television..... C10-11
 Calendar C13

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ADVENTURE

Framingham Town Counsel Chris Petrini chronicles his hike through the Himalayas



A

BY CHRIS BERGERON
 DAILY NEWS STAFF

As an Eagle Scout leading youth treks at Philmont Scout Ranch in 1981, young Christopher Petrini was so inspired by the mountains of New Mexico he pledged to someday hike the Himalayas. For three decades, the Framingham resident attended college and law school, married and raised a family, served on the school committee, board of selectmen and, in 2001, was appointed town counsel.

Approaching his 50th birthday last fall, Petrini laced on his old hiking boots and kept his promise to himself by trekking through the Rooftop of the World.

For 16 days in September and October, he and friend John Bottini hiked 150 miles along the Annapurna Circuit through central Nepal, reaching heights of 18,000 feet amid panoramic vistas of spectacular beauty.

SEE PETRINI, C6



Inset, Chris Petrini, back right, and friend John Bottini, kneeling, left, both of Framingham, hiked 150 miles along the Annapurna Circuit of central Nepal with their Sherpa guides. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS BY CHRIS PETRINI



BOOKS

Moore wins praise, strong reviews

'Heft' is second novel for young Framingham author



BY CHRIS BERGERON
 DAILY NEWS STAFF

Whether writing or singing, Liz Moore tries to "express the inexpressible."

In her second novel, the 28-year-old Framingham native achieved that contradiction through the redeeming bond that grows between a solitary 550-pound ex-professor and a troubled adolescent, brought together by a mother who can barely manage her own life.

Published last month to strong reviews, Moore's "Heft" brings alive the voices of flawed and desperately funny characters

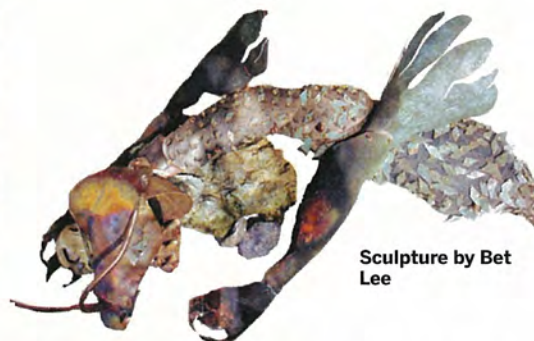
SEE MOORE, C6

ART

Enter the dragons



Dragon painting by Judy Funkhouser



Sculpture by Bet Lee



The end of Chinese New Year is celebrated with lanterns, above. Right, teacher Qing Xiong Ma stands in front of one of his dragon paintings.



Painters, potters greet New Year with dragon-inspired art

BY CHRIS BERGERON
 DAILY NEWS STAFF

L EXINGTON — Judy Funkhouser paints imperial dragons with blazing eyes.

Keith Nelson's dragons fly through the clouds in a swirl of claws and tails. Painting or making pottery, Bick Mee Lee infuses her dragons and maidens with the energy and beauty of Hong Kong where she grew up.

Dragons are so mysterious for their painting teacher Qing Xiong Ma, he hides them among the misty mountains of his native China. Chinese New Year officially ar-

To hear an artist talk about her work, go to the **Multimedia** tab at metrowestdailynews.com.

rived last week but there's still "Dragons and More" at the Lexington Arts and Crafts Society.

In a fruitful collaboration, the Chinese Painting Guild and LACS Ceramics Guild are showing and selling paintings, pottery and other art inspired by dragons.

For most of us, it's 2012, time to elect a president.

For traditional Chinese, the lunar year of 4709 is the Year of the Dragon, a time when healthy children

SEE 'DRAGONS,' C7

THE 84TH ANNUAL Academy Awards

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, ON ABC

BY JAY BOBBIN

Best Picture

- » "The Artist" Thomas Langmann, Producer
- » "The Descendants" Jim Burke, Alexander Payne and Jim Taylor, Producers
- » "Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close" Scott Rudin, Producer
- » "The Help" Brunson Green, Chris Columbus and Michael Barnathan, Producers
- » "Hugo" Graham King and Martin Scorsese, Producers
- » "Midnight in Paris" Letty Aronson and Stephen Tenenbaum, Producers
- » "Moneyball" Michael De Luca, Rachael Horovitz and Brad Pitt, Producers
- » "The Tree Of Life" Nominees to be determined
- » "War Horse" Steven Spielberg and Kathleen Kennedy, Producers

JAY'S PICK: Not only does "The Artist" truly exude artistry, it celebrates film and also displays a worldview of moviemaking, a combination that is all but impossible for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which gives out the Oscars, to resist. Clearly, that is the picture to beat in this race, though the field of nominees surely represents great variety. That goes from a popular choice ("The Help") to the latest achievements by two of our greatest directors (Scorsese's "Hugo," Spielberg's "War Horse"). And good on Brad Pitt for having two contenders here ("Moneyball," "The Tree of Life"), and also on Woody Allen for making it back in with his very accomplished and entertaining "Midnight in Paris." As for "The Descendants," the compensation is that the majority of its most pivotal parts have separate nominations.



Best Animated Feature Film

- » "A Cat in Paris" Alain Gagnol and Jean-Loup Felicioli
- » "Chico & Rita" Fernando Trueba and Javier Mariscal
- » "Kung Fu Panda 2" Jennifer Yuh Nelson
- » "Puss in Boots" Chris Miller
- » "Rango" Gore Verbinski

JAY'S PICK: "The Adventures of Tintin" not being in this category is one of Oscar's most stunning omissions this year, if only for its creative pedigree. (Um, what's that director's name again? Spielberg or something?) With that said, I just don't see the American contenders — "Kung Fu Panda 2," "Puss in Boots" and "Rango" — as strong enough to be Academy Award-worthy. Sure, they all had their enjoyable points, but to be the Oscar winner in any category takes much more than that. It's the highest level of accomplishment in the industry for a given year, and on that count, I'd rather have the considerably more unique "Tintin" as an option. That leaves "A Cat in Paris" and "Chico & Rita." And here comes the coin toss ... I'll call it for "A Cat in Paris."



Best Directing

- » "The Artist" Michel Hazanavicius
- » "The Descendants" Alexander Payne
- » "Hugo" Martin Scorsese
- » "Midnight in Paris" Woody Allen
- » "The Tree of Life" Terrence Malick

JAY'S PICK: A best picture winner not having a corresponding best directing victor can be mystifying, but this could be one of those years, since for all the evident style of "The Artist," Martin Scorsese stepped outside his box and showed an equal amount of it with "Hugo." And the Academy just loves that man, so it will may take this opportunity to reward him for expanding his boundaries so visibly, creatively and successfully. At the same time, here's to Woody Allen for landing himself back in the directing race (and, for that matter, the best original screenplay race) for his best-reviewed film in some time. And neither Alexander Payne nor Terrence Malick outputs movies too regularly — to risk understatement — and the quality of their current entries makes them worthy nominees as well.

PETRINI

Continued from page C1

An Eagle Scout, Petri knew Botini, an actuary from Framingham, from their mutual involvement with the Boy Scouts in which they've both been scoutmasters.

Trekking with a Sherpa guide, they lived on rice and lentil stews and soups. They climbed up and down mountain passes sometimes so arduous Petri pounded both big toenails off. They hiked over suspension bridges and along rocky paths with herders, merchants and Buddhist monks to the highest freshwater lake in the world within view of several of the tallest mountains on the globe.

Like other pilgrims before him, Petri said, amid the fatigue, occasional illness and stupendous beauty, his trip became "a spiritual journey" during which he "glimpsed" moments of soul-altering serenity.

"It's hard to express it in words. But when you see those huge mountains reaching into the clouds, you just have to take a broader perspective on things," he said, relaxing in the offices of the Union Avenue law firm he founded. "You see there's much more to life than you see when you're caught up in the everyday fray."

To preserve and share those memories, Petri worked with Michael Lamy, a communications major at Boston College, to make a video of his trip.

Lamy used about 400 of the 1,300 digital photographs Petri took and added a sound track to make a fascinating 40-minute video "Trekking in Nepal: a 50 Year Spiritual Journey" that captures Nepal's natural grandeur and the adventure of achieving of a lifelong dream.

Petri will screen and discuss his video, Wednesday, Feb. 8 at 7 p.m. in the Costin Room of the Framingham Library.

For several months before leaving, Petri worked with personal trainer Michael Sylvester who put him through a rigorous routine that increased his stamina and flexibility

and helped him lose 15 pounds.

After a 30-hour flight with layovers in Hong Kong and Bangladesh, he and Botini arrived in Kathmandu, Nepal's ancient capital which is 4,400 feet above sea level.

At first impression, Petri recalled "a jumbled mass of humanity of people grabbing at you to sell you something or take their cab."

They learned that day a small plane operated by Buddah Air had crashed on its way back from Mount Everest, killing 19 passengers and crewmen.

Before leaving the U.S., Petri had hired a local guide, Sherpa Nawang, who'd been recommended by a friend who'd served in Nepal with the Peace Corps.

On Sept. 29, they set off from Bhulbhule walking on narrow trails through small villages and past surging rivers and tumbling waterfalls. At night, they stayed in local lodges with modest amenities.

Petri's color photos combine shots of children, rural scenes, temples and massive snow-covered mountains looming in the distance.

Many of the scenes are accompanied by a sound track of personal favorites by Dire Straits, Jackson Browne and Grateful Dead.

Throughout the film, he includes quotations that reflect his appreciation of Nepal's beauty and the growing sense that the trek became a vehicle to heightened awareness and appreciation of life's ephemeral joys. Offering their own insights, the Grateful Dead sang in "The Wheel" "If the thunder don't get you, then the lightning will."

For more than two weeks, Petri lived in a digital vacuum, cut off from his wife, Julie, and daughter, Tabitha, a Marian High senior, and son, Shawn, a soldier serving overseas. Cut off from the usual amenities, the normally buttoned-down lawyer couldn't shave and resembled a smaller version of Sasquatch.

On Oct. 16, after 150 miles on which he dropped another 10 pounds, Petri arrived back in Kath-



"Trekking in Nepal: a 50 Year Spiritual Journey"

WHERE: Costin Room, Framingham Public Library, 49 Lexington St.
WHEN: 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8
INFO: 508-532-5570.

mandu where he paid a local barber 100 rubies to shave off his hermit's beard with a straight razor.

Back home for several months, Petri has returned to many familiar routines that drove him to seek solace in the thin Himalayan air. He accepts those responsibilities but clings to the memory of waking in the brisk morning air, seeing cloud-shrouded mountains looming ahead.

He recalled setting off one morning around the 10th day, tired, his lungs aching in the thin air when "the clouds parted like a curtain" unveiling and seeing in the distance, the mountain Annapurna II, rising 26,040 feet in a cobalt blue sky. "It was just an unbelievable moment," he said.

Throughout the trip, Petri meditated on a statement by Henry David Thoreau that he included in the video because it expressed his deepest feelings: "It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see."

For armchair travelers and seasoned trekkers alike, Petri's "Spiritual Journey" will remind you not just to look but to see.

MOORE

Continued from page C1

who'll claw and connive their way into readers' hearts.

Russell Banks called Moore and "Heft" the "real deal." "She's written a novel that will stick with you long after you finished it. A beautiful book," he wrote. Impressive praise from the author of "Affliction," "The Sweet Hereafter" and "Lost Memory of Skin."

How does a Framingham High honors graduate who wrote poetry, sang in the jazz choir and painted posters her English teacher still remembers come to make what a reviewer called a world of "lonely, vulnerable misfits" so entertaining and moving?

Moore said she spent four years "writing tons of drafts" and revising her novel's structure to create the distinctive "voices" of the story's main characters.

Despite obvious differences, she feels she can understand "the great loneliness and loss of connection" driving their lives.

Her quasi-autobiographical first novel, "The Words of Every Song," published in 2007, incorporated her own experiences singing in Greenwich Village and working for a record company. She also started the Liz Moore band and released a CD, "Backwards," of songs she wrote.

Moore said, "In some ways I tried to create characters in 'Heft' very far removed from myself."

"But I think there's a lot of me in them. I invested both characters with emotions I've felt in my life," Moore said from Philadelphia

where she teaches creative writing at Holy Family University. "Sometimes it's necessary to create characters so different so I can honestly explore things I've felt."

Moore will appear Thursday, Feb. 9, at 7 p.m. at Porter Square Books in Cambridge to read from and discuss "Heft." She'll appear with author Alex Gilvarry who'll read from and discuss his novel "From the Memoirs of a Non-Enemy Combatant."

Moore said growing up in Framingham "helped me immensely" to write about "American themes," like social class, often ignored by other novelists.

"Framingham is the most diverse place I've ever been with a real mix of class, race and every type of person," she said.

She called attending Framingham High School "one of the greatest gifts of my life" and credited English teacher Will Cook for encouraging her passion for writing and literature. She recalled studying in his class James Joyce's short story "The Dead" with its haunting final passage that, she believes, still influences the rhythms of her prose.

The head of the FHS English Department, Cook remembered Moore as a "polished and mature" writer whose senior project, consisting of her own poems, was "a most outstanding" accomplishment. And he remembered Moore's "incredible artistic ability" and "a beautiful poster she made illustrating one of her poems."

Moore said she was "lucky" to have her parents,

SEE MOORE, C7