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**Friends of WSO**  
**Welcome Lee Corcoran**  
WESTFIELD - The Friends of Westfield Symphony Orchestra, the auxiliary and fundraising arm of the orchestra, has announced the selection of Lee Corcoran, left, of Westfield to join Veena Sharma as co-president. In her remarks at the recent Friends' season-opening Overture



**BEST FRIENDS...** Lee Corcoran, left, and Veena Sharma of the 'Friends.'

party, Ms Corcoran highlighted the group's calendar for the upcoming season, which includes a variety of gourmet luncheons, the annual holiday party for members and spouses, a progressive dinner in spring and the premier annual fundraiser, A Tour of Notable Homes.

Ms. Corcoran also provided information about the orchestra's upcoming concerts: Monster Music on October 30, a Halloween spectacular presenting Lon Chaney's 1925 movie *The Phantom of the Opera* with live symphonic soundtrack, and Home for the Holidays on December 4, a family festival of songs, music and sing-a-longs to celebrate the beginning of the holiday season.

Learn more about the Friends of WSO at [westfieldsymphony.org](http://westfieldsymphony.org). New members are welcome. If members of the public would like to cultivate new friendships and enjoy a series of social events while providing support for Westfield's professional symphony orchestra, contact the Friends at (908) 232-9400.

**Arts & Entertainment**

**Westfield, Mountainside Residents Film Indy Short *Crackers* in S. Amboy**

By **CHRISTIE STORMS**  
*Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times*

WESTFIELD — When Westfield resident Gregory Principato last spoke with *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* in 2008, he had just attended the New York City premiere of his documentary, *Mr. Laughs: A Look Behind the Curtain*.

The film, which chronicled the life of actor-comedian Sal Richards, went on to win many awards, including Best Documentary honors at four film festivals.

Now, Mr. Principato has just finished shooting his independent short film, *Crackers* the movie, in South Amboy. It features cast and crewmembers from the local area along with well-known actors, including Vincent D'Onofrio and Brenda Vaccaro.

The film tells the story of an Italian chef whose happy-go-lucky existence is shattered when his loud, overbearing mother-in-law suddenly moves in with his family.

Mr. Principato got the idea for *Crackers* during a "haunted tour" of New Orleans about 10 years ago.

"Although it's a dark story, it's funny," he said. "It's dysfunctional, but it's about how someone could be pushed to the point of insanity."

Mr. Principato has extensive experience working on films, including *Jumanji* and *Die Hard III: With a Vengeance*, and television series "Spin City" and "Law & Order: Criminal Intent." He is currently first assistant cameraman on HBO's "Boardwalk Empire" series.

After mulling over his original plot, Mr. Principato sought a writer to help him transform his ideas into a script. He found one after his wife, Jennifer, was asked to proofread a novel written by Timothy Reinhardt,

a fellow parent at their children's preschool.

She read excerpts from the Mountainside resident's book to her husband, and he could immediately see he and Mr. Reinhardt shared a similar sense of humor.

"So, we met for two and a half hours; I described the story and characters...and within six days, he had written 60 pages for me," Mr. Principato said. "I couldn't ask for a better writing partner."

Mr. Reinhardt also spoke highly of Mr. Principato and the knowledge of film-making he brought to the project, adding that the two just "clicked" when writing together and became friends.

"The script is a combination of Greg's vision of how he saw the movie being shot and my ability to add words to that," he said. "It's an art piece...It's a labor of love and him expressing himself."

He said the biggest challenge was to tell a complex story in only 30 minutes.

Mr. Principato, who also served as director and a producer, spoke of the additional challenge of consolidating the entire shoot into a five-day period in September. He said because he didn't have the "luxury" of taking his time, he did have to abandon some ideas and/or artistic shots.

"It's definitely different...the movie on the page, the one you shoot, and then once it's edited," Mr. Principato said.

It was also his first time directing a child actor.

Vincent "Cenzy" Mora, an 8-year-old Franklin School student from Westfield, plays the mute neighbor and dear friend of the main character. While he has a background performing in various shows from a young age, this was his first film role.

Vincent said it was definitely a different type of experience to por-

tray a character who cannot speak.

"Everything is going on all around me...and I'm reacting to them," he said. "It's a lot of facial emotions."

He appreciated the guidance Mr. Principato and others on the set offered.

"He's a good actor," Mr. Principato said. "He delivered the emotion when I needed it and did a great job."

Vincent's father, also named Vincent Mora, serves as an executive producer for the film with Mr. Reinhardt, Mrs. Principato, Frank Colli, Walter Lamb and Frank Ricci. Michael Franklin is assistant director and co-producer with Mr. Principato.

The film also features television stars Anthony Laciura ("Boardwalk Empire"), Dan Hedaya ("Cheers"), and Beth Ann Bonner ("One Life to Live"), along with Sal Richards from *Mr. Laughs*.

Now that filming has concluded, Mr. Principato will begin editing, a task he also handled on *Mr. Laughs*.

"On a documentary, you're doing a lot of writing in the editing room," he said. "But here, everything was written, and you have to make the transitions work and rearrange the clips to get the rhythm of the story. It's a different puzzle to put together."

Mr. Principato hopes to have a rough cut in a few weeks, work on the musical score with his brother and start screening in the winter.

He would like to have the film initially run the festival circuit and, ultimately, get it recognized at Cannes or Sundance, which would help make it eligible for an Academy Award.

"I want people to notice it's fresh...a little break from all the big Hollywood movies we've seen lately," Mr. Principato said. "It's not about blowing things up or selling soda. You can be entertained and laugh about some wacky people for a half-hour."



**GOING CRACKERS...**(Above) Vincent D'Onofrio's character, Gus, drills holes in his overbearing mother-in-law's nutcrackers on the South Amboy set of *Crackers*. Pictured, left to right, are: Nicolas Catania, Mike Latino, Carl Prinzi, Nicolas Deeg, director Gregory Principato and Mr. D'Onofrio. See story at left. **LEARNING ON THE JOB...**(Below) Westfield resident Gregory Principato directs 8-year-old Vincent Mora of Westfield, who plays Luke in *Crackers*.



**Jersey City Author Revisits Scene of Forgotten Battle**

By **MARYLOU MORANO**  
*Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times*

WESTFIELD - It has been 50 years since American historian Thomas Fleming released "Now We Are Enemies: The Story of Bunker Hill."

To commemorate this milestone, American History Press released a 50th Anniversary Edition of this highly acclaimed account of the June 17, 1775 battle.

Mr. Fleming's book started with a magazine assignment he received to write a one-page article about the Battle of Bunker Hill - an early part of the American Revolutionary War.

In the course of his research, the author learned that there had not been a book written about the battle for nearly 85 years.

"The Civil War and the two World Wars had overshadowed the Revolution's story, reducing it to a mix of myth and glittering phrases in most Americans' minds," said Mr. Fleming.

As part of his research, the author traveled to Boston, where he took a taxi out to the monument and saw for himself the fort built by the Continental Army in a single night after learning British soldiers based in Boston were planning to attack.

"At the heart of the story lay a totally unknown British plan to launch a massive assault on the American army outside Boston on June 18, 1775," explained Mr. Fleming, who is a native of Jersey City.

"American spies had discovered this cold-blooded intention to abort the revolution in its cradle, and this

triggered the decision to build a fort on Bunker's Hill.

"I slowly realized there was a legend of Bunker Hill [that] was very much alive in most Americans' minds - and was the real story, about which most Americans, including me, knew next to nothing about," he continued.

For example, most people do not realize that the Battle of Bunker Hill

was really fought on Breed's Hill because Breed's Hill was closer to Boston.

"From Bunker Hill, their cannon balls would have fallen short," said Mr. Fleming.

"Now We Are Enemies" is superbly researched and is written in such a way that it "humanizes history."

Utilizing historical notes, papers and memoirs, Mr. Fleming writes about the events leading up to the Battle of Bunker Hill, including the altercation at Lexington and Concord, as well as the actual battle itself.

The outcome of the battle, which was a defeat for the Americans, was turned into a victory, once British losses were taken into consideration.

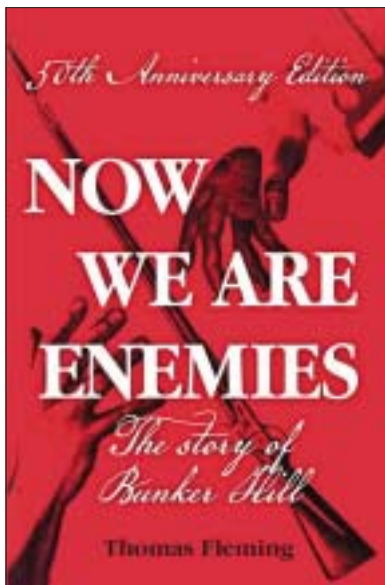
"[The Americans] were 'forced to retreat largely because they ran out of ammunition, a blunder best explained by the makeshift organization of the American army at this point in the war,'" explained Mr. Fleming.

"[However,] almost 50 percent of the attacking force had been killed and wounded...[This] was the beginning of Bunker Hill's transformation from defeat to legendary victory," he added.

In addition to "Now We Are Enemies," Mr. Fleming has written 20 nonfiction books and 23 novels. Many of his books take place in New Jersey.

He is the recipient of Boston University's Burack Award for Lifetime Achievement in American History and the Governor Richard Hughes Award from the N.J. Historical Commission for Lifetime Achievement in American History.

He is a frequent guest on The History Channel, C-Span and PBS. "Now We Are Enemies: The Story of Bunker Hill" is available at all area bookstores.



**Oak Ridge Hosts Paul Jackson 5K This Saturday**

CLARK - The Paul Jackson 5K at Oak Ridge Park will take place this Saturday, October 9, at 9:30 a.m. at the Clark park on Oak Ridge Road.

Registration begins at 8 a.m.; the 5K run commences at 9:30 a.m., with a two-mile, wheelchair-friendly walk to begin at 9:45 a.m. The event will

feature a DJ, kids activities and snacks.

The Paul Jackson Fund assists individuals and families who are facing a financial crisis due to a long-term illness or disability. For more information about the fund, visit [pauljacksonfund.org](http://pauljacksonfund.org) or on Facebook.

**Community Players Open With *Abie's Irish Rose***

WESTFIELD - The Community Players of Westfield opens its 76th season with the comedy *Abie's Irish Rose*.

Jewish "Abie" Levy brings home his Irish bride, Rosemary Murphy, whom he met in France during the war. To appease his father, Abie introduces Rosemary as "Rosie Murpheski," a Jewish girl. Papa Levy is fooled until Rosie's father, Patrick Murphy, arrives and a comic war erupts.

The season will continue with *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, opening in January. *A View from the Bridge* opens in March, and *Smoke and Mirrors* opens in May.

Tickets for *Abie's Irish Rose* are \$20. Show dates are Fridays and Saturdays, October 9, 16, 22 and 23 at 8 p.m., and Sunday, October 17, at 3 p.m. Student tickets cost \$10 and are available with valid ID for the matinee only.

To learn more, call (908) 232-1221 or visit [westfieldcommunityplayers.org](http://westfieldcommunityplayers.org).

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