

## Two WF Fiber Artists Won't Cut Corners On Quality

By MICHELLE H. Le POIDEVIN  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

**WESTFIELD** — "Fiber Revolution: Quilts as Art," an exhibition at the Brodsky Gallery in Princeton will underscore poignant and distinctive pieces by Westfield natives and fiber artists Joan Dreyer and Carolyn Lee Vehslage, who are members of Fiber Revolution, a band of 30 art quilters from New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Delaware and Massachusetts.

Seventeen of the 30 members will participate in the show, which was organized by Fiber Revolution member and Toms River resi-



"Motherboard Meltdown Versions 2.5-2.8: Four Patch," by Carolyn Lee Vehslage.



"Requiem (for Greta)," by Joan Dreyer.

dent Joanie San Chirico. The exhibit will run from Monday, October 20, to Thursday, November 20.

Dreyer, a founding member of Fiber Revolution, will present "Requiem (for Greta)," an assemblage of swirled fabric and sheet music devoted to Greta Schoenemann, a freshman who died on the campus of Westfield High School (WHS) on September 11, 2002.

"My daughter (currently a WHS sophomore), was a friend of Greta's," explained Dreyer. "I had to find a way for my grief to work itself out."

As a child, Dreyer joined her mother and sister, who were seamstresses, in experimenting with fabric and fabric scraps, and in growing as an artist, chose to fuse innovative printing and surface design methods with conventional quilting.

Vehslage, whose parents met as neighbors living across the street from one another on Westfield's Harding Street, is a former resident, who was mostly raised in Rye, N.Y. She currently resides in Erial, near Philadelphia.

Continued on Page 19

## INSIDE : QUEEN OF ARTS SHARES THE SPOOKY DETAILS ON HALLOWEEN CRAFTING

# Arts & Entertainment



Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
**THE NEW FRED AND GINGER...** Considering themselves to be "typical Westfield folks," residents Kara Shovlin and John Russitano host their own weekly television program, "Make you Wanna Dance." Pictured, above, the dancing duo takes a break in picturesque Mindowaskin Park.

## Just Regular Westfield Folks With Their Own Television Dance Show

By SUSAN M. DOUGHERTY  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

**WESTFIELD** — Some people dream of being on TV and hosting their own show, so they work long and hard at developing a talent, honing their skills and networking to meet the right people. Others just seem to fall into the industry through a series of events.

Westfield resident John Russitano exemplifies the former, while co-host Kara Shovlin, also of Westfield, is more like the later. Ask Russitano if it was his hard work and unflagging determination to get his own TV show, and he will tell you it was all that, but some people could consider it to be "more of a fluke."

Russitano and Shovlin's weekly half-hour show entitled "Make you Wanna Dance" premiered by Comcast, Channel 74, during the first week in October.

For a number of months and even years before the signing of this show, Russitano and his producer partner Marc Principato tried to get studios to buy a half-hour comedy show they had produced with Russitano as a stand-up comedian. Because that dream didn't become a reality, Russitano decided to work on his acting and dancing skills to "build up the old résumé."

He took two free ballroom dancing lessons advertised at a studio, was hooked, and then looked around for a place where he could continue to take lessons for free.

That's when he paired up with "Shall We Dance," a Kenilworth studio. He did jobs around the studio for the complementary lessons.

"Until then I was a 'street dancer,'" he said, explaining that he watched people in clubs and various places, imitating their moves and forging his own style based on what he saw.

After completing formal ballroom dance lessons, and even becoming a professional dance instructor with Fred Astaire, North American Dance Teachers Association, Russitano now calls himself a "street social dancer," which he feels incorporates "the energy of street with the ballroom dancing that has impacted my street style to give me finesse."

He isn't the stereotypic ballroom dance instructor, though. In fact, he is a blue-collar worker by day for Westfield's Department of Public Works.

"I'm a teamster," he said proudly, "not what most people might think of when they think of a dance instructor."

Shovlin got on board as co-host of the program through her brother-in-law who is a longtime friend of Russitano. Although Shovlin and Russitano both worked at the same dance studio, it was never at the same time.

"When John called me up one day and asked me if I was interested to co-host, I didn't hesitate," said Shovlin, when discussing how the duo had never previously danced together.

Shovlin explained she had given

birth to her second son a few months earlier, so she was between jobs. The show's perfect venue for her talent and creative energy seemingly fell into her lap. But she too had worked for years as a professional dance instructor before the "instant" stardom of TV.

Since June, three months' worth of shows have been shot, and with a full-year contract, they have plenty of room to continue doing what they like.

"Our show is a perfect combining

Continued on Page 19



## The Music Corner

With Brad Tinfow

## Successful Opening Relished by WSO

By BRAD TINFOW  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

**WESTFIELD** — Music Director and Conductor David Wroe opened the 2003-2004 season of the Westfield Symphony Orchestra (WSO) on October 4 at the Union County Arts Center in Rahway.



Brad Tinfow for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
**APPLAUSE, APPLAUSE...** Pianist Adam Neiman and Westfield Symphony Orchestra Music Director and Conductor David Wroe receive hearty applause.

The unifying theme of the evening's offerings was program music, or music inspired by a non-musical idea, such as a poem or painting. In addition, two of the works were arrangements originally composed for piano solo.

The concert was sponsored by Merck & Company, whose representative was awarded a plaque in recognition of the firm's service to the arts in Union County and the 100th year anniversary of the opening of its Rahway facility.

The concert began with three selections from Morton Gould's Family Album Suite: Maestro Wroe pre-

ceded the performance of these pieces by reading the composer's annotations from the score. These remarks were non-musical guides to what was occurring in the pieces.

All the pieces were cleverly composed and highly evocative of their subject matter. "Nickelodeon" suggested the rapid-fire scene changes and melodrama of an old silent movie, while "Old Romance" captured the wistful remembrance of a lost love.

"Horseless Carriage Galop" was the most clearly imitative of the three pieces, as the orchestra sounded the winding of the crank, traveling music, horse clopping, neighs, and automobile horns.

Wroe and the orchestra captured the character of these three pieces perfectly.

The showcase work of the evening was Moussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition, in a rarely heard version arranged for piano and orchestra in 1977 by Lawrence Leonard. The piece originated as a piano solo, and was later orchestrated brilliantly by Maurice Ravel.

Pianist Adam Neiman's interpretation was thoughtful, impassioned, and lyrical, depending on what the music required. He played with a lovely singing tone throughout and employed a wide palette of sound.

Despite the awkwardness and technical difficulty of the piano writing, Neiman demonstrated a complete command of the instrument. His formidable skill allowed him the freedom to create an involving music experience for the audience in each succeeding moment.

Because Moussorgsky's music is so original, the work was generally effective, although several of the pieces in this arrangement were less musically satisfying than others.

Some of the interplay between piano and orchestra produced little musical advantage over the original

Continued on Page 19

## Nomahegan Art Show Went Beyond Norm

By MICHELLE H. Le POIDEVIN  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

**CRANFORD** — Every fall and spring, Rose Squared Productions brings the Fine Art and Crafts Show to Nomahegan Park in Cranford. Until this fall, the only real difference between the two seasons was the inundation of leaflets distributed by politicians working feverishly up to November's Election Day deadline.

However, this year, more inventive crafts could be found amid the booths of cinnamon-roasted almonds and hot, braided pretzels.



Michelle H. Le Poidevin for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
**THE SEARCH IS OVER...** One shopper, who had been looking everywhere for Metal Magic lanterns and candleholders, finally met their maker, Lennie Kaumzha, right, at the Fine Art and Crafts Show in Nomahegan Park.

Besides the usual painted wood chatkies and dust-collectors were items rarely seen before, whirligigs of stained glass, handcrafted sterling, gold and polymer clay jewelry fashioned beyond the average imagination.

One attendee told Lennie Kaumzha of Metal Magic in Easthampton, Mass. that she had been searching far and wide for his candleholders, chandeliers and candelabras cleverly crafted from

tin cans after she saw them at a previous show.

When illuminated, the metal sculptures emit incredible patterns of light. Kaumzha explained, "Using an oxy-acetylene torch with a pencil-thin flame, the original designs are burned into the tin can without drawing or stenciling. The cans are then shaped by hand. The action of the heat on the metal turns the tin dark, almost pewter-like."

Modestly priced, the lanterns can be ordered at [www.rovers.net/~himeka](http://www.rovers.net/~himeka).

Little Claymates creations, which were vended nearby, are formed using sturdy polymer clay like Fimo and fired in a confection oven. Teeny witches and figurines marking different professions and holidays could be personalized and worn on a necklace at \$15 a pop, while other jewelry pieces were more elaborately designed for an evening of elegance.

Pennsylvania-based Glass Expressions and Stained Glass by Jo Allyn of Manchester were noteworthy exhibitors in the category of stained glass. Both vendors offered flattering designs for lamps, windows and suncatchers for every season. Jo Allyn offered beveled heart-shaped suncatchers for \$5 each. No one could beat the price and the quality.

Finally, Michael T. Dunn Distinctive Handcrafted Jewelry of Petersburg, N.Y. and Purple Gem Designer Jewelry by Alan Uchin of

Continued on Page 19

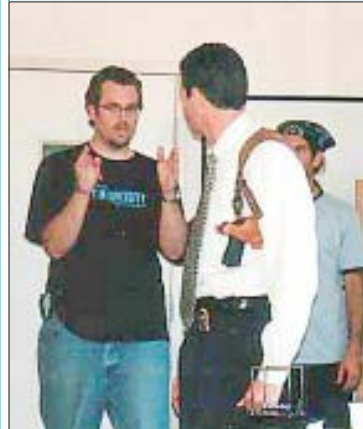
## "Alias"-Inspired Ind. Film Shot By Westfielder

By LISA M. BASILE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

**WESTFIELD** — It was only last year that *Just Add Pepper*, an independent film by Westfield director/writer Peter Paul Basler, was screened at the Rialto Theater in town.

This year, Basler has a new independent film in the making, entitled *As Cool As Jennifer*, which is inspired by the popular ABC dramatic television series, "Alias."

Basler's group, The Tomorrow Project, along with Semper Mental Productions and @will Productions, is anticipating the com-



**HERE'S YOUR MOTIVATION...** In producing and directing his latest independent film, *As Cool As Jennifer*, Peter Paul Basler made certain that actors knew their muse and motivation.

petition of the film before the end of this year.

"The shooting is done," Basler told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*. He also mentioned that his group is awaiting a new film editing system.

"Hopefully it will all be done by the end of this year," he said. The film may play in 2004 at The Rialto.

*As Cool As Jennifer* is about a female college student, Cali Brauer, played by Kate Dillingham, an actress from New York City. But the character of Cali is not just any college student, but a spy whose parents were killed by a rogue agent.

According to Basler, the movie involves Cali's search for meaning in life, romance and avenging the agent who killed her parents.

Basler and The Tomorrow Project shot *As Cool As Jennifer* this summer, including scenes from various nearby locations, including Ferraro's Restaurant, Edison and Roosevelt Intermediate Schools, as well as Westfield High School (WHS).

Filming also took place at Fairleigh Dickinson University and Drew University.

A teacher in the television program at WHS, Basler selected a handful of the high school students who wanted to join his filming crew and gave them the opportunity to participate behind the camera.

Sean Devaney, who recently

Continued on Page 19

## Pen & Ink: With Michelle Le Poidevin

### CBS' 'Joan of Arcadia': Will The Real God Please Stand Up?

By MICHELLE H. Le POIDEVIN  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

"Newsflash! You don't have to keep letting me in on your thinking process. I'm omniscient." That's God speaking as a telephone wire repairman. Those of us who thought that, especially through prayer, God longed to hear our thoughts and concerns, will now become familiar with CBS's "Joan of Arcadia" version which aims to replace the white-bearded, hellfire and brimstone version most of us recognize with the disguises of garbage men, newscasters, bratty school children and mimes.

Watching this show Friday night, I had both versions of my conscience seated on either shoulder — you know, the smarmy little devil and the meek, just angel.

"They're just being artsy. Those television writers are just playing on the whole 'you can see God in everybody' theme," said the devil, chomping on some Cheetos.

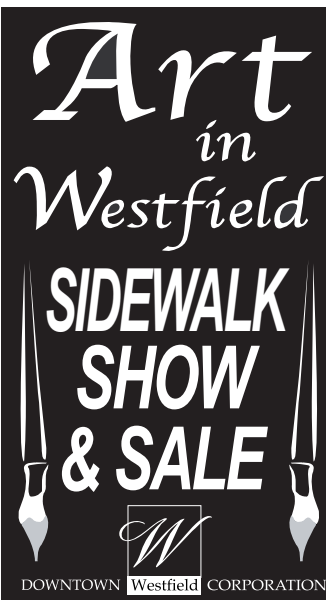
"Oh, no," the angel nudged in, "God would never say those things or appear that way. Remember what Jesus said to St. Thomas? 'Happy are those who have not seen, yet still believe?'" Although she was paraphrasing, the angel made the most sense, yet the devil had a point too. We are taught to see God in everybody, but believing He could represent himself wholly through a gelled up news anchor was over the top. Maybe even near blasphemy, especially when he smugly informed Joan, "It's me, you know, king of kings, lord of lords."

Amber Tamblyn, who plays Joan Girardi, the girl receiving the unholy visits, is a product of ABC's "General Hospital," where she surpassed most of her fellow actors. She deserves the primetime role, although the lines she delivers make me less than fond of her. When her father, played by the commanding Joe Mantegna, shuts off the television, cutting the cord between the news anchor and Joan, she goes into Exorcist mode, needing to reconnect. Her family knows she's been "hearing voices," but dad, the police chief, has an arson investigation underway and that takes precedence.

Her next encounter of the fabricated-kind comes when a garbage man in an orange suit persuades her to work to her potential. After asking "God" why he "always has to be so mean," he tells her, "Just because I speak doesn't mean anyone has to listen." Does that sound like

Continued on Page 19


## Westfield Art Association



Saturday, October 11  
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
(Raindate October 18)

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