

Arts & Entertainment



Christie Storms for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
HEART AND SOUL.....Saxophonist Benny Reid gives it his all, performing tunes inspired by the memory of his sister at The Crossroads in Garwood.

Former WF Resident Debuts 'Findings' at Crossroads

By CHRISTIE STORMS  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

GARWOOD — It was standing-room only at former Westfield resident Benny Reid's CD Debut Party at The Crossroads in Garwood last Saturday night. Mr. Reid and his band performed music from his newly released contemporary jazz CD "Findings," as well as a sampling of new material.

The crowd interjected applause at several points during each song, apparently impressed by Mr. Reid's saxophone playing and the talents of guitarist Richard Padron, bassist Dan Loomis, keyboardist Pablo Vergara and drummer Kenny Grohowski.

Former Westfield resident Kevin Brown, who had played trombone in the same Boy Scout jazz band as Mr. Reid, drove up from Maryland to watch him perform.

"This is just awesome to see," Mr. Brown said.

Rebecca Reyman, who, as a freshman, played trombone in the Westfield High School band under Mr. Reid's direction, was also enjoying the show.

"He is a very, very talented musician and a great guy to work with," Ms. Reyman said. "He definitely knows what he's talking about and knows how to talk to high-school kids."

During a break, Mr. Reid offered to autograph copies of his new CD, and a line immediately formed straight back to the door.

Ronnie Frankel, whose son, Lee, owns The Crossroads, said she was impressed by the large turnout. As a family friend, she commented that she had seen Mr. Reid practice saxophone as a child and was happy to see him on the Garwood stage.

Cranford's Les Marmitons Chapter - 'Oui Men Can Cook'

By LINDA B. CONDRILLO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

MOUNTAINSIDE — There's something about a man in a uniform. If he happens to be well equipped with some high-end culinary utensils — well, let's just say, "You had me at bonjour." And the icing on the cake — he'd tell me I'd never be allowed to set foot into my own kitchen. A fantasy? Mais non!

Les Marmitons — an international gastronomic and social club of gentlemen who share a common interest in fine food, wine and the culinary arts — is alive and well in the suburbs, and wives around town couldn't be happier.

While regular gatherings of Les Marmitons are customarily off-limits to ladies, Valentine's Day is an obvious exception. On February 23, couples from the Cranford chapter of Les Marmitons enjoyed a belated sweetheart's celebration at the all-male cooking club's newest venue, Restaurant 89 in Mountainside.

Bob Rial, a machine designer from Cranford, is the Les Marmitons Cranford chapter president. Wearing the traditional chef's costume — white jacket and traditional toque (hat) — Mr. Rial told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, "We are cooking for our wives tonight, and it will be murder when we get home if we screw things up."

We also wanted to show our spouses that we actually do get together and cook."

He noted, "The motto of Les Marmitons is 'from friendship to gastronomy,' and we strongly push the friendship part — gastronomy is an extra added plus."

According to Mr. Rial and the organization's website (lesmarmitons.org), a typical evening goes something like this: eight times a year, a professional chef is invited to lead the cooking event, usually at a restaurant or a lodge with adequate facilities.

The guest chef creates a menu and the club purchases the gourmet meal. Members break into teams, each of which prepares a course of the preplanned menu under the direction of the invited chef.

During preparation, the chef moves throughout the kitchen, providing guidance to each team member. A sommelier selects wines that will

complement and frame each course, and when dinner is complete, everyone is responsible for clean up. As a fundraiser, a bottle of wine is raffled off. Mr. Rial noted, "The wine raffle part usually keeps the members involved in the cleanup process."

The annual Valentine's Day cooking event is a self-directed evening, meaning no guest chef is invited. Converging in what Mr. Rial defines as "an organized chaos," the men went right to work and prepared a five-course meal for their spouses and significant others.

There were a variety of interesting starters on the menu, including tapenade, smoked trout pate and a cheese plate. Pasta e fagioli followed, with pan-seared scallops next and a grilled pear salad with bacon, cranberries, Roquefort and port vinaigrette dressing.

The entrée was lemon chicken with smashed red potatoes with garlic and parmigiano.

For those who had any room left, dessert was hazelnut chocolate cake. Each dish was paired with a different wine.

According to Mr. Rial, "The Valentine's Day dinner is a nice way for the wives to meet so that they know one another when we attend other Les Marmitons events together."

He noted, "The cooking season starts in September, and the last event is held in

May. Every June, the chapters take their turn hosting the 'International Reunion of Les Marmitons.' This year, it's going to be held in Longueuil, Quebec, and many of us from the Cranford chapter will be attending. In the summer, I host a barbeque at my house for the membership, keeping the party going."

Mr. Rial also noted that the Cranford and New Jersey chapters will co-host the 2008 International Reunion at the Grand Summit Hotel.

Richard Dreher, a CPA from Westfield and the club's treasurer, noted, "We (the members) have cooking skills from boiling water to those who are well equipped, and we encourage all skill levels to do this as a hobby. It's intended to be fun because we have a good time and enjoy working together; and wait 'till we get the wine going!"

Jim Fraser of Pottersville is one of the men who can do more than boil water. "I'm more than a good cook," said Mr. Fraser, carrying a bright red toolbox and wearing a big smile. Like many members of Les Marmitons, Mr. Fraser learned about the club after seeing an advertisement in *The Star Ledger*. Mr. Fraser noted that he had taken numerous classes at the Kings cooking school and has learned a great deal from the guest chefs at Les Marmitons gatherings.

Mr. Fraser said, "Rather than tricks of the trade, and maybe more important, what I've learned are different techniques. For example, I've learned how to bone out a chicken so that you end up with a bird with the wings and legs attached, but no carcass."

Reaching into his neatly organized tool box, where one would ordinarily expect to find things like a hammer or a wrench, Mr. Fraser pulled out a pair of heavy duty cotton-lined dishwashing gloves instead.

He noted, "These are far more practical for turning a chicken in the oven than tongs, which often break the skin." Mr. Fraser told the newspaper he felt the single most important tool every cook should have is a good set of sharp knives — and they need not be expensive.

Mr. Fraser noted, "The Forscher Victorinox line are quite affordable." He also told the newspaper that he's enjoyed learning new recipes to bring home to cook for his wife, Gail, who is an associate professor at Kean University. Mr. Fraser remarked, "You meet nice people, eat great food — what could be better? You will come to know an army of people who you can call on for advice."

At the event, Joe Nelson of Iselin was in charge of the grilled pear salad. A high-school social studies teacher and a Major in the US Marine Corps Reserve, Mr. Nelson became aware of Les Marmitons while watching a special broadcast on the Food Network.

Mr. Nelson said, "Al Roker was doing his 'Roker on the Road' spe-



AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN... Joe Nelson, left, an infantry officer in the U.S. Marine Corp. Reserves, and Bob Rial, president of Les Marmitons, Cranford chapter, slice Bosc pears for the third course — a grilled pear salad with bacon, cranberries, Roquefort and Port Vinaigrette, which was served to their wives at the Annual Valentine's Day dinner event at Restaurant 89 in Mountainside.



Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
JAZZING IT UP...At the end of "Brotherhood of Man," the cast joins in to rock the house; A FEMINIST'S NIGHTMARE...Rosemary, played by Arielle Smelkinson, tells her secretarial friends she's "Happy to Keep His Dinner Warm"; I WANT MY MONEY BACK...Secretaries singing "Paris Orange" realize they have all been duped into thinking their gown was one-of-a-kind.

TAKE THE STAGE

Funny Business Abounds In WHS's How to Succeed



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

WESTFIELD — The Westfield High School's (WHS) drama and music departments put on quite a show with last weekend's *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*.

Greg Nelson throws himself into the lead role of J. Pierrepont (Ponty) Finch full tilt; so right from the first number, the audience sees it's in for fun with his facial gymnastics and vocal superiority.

With music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, this winner of seven Tony Awards and a 1962 Pulitzer Prize is the zany story of a window washer's meteoric rise to chairman of the board of the World Wide Wicket Company. Window washer Ponty reads a self-help book that, through voiceover instructions, walks him through steps to his ultimate rise.

Ponty's love interest, Rosemary, charmingly portrayed by Arielle Smelkinson, is smitten with the young upstart who fairly ignores her. Ms. Smelkinson's clear, sweet voice matches the intensity of her bright eyes and winsome quality.

Totally credible, Rosemary sings, "Happy to Keep His Dinner Warm," (a philosophical nightmare for a feminist) and the audience falls in love with her way before thickheaded Ponty does.

The ensemble dance piece, "Coffee Break" when office personnel

MS Library Hosts Artist Showcase

MOUNTAINSIDE — The second-annual Artists' Showcase sponsored by the Friends of the Mountainside Public Library will be held on Sunday, March 11, from noon to 4 p.m. at the library.

This event provides an opportunity to view and purchase artworks created by local artists in a relaxed environment. All of the artworks are original, one-of-a-kind pieces and include oils, acrylics, watercolors, photography, sculpture, mixed media and more. Artists from a three-county area, including Union, Essex and Middlesex counties, will be represented.

Admission is free, parking is available and refreshments will be served to those in attendance.

The event will include a silent auction, featuring fine artworks donated by the participating artists.

The library is located at Constitution Plaza. For more information, call the library at (908) 233-0115.

enact their caffeine withdrawal if they don't get their morning fix of the black liquid is great-stylized fun.

In all of the dance numbers, choreographer Lauren Hansen, ably assisted by student dance captains Kristen Dilzell and Jana Goldfarb, makes good use of the impressive, gargantuan office-building set designed by Roy Chambers.

The tap dancers in "A Secretary is Not a Toy" are especially energized and enthusiastic.

Senior Patrina Caruana, playing Smitty the office pal of Rosemary, provides comic moments and great stage presence in "It's Been a Long Day," a cute trio number with nice harmonies with Rosemary and Ponty that is well reprised later.

The boss of World Wide Wicket Company, J.B. Biggley, handled expertly by Max Lazar, plays right into Finch's hands. Mr. Lazar affects laughable mannerisms appropriate to an elderly egomaniac.

Ellen Scariati plays Miss Jones, the boss's no-nonsense secretary, who is charmed by Ponty's insincere flattery. Ms. Scariati's portrayal of Jones is right on the money with her fine acting skills and stellar voice, which she displays in "Brotherhood of Man."

Aaron Eisenberg gives an original, memorable portrayal of nerdy Bud Frump, the boss's nephew. Mr. Eisenberg's movement on stage, especially in the animated dance with Hedy's fur wrap is physically infused with the right amount of frailty.

Melanie Jackson as the hilarious bee-hived secretary Ms. Krumholtz and Mia Pafumi as Hedy, the blonde bombshell who is the married boss's girlfriend, have fun with their roles.

Correct casting can make or break this show that has a very long first act, scads of dancing and vocal numbers that can be physically demanding even for energetic teens.

Thanks to director Darlene White, vocal coach Sharon Reynolds and musical director Eric Johnston, and the countless behind the scenes stars, the show, like a good business ven-



Nancy Ori - "Botanical Berries"

Reeves Reed to Present Nancy Ori's Photos

SUMMIT — The Reeves Reed Arboretum in Summit will present "The Soul of a Tree Exhibit" by Berkeley Heights photographer Nancy Ori between now and March 30. The arboretum will host a "Walk with the Artist in the Garden" on Sunday, March 11, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., followed by an artist reception from 2 to 4 p.m.

"Each tree is unique," Ms. Ori said. "It has its own posture or what I like to call gesture. I look at the shape, color, texture, leaves, branches, trunk and, of course, the lighting."

For more information, contact nancyoriphotography.com or call (908) 790-8820.

Westfield Symphony Orchestra  
DAVID WROE, MUSIC DIRECTOR

East meets West... meets North

SIBELIUS: Finlandia  
ZHOU LONG: World Premiere  
BRAHMS: Symphony No. 4  
MOZART: Overture to Abduction From The Seraglio

Saturday March 17 at 8PM  
Westfield High School, 550 Dorian Road, Westfield  
Tickets: \$25, \$35, \$45, \$65  
FOR TICKETS: CALL (908) 232-9400 email: wso@westfieldsymphony.org  
OR VISIT OUR TICKET OUTLETS:  
FASTFRAME: Quimby St. Westfield · MARTIN JEWELERS: Cranford

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