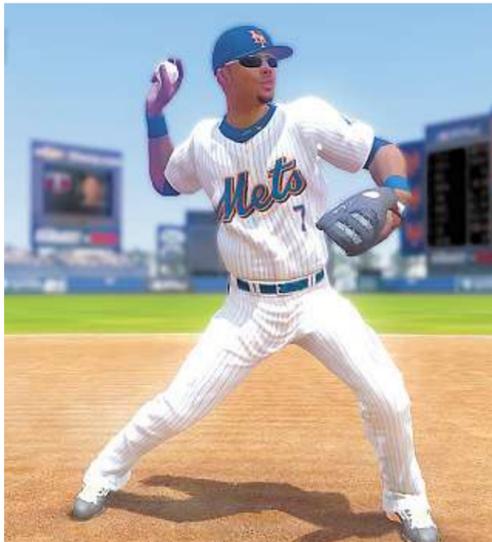


# Better Living

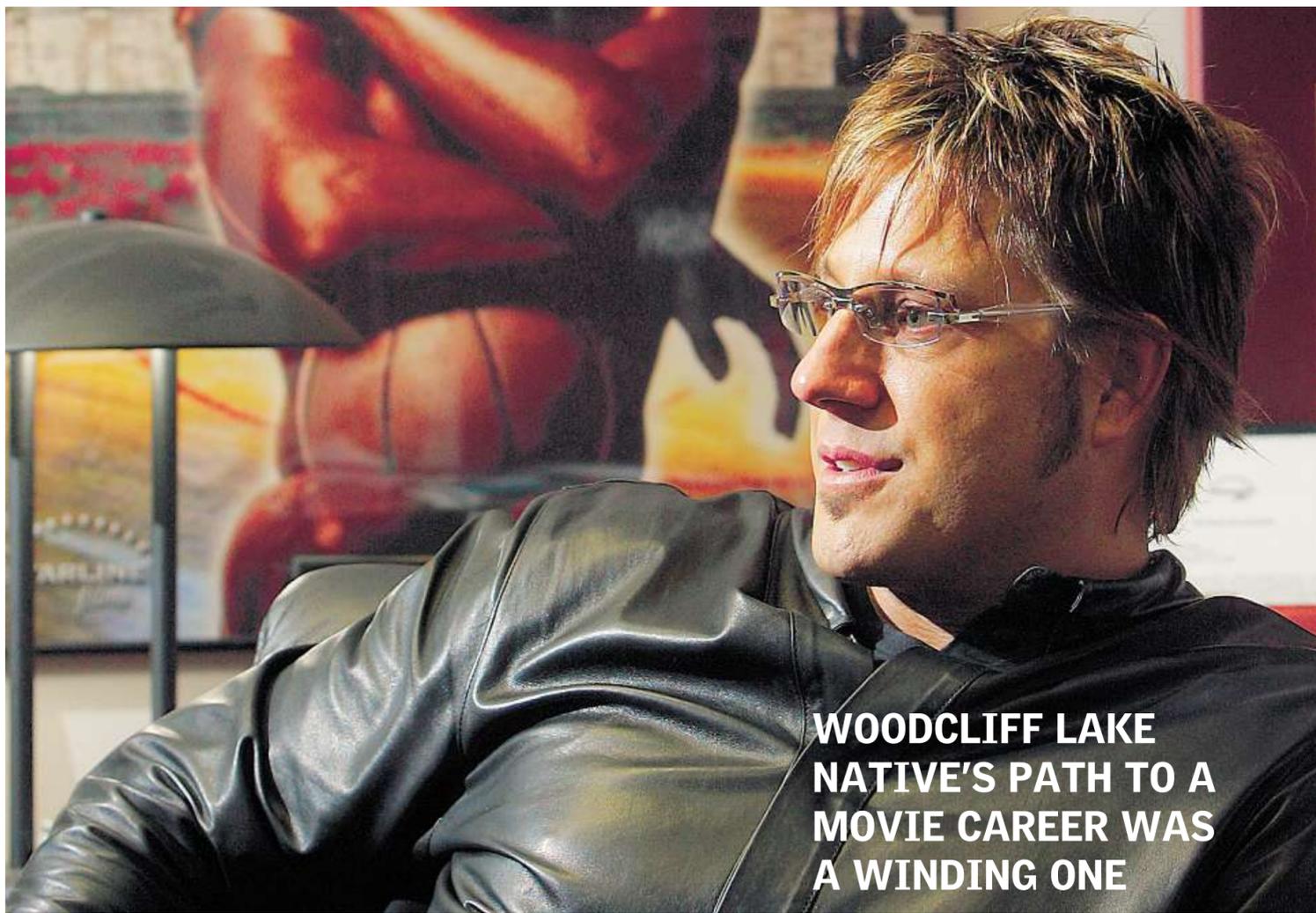
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"Alvin and the Chipmunks" is among the new releases on DVD today. **6**

Get into the baseball season with the Hit-N-Run video game tour. **2**

# FROM DROPOUT



**WOODCLIFF LAKE  
NATIVE'S PATH TO A  
MOVIE CAREER WAS  
A WINDING ONE**

TARIQ ZEHAWI/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**The Sixth Annual Garden State Film Festival**

**When:** Thursday through Sunday.

**Where:** Asbury Park locations include the Paramount Theater, 1300 Ocean Ave.; the Berkeley Hotel, 1401 Ocean Ave.; Synaxis, 660 Cookman Ave.; and the Stone Pony, 913 Ocean Ave.

**How much:** \$10 per two-hour block of films.

**Red carpet event:** There will be a special showing of "4Chosen: The Documentary," 7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Paramount Theater. Director Jon Doscher, actor Danny Aiello and talk-show host Montel Williams will be present. Tickets for "4Chosen" are \$25, with proceeds benefiting the Montel Williams MS Foundation.

**For more information:** [gsff.org](http://gsff.org).

# TO DIRECTOR PAGE 3



## In Fort Lee, mixed feelings over whoopee cushions

By **JIM BECKERMAN**  
STAFF WRITER

Somebody go get the keys to the parking lot.

They're on the table, just through that door — *splashhhhh!* Sorry, no offense, let's shake hands on that — *bzzzzzzzzt*. By the way, is there a Moe Ronn living here?

It's April Fools' Day, and the practical jokes are coming as thick and fast as spaghetti on a spaghetti tree.

You didn't know there were spaghetti trees?

"Practical jokes are not my favorite kind

of joke," says Fort Lee comedian Freddie Roman. "But I don't mind doing them when it's done with humor and nobody gets hurt."

As president of New York's Friars Club, home base for all jesters, jokers and zanies, Roman is pretty much a one-man storehouse of jokes — most of them the verbal rather than the "practical" kind.

Even so, practical joking was once, in effect, part of Roman's job description.

Like many a stand-up comic of his generation (he's 70), Roman got his start in the 1950s as a "tumbler" — a social director at the Catskill summer resorts once popular with Jewish vacationers.

Tumblers were supposed to make a tumult — crack jokes, jolly people along, "accidentally" fall into swimming pools with their tuxedos on. Part of Roman's skill set was practical jokes.

"I would take 300 people in the morning on a walk, and I would tell them we were going to an Indian village," Roman recalls. "I made them walk a mile. When we got to the 'Indian village,' there was one tepee, one little tent that we had constructed, with a sign in front: 'Sorry, we moved to Nassau County.' People wanted to lynch me."

E-mail: [beckerman@northjersey.com](mailto:beckerman@northjersey.com)

*Just for the Health of it!*

## The Weekend Warrior

Learn how to recognize and prevent exercise-induced injuries

Wednesday, April 9 • 7 – 8:30 pm

Call 1-800-VALLEY 1 to register



## COVER STORY

# He doesn't believe in luck; timing is everything

By MIKE KERWICK  
STAFF WRITER

On the wall beside Jon Doscher's desk hangs a photo of a fleet of white trucks. It is Doscher's proxy for a college diploma. Without those trucks, he would not have a black director's chair, an Upper Saddle River office on Route 17, or a poster of "4Chosen: The Documentary" – his directorial debut.

Without those trucks, the Woodcliff Lake native would not be introducing his film at a red-carpet event that kicks off the Garden State Film Festival at the Paramount Theater in Asbury Park Thursday night.

"I left college very early," Doscher said on a recent afternoon. "I went to a local school. I was there, realistically, for maybe half a semester. I was taking business classes and political science [classes]."

How Doscher came to produce and direct a documentary about four African-American basketball players who were shot by state troopers while driving south on the New Jersey Turnpike in 1998 is a unique narrative.

He dropped out of college, scraping together the cash to start his own power-washing and painting business. He put ads in newspapers, left signs on lawns, sent brochures through the mail. He was tapping into a wealthy residential market that was new to the power-washing scene.

"Six trucks, 20 men," Doscher said. "We were generating revenue. What I liked about the business at the time was I got in at the right time. I'm not a believer in luck at all. But I am a believer in timing. I think at the time when I started creating that company, the economy was starting to turn positively, and I kind of caught the wave a little bit."

By day, Doscher worked on houses and dabbled in magazine publishing. By night, he took acting classes. His two worlds crashed into each other when he was hired for a job at veteran actor



Woodcliff Lake native and Starline Films co-owner Jon Doscher credits his success with his determination and business savvy.

TARIQ ZEHAWI/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Danny Aiello's home. According to Doscher, Aiello urged Doscher to forget the classes and just plunge into acting.

But Doscher had grander schemes. He continued to build his power-washing business, which eventually evolved into Doscher's Restoration Co. He sold the company and used the capital to start Starline Films with his friend Kevin Leckner.

Starting their own company allowed Doscher to selectively choose interesting roles and projects. If he wanted to work behind

the camera, he could do that. If he felt like acting, he could do that, too.

"He's a workhorse," Leckner said. "He's a real producer. ... He knows how to talk to the agents. He knows how to talk to the talent. ... He's a very good salesman."

## Story needed to be told

Not long after Doscher founded Starline Films, a lawyer reached out to the company. Danny Reyes, Jarmaine Grant, Rayshawn Brown and Keshon Moore – the four

young men who survived a barrage of gunfire on the New Jersey Turnpike – wanted to tell their story. They were interested in making a documentary.

Doscher wanted to make a feature film.

"We didn't get a lot of support for the documentary," Doscher said. "Industry people were more interested in the motion picture, so the documentary, you know, it was a passion piece."

Doscher admits the documentary is "more of a slanted view." Leckner concedes the documen-

tary is not Starline's most polished piece of work.

"I look at it as a 7 on a scale of 1 to 10 because we had a shoestring budget," Leckner said.

So Doscher decided to make two movies – a documentary and a feature film. Veteran talk-show host Montel Williams agreed to narrate the documentary.

"I think it's important because this is really the story that defined racial profiling in America," Williams said. "And it defined an era in America that even 'til today, still has remnants. It's a powerful

By day, Doscher worked on houses and dabbled in magazine publishing. By night, he took acting classes.

story of community and people stepping up seeking justice, though I'm not sure if justice was ever really, really, really satisfied in this case."

Portions of the proceeds from Thursday's event will benefit Williams' MS Foundation. Williams still hasn't seen the final version of the documentary, but he's confident leaving his voice work in Doscher's hands.

"I met [Jon] after the project started moving forward," Williams said. "I really believe his heart's in the right place."

Checking in at 48 minutes long, the documentary features interviews with the four basketball players, lawyers from both sides and the Rev. Al Sharpton.

"It's very well done," said Diane Raver, the executive director of the Garden State Film Festival. "It's a real New Jersey story."

The players have tried to shy away from publicity, declining several interview requests from The Record.

"One of them seems to be more bitter than the other three," Doscher said. "I think they've taken the high road overall and said, 'Well you know what, we're lucky to be alive.' ... But they were paid handsomely, and they were given an opportunity not only to live but to do other things."

Doscher was given a similar opportunity. He has other projects in development, including the motion picture version of "4Chosen." Will it ever make the big screen? If that photo of white trucks is any indication, Doscher will figure out a way to get it there.

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## VOLUNTEERING

A selective list of non-profit agencies and organizations in North Jersey needing volunteers and donations.

■ **Volunteers to help with the "Paint, Paper and Primp" event** from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at Friendship House, a psychiatric vocational rehabilitation center at 125 Atlantic St., Hackensack. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. Donations of paint, wallpaper and other materials also are sought. Volunteers and donors may call 488-2121 or e-mail kenglish@njfriendshiphouse.com.

■ **Volunteers for Ridgefield Cleanup Day** from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday. Meet at 9:45 a.m. at the Community Center, 725 Slocum Ave. Cleanup items provided. Rain date noon to 2 p.m. Sunday. To register, call 201-943-5215, ext. 353.

■ **Toothpaste, toothbrushes, shaving cream, razors, shampoo and soap** for toiletry bags that will be made up for the homeless and for migrant workers who arrive in early April to plant onion fields in Goshen, N.Y. Donations of new items may be taken to the office of St. Bartholomew's Church, 70 Sheridan Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus. Information: 201-444-5025.

■ **Unopened, non-perishable food items** for the Center for Food Action in Englewood. Donations may be dropped off through April 17 at Chopstix, 172B W. Englewood Ave.; Chickies French Fry and Chicken Bar, 172A W. Englewood Ave.; and Dougie's BBQ, 184 W. Englewood Ave., all in Teaneck. Toiletries also will be accepted. A competition (which restaurant could collect the most food items) began several years ago when customers preparing for Passover approached Chopstix with items they were going to discard. Information: 201-833-0200.

■ **Adults to serve as mentors** for mothers in need of guidance and parenting and life skills, particularly those who have been in child service programs or are moving from welfare to work, or become **mentors and positive role models** for Bergen County children who have experienced abuse, neglect or isolation. Training workshops will begin April 14 for the Mentoring Moms program and April 16 for the Volunteers in Protective Services program. All sessions will meet from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, 64 Passaic St., Hackensack. For the VIPS program, men are particularly needed and applicants are asked to supply references and undergo a background check. Prospective volunteers for either program should call 201-489-9454 or visit bergenvolunteers.org.

These listings are primarily for one-time, seasonal or otherwise non-routine volunteer opportunities. Notices may be sent to Lorraine Matys at events@northjersey.com. All information, including a phone contact, must be received at least two weeks prior to publication date. Notices also may be mailed to Matys at The Record, 150 River St., Hackensack, NJ 07601, or faxed to 201-457-2520.

## HEALTH

# For this, you don't want sunscreen

By KATHY HAIGHT  
McCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

There's something simple you can do to help protect yourself against ailments ranging from cancer to depression.

You can take vitamin D – and some experts believe as many as 50 percent of healthy adults and children are deficient in this essential nutrient.

Doctors and researchers say the vitamin D problem could be solved if we just got out in the sun.

## Q. What's so important about vitamin D?

For years, doctors have known vitamin D helps build strong bones by promoting the absorption of calcium. (The vitamin was added to milk more than 50 years ago to successfully combat the common childhood bone disease of rickets.) But recent research indicates D is important to almost all body tissues. Low levels of vitamin D have been linked to increased risk of breast and prostate cancer, colon polyps, multiple sclerosis, Type 1 diabetes, muscle weakness – even depression and schizophrenia.

## Q. Why are so many people deficient?

Two reasons. People aren't

## How you can get more D

■ Spend 10 to 15 minutes in the sun at least twice a week with your arms, hands, face or back exposed.

■ Take 1,000 IU of vitamin D daily.

■ Ask your doctor to be tested.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ "The UV Advantage," by Michael Holick (IBooks, \$7.99).

■ "The Vitamin D Cure," by James Dowd and Diane Stafford (Wiley, \$24.95).

■ National Institutes of Health vitamin D fact sheet: <http://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/vitaminD.asp>.

Sources: Dr. Michael McClung, Dr. Charles Rich, Dr. Stuart Tucker, New England Journal of Medicine, ods.od.nih.gov.

spending enough time in the sun, and it's hard to get enough vitamin D from food. The best way to get it is by being in the sun, since skin produces plenty of D when exposed to the sun's rays. But office workers and kids playing video games often don't spend enough time outdoors to make the D they need. And when they are outside, they're probably wearing sunscreen. Sunscreen with an SPF of 8 blocks more than 95 percent of the sun's capacity to make vitamin D in your skin.

Fortified milk, yogurt and orange juice contain about 100 International Units of vitamin D per one-cup serving. Canned salmon contains 300 to 600 IU. Dr. Michael

McClung, director of the Oregon Osteoporosis Center, recommends adults get 1,000 to 2,000 IU of vitamin D each day – unless their blood calcium is too high or they've had kidney stones.

## Q. Who is most at risk of vitamin D deficiency?

"The farther you live from the equator and the less opportunity you have for regular sun exposure, the more likely you are to be deficient," says Charlotte, N.C., internist Dr. Charles Rich.

Older adults are more at risk. Obesity and liver or kidney disease also increase your risk. Blacks and people with darker skin are more at risk, because their skin is less able to

synthesize Vitamin D from the sun.

## Q. What are the symptoms of deficiency?

Often there are none.

## Q. How much vitamin D do I need, and what are the best sources?

There's still disagreement on how much D is enough. The New England Journal of Medicine says adults and children need 800 to 1,000 IU of vitamin D daily if they're not getting enough sun exposure. McClung says it's safe for adults to take 1,000 to 2,000 IU daily. (You'd need to drink 10 glasses of milk to get 1,000 IU.) Cautious sun exposure is the easiest way to get enough vitamin D. The National Institutes of Health says 10 to 15 minutes in the sun at least twice a week with your arms, hands, face or back exposed without sunscreen is usually enough.

Children and healthy adults make about 25,000 IU of D by spending 15 minutes in the sun with their face and arms exposed before applying sunscreen, says McClung. Because D is stored in fat and muscle, you can build up reserves to draw on later.

## Q. Should I be tested?

Ask your doctor. The test costs about \$100 and is often covered by insurance.

## ADVICE

# Sports fan misses his incarcerated wife's VCR skills

**DEAR ABBY:** To say I am upset is an understatement. I have a terrible problem. My wife of 22 years, "Verna," was recently sentenced to 15 years in prison. Verna always programmed our VCR. As a result, I have no idea how to record my favorite sporting events.

I begged my daughter to show me how to operate the darned thing, but she's still mad at me because when she asked me if her blue blazer made her look fat, I replied: "No, I don't



DEAR ABBY

think your blazer makes you look fat. It's those double cheeseburgers you've been scarfing down two at a time that make you look so fat."

I'm thinking maybe if I run a personal ad in my local paper I could meet a nice lady and get my mind off all the sports I'm missing on TV. Here's how I plan to word it: "SWM seeking single female with lots of money and a fast car. Race, age and looks unimportant. Please send picture of car."

I know you get hundreds of letters every day with the same exact problems that I have, but please tell me what to do.

— April Fool From Fort Smith, Ark.

**DEAR APRIL FOOL:** People often ask

me if I get made-up letters, and in honor of April Fools' Day, I am printing yours.

By the way, forget about the personal ad. You have enough family problems already without revving up anyone else's engine.

**DEAR ABBY:** I'm 13, and I have a problem with my parents. They have been having sex. That's not the problem, except for the fact that they don't wait for me to fall asleep before doing it. Tonight they had sex before saying good night! How do I confront them about this?

— Freaked Out in Alameda, Calif.

**DEAR FREAKED OUT:** Tonight at dinner, say, "Mom, Dad, I think it's time we

talked about the facts of life. The first fact of life is, I'm not deaf."

**DEAR READERS:** The following poem was written by a longtime reader, the late Jean Wells Rogers. In March 2002, I printed a poem she had penned titled, "Old-Timer's Bedtime," which contained the heartwarming lines: "We're old and we're wrinkled, but why should we mind? We sleep like two trees – our branches entwined."

Today, I'm sharing another one of her treasures because it is both timely and relevant. Enjoy!

"April 1"  
No one goes hungry  
All people are fed

The oceans are clean  
Lake Erie's not dead.  
The Irish aren't fighting  
The Arabs love Jews  
The swords are now plowshares  
Now ain't that good news?  
The water's delicious  
The air is so clear  
On top of a mountain  
You see to next year.  
Couples stay married  
Children are jewels  
Sure got you going!  
APRIL FOOLS!

Write Dear Abby at [dearabby.com](mailto:dearabby.com) or PO Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.