

## Cretan 'Godfather' in works

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**AMERICAN** Community Schools (ACS) student Tex Pardue will star in a new film co-written by filmmaker Olga Malea and writer Nick Papandreou. The film's Greek title can be translated as "First-Time Godfather". Inspired by a section of Papandreou's autobiographical book *A Crowded Heart* (1998), the film is about Alex, the son of a prominent politician, who is sent from the US to baptise a local politician's son in Crete - in order to garner votes for his father's party in the 1963 elections.

The local Cretan politician, played by popular Greek actor/director Antonis Kafetzopoulos, is disappointed that the boy is there instead of his father, but leads young Alex through zany Cretan terrain in this coming-of-age story. The 1.5 million euro film, funded by production company CL Productions, broadcaster NOVA/Filmnet and the Greek Film Centre, will be shot in various locations near Hania, Crete, from May 20 through July.

In a press conference on May 2, Papandreou noted that in the film no one mentions "Andreas", his late father (founder of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement party and former prime minister) by name. Instead, he is referred to as "the Leader". Nonetheless, the resemblance is close enough that

Papandreou notes that this will be the first time that a fiction film portrays him. Actor Giorgos Kimoulis will play Alex's father.

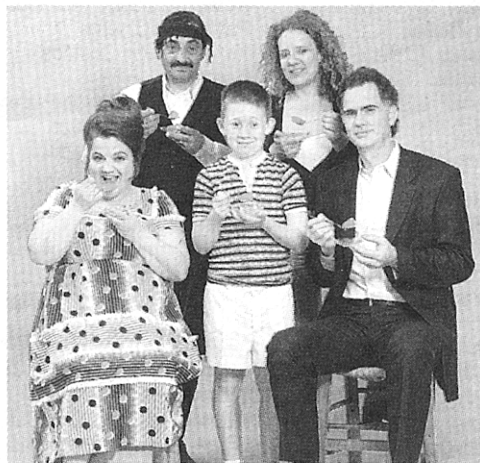
Papandreou noted that seeing a child play his life will be "a little strange". He said that the film's hero is an *Amerikanaki* (American), who feels like a foreigner in Greece and even more so in Crete".

The film's director, Malea, noted that Pardue speaks Greek with a remarkably

good accent, though his diplomatic family only arrived in Greece about a year ago. She added that he's already picked up a Cretan accent. The *Athens News* aided in discovering Pardue, Malea noted, through a listing she placed in the newspaper searching for actors. The director said she saw about 400 boys before finding Pardue. The ACS student also speaks Spanish and plays the trumpet.

Composer Kostas Leivadas, who is from Crete, promises that the local tradition will be respected. Papandreou and Malea agreed at the press conference that the film will be "a comedy, but not a farce". Comic Kafetzopoulos noted that he's preparing to embody a whole culture in his character, jokingly referring to the co-screenwriters as "Maleaki" and "Papandraki". Papandreou points out that Cretan *mantinadas* (sung poems) are incorporated in the script.

Malea said she and co-writer Papandreou met at a Greek event while studying in the US and had discussed collaborating previously. Greek Film Centre president Yorgos Papalios pointed out that the film is the first to be approved by the centre's new board. He vouched, "I think we'll have our first big success."



**ACS student Tex Pardue is surrounded by (clockwise, from top L) actor Antonis Kafetzopoulos, director Olga Malea, writer Nick Papandreou and actress Eleni Kastani**