



ARTISTIC ENDEAVOR...Sanford Harlan, pictured with students, offers an after school ceramics program for fourth graders at McGinn Elementary School in Scotch Plains.

Letters to the Editor

Couple Gives Possible Solutions To Westfield's Parking Woes

Editor's Note: The following letter was sent to Westfield Mayor Thomas C. Jardim with a copy e-mailed to The Westfield Leader.

My wife and I read Robert J. McCormack's October 16th letter to the editor of The Westfield Leader regarding the problems with commuter parking, and as commuters to New York City, we couldn't agree more.

While planning to relocate to Westfield over a year ago, one of our concerns was commuter parking. Our Realtor said we would have to be placed on a list and

could expect to receive a parking sticker in about one year.

As residents for over a year, we were very disappointed to learn it would be three years before we would receive a parking sticker. Lord & Taylor's graciousness has made parking bearable, as long as we arrive in the lot before 6:40 a.m. After that time, there is literally no long-term commuter parking available.

We were offered, by a non-Westfield resident, the permanent use of a Westfield Train Station parking permit. We turned it down, but have since discovered that this practice is prevalent. We believe we did the right thing, but if this is the common custom and there are no changes to the present system, then clearly, we made the wrong decision.

Listed below are some possible solutions for your consideration:

- Stickers issued to Westfield residents should clearly show that residents license plate number, and would only be valid for that vehicle. This would deter the passing of stickers.
- Perhaps, a short-term solution, until the NJ Transit construction is completed, would be to ask the United Methodist Church to allow some parking.
- Expand the on-street parking around the downtown area until the NJ Transit construction is completed.
- Increase the number of metered municipal parking spots from eight hours to 12 hours.

It is not our desire to smother the downtown area with commuter parking; we are sensitive to the concerns of the downtown merchants, but this problem has only become worse in the past six months. Solutions need to be developed and instituted quickly.

We would be very interested in learning the types of solutions your office is contemplating and when we can look forward to their implementation.

Paul and Melanie Sawina
Westfield



MEMORIES...Jacqueline Harper Cecchetti recently shared her memories of the people, shops, streets and events she knew while growing up in Fanwood during the October meeting of the Fanwood-Scotch Plains College Club. She also reminisced about her days at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, including her remembrances of the principal and teachers. She has written these memories in "Fanwood - The Way It Was - The Way We Were." Copies are available in local libraries.

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POPCORN™

Hackford's *The Devil's Advocate*: Rosemary's Baby With Lawyers

By Michael S. Goldberger

One Popcorn, Poor • Two Popcorns, Fair • Three Popcorns, Good • Four Popcorns, Excellent



2 & 1/2 popcorns
Fashioning himself the Clown Prince of Darkness, a puckish Al Pacino gets to hot dog it up plenty in *The Devil's Advocate*, a dazzling fiasco that entertains hugely despite a deeply troubled soul marinated in a trough of wildly absurd rantings. Maybe director Taylor Hackford made a deal with his title character: a film this shoddy shouldn't be so much fun. But it is.

Meet Kevin Lomax, the best damned defense lawyer in Gainesville, Florida. Played sportingly well by a finely honed Keanu Reeves, Southern gentleman drawl and all, he never loses. Hey, that's curious. Is he really that good? To find out you'll have to follow John Grisham's deliriously convulsing plot as it capriciously updates the Faustian theme. Major stops include obtuse spewings about Big Apple life and incessant jabs at the legal profession.

The movie's monumental matters are set in motion when the law firm of Milton, Whoever and Whatever come soliciting. Headed by John Milton (Al Pacino), they're impressed with Kevin's winning percentage. Will he come to Babylon, er, New York, that is, and head up their criminal defense department?

Downhome honey pie wife, Maryann, portrayed by attractive Charlize Theron, doesn't quite cotton to the opportunity. Bible-thumping Mom (Judith Ivey) is agin it, too. But vain Kevin is driven. And somebody Down There knows it. His last case in Gainesville, featuring a tug of war with his conscience, sees him successfully defend a child molester. He didn't surmise his client's guilt until mid-trial. The choice was win and sin or come clean and lose. The tarnished victory sets the stage for lawyer Lomax's trials and tribulations in Gotham.

Opulence abounds at Mr. Milton's law firm, a multinational conglomerate with ubiquitous tentacles. Being pranced through the architectural gaudiness that the company associates with wealth and prestige, Kevin meets the staff, a murderer's row of legal specialists. The palatial surroundings are bedeviling. That his potential boss considers him their peer sets his egomania swimming.

Using simple hyperbole, like outlandish set designs to symbolize status, or just the right word from someone "in the know," Mr. Hackford pontificates about power with no particular message in mind. For example, at a cocktail party featuring a curious cameo by Senator Alfonse D'Amato, he portrays greed and corruption as vaunting players blithely whisper

tricks of the trade. But what of it? Aside from making a cause célèbre of Kevin's (and therefore mankind's) vanity, *The Devil's Advocate* rarely follows up on any of its vituperations. The movie exhibits all the showy glitz of a music video, but none of the quick-cut pizzazz. If it's diabolical, that's good enough to be tossed in the fray.

Half-sermonizing and fully sensation-alizing, nary an opportunity is missed to portend, doomsayeth or simply wax perfidious. Like an eager adolescent who has just learned his first set of four-lettered favorites, Hackford, with Beezeleub-on-the-brain, uses inane dialogue and special effects in a repetitious cant of things infernal.

And yet, as awfully overdone as it is, not to mention overlong, Pacino at the center of this baroque tirade is as good as seeing your funniest uncle holding court at little Schley's Bar Mitzvah. The man is a treasure and his stature as a movie star is indomitable here, mirthfully setting the meter as well as the rules, which apparently are far and few between.

At about the film's mid-point, when Scratch finally reveals himself (oh, you already knew), all hell breaks loose, so to speak. The scenario shifts into complete horror movie mode. Only trouble is, it isn't very scary. Disgusting, in a blood bath, entrail-waving way? Yes. Frightening, in a seat-edged, heart-visits-your-throat way? No.

Success and Lucifer's imprint have rendered wife Maryann a basket case. A senior partner at the law firm meets his untimely acquittal. On and on it goes. And it's all Kevin's fault. Darn his over-achieving soul. Sure, the Devil may have set the stage and polished a choice or two—but it's the Deity who gave him all that free will in the first place.

Hackford plays that conundrum back and forth ad nauseam, rather than bothering with a cogent plot. Occasionally, Grisham's screenplay splices together a jolting thought to complement the fury and fervor. i.e.—Someone asks Satan why he chose to be a lawyer this go-round. He responds: "Because they're into everything. It's the new priesthood." Hence, we have the ultimate lawyer's joke. Verdict: *The Devil's Advocate* proves rather amusing, but strictly small claims court.

The Devil's Advocate, rated R, is a friendship with oneself. A vital important document, with out it some of the best friends will be gone. Running time: 138 minutes. — Eleanor Roosevelt



LEAGUE MEETING...The Associates and Sustainers Group of the Westfield Service League recently held its first meeting of the season. The group is planning a special program and a lunch in November to celebrate the League's 65th anniversary. All current and past members are invited to attend. Pictured at the meeting, left to right, are: Associate/Sustainer Co-Chairwoman Jennie Williams, Treasurer Jeanne Meiklejohn, and Co-Chairwoman Peggy Walsh.

League to Mark 65th Year With Program and Lunch

The Westfield Service League's Associates and Sustainers Group has invited all current and past members to a special program highlighting the league's 65 years of service to the

community. The program will be followed by a luncheon at Echo Lake Country Club in Westfield.

The program and luncheon will follow the general membership meeting on Wednesday, November 19. The program will start at 10 a.m., followed by cocktails at 11:30 a.m. and lunch at noon.

Old Guard to Hold Open House Nov. 13

The Old Guard of Westfield will hold an Open House for new and prospective members at its regular Thursday meeting on November 13, at the Westfield "Y" from 9 to 10 a.m.

All retired and semi-retired men interested in learning what the Old Guard is all about are cordially invited to attend.

The club offers a wide range of activities such as golf, day trips, bowling, bridge and shuffleboard.

For further information, please contact Harold Hitchcock at (908) 233-1638.

The League was founded in the early 1930s by a group of Westfield women who banded together to do volunteer work for charities.

The League owns and operates the Thrift Shop and Consignment Shop, located at 114 Elmer Street in Westfield. Each year, all profits from the shops are donated to local charities. The League also provides dispatchers to the Westfield Rescue Squad.

Luncheon reservations must be made by Wednesday, November 12. Past members may call Joan Hogan at (908) 232-4928 for reservations or information. Current members can sign up at the League Shops.

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