



HEATING UP THE HOLIDAYS...The Hot Chocolate & S'mores will return during the Holiday Shop in downtown Cranford. Weather permitting, it will be located at Eastman Plaza Clock from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday, December 14. If the weather's not cooperating, the Hot Chocolate & S'mores will be a Cranford Vanilla Bean Creamery.

Downtown Cranford Holiday Shop Has Carolers, S'mores

CRANFORD — Downtown Cranford will hold its Holiday Shop this weekend, Friday through Sunday, downtown. There will be holiday caroling, in-store specials, promotions, discounts, and more. This is a great opportunity to wrap up holiday shopping!

The Celebration Singers will be performing during the Holiday Shop on Friday, December 13, from 6-8

p.m. They'll be caroling throughout downtown to help get you in the holiday spirit!

Also, the Hot Chocolate & S'mores will return during the Holiday Shop! Weather permitting, it will be located at Eastman Plaza Clock from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday, December 14. If the weather's not cooperating, the Hot Chocolate & S'mores will be a Cranford Vanilla Bean Creamery.

Continuo Arts Orchestra to Hold Holiday Show Spectacular

SUMMIT — The eleventh annual "Christmas Time in the City" Holiday concert will be presented on Saturday, December 14, at 7:30 p.m. at the Lawton C. Johnson Summit Middle School. A production by the Continuo Arts Foundation, this concert features over 200 singers, seven choirs from Union, Morris, Essex and surrounding counties, soloists, the Continuo Arts Chamber Orchestra, Santa, audience sing-a-longs and special guest artists!

The individual and combined Continuo Arts Ensembles & Cham-

ber Orchestra will present many perennial holiday favorites including works by Faure and others. Concertgoers will enjoy the distinctive French theme of this year's program. The Continuo Arts NJ Children's Choir and a visit by Santa always have surprise vignettes in store for young children and they can look forward to an opportunity for picture taking after the performance!

Tickets are \$10 and \$20. Doors will open at 7 p.m. Call (908) 264-5324 or visit www.continuoarts.com for more information.

Premiere Stages Presents Reading of *The Wolf*

UNION — Premiere Stages at Kean University, in partnership with The International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Foundation, presented Violet Macdonald's original pilot *The Wolf*, winner of the 2019 Sir Peter Ustinov Television Scriptwriting Award, on November 24 at the Sofitel Hotel in New York. Directed by Premiere's producing artistic director John J. Wooten and presented as part of the International Emmy® Awards, the reading featured accomplished actors Nataysha Echevarria, Lianne Kressin, Reynaldo Pinella, Louis Sallan and Andy Truschinski, as well as Kean Theatre Conservatory student Christopher Grant '20 and alumna Megan Tobias '19.

Ms. Tobias, a resident of Winfield Park and recent recipient of a dual degree in BFA Theatre Performance and BA Honors History, said, "The best part was seeing the screenwriter before and after the reading. Violet [Macdonald] looked over the moon about what we had done and that just made me feel so fulfilled. Having the opportunity to talk to her afterwards

and discuss her script was surreal."

Ms. Macdonald is an Australian/British writer living in Montreal. She grew up on the island of Tasmania, where she spent her time writing hundreds of poems and short stories, some of which would see her go on to win accolades such as the Ted Hughes Young Poets Award, the H.E. Bates Short Story Award, and the title of reigning Australian Junior Bush Poetry Champion. After finishing her studies in English Literature and Philosophy, she became an award-winning copywriter.

The International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Foundation administers the Sir Peter Ustinov Television Scriptwriting Award. The competition is designed to motivate non-American novice writers under the age of 30, and offer them the recognition and encouragement that might lead to a successful career in television scriptwriting. Entrants are asked to create a completed half-hour to one-hour English-language television drama script. The award winner receives \$2,500, a trip to New York City, and an invitation to the International Emmy® Awards Gala.

"This unique collaboration with the International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences is a perfect embodiment of the Premiere Stages mission to develop and encourage emerging artists," stated Mr. Wooten.

POPCORN

The Irishman
At 3 Hours & 29 Minutes, it all Depends®
3 popcorns

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

By Michael S. Goldberg
film critic

"Fuhgeddaboutit" was the advice from those who decided against climbing the movie mountain that is Martin Scorsese's *The Irishman*, all three hours and 29 minutes of it. Dilemmas presented themselves. How many times will I have to go to the bathroom? Should we skip breakfast, have dinner now, pack a picnic lunch, or maybe even book a room close to the theater? The destinies of whole lives were changed for those strict constructionists who wouldn't succumb to the tyranny of their bladders by availing themselves of the small screen, Netflix offering.

Me? Nope. I came this far in my moviegoing...lived through the days of when films broke in midstream, before stadium seating coddled your frame and prior to the advent of whispering waitresses asking if you wanted cheese-drenched nachos. I will see it on the big silver screen and damn the consequences. Thus began my journey, knowing full well that, unlike *The Ten Commandments* (1956) and several other movies of storied length, there'd be no intermission and probably no reward of a bumper sticker noting my feat, nothing I might attach next to the one informing, "This Car Climbed Mt. Washington."

Thirsty, intentionally dehydrated, I was ready. Gosh knows that any hasty return from the facilities would surely bring those dreaded words from my movie partner: "YOU MISSED THE MOST IMPORTANT PART." And of course, said unseen portion, to forever be known as the "lost footage," will stunt your cinema knowledge in the same way that being out sick with a cold when they taught the 8-Times Table in grammar school kept you from becoming President. And you know what tragedy that unleashed.

All this said, for those still wondering whether to attempt the moviegoing version of crossing the Great Plains by covered wagon, Mr. Scorsese's encyclopedic buffet of things Wise Guys is pretty good but not necessarily great. However, for those who simply can't get enough gangland jargon, non-stop mob hits and the recitation of Cosa Nostra doctrine, and who would like a respite from constantly re-running *Goodfellas* (1990) and all three *Godfather* films, *The Irishman* is a competent addendum. The length and violently charged breadth of this blood-stained extravaganza in the hands of a lesser director would have doubtlessly proved an unwieldy mishmash.

Act One, Scene One, we meet Rob-

DWC Offering Elfie Selfie Contest

WESTFIELD — The Downtown Westfield Corporation is holding a drawing where shoppers can send in a selfie with an Elf on the Shelf at participating stores in downtown. The Westfield Elfie Selfie Contest Rules are as follows: make a purchase at a downtown business with a "Shop Local ELF" window cling; find their Elf on the Shelf; take an "Elfie Selfie" with your receipt; tag both the business and #WestfieldElfieSelfie on Instagram or Facebook; a winner will be selected weekly, at random through December 29. See westfieldtoday.com for participating stores and more details.

BUY, SELL, RENT, HIRE:
goleader.com/form/classified

ert De Niro's Frank Sheeran, hitman/Teamster boss, at a ripe old age in a nursing facility from whence he relates his life's tale to nurses' aides, visiting FBI agents and sometimes just us. Expertly shuffled flashbacks aided by a terrific switching of period correct art direction and hi-tech enhanced makeup draw us into this sordid tale of tarnished majesty. It's ugly, controversial and, we unfortunately suspect, an educative window into that part of our nature we've been trying to purge ever since Oog clobbered Eek on the head for that woolly mammoth he then dragged to his cave.

Indeed, fans of the brand, admittedly or not, become at least temporarily enamored of this parallel civilization that thumbs its broken nose at what normal society calls the straight and narrow. The organized mobster rationalizes that the above-ground world is a con and weighted against his ilk. Whereas, in the agency of the Mafia, the playing field is evened.

But unlike most permutations of this evil culture, the Scorsese take this go-round has deflated the air of any romanticization. While De Niro's assassin is full-bodied, he is sociopathically bereft of any true humanity. Like his mentor, Joe Pesci's fantastically drawn bigwig, Russell Bufalino, he is merely a butchering automaton, his movements and decisions geared to prevailing in the hideous, kill or be killed chess game in which he is a zealous participant.

Pending a rather fatalistic, philosophical wrap-up in the last half hour, Scorsese whimsically counterpunches the perpetrated bravado with brief, printed overlays identifying a character and informing when and if they were ultimately rubbed out or sent to the pokie. It's a reminder that for all the glorification rendered these cold-blooded murderers in the service of our guilty thrills, crime usually doesn't pay. These are bad men who "don't need no stinkin'" rationale.

But sadly, as was exemplified with G.D. Spradlin's crooked Senator Pat Geary in *The Godfather: Part II* (1974) and as is seen every day in the finaglings of a Congress that has all but abrogated its Constitutional duty in defense of power-hungry corruption, the justification is regularly fed. Still, the true nature of what bad is must be constantly hammered home, lest these pretenders at government foist upon us their own, self-serving definition.

The question is, do you want to immerse yourself for three hours and 29 minutes in this albeit expertly crafted iteration of the infernal underground where *The Irishman* wreaks his iniquities? Setting my own personal record, I didn't leave my seat once, if that helps you.

The Irishman, rated R, is a Netflix release directed by Martin Scorsese and stars Robert De Niro, Joe Pesci and Al Pacino. Running time: 209 minutes.

Cranford Photo Book New at Holiday Fair

CRANFORD -- Jean Kreiling has just announced the publication of her new book, "Cranford, NJ. Photos of the Town." It contains a wide variety of pictures of many of the things that make Cranford such a memorable town. These include street scenes, town events, churches, parks, major buildings and more. The book is available at Simply, at 11 North Union Avenue in Cranford. The author will be at the Cranford United Methodist Church's (CUMC) "Christmas Shoppe" on Saturday, December 14, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. with her book and an assortment of photos of Cranford. The church is located on the corner of Lincoln and Walnut Avenues. CUMC's annual Christmas Shoppe and Soup Fest, has a vast array of craftsman and holidays items for sale and delicious soups for sale.



SOUNDS OF THE HOLIDAY...Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Moonglowers Rhythm Section performs at Fanwood Holiday Celebration and Christmas Tree Lighting held last Sunday.

Westfield to Celebrate Holidays with Elf Movie, Gingerbread House, More

WESTFIELD — On Saturday, December 14, starting at 4 p.m., all are invited to wear an Ugly Holiday Sweater and join in for a group photo at Downtown Westfield Corporation's holiday celebration, XTRAVAGANZA!orous, to be held by the South Avenue Train Station Tree. A DJ will be spinning holiday tunes, and visitors can warm up with a cup of Kilwin's hot cocoa.

The holiday event will conclude with the 30-minute outdoor movie, *An Elf's Story*, written by Westfield's own, Kenneth Waddell, from 5:15 to 5:45 p.m. Bring blankets and chairs for the outdoor screening. Visitors will have the chance to meet Chippey the Elf and Mr. Waddell.

The festivities will also include a Walk-in Snow Globe for family photos, a 'Gingerbread' House open from 4 to 5:15 p.m., gingerbread cookie decorating, and attendees can enter in the Candy Cane Pull—25 families will win a prize!

Gift Wrapping at Lord & Taylor to Benefit Westfield Historical Society

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Historical Society will offer holiday gift wrapping at Lord & Taylor of Westfield. Each holiday season, the Lord & Taylor store of Westfield allows volunteers from the Westfield Historical Society to expertly wrap shoppers' gifts as a fundraiser for the Society. For a small donation, volunteers will wrap holiday gifts, right there on the spot at the gift-wrapping station located near the center of the store on the first floor. Shoppers can choose from a variety of beautiful wrappings and ribbons.

The schedule is as follows: Saturday and Sunday, December 14, 15, 21 and 22; and Tuesday, December 24.

Gift wrappers are scheduled from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Spread the holiday cheer even further this year and have those Lord & Taylor gift purchases wrapped while helping the Westfield Historical Society.

The Westfield Historical Society celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2018. Since 1968, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit Westfield Historical Society has worked to preserve, interpret and encourage interest in history, Westfield, and its residents through educational efforts and community outreach programs.

For more information on the Westfield Historical Society, visit <http://westfieldhistoricalsociety.org>.

Peter and the Starcatcher At Hillside Ave. School

CRANFORD — Please come and support the amazing acting and dedication of HAS student cast, stage crew and teachers, at the *Peter and the Starcatcher* play on Friday, December 13, at 7 p.m. and Saturday, December 14, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Hillside Avenue School. It is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy some fun theatre that's family friendly. To purchase advance tickets, go to <https://has.booktix.com/cart.php>.

Peter and the Starcatcher tells a story of how a miserable orphan comes to be The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up (a.k.a. Peter Pan). A young orphan and his mates are shipped off from Victorian England to a distant island ruled by the evil King Zarboff.

They know nothing of the mysterious trunk in the captain's cabin, which contains a precious, otherworldly cargo. At sea, the boys are discovered by a spunky young girl named Molly, (a Starcatcher-in-training) who realizes that the secret trunk contains a precious cargo (starstuff)—a celestial substance so powerful that it must never fall into the wrong hands. When the ship is taken over by the pirates led by the fearsome Black Stache, a villain determined to claim the trunk and its treasure for his own—the journey quickly becomes a thrilling adventure. Peter and the Starcatcher playfully explores the depths of greed and despair...and the bonds of friendship, duty and love.

The Family Law Department of Dughi, Hewit & Domalewski

Jennifer L. Young, Esq. • Kristin M. Capalbo, Esq. • Mario C. Gurrieri, Esq.

3 Lawyers, 3 Levels of Experience, 3 Hourly Rates

All designed to serve your interests in all aspects of divorce including custody, parenting time, relocation, distribution of assets, alimony, child support, college costs, prenuptial agreements, mediation, domestic violence, palimony and post-divorce changes in financial circumstances.

Dughi, Hewit & Domalewski, P.C.
340 North Avenue Cranford, New Jersey 07016
(908) 272-0200
www.dughihewit.com

Carolers to Sing in Downtown Westfield

WESTFIELD — The soft sounds of Christmas carolers will spread cheer throughout the downtown this holiday season. Starting on Saturday, December 14, at 3 p.m. the School of Rock will have students performing at the Northside Train Station. At 4 p.m. the First United Methodist Church will have its free Christmas show. Then, on Sunday, December 15, at 10 a.m. the Redeemer Choir will sing on Elm and Quimby Streets. The following weekend, on Thursday, December 19, at 6 p.m. students from Roosevelt Intermediate School will sing carols around the town. On Friday, December 20, at 6 p.m. RMC Studio will have music at the Northside Train Station. Community caroling will take place on Saturday and Sunday, December 21 and 22.

Coming Next May
Our 48th
Annual Edition

This Is
Westfield

To reserve your space
Contact Jeff Gruman,
Sales Manager
908-232-4407
sales@goleader.com



have the perfect wedding at

THE JAMES WARD MANSION

Make Our Mansion Your Mansion
"THE BEST KEPT SECRET" IN NEW JERSEY

Specializing in weddings, birthday parties, anniversaries, holiday parties and fundraisers.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATION TODAY!

169 East Broad Street • Westfield, NJ 07090 • 908.389.0014 • 908.425.6947

www.JamesWardMansion.com

18th Annual Christmas Concert

at
St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church

2032 Westfield Ave. Scotch Plains

Saturday, December 14 @ 7 p.m.

Enjoy the beautiful acoustics of the church as more than 40 singers perform a blend of familiar carols, contemporary songs, and unexpected arrangements accompanied by a chamber orchestra, band, and special guests.

Bluegrass group Dollr Hollr will begin prelude music at 6:30pm.

Suggested Donation: \$10