

NewHavenRegister.com

NewHavenRegister

08/05/2008

Movie crew keeping low profile

By Amanda Pinto, New Haven Register

MADISON — When the Rev. Chris Nichols crossed paths with a famous actor inside the 300-year-old church where he serves as senior pastor, he didn't know it.

His colleagues at the First Congregational Church told him afterward that he had seen one of the stars of "Once More With Feeling," an independent film being shot inside private homes on Grove Avenue and Randi Drive, but Nichols is still not sure who it was.

The historic church on the Green served as a staging area for the film this week, with actors Chazz Palminteri ("The Usual Suspects"), Drea de Matteo ("The Sopranos") and Linda Fiorentino ("Men in Black") using the property — mostly Sunday school rooms — for wardrobe changes and makeup work.



Truck rental in front of a house on Randi Drive in Madison where there may be filming for the movie production of "Once More With Feeling."

Advertisement

NEW HAVEN
IT ALL HAPPENS HERE
www.infonewhaven.com

Learn More About Our:

Dining **Culture**
Shopping **Nightlife**

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION

At night, as many as 50 or 60 crew members ate meals in the church hall, Nichols said.

Nichols' brush with the actor was likely one of few such encounters in town.

Selectmen, police and production company Rosetta Films collaborated to keep the movie — filming for six days last week — as low-key as possible.

Except for a few cones surrounding a small cart of lighting fixtures on Grove Avenue last week, the drive past 23 Grove Ave., the home-turned-movie set, was unobstructed.

Acting Police Chief Robert Nolan said Friday he has not gotten any complaints from neighbors near either of the private homes used in filming.

The film's staff "have worked pretty diligently to make sure they don't bother the neighborhood; they spoke to pretty much all the neighbors," he said. "We met to make sure they wouldn't be doing anything that would disrupt traffic."

Despite a tax credit that has lured numerous filmmakers to the state since 2006, this summer is Madison's first encounter with Hollywood, First Selectman Al Goldberg said.

In addition to "Once More With Feeling," another, smaller independent film, "Harvest," will use the town as a backdrop this summer.

Residents got their first glimpse of movie-making when writer-director Marc Meyers filmed crowds and participants at the Fourth of July parade.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post Cmdr. Ray Hanley was in many of the shots, he said. He and his nephew, a Marine on leave from Iraq, marched in front of the color guard in the parade.

About 20 veterans signed releases allowing Meyers to use their images in the Ibid Filmworks movie, Hanley said.

Although he had not begun production, Meyers said he thought it was vital to get footage of the parade for his film, which is about the relationship between a college student and his grandfather, a World War II veteran in failing health.

Madison is not only where the film is shot, but also where it is set. The film will likely feature local vendors, and will shoot at a variety of places in town, Meyers said. Most of the filming will take place in September, he said.

“I think it’s a beautiful place: shoreline environment, beautiful homes, wooded areas ... so there’s a lot of visual range,” he said.

Most of the filming will take place in September, he said.

Goldberg said the filming has been a success from his perspective — the workers have abided by the town’s ground rules. No town permit is required, since the film was shot on private property, he said.

George Norfleet, director of the Film Division of the state Commission on Culture and Tourism, said the state is assisting filmmakers with any needs they might have.

“We found them to be very good guests,” Laurie Satterwhite, administrative assistant at the church, said of the film staff. “They were very self-contained, very self-sustaining.”

Amanda Pinto can be reached at apinto@nhregister.com or 789-5734.

©New Haven Register 2008