

Queens Lutheran School Holds Fundraiser



On March 4 the first annual fundraiser for Queens Lutheran School was held at the Crystal Palace in Astoria. Assemblymember Michael Gianaris was honored for the donation of a flag-pole. Special thanks for the carpeting, painting, roof repairs, Internet hookup and security camera with monitor were given to: Rocco Primiani, a local contractor, Jeff Michaels, Metro Security & Communications, D&V Hardware and Locksmith, the DiVittorio family, Jiffy Jeff's Dry Cleaning, D&N Services, DiVito Brothers and Joe Pistilli, owner of Pistilli Realty and president and chief executive officer of First Central Savings Bank.

Felix DiVito and Mark DiVittorio

(L. to r): Bettye Lee, principal, Queens Lutheran School; Assemblymember Michael Gianaris; Rocco Primiani, contractor; Jeff Michaels, Metro Security & Communications, Marlene Lund, Lutheran School Association.

(L. to r.): Danny DiVittorio, Karen DiVittorio, Vinny DiVittorio, Rocco Primiani, Maria Primiani, Lynn Primiani, Jeff DiVittorio, Barbara Michaels, Nina DiVittorio. Back (l. to r.): Mark DiVittorio and Nancy DiVittorio



'Failure To Launch' Never Gets Off The Ground

BY DIANA SANDERS

Boy meets girl. In the world of Hollywood, the concept is almost a default for movie making, so what happens before, during and after 'boy meets girl', it is hoped, makes the film. Moviegoers willing to devote a night out after a stressful day at work and the price of admission to yet another romantic comedy, at the least should be able to expect an original screenplay and a witty cast that can generate some laughs. If that means watching a refreshing, unrealistic, foolishly semi-entertaining chick flick, then so be it.

In "Failure To Launch", Tripp, a 35-year old boat seller hunk with a Porsche, played by Matthew McConaughey, meets quirky Paula (Sarah Jessica Parker.) What can go wrong when two good-looking people find chemistry? Something can, if the guy is still living with mom and dad and the girl is on mom and dad's payroll to get him out of the house.

Relationships for Tripp reach their endpoint when the girl gives him "the look". This look, which means she's smitten, results in a trip to Tripp's home, where she will, to her shock, realize the guy of her dreams still lives with his parents, ending the relationship. But Tripp's sweet-talking games have become too, too many for his parents, played by former pro football player Terry Bradshaw and Oscar winning actress Kathy Bates. Desperately wanting to regain their lives after 35 years of parenting, the two hire Paula (Parker), a professional who guarantees she can get him to move out.

The somewhat awkward-yet-silly plot, though, seems to fall a bit short of expectations. If two beautiful people are put together, a film can be expected to be watchable, but not so much if there's no chemistry between them. Parker and McConaughey didn't seem to connect, and Parker simply seemed her old self once again.

The supporting roles save the film. Tripp's two friends, Ace and Demo, played by Justin Bartha and Bradley Cooper, add their own sense of comedy to the flick, but it was definitely the character of Paula's roommate, Kit, played by Zoey Deschanel, that stole the show. The definite highlight of the film, Deschanel is not a typical roommate. Distinct expressions and clever one-liners humorously build the character's sarcasm. Deschanel's character is enraged by mockingbirds, and in perhaps the funniest scene in the movie, makes Ace (Bartha) shoot the mockingbird that will not let her sleep. She instantaneously feels guilty and orders Ace to give the dying bird mouth-to-mouth. Her performance gave much-needed dimension to the film.

Director Tom Dey's work did not go completely unnoticed. Although the romantic comedy won't go down in history for its excellence, as did the classic "The Philadelphia Story", slight comedic moments, along with the unusual plot, are credited to him. However, while the movie does not display anything outstanding, it does not have to. Movies like these are unrealistic—that's what makes them watchable. Violence, world issues, tragedy and unconditional love are not always ingredients for a good film. Sometimes, all you need is a simple laugh, even if the joke is unclear.

'Inside Man' Is Suspenseful Crime Drama

BY ROSE WHITNEY

Atypical of several of director Spike Lee's prior films which characteristically addressed the social and political issue of race relations, "Inside Man" focuses instead on the more mundane topics of bank robbery and hostage taking. However, this is definitely not the average bank robbery—surprise revelations gradually surface throughout the film.

The plot begins with the dramatic takeover of the Manhattan Trust Bank located at 20 Exchange Place in the heart of the Lower Manhattan financial district. Several heavily armed perpetrators posing as painters enter and quickly gain control of the bank. Bank surveillance monitors are electronically deactivated, cell phones of all employees and customers are confiscated, and all hostages are forced to change clothes and don laborer overalls identical to those of the gunmen. Appropriately menacing, volatile, ruthless and a single-minded man on a mission, Clive Owen is completely convincing as Dalton Russell, the Shakespeare-quoting leader of the gang. Since we are offered no information as to his personal history, background, or motivation, the viewer is forced to speculate and form his own theories.

After Police Detective Keith Frazier (Denzel Washington) is assigned to monitor and coordinate the hostage situation, he meets police negotiator Captain John Darius (Willem Dafoe) and conflicting views of jurisdictional responsibility arise. Both Washington and Dafoe successfully convey the territorial issue, which is particularly relevant in these times of emergencies when the chain of command can determine whether a crisis is successfully resolved or becomes an even greater disaster.

It soon becomes evident that rather than the bank's money, the object of Russell's attention is the contents of safe deposit box 392, which is rented by the chairman of the bank's Board of Directors, Arthur Case (Christopher Plummer). In a desperate attempt to safeguard his property, Case enlists politically well-connected fundraiser and power broker Madeline White (Jodie Foster) to intercede on his behalf. Through her connections with the mayor, she is given access to the crime scene and is allowed to speak to Russell. During this meeting, information is exchanged which indicates that the safe deposit box contains incriminating information on Case's past life which could destroy his reputation and jeopardize his future. Foster is perfectly cast as the focused, pragmatic, cold, manipulative, no nonsense wheeler-dealer who allows no room for personal emotion or involvement.

In intermittent flashbacks throughout the film, several hostages are interviewed, and this offers some slight comic relief in a film that is otherwise serious and sobering. Since the hostages could not be physically distinguished from the perpetrators because of their identical clothing, Frazier is forced into the ludicrous position of having to interrogate some unlikely suspects, such as a middle-aged Jewish woman who is a bank employee.

"Inside Man" is the tale of a cleverly planned and executed crime told in a suspenseful and entertaining manner that features fine performances in all the main roles.

