



Ipswich becoming a hot spot for Hollywood

By Steve Landwehr
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IPSWICH — You'd never know it, but Tinseltown seems to have developed an infatuation with the Town of the Seven Hills.

In November, Cameron Diaz was at the mansion at Turner Hill for 12 days filming "The Box," according to Bob Talbot, president of Turner Hill Golf Club.

This month, more Hollywood luminaries will be at Turner Hill filming the screen adaptation of local author Dennis Lehane's "Shutter Island."

Directed by Martin Scorsese, the film features Leonardo DiCaprio, who starred as an undercover cop in another recent movie set in Boston, "The Departed." According to The Hollywood Reporter, Ben Kingsley and Mark Ruffalo will also star in the new film. Talbot said the golf club arranged for DiCaprio's seat at last week's Celtics game against the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Inquiring minds might want to get a glimpse of the glitterati, but the set will be closed to the public.

Celluloid magic — or is it all digital now? — has also touched down across town at another historic estate, Richard Crane's modest old manse high above the beach named after the plumbing tycoon.

Jennifer Garner and Matthew McConaughey are at the Crane Estate filming "The Ghosts of Girlfriends Past," a romantic comedy about a man who gets revisited by old flames while attending his brother's wedding, according to the trade journal Variety.

That set is also closed to the public.

But local sightings of McConaughey have been reported recently, particularly in Rowley.

The father of a Rowley teen who works at Riverview Restaurant on Estes Street reports his daughter was anxious to work late last Friday night, hoping to deliver 100 pizzas ordered by the "Girlfriends" film crew, presumably to catch a glimpse of either

McConaughey or teen fave Breckin Meyer. The film crew ordered 50 pizzas the night before and apparently liked the local eatery.

McConaughey et al have good taste. Saveur magazine named Riverview's pies one of the top 100 things on its food and restaurant to-do list in 2007.

Peter Pinciario, general manager of the Crane Estate, said the film is being shot on the grounds of the estate and inside the mansion, but not on the beach. Pinciario said he and his staff have almost no contact with the actors.

"They really like to keep to themselves when they're working," he said.

He noted that when this year's Best Actor Oscar winner, Daniel Day-Lewis, was at the estate for five months while shooting "The Crucible" in 1995, "I only met him like one time."

Why this spurt of interest in Ipswich? Turner Hill's Talbot thinks it may be due to word-of-mouth advertising in the industry. He noted seeing a lot of the same production crew members who worked on "The Box" preparing for "Shutter Island."

Co-starring James Marsden, "The Box" is the story of a couple who discover a mysterious box with a button inside that, if pressed, will give them enough money to save their dying son. The downside is that in return, someone else, somewhere, will die.

The film is adapted from a short story that ran on CBS' mid-80s revival of "The Twilight Zone."

"I can't speak enough about them; they were both great," Talbot said of the movie's two stars.