Woody Allen’s latest film deals with the affair, the theater, and trademark comic capades in Reeling (1982-era New York). It’s a terrific, light-hearted portrait of everyone David Shaye, played by John Slattery, who struggles to resist the comical allure of show business during the film’s run time. His latest theater work, funded by his boss Nick Valent (Joe Vincelli), produces under the condition that the boss’ heady, 15-year-old girlfriend (Jennifer Tilly) is a lead role. Another actress, Helen Singer (Diane Wiest), seduces Shaye into writing the script for her and her eccentric, off-the-bat career. The comic splendors of a screen are balanced by the splendid set that Allen’s set designer, Santo Loquasto, and the jazz soundtrack definitely aid in the film’s general presence. — Carrie Perlman, Sony Nickelodeon.

Interview with the Vampire
As many points, interview with the Vampire’s eerie darkness lying in the gloom that permeates it, but just enough comic relief keeps it from floating. Tom Cruise plays Lestat, a vampire who draws his vitality from his way of life, not through the gift of immortality on Louis’ own terms, a sorrowful man who can’t come of age. The vampire’s primal need to exist, with no possibility of escape. The film is basically a variation on the Bram Stoker legend, a tale of suspense and horror, and give emotional weight to the gothic tale about the dangers of our own hearts. This film is basically a variation on the Bram Stoker legend, a tale of suspense and horror, and give emotional weight to the gothic tale about the dangers of our own hearts.

The Crying Game
Steady Stone’s latest film focuses on a marauding couple (Woodrow Harrelson and Juliette Lewis) whose sensational show-killing spree catapults them into the national spotlight. Their lives are consequently explosively by a TV tabloid journalist (Roberts Downey Jr.), a sadistic cop (Tom Sizemore), and a somewhat dimwitted prison warden (Tommy Lee Jones). All elements of justice and the media machine are represented as cartoonish caricatures, which degenerate as the film goes on. The main problem is the director’s somewhat hyperbolic attitude that fails to recognize that he is part of that same machine. The main attractions actions in the film are the hyperkinetic performances of the cast members, the excessive violence, and the bizarre, rapid-fire editing of picture and sound, all of which Store executes brilliantly. By the end of the film, audiences will either revel in its visual and auditory delight or die of visual and auditory monotony. — Scott Deskin, LSC Saturday.

Pulp Fiction
Winner of the Palm d’Or at this year’s Cannes Film Festival, this movie contains standard plots of hit men, junkies, and criminals, with an amazing facility with story-telling. The plot consists of two filmic principal stories: First, the daily experiences of two hit men (John Travolta and Samuel L. Jackson); second, Travolta’s character involved with his gangster boss wife (Uma Thurman) as an ex-cop, and third, the plans of a boxer, who has been paid off to take a dive in the ring, instead choosing to win the fight and take off with the money and his girlfriend. Although these film noir concepts may seem a bit clichéd, the film ultimately infuses his characters with something cracking dialogue and a sense of purpose (i.e., Jackson’s hit-man character quoting Bible verses as a prelude to execution). Tarantino’s career may still be young, beginning with the cult hit Pulp Fiction (1992) and recently surfacing in his scripts for True Romance and Natural Born Killers, but his latest film confirms his mission to shake up the current course of cinema. — Bob Marzanto, Sony Nickelodeon.

The Santa Clause
This vehicle for television sitcom star Tim Allen is cuttlefish in its initial premise. Once Scott Calvin (Allen) climbs into Santa Claus’ sleigh after the fat man in the red suit has fallen dead in a pile of snow, he is nominated to fill Santa’s shoes by the little-known legal contract of the film’s title. Not only does Allen’s character feel a moral obligation to do this duty, but he undergoes the physical transformation into Santa as well. As the new Santa, he fights for the rights of children everywhere, much to the dismay of his ex-wife (Wendi Crews) and her psychiatric boyfriend (Judge Reinhold). In the end, the film scores high for its compassionate view of children, but it rings false when it condemns adults for not understanding the world as it really is. The film is tailored to children under 12: If you must go, take one with you. — Terisa Eisner, Sony Caplay Place.

The Shawshank Redemption
This extraordinary movie about hope, friendship, and renewal is the face of suffering. It’s a much more heartfelt story than the movie title suggests, Tim Robbins embodies the classic protagonist in Andy Dufrain, a banker who is imprisoned for two murders he swears he did not commit, and he is forced to face the abrasive reality of prison life. He eventually emerges out of his shell and cultivates a friendship with Red (Morgan Freeman), whose connections inside the prison provide a near counterfoil to Andy’s own talents as a financial planner, which he eventually exploits to get on the good side of the prison guards. Through all of Andy’s suffering, he never loses the hope of being free, and it carries both Andy and Red through the tough years. This film transcends its short-story basis (originally written by Stephen King) with excellent performances and stylish direction from the newly minted “Oscar” Iverson. — John Jacobs, Sony Harvard Square.