

For Immediate Release

# The Newburyport Literary Festival

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## **Oscar®-Nominated Filmmakers Todd Field and Tom Perrotta to Appear at Second Annual Literary Festival**

Adapting literary work for the movies is always a challenge. Keep too close to the source material, and your film could lack a life of its own. Veer too far away, and what initially drew readers to the book may get lost in the process. The 2007 Newburyport Literary Festival welcomes writers Todd Field and Tom Perrotta for a discussion with National Public Radio and former *New York Times* critic Elvis Mitchell about how they approached adapting Perrotta's novel *Little Children* for the screen.

"When Todd and I began collaborating on the script, we were hoping to make something new out of the material, rather than simply reproducing the book onto film," says Perrotta. "For me, as a novelist, the attraction of a film adaptation lies precisely in this opportunity to re-imagine my book with someone else, and explore new possibilities for the characters and the story. To be able to work with a writer/director as accomplished as Todd was a huge part of the appeal for me, but I understood from the start that what we produced together would no longer be 'mine' in any simple sense. There's really no way for two writers with such distinct voices and sensibilities to come together and not create something very different from what either one of us would have done on his own."

*Little Children*, starring Kate Winslet, Jennifer Connolly, Jackie Earl Haley, and Patrick Wilson was on more than 150 Top Ten Lists, won numerous critics' prizes, and went on to be nominated for three Academy Awards. *The New York Times* called *Little Children* "unfailingly intelligent," saying, "Mr. Field and Mr. Perrotta have wisely trimmed and modified the book. The result is a film that is challenging, accessible and hard to stop

thinking about. Mr. Field proves to be to be among the most literary of American filmmakers.” And the *Los Angeles Times* said that *Little Children* was “the Best Film of the Year....An empathetic, humanistic vision. One of those rare films that transcends its source material.”

**Todd Field** began making motion pictures in 1985 when he was cast by Woody Allen in *Radio Days*. He went on to work with some of America's greatest filmmakers including Stanley Kubrick, Victor Nuñez, and Carl Franklin. Franklin and Nuñez encouraged Field to enroll as a directing fellow at the American Film Institute (AFI), which he did in 1992. Since that time he has received the Franklin J. Schaffner Fellow Award from the AFI, the Satyajit Ray Award from the British Film Institute, a Jury Prize from the Sundance Film Festival, and his short films have been exhibited at various venues overseas and domestically at the Museum of Modern Art.

Field became one of Hollywood's hottest new writer/directors with the release of *In the Bedroom*, a film based on a short story by Andre Dubus. For Field's work on *In the Bedroom*, he was named director of the year by the National Board of Review, and his script was awarded best screenplay. The film went on to win best picture of the year from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, and the New York Film Critics Circle awarded best first film to Field. *In the Bedroom* also received six AFI, three Golden Globe, and five Academy Award nominations including that for best picture.

In 2006, Field co-wrote and directed *Little Children*, based on a novel by Tom Perrotta. For this film, director Field and Perrotta intended to take the story in a separate and somewhat different direction than the novel. The film is set in an upper-middle-class bedroom community outside Boston, and tells the story of several seemingly unrelated characters and how their lives connect in surprising, and potentially dangerous, ways. *Little Children* won numerous awards from the nation's critics associations including writing awards for Field and Perrotta. The movie received three Golden Globe nominations including best picture, and was nominated for three Academy Awards.

**Tom Perrotta** is the author of five works of fiction: *Bad Haircut*, *The Wishbones*, *Joe College*, *Election* (made into the acclaimed 1999 movie that starred Matthew Broderick and Reese Witherspoon), and most recently, *Little Children*. Perrotta has worked as a

screenwriter and a journalist writing for several major publications including the *New York Times Book Review*, *Rolling Stone* and *GQ*. He has taught writing at Yale and Harvard. He lives with his family outside Boston.

### **About the festival**

The 2007 Newburyport Literary Festival (NLF) runs from Friday, April 27, through Sunday, April 29. A three-day celebration of reading, writing, and the love of books, this year's festival features more than 70 writers of distinguished fiction and non-fiction—including short story writers, children's authors, biographers, nature writers, critics, screenwriters, poets, novelists, and journalists—who will read and discuss their work in venues throughout Newburyport's historic downtown.

The vision of the Newburyport Literary Festival is shared by many individuals and organizations. The NLF is especially grateful for the generous support of our founding sponsors, the Newburyport Five Cents Savings Bank Charitable Foundation and the Institution for Savings, who have made it possible for the festival to take root and flourish. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Newburyport Cultural Council, a local agency that is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

All festival events are wheelchair accessible and open to the public. All events are free, except for the opening night gala. For complete information about the festival, including event times and venues, please visit: [www.newburyportliteraryfestival.org](http://www.newburyportliteraryfestival.org).