

# That's a wrap!

## Area native completes filming for student movie set in Waverly home

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Filmmaker Joanna Jefferson, Boston University graduate student, completed filming "Sole Spirits" Monday at the Waverly house built on the banks of the Charles River in 1888 and still owned by her mother's family.

"It's been fantastic. The weather has cooperated beautifully; we even had fog when we needed it one day. I have a good crew and the cast took direction like pros, gave me great performances. I'm very pleased," Jefferson says.

Inspired by events in her family, "Sole Spirits" is the first major directing role for Jefferson. The project is being produced primarily as her thesis film toward receiving a master's in fine arts from Boston University.

It is expected to play at festivals and screenings across the country, including a viewing offered by ARTSBRIDGE.

"Sole Spirits" tells the tale of an older woman who has reached the point where she realizes she can no longer live alone in her deteriorating family home. Her son, who has left the area, returns with his daughter to help his mother with the transition. The events of the film take place on a single morning as the family comes to terms with putting the house and its history behind them as they move on toward the future.

Believing that it was imperative to cast local residents in these roles, Jefferson visited Parkersburg in April to conduct auditions. Mary Green was given the role of Claudia, the mother. Joe Oliverio, assistant principal at Williamson, Elementary School, and his daughter, Alyssa, were chosen as Jackson and Elizabeth.

"Casting a father and daughter to play those roles was an added bonus. Their natural, off-screen relationship comes across on screen with the closeness and playfulness intended in the script. Then, casting Mary as Claudia, and the fact that she was a stranger to them both, also helped. In the script, she has been estranged from her family and that distance worked well for me," Jefferson says.

Alyssa heard about the auditions through Guild Builders (an Actors Guild program) and came home and told me. We've both worked in live theater through the Actors Guild, though never in the same play. So when I learned there was a chance we might be able to work together on this film, we signed up to audition. Just finishing up the school year, it's made a good outlet for us and a way for us to spend some good time together," Joe says.

"This is the only film I've ever been in and I found out that it's a lot different from theater. You just do a little, short piece at a time, instead of the whole script. And, you can always do it over. You can't do that in a play," adds Alyssa, who will be entering fifth grade at Williamson Elementary this fall.

"She's been a real trooper. She not only

had all of her lines, but everybody else's lines, memorized by the time we got here. I'll ask her to try something different, or just to do the scene again, and her answer's always the same, "Okay Dokey," she says," Jefferson says.

"I have been so impressed with the professionalism of my group, Mary, Alyssa and I were complete strangers plopped in the middle of a crew that know each other well and there was never an uncomfortable moment. They just accepted us as part of the team and went to work," Joe says.

Jefferson's film crew are fellow students, each of whom will complete their own film. The group hopes to offer the results as a package. "Sole Spirits" is the third film completed during a month-long trip that took them first to Kansas, on to Georgia and then to Waverly.

"All of the filming, a total of 14 days of actual shooting, has gone extremely well. This has been the most relaxing shoot, which is probably a good thing; we're all getting tired, but it's been a wonderful experience. We've agreed that going out on location is the way to make films," Jefferson says.

Jefferson's core crew consists of Zak Lee, director of photography; Derek Frank, assistant cameraman; Pegeen Quinn, assistant director, and Matthew Payne, gaffer with Mike Fleisch and Jeff Stern on sound recording. As a bonus on this shoot Jefferson's sister, Sarah, came in from Cincinnati to work as set designer and grip.

In fact, the entire family has been involved in the project from the beginning.

When her parents, Bonnie and Terry Jefferson, learned their daughter intended to shoot her film at the Wood County house where Bonnie grew up, it became a labor of love. They began working to prepare the house, contacted local collectors to lend their dolls and became assistant set designers.

During the week of actual filming, they served as the chuck wagon for cast and crew, "feeding us entirely too well," Jefferson laughs.

Her aunt and uncle, who live next door, allowed the team access to their home, making them feel like welcome guests. "Even my cousin got in the act, which I didn't know until today (Monday). I had told my aunt that we were having to be careful to shoot around the sounds of engines and motors coming through the windows, so my cousin went and told the neighbors to be quiet. I guess she even put up signs," Jefferson says.

With filming of "Sole Spirits" completed, the crew left for Boston Wednesday. Their travels are not complete, however, as it's on to Ireland for yet another project. Then, the editing process will begin. They expect to have the movies ready for viewing by the Christmas holidays.

"ARTSBRIDGE has been very supportive and we're excited about the project. All the films are complete for a showing here. We're a very excited about seeing the

footage and watching the projects come together as viewable films," Jefferson says.

"To be able to show them here, where the arts community, my family, the media have been so receptive to us, would make a nice Christmas present."

The Oliverios have spent a great deal of time with the crew, getting to know them and inviting them to their home to celebrate the film with a dip in the pool.

"You hear a lot of negative reports associated with the film industry, but if these young people are any indication of the future, it's in good hands," Joe says.

Alyssa, who will earn a Girl Scout filmmaking badge for her efforts, has learned how to take light readings, helped with the slates and other tasks in addition to acting.

"Elizabeth is a lot like me, so a lot of the scenes are just me being myself," Alyssa says.

"Which has been excellent for the film, very natural and spontaneous," Jefferson agrees.

"One of my favorite scenes was down by the river. I had to learn how to skip rocks and I'm not very good at it," Alyssa adds.

"And so I would ask her to do it over, again and again and again," says Jefferson.

"And every time she would say..."

"Okay Dokey!" they exclaim together.



Jeff Stern and Mike Fleisch were responsible for the soundtrack of the movie.



Claudia (Mary Green, white shirt) enters the bedroom where her son and granddaughter (Joe and Alyssa Oliverio) are preparing to pack her belongings for removal from the family home. The movie, "Sole Spirits," will be shown locally later in the year.