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Thursday, September 20, 2007

A date movie

Locally made short flick 'Third Date' premieres next Thursday

By Richard Duckett TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF
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It's the "Third Date," but Kristen Lucas, Tom Henrickson, Jeff Craddock and crew have pulled it off at the first try.

"Third Date" is a romantic comedy short movie that will have its world premiere at 6 p.m. next Thursday in Showcase Cinemas Worcester North. Cast and crew will be on hand, and the screening is free. "We want as many people as possible to come," said Lucas, founder of Goldilocks Productions, which produced the film.

The locally written and produced 25-minute movie was shot in July and just finished post production on Monday. But those involved like the way it looks. "It looks great. The acting is great," Lucas said. Down the road, it will be entered to have a date at the Sundance Film Festival.

So on Sept. 27 Henrickson, for one, will be able to watch the movie without saying to his wife, Eileen, "I could have done better."

"Third Date" is his story, and he co-wrote the screenplay with Jon Seamans.

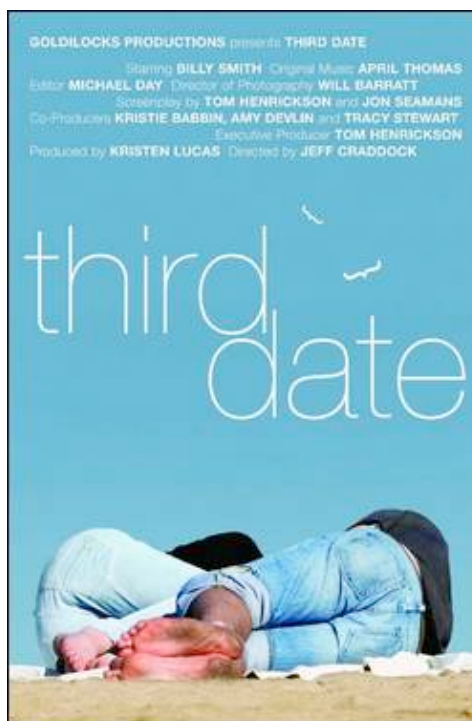
Still, movie premieres are a new experience for him.

"I don't know what to expect, to be honest with you," said Henrickson, a father of three who lives in Worcester, works for Omark Consultants, and is active with youth sports including being the offensive coordinator for the South Community High School football team and serving as president of the Sacred Heart Basketball League.

"I'm just your normal, everyday Joe. I never expected it to go this far," he said.

Henrickson, 45, acknowledged that he is the sort of person who will see a film and express an opinion about how he could write a movie. "I always said I could, I just never did it," he said.

One day he was giving what he termed a "parental speech" to one of his children when he received the reply of "You always said you could write a movie, but you never did." End of parental speech. "I got a book (on writing screenplays)," Henrickson said.



Enlarge photo

"Third Date" locations included the Blissful Meadows Golf Club in Uxbridge, a motel in Foxboro and a beach on Cape Cod.

'Third Date'

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And he did write a screenplay. "Third Date" concerns Ed, a decent enough man who has never gotten to a third date with the same woman. The first date goes along swimmingly, the second starts off well, but then ... no third date. Is Ed unlucky, clumsy or the victim of a family curse?

"I think I have a unique idea here," Henrickson said. "I'm not a good writer. I don't claim to be. But I have a lot of ideas."

Henrickson read in the newspaper last year about Lucas producing "Let it All Out," a short film that won a prize as part of the 48 Hour Film Project competition held in Providence. Competing film crews had 48 hours to make a short movie from scratch. Lucas assembled a large team who made a comedy out of their assigned topic of "road movie."

"He came across my name," Lucas said. Both Lucas and Henrickson were surprised to learn that they lived just five streets from each other in Worcester. "So it's small-world stuff," Lucas said. "He asked me, 'Are you the girl that makes movies?'"

Lucas, 39, has had a longstanding interest and involvement with films but works full time as marketing manager for HomeGoods, a division of the TJX Cos. in Framingham. She has a graduate degree in screenwriting from Emerson College and her own production company, Goldilocks Productions.

Henrickson's script was for a full-length feature movie. Lucas read it, and the two got together in March for what would be a very productive first meeting.

Lucas' idea was that "Third Date" should be made initially as a short movie. The short can then be used as a "calling card" to attract investors who might be interested in backing "Third Date" as a full-length movie, she said.

Henrickson was amenable to the idea. "Before it (the meeting) ended, we were planning a fundraiser," Lucas said. They would be a team.

The 48 Hour Project had bonded those who were involved with it and so Lucas "already had a team in place" on the production end of things, she said. Craddock, post-production specialist for Harvard Business School, had directed "Let it All Out." Seamans was the head writer for "Let it All Out" and subsequently worked with Henrickson in fashioning "Third Date" into a shorter script.

Similarly, Lucas' connections helped in putting together a cast that includes several professional actors including Maurice Lavell, who was also a bodyguard for Anna Nicole Smith. Lavell and Lucas had worked together on a student film. Lavell has had parts in "Striptease" and "Miami Vice."

"It's not like we called in Hollywood connections. We had friends we called on who believed in this project," Lucas said. The cast includes Billy Smith as luckless Ed, Lavell as Rudy, Ed's best friend, Jay Miller, Natalie Marie Teager, Molly Kelleher, Patricia Thomas and Sari Gagnon. And a lot of Henrickson's family — his son, his son's best friend, two nephews, a niece, and lots of other nieces and nephews in some group scenes. "It was fun," he said.

Henrickson is also the film's executive producer, and a fundraiser for "Third Date" was held in May at Union Station. More than 200 people attended.

Even so, the film was shot and produced on a very small budget, Lucas said. "Most people were not paid. Most of the money was on post-production editing."

"Third Date" was shot in four days in July. Locations included the Blissful Meadows Golf Club in Uxbridge, a motel in Foxboro and a beach on Cape Cod.

Where: Showcase Cinemas Worcester North
How much: Free



Director Jeff Craddock (in baseball cap) observes actors Maurice Lavell, left, and Billy Smith go through a scene on the set of "Third Date."

(JAY GROCCIA)

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The first day's shoot lasted 20 hours. "Was everybody smiling? ... But I can't put in words the dedication of the crew and cast," Lucas said.

"To think we only sat down in March and it was filmed by the end of July," Henrickson marveled.

Editing began the first week in August and was finished on Monday.

The deadline for Sundance Film Festival entries is tomorrow. Regardless of whether "Third Date" gets accepted, Lucas plans to attend Sundance and "pound the streets" on the film's behalf. The movie will also be entered into other film festivals as they come up, she said.

There are high hopes.

"I'm thrilled with the quality of it. It's absolutely awesome," Henrickson said.

He couldn't have done better himself — thanks to himself and the cast and crew.

For more information, visit www.thirddatamovie.com.



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