

# On Location In New Canaan

## Local Film Company Makes First Picture

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New Canaan is no stranger to the camera eye – its landscape has been used as setting for several major Hollywood films over the years. Directors Frank Oz and Ang Lee brought in big-name stars and crews to produce “The Stepford Wives,” and “The Ice Storm,” respectively.

But some think it’s about time to make things local.

Joanne Powell and Garret C. Maynard are two such people, and on Aug. 1, started filming “FilmCAMP: Reel 1,” their first full-length feature for Nutmeg Pictures, which the two formed in the fall.

Shooting, which is set to wrap on Aug. 19, will take place across numerous locations in town, including Powell’s own home and those of some friends, and The Roger Sherman Inn, as well as at the Avon Theatre Film Center in Stamford.

The film, written by the duo five years ago, is a comedic story of fictional Hollywood director Ted Putterbaugh, played by Greenwich actor Gideon Fountain, who is accused of financial irresponsibility by his corrupt producer, and assigned to head a B-class film camp of spoiled, out-of-control children in the woods of Connecticut.

Powell’s home on the fourth day of shooting was relatively calm, but by all accounts busy – scenes are shot at the front door and in other rooms of the house, while actors prep for upcoming camera time in other rooms, and

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NEWS-REVIEW photos / Scott Andersen



*New Canaan’s Patricia Sanger Cook, above, plays Patt Slabb during the making of “FilmCAMP: Reel 1,” a comedy currently being filmed in town through resident Joanne Powell’s Nutmeg Pictures. Director Garrett Maynard, left, operates the camera during a scene. Production will run through Aug. 19.*

## On Location

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Maynard, camera in hand, calls for repeated takes of scenes.

Shooting has been so-far, so-good as far as everyone is concerned.

"The very first day, one of our actresses calling in sick first thing in the morning," Powell said. "Other than that, there hasn't been anything we've confronted that we haven't been able to resolve."

In starting Nutmeg Pictures, Powell wanted to specifically utilize Connecticut talent, and for the most part, she succeeded – most of the cast is from the state, with one actor, Patricia Sanger Cook, being from New Canaan. Some of the cast comes from nearby areas of New York, and some from Pennsylvania, though Powell says the entire crew is from Connecticut.

Fountain, of Greenwich, works his day job in real estate, often taking calls and sending information with his Blackberry device while not on camera. Formerly a stand-

up comic, he had a large role in the 1987 comedy "Firehouse," which featured a small appearance by then-unknown Julia Roberts.

Breaking his long retreat from acting, he recently began shooting the film "Person of Interest" in Stamford.

"I'm really glad to be back doing this," Fountain said. "This gives me the opportunity to put in two more credits. I hope the exposure helps to put me out there some more."

He is comfortable with and fond of his latest character – he said it reminds him Tony Randall's "Felix Unger" character from "The Odd Couple."

"I think it really fits with me," he said. "He's a little fussy, easily frustrated and unintentionally funny in his foolishness. I like that kind of character."

Amy Rose Taylor plays the female lead, Ruth Wimsatt, a camp secretary and support character for Ted Putterbaugh.

"It's her function to motivate him, inspire him and back him up," Taylor said. "They come to develop a true respect and admiration for each other."

Taylor hails from Tappan, N.Y., and has acted since the age of 5, with her experience including Broadway plays and television commercials. After taking a break to start a family, she came across an advertisement for the part through Ross Reports, a sort of online classified section for actors and casting agents.

Both actors say they are hoping the film gets good exposure and that it is shaping up to be a quality piece of work.

"Joanne and Garret are unbelievable," Taylor said. "They are fantastically talented people with a firm grasp on the industry. This is going to come across as a very top-notch, very marketable film – which is what we're aiming for."

Getting much credit from Taylor and Fountain were the child actors playing the campers in the film – many coming from all around the state.

"The kids have been fantastic," Fountain said, expressing the satisfaction of working with children. "Everyone should try to maintain the genuineness that kids have."

Two of those child actors, Evan Gambardella and Michael Baldarelli – both of North Haven – were on set, preparing for their upcoming scene. Aged 13 and 12, respectively, and each with a long list of work under his belt acting, singing and dancing, playing a role in a movie is the ultimate thrill.

"Every movie I see, I go, 'Man, I wish I was there,'" Gambardella says before Baldarelli chimes in, "Now my dream has come true."

The two actors are very bright, well-spoken and enthusiastic. Baldarelli even belts out a few lines of "Chicago" by Sinatra, one of his musical idols.

"I love the story," Gambardella said. "It's got a great plot, a nice ending, and all the roles are so

individual – it's so well casted. I really hope it goes big – that would be a lot of fun."

"Even if I had to come here every morning for two months I would never get sick of it," Baldarelli said.

All the actors are quite vocal of their appreciation and praise for Powell and Maynard putting the production together, and the out-of-towners are all impressed with New Canaan – "one hell of a town," as Baldarelli put it.

Powell and Maynard started Nutmeg Pictures last fall, and the idea from the get-go was to utilize what was available within the state.

"We want to create progressive

family filmed entertainment, while developing the state of filmmaking in the state," Powell said. "We wanted to capitalize on the talent we already have in Connecticut. There is real talent here."

The actors were initially selected over four days of auditions held at the New Canaan Library. While a marketing plan for the film has not yet been formed, Powell said it is her intention to see the film get a wide distribution.

"It was intentionally written as a very commercial endeavor," she said. "It's targeted to teens and young adults and we're aiming for a G or PG rating."

"We're seeking the widest possible audience."



NEWS-REVIEW photo / Hal Brown

### EMERGENCY TRAINING

Jim Hondy signals that he's found an object during search and rescue training for the Community Emergency Response Team in Irwin Park Saturday. With Hondy are Rosemarie Rowley, left, and Linda Spence.

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