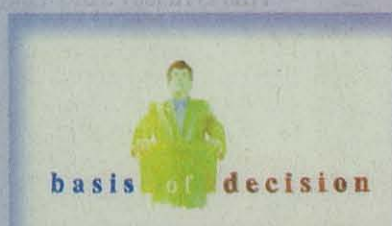


ARTS

Lights, camera
...ACTION!

Local graduate to shoot film in Petoskey



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When Erich Rettstadt, a student at New York University, began outlining the concept for his short film, "Basis of Decision" a couple years ago, he knew he wanted the film to be a musical comedy. He knew he wanted to shoot in Petoskey. And he knew he wanted it to be about a debate team.

Later this month, Rettstadt, a 2007 graduate of Petoskey High School, will return to his hometown to shoot the film with the help of a couple hundred locals.

"'Basis of Decision' follows a pair of debaters. I would be lying if I said it wasn't semi-autobiographical. I did debate while in high school and the film takes place in an undisclosed Midwestern town," Rettstadt said.

The film tells the story of debaters Blake and Dakota and follows them as they compete through a tournament. While the pair are from a small Midwestern town, they are forced to compete against teams from large metropolitan areas.

"The film is about them trying to win the tournament and of the relationship between the two of them," Rettstadt explained. "I based their relationship off the characters in the film, 'Singing in the Rain.' It's kind of an homage to 1950s musicals."

While the principal roles will be cast in New York, casting will also take place locally. Rettstadt believes about two-thirds of the film will be made up of local actors in smaller roles.

"The final scene of the film will take place in the Petoskey High School auditorium where we hope to fill the room to get shots of the cheering crowd," Rettstadt explained. "We're hoping to get about



COURTESY PHOTO

Erich Rettstadt (right) and Mingjue Hu scout Central Elementary School in Petoskey as a filming location for Rettstadt's film "Basis of Decision." Rettstadt is a Petoskey High School graduate attending New York University. Mingjue is a native of Beijing, China, and a graduate of NYU. Mingjue is the director of photography for Rettstadt's film. The film students met at NYU as members of Tisch Scholars, a group of students selected by the faculty for their demonstrated artistic and leadership ability and commitment to public service.

200 people in there so we need some help."

Other scenes will be shot in Central Elementary gym, at the waterfront and in front of the clock tower and on the corner of Lake and Howard streets in downtown Petoskey.

The cast and crew are expected to arrive in town on Wednesday, March 30 and hope to finish shooting on Sunday, April 10.

"It's going to be quite an undertaking," Rettstadt joked. "But it's going to be a lot of fun and I think everyone involved in the film is looking forward to it."

Rettstadt will graduate in May with a double major in film and television production and dramatic literature.

He hopes to stay in New York and work in either the film or theater industry.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

While the main characters in "Basis of Decision" will be cast in New York City, the film will use many extras to be selected from local students and community members interested in acting and all aspects of filmmaking.

The production crew, which consists of student and young professional filmmakers from all over the world, also hopes to offer on-set mentor opportunities in directing, producing, costuming, cinematography and set design, among others.

Producer Erich Rettstadt is seeking community support to provide home stays for members of the international cast and crew during the shoot. Community members interested in any of these opportunities should e-mail their area of interest along with contact information to basisofdecision@gmail.com.

A "Basis of Decision" film fund has been established at the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation to receive tax deductible donations to support the effort to bring this nonprofit film shoot and accompanying educational opportunities for area students and community members to Northern Michigan.

Contributions can be sent to the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation, 616 Petoskey St., No. 300, Petoskey, Mich. 49770, and include a notation that they are directed to the "Basis of Decision" film fund. Support is also needed from volunteers who would like to contribute food and lodging to cast and crew members. For more information, e-mail basisofdecision@gmail.com.

Erich Rettstadt named 2010 Pearson Prize National Fellow

Erich Rettstadt, who will graduate from New York University this May with a double major in film and television production and in dramatic literature, is one of 20 students nationwide to be recognized as a 2010 Pearson Prize National Fellow.

The award, from the Pearson Foundation, recognizes and supports exemplary students who are distinguishing themselves through local public service efforts while still completing their undergraduate studies. More than 10,000 students applied for the Pearson Prize, which was administered in 2010 by the National Society of Collegiate Scholars.

Rettstadt was recognized for his founding of Tisch New Theatre at New York University, one of the university's largest active student-run theater companies. The Tisch New Theatre allows students, regardless of major, to work in all facets of theater arts and contribute to enriching the community.



Rettstadt