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Horror movie features Wagoner-area residents

By: Zane Thomas, Neighbor Newspapers

WAGONER - Two Oklahoma natives from this area have returned to make a horror movie.

Last week, Wagoner native Glen Jensen and Broken Arrow native Julie Corgill-Lisandro were in the Muskogee-area filming, Denizen, which, without giving away much of the plot can be described as a creature that leaves a trail of blood in a small town. "Like every movie, there's a pretty girl and an evil general," Jensen commented.

He plays the evil Gen. Jernigan. Corgill-Lisandro is Callie, the love interest of the protagonist.

"It's actually really exciting that I can come back here to work," she said.

Corgill-Lisandro now lives in the Los Angeles area.

Jensen now lives in the Philadelphia area. He said he can visit his family, then travel down the road to work on the movie.

This is not the first movie Jensen has made in this area. In 2006, he starred in Salvation, which is due out in DVD in June. It was one of the movies which was viewed at the Barebones Film Festival, a two-week event which concluded on Sunday in Muskogee.

Both movies were directed by J.A. Steel, who wears many hats as an actress, writer, director and producer.

Steel said the greatest thing about filming in the Muskogee area is it has the small-town America feel to it. That and state legislation gives tax incentives for filmmakers, which is good for a low-budget movie.

"I really like filming in Oklahoma," Steel said.

Steel said she has future plans to film her next movie, titled Operation Overlord in the Muskogee and Wagoner areas.

Several local residents appeared in a town-hall scene filmed at the Roxy Theater in Muskogee on Friday night, prior to the screening of Salvation.

Steel called it an adventure in independent filmmaking. The whole scene took about 30 minutes for the filmmakers, and that included various takes from different angles.

Denizen was filmed in a period of nine days, same as her previous movies.

Steel said there is a lot of waste in Hollywood because working on big-budget movies takes all the creativity out of making the movie.

When she was filming Salvation, the cast and crew had to film in a hotel room because shooting at another location fell through. She had to make some changes from her original plans when she filmed scenes at Lake Tenkiller on Saturday.

Steel said Denizen is a movie that can be compared as a cross between Outbreak, Universal Soldier and I Am Legend. Jensen plays a general who wants to use the movie's creature as the ultimate soldier for the military.

Jensen described Denizen as a Roger Corman-like movie. Corman is a veteran movie producer and director of low-budget B-movies.

Many famous actors and directors, such as Jack Nicholson, Sylvester Stallone, Martin Scorsese, director of The Departed, and Francis Ford Coppola, director of The Godfather movies, started out working for Corman.

Corgill-Lisandro also has worked for Corman. According to www.imdb.com, her movie credits include Cheerleader Massacre and Sorority Sister Slaughter.

She said she would like to make it big in Hollywood, but actually enjoys working on independent movies.

Even Hollywood movie star Brad Pitt, who once resided in Shawnee, started out in the 1980's slasher movie Cutting Class.

Jensen described Steel as the next Roger Corman. He said the movie has the potential of being one of those movies that produces the next Hollywood star or of being a cult classic.

Cult classic are movies, such as Night of the Living Dead or The Rocky Horror Picture Show, which generally aren't popular at their initial release but gain a following of admirers over many years.

Jensen, a 1971 graduate of Wagoner High School, divides his work between starring in movies, and working as a stand-up comedian. His schedule is so full, he had to pass up the opportunity to act as a secret service agent in National Treasure: Book of Secrets alongside Academy Award winners Nicholas Cage and Helen Mirren and in M. Night Shyamalan's The Happening. Shyamalan is the director of The Sixth Sense.

Jensen said it is fun working in these low-budget B-movies because they have drama, comedy and scare scenes.

"You get an opportunity to work in a film that has something for everyone," he said. "It has a little bit of everything."

Fingerprints, a 2006 movie Jensen appeared in, won the category for "Best Feature" at the New York City Horror Film Festival.

Other Oklahomans who are featured in the movie are Devon Brewster as Billy Bedlam, and Sherry Wisman as Aunt Flo. Both are from Tulsa.

Along with a being in a movie, Jensen and Corgill-Lisandro will have the likeness featured in a comic book version of the movie.

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