

Helena Life

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'When we started, we really didn't know what we were doing. It's tough. With a production you never realize how much goes into one minute of a scene.'

—Isaac Marble, production manager of 'My Favorite Movie'

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Eliza Willey IR Photo Editor

Alex M. White, left, and Bill Otto, director of photography, check their scene through the camera's lens while shooting a movie recently in the downtown Pattern House coffee shop location.

Cameras rolling

Budding auteurs | Montana duo begins shooting film in Queen City

By LARRY KLINE
Independent Record

Sheila Lopach answered her door one evening a few months ago to find two young men standing on her Reeder's Village porch. "There were two well-dressed gentlemen, and I assumed they were selling something," she recalled.

Lopach and her husband, Dennis, invited the men in and learned they were Martin Murray and Isaac Marble, the director and production manager, respectively, of "My Favorite Movie," which began filming in the Queen City on June 9.

After checking the script to make sure it wasn't some sort of "Borat"-style spoof, the couple agreed to open their home to the budding filmmakers.

The production has since filled their home with busy cast and crew members, up to 50 folks at one point, along with some odd statues, a fish tank and other props, Lopach said.

"It's been huge," she said. "I hope the movie does well."

The film has turned into a community event — with Rogers and Marble planning shoots at Women's Park, Riley's Pub and other locations in the greater Helena area. This week, they'll bring in Brutus, a trained grizzly bear, to shoot a scene at an undisclosed location in town.

The project is a bit of a family matter as well.

While preparing for an Independent Record online video interview on the set at the Pattern House coffee shop this week, Marble's mother, Cynthia, stepped in to adjust the microphone attached to his shirt. She's in town for the filming — she has a small role — and has been nice enough, along with Marble's uncle, to cook meals for the cast and crew.

The film also is drawing some recognizable names to Helena, Marble noted. John Murray, Bill Murray's brother, has a role, along with Billings-born comedian Augie Smith and Liz Cain, who appeared on several episodes of the television show "The Mole."

Mike Butters, president of the Helena Bighorns hockey club and

an actor who's appeared in the "Saw" horror films and other roles, also plays a part in "My Favorite Movie." Butters also has had a big hand in helping Marble and Rogers — two Montana natives who've taken some time off from college to work on the project.

The film, Rogers and Marble said, is a family-friendly comedy about a man who's done everything right in his life but can't find happiness. The lead character, Dave, is played by Carroll College student Bryan Ferriter.

Dave, who went to college, got a professional job and lives in a nice house, is surrounded by wacky friends who have oddball jobs but have much more satisfaction with their stations in life. Dave's got nothing to live for besides his work, and he's miserable.

His world is turned upside down when he meets and falls for a woman, played by Carroll College junior Alexa Etchart, who just happens to work for a company Dave's friend is waging a personal battle against.

The project had its genesis

Homegrown

"My Favorite Movie," an independent movie project, is filming now in Helena.

Video online

Visit helenair.com to see footage of the filmmakers at work.



when Rogers was in junior high and became interested in scriptwriting. He drafted the first outline of the story and then shelved it for several years. He ran into Ferriter one day when the young stage player — who hadn't yet realized his dream of acting — was having a particularly rough time.

After talking, Rogers realized Ferriter was Dave from that long-forgotten script. He called his friend Marble home to revive the project. The pair put in some of their own money and raised more from investors across Montana,