

THIS Man's LIFE

a STARS NORTH™ film

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stars North Media Contact:

Mark Sadowski
(310) 770-6444
Markski506@aol.com

Creativity, Collaboration, Celebrity and a Whole Lot of Community Support Independent Filmmaking—Stars North™ Style

ORLANDO, FL (December 20, 2007) — An antique passenger train inches its way down a stretch of track along Old SR 441. A fog machine inside fills a passenger car with smoke as shafts of sunlight stream through the windows. A man behind a very expensive camera adjusts his lens as crew members scurry about and a director, a couple famous actors and a car full of extras get ready for final rehearsals. The set of a big Hollywood production? Not quite. Welcome to the world of independent filmmaking—Stars North™ style.

Like all their films, green-lighting the Orlando-based production company's latest project, "This Man's Life," was no ordinary task. A little money was involved, sure, but most of what will end up on the big screen when the film premieres was made possible thanks to the help of a long list of generous people and local business owners who saw past the dollar signs and focused on one thing only: The art of independent film and the positive, long-term impact it has on the local economy.

Take the actors, for example. Three very familiar faces who bring an instant level of credibility to the project—Michael Rooker (*Days of Thunder, JFK*), Betsy Brantley (*The Princess Bride, Deep Impact*) and veteran actor Bill Cobbs (*That Thing You Do!, Night at the Museum*). All three fell in love with writer/director Todd Thompson's story and agreed to waive their regular day rates in order to participate in the endeavor. They flew first-class to Orlando on frequent flier miles provided by the producers, met a small team of local, volunteer drivers upon their arrival and checked into hotel rooms graciously provided by Stuart Newmark and Orlando's premier, flagship hotel, the Grand Bohemian. First impressions are definitely important for Stars North producers Todd Thompson and Smithy Sipes. And even though they may be working on shoestring budgets, they wanted everyone's filming experience in Orlando to be first class and as memorable as possible.

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Take the kick-off dinner for the cast and crew as an example. It was hosted by K Restaurant and Wine Bar in historic College Park. The celebration went on well passed 10 before star, Rooker, called it a night and returned to the Bohemian for a good night's sleep. Call time the next day was 6 a.m. which made the first day of shooting only eight short hours away.

There wasn't much sleep for Neil Bagaus and his team of train conductors either. But Bagaus didn't think twice about offering their engine, train cars and time when Thompson and Sipes told him they needed to travel up and down the tracks for three consecutive, 12-hour days in order to tell the story they were trying to tell.

"It was an exciting opportunity for us and we were happy to oblige" Bagaus says. "I spent a lot of years operating a movie theater back home, so I was already a fan. Being able to see just how things work behind the scenes was a thrill for all of us!"

CUT TO: Days four and five and a company location move to the downtown Orlando Amtrak Station. Marcia Kostival, the station's lead agent was equally willing to help when the filmmakers approached her about using her facility about two months prior to shoot day. She had allowed the building to be used as a location before on student projects, so getting the chance to have Hollywood celebrities hang out for a couple days just seemed like good business. A phone call by the producers and written approval from Amtrak's corporate offices in Washington D.C. followed and production was underway!

"We just can't make these films without the help and support of everyone involved" producer Sipes explains. "The cast, the crew, the local businesses and business owners—they all play such an integral role in what we're trying to accomplish here as filmmakers."

And what is Stars North™ trying to accomplish?

"To champion the cause and do everything we can to shine the spotlight on Florida" says Thompson. "There's an abundance of talent, resources and funding here, and whether Hollywood knows it or not, we are fast becoming a force to be reckoned with!"

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Interviews

Interviews with writer/producer/director **Todd Thompson**, producer **Smithy Sipes** and actors **Michael Rooker**, **Bill Cobbs** and **Betsy Brantley** are available upon request. Please call (407) 363-5269 for scheduling.

About "This Man's Life"

This Man's Life is the third in a series of four short films from the award-winning, Orlando-based production company, Stars North™. Written and directed by Todd Thompson, the film tells the magical tale of a man traveling home to claim his estranged father's inheritance when he encounters a peculiar stranger that seems to know everything about his life. The film stars Michael Rooker (*Days of Thunder*, *JFK*), Bill Cobbs (*Night at the Museum*, *That Thing You Do!*) and Betsy Brantley (*The Princess Bride*, *Deep Impact*).

Produced by Todd Thompson and Smithy Sipes, along with a production team of industry professionals, local film school students and independent film-enthusiast volunteers, *This Man's Life* was filmed over a period of 5 days (December 4-8, 2007) in and around the Mt. Dora / Orlando area. Upon completion, the film will be distributed on the international film festival circuit.

About Stars North™

Stars North™ is an independent movie production company based in Orlando, Florida. The company produces commercially appealing, quality films with memorable characters, engaging plots and redeeming messages. Stars North™ is committed to developing and producing projects in Florida that employ local cast and crew for worldwide distribution. For more information, contact Stars North™ at (407) 363-5269, or visit the company's Web site: www.starsnorth.com.