

ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINEE
ABIGAIL BRESLIN IS

KIT **KITTREDGE**

An American Girl

PRODUCTION NOTES

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SYNOPSIS

In the first feature film based on the hugely popular American Girl® book series, Oscar® nominee Abigail Breslin (LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE, NIM'S ISLAND) stars as a resourceful young girl whose bravery, compassion and determination help her solve a mystery that saves her family's home during the Great Depression. KIT KITTREDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL is directed by Patricia Rozema (MANSFIELD PARK) from a screenplay by Ann Peacock (THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE). The film's all-star ensemble cast includes two-time Oscar® nominee Joan Cusack (IN & OUT, WORKING GIRL), Glenna Headly (DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS), Tony Award winner and Golden Globe nominee Jane Krakowski ("Ally McBeal"), Golden Globe nominee Chris O'Donnell (BATMAN & ROBIN), Julia Ormond (LEGENDS OF THE FALL), Wallace Shawn (THE PRINCESS BRIDE) and two-time Golden Globe winner Stanley Tucci (THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA).

Aspiring reporter Kit Kittredge can't resist bringing home strays, whether it's Grace, an abandoned basset hound, or Will (Max Thieriot of JUMPER) and Countee (Willow Smith), a pair of young hobos willing to trade work for meals. Bright, inquisitive and generous, Kit is a natural born leader. But her happy childhood is abruptly interrupted when her father (Chris O'Donnell) loses his car dealership and must leave Cincinnati to look for work. Kit and her mother Margaret (Julia Ormond) are left to manage on their own, growing vegetables, selling eggs and even taking in an assortment of boarders including an itinerant magician (Stanley Tucci), a vivacious dance instructor on the prowl for a husband (Jane Krakowski) and a zany mobile librarian (Joan Cusack).

When a crime spree sweeps Cincinnati, all signs point to the local "hobo jungle," where Will and Countee live with a group of their impoverished companions. Kit, who always has her antennae out for a good news story, convinces her new friends to take her to see the hobo camp for herself and writes an article that creates a sympathetic portrait of the camp's residents. But when Kit's mother and their boarders become the latest victims in a string of robberies, Kit's loyalties are tested. Will is accused of the crimes and, with all of their savings gone, the Kittredges face losing their house to foreclosure. Determined to recover the stolen money and believing Will is innocent, Kit recruits her friends Ruthie (Madison Davenport) and Stirling (Zach Mills) to help her track down the real culprit. Together they uncover a plot that goes far beyond Cincinnati!

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Mention American Girl® to any female aged three to 12 and the reaction may range from a sweet, ear-to-ear grin to a jumping-up-and-down ‘omigod omigod omigod’ frenzy. One of the top 15 children’s publishers in the nation, American Girl blends historical fact and inspirational fiction in stories that encourage girls to embrace their dreams. The company has sold more than 123 million American Girl books and 14 million American Girl dolls since 1986, and its award-winning American Girl magazine has a circulation of more than 620,000, making it the largest publication dedicated exclusively to girls ages eight and up.

But it was more than just that phenomenal success that inspired producers Elaine Goldsmith-Thomas, Lisa Gillan and Julia Roberts to approach American Girl more than six years ago with the idea of bringing the series to the screen. Roberts and Gillan, who are sisters, had learned about the unique appeal of American Girl from an expert: "Our mom—AKA ‘Grandma Betty’—was a regular supplier of American Girl dolls to our niece Emma, who really loved them," say Roberts and Gillan. "Emma would introduce them to us as the real girls they are, sharing their background stories." "They really are girls, not just dolls," adds Gillan. "They each have a history, a family, and a point of view. I think girls can relate and learn from each one's story."

For Goldsmith-Thomas, it was the combination of contemporary life lessons and history—and the unique way both are presented—that made the American Girl series such an appealing film project. "They never sugarcoat the girls’ stories," she says. "Seeing the Depression or slavery or the loss of a parent through the eyes of a nine-year-old makes these stories unique. Comparing and contrasting life in different points of American history helps girls today understand that they are a part of history, too. The stories don’t make people from the past seem old-fashioned. They help create a connection between the past and the present. American Girl uses some great tools to teach kids to find the relevancy between their doll’s life and their own. As a filmmaker, that concept makes for compelling and interesting ways to approach bringing these stories to the audience."

"We take girls seriously," says Ellen L. Brothers, president of American Girl and producer of *KIT KITTREDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL*. "All of our stories are told through the eyes of our heroine—a nine-year-old girl who turns ten in the story. In this film, you’re seeing the Great Depression through the eyes of a very confident nine-year-old girl. And that’s what makes this story so special."

Brothers says the idea of a movie had been percolating at American Girl for several years. "From the very beginning, we thought it was completely natural to make a feature film, but it was all brand new to us. We felt we had to get our feet wet first. When Elaine, Julia and Lisa came to us, we talked about made-for-television movies as a great first step in exploring whether our audience would like seeing their favorite American Girls in a live action format.

When the success of those three movies proved to us that our audience loved seeing the characters come to life, moving to the big screen was a logical next step.”

The first American Girl movie, “Samantha: An American Girl Holiday,” aired in 2004, followed by two more made-for-television films based on the series. Gillan was an executive producer of all three. “The success of ‘Samantha,’ ‘Felicity’ and ‘Molly’ made it clear how much girls loved seeing “their girls” stories come to life and made the transition to the big screen inevitable.”

“Without much in terms of marketing dollars, we did exceptionally well,” says Goldsmith-Thomas. “So after the third one, we started exploring a lot of options and pondering how to make the transition to theatrical releases.

“We all fell in love with Bob Berney at Picturehouse and Colin Callender at HBO because they were committed to maintaining the same high standards,” continues Goldsmith-Thomas. “They both totally got it. Like us, they realized that American Girl is not simply about selling books and dolls. It is about exposing young kids to beautiful, sincere characters with beautiful, sincere stories to tell.”

Berney was equally enthusiastic about the project. “We all agreed that Kit Kittredge was the perfect choice for the first theatrical release,” says the president of Picturehouse. “Kit is a wonderful character, a spirited, ambitious young girl living in very difficult times. Her story is inspirational in the way it teaches the importance of giving to those who are less fortunate.”

“It was my two daughters who introduced me to American Girl books, and I was struck by what wonderful stories they were - they were celebrations of different times in our history yet they dealt with real challenges of every day life that young people today can relate to. ” says Callender, president of HBO Films. “When you combine these great characters and stories with the remarkable marketing machine behind American Girl it seemed like a natural theatrical franchise.”

Once the partnership solidified in February 2007, things began to happen very quickly. “We were fortunate to have Ann Peacock write a truly heartwarming screenplay that attracted a great group of creative people from the start,” says producer Lisa Gillan. “Once Abigail Breslin signed on, director Patricia Rozema came on board as did the rest of our amazing ensemble of actors. It all came together unusually fast.”

Director Rozema, best known for her acclaimed 1999 film MANSFIELD PARK, has two young daughters, so she was already very familiar with the American Girl books and dolls. “I loved Kit, this little reporter who wants to write, who wants to express herself, who wants to do good. So many kids’ movies are about, ‘Oh, I can have love, I am a princess, I own the world now.’ There aren’t many that show kids and adults trying to hang on when material goods aren’t flowing their way, and showing that what’s valuable is not material.”

Gillan believes that Kit's story has a very timely message for modern girls. "It is a wonderful lesson for young girls who are seeing women doing more and more amazing things, like running for president," she says. "I think Kit has an almost Churchillian point of view about life. He said 'Never, Never, Never Quit', and Kit doesn't seem to know the meaning of the word. Giving up doesn't seem to be at all part of her character."

For Rozema, the first priority was getting all the characters right. "American Girl isn't just dolls," she points out. "It's characters. The dolls are one representation of those characters. The books are a representation of those characters. I don't think kids who know the character already from the books are going to be disappointed at all. There are new elements that you haven't seen in the books, but this won't be a situation where people say 'Hey, the text said this and the movie says that, what's going on?' It'll be more like, 'Oh, here are all these lovely characters I know and recognize in this new adventure.'" According to Goldsmith-Thomas, the audience for American Girl films "isn't just little girls and their mothers, as we found out with the three TV movies we made. Every American Girl character has some sort of family element, whether it's parents or siblings or grandparents or aunts and uncles. An entire family can go to the theater and enjoy tagging along with Kit and her friends as they embark on an adventure."

CASTING KIT

The filmmakers knew that finding the right actress to play Kit was essential to the success of the film. Oscar® nominee Abigail Breslin, who won over audiences, critics and Academy members as the plucky Olive Hoover in *LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE*, was everyone's first choice to play Kit. But she had a very short window of availability before starting another film. This meant the filmmakers had to finalize the script and cast, prep the movie and shoot it all in the course of about four months.

"We did this feature on a very, very, very tight little schedule with a lot of limitations," says Rozema. "Every shot had to be completely constructed. You couldn't just shoot from any angle, because, oh my goodness, there was a satellite dish or something else that would be out of the period."

To help speed the process, Rozema decided to use three cameras shooting simultaneously. "If we got that magic moment, it was covered on every side, and we didn't have to repeat it and repeat it to get it each time," she says.

This approach gave the director and her cast additional creative freedom. "The kids didn't have to think about continuity as much, they didn't have to remember 'Oh, I had the fork up to my mouth on this line.' If the moment was fresh and free, and we caught the spark, we had it on camera at different angles instantaneously."

Although the expedited production schedule was a challenge at times, the director says it ended up being an extraordinary experience, "The whole enterprise has been so full of

unabashed goodwill. It's very hard to be really bitter or angry or blaming with little kids around. Their faces teach you things. They teach you things. We think we bring them up; they bring us up."

Breslin lived up to the filmmakers' expectations as the perfect Kit, says producer Elaine Goldsmith-Thomas. "We couldn't have been more thrilled with Abby," she says. "She brought humor, warmth and intelligence to the role, and an enthusiasm and passion for the project that was simply infectious. "Abby handled the material like such a pro," she continues. "Right from the beginning she understood the arc of the story. She recognized that Kit's life was not all on 'the sunny side of the street' and that life can be very tough, but making it through the tough times makes everything that comes after even more valuable. Abby understood that within the story, Kit's whole perspective on life changes, and with that change in perspective comes a change in values."

Breslin learned some of the history of the Great Depression from her grandmother, who grew up during that era. "I showed my grandma the doll and the outfit that I wore and she told me that it was kind of like the clothes she used to wear when she was younger," says the actress. "The Great Depression was when people were buying a lot of things on credit and then they didn't have enough money to pay it back. And so they stopped buying things, which made the stores and the factories close, until everybody was basically out of work."

In the movie, Kit is trying to convince the editor of the Cincinnati Register to publish her story so she can begin her journalism career. "She just wants more than anything else to become a reporter," says Breslin. "That helps when she tries to solve the mystery, because she writes down everything that could maybe be a clue, like somebody had a tattoo or they were wearing boots or they had dark hair."

Explaining why Breslin was perfect for the title role, Rozema says, "She is a very keen observer and a feeling person, like Kit. And quite daring, in her own quiet way. There is something admirable about Abigail Breslin that's a lot like the character of Kit Kittredge."

Madison Davenport, whose young acting career has included television and feature film roles, plays Ruthie Smithens, Kit's best friend and daughter of the local banker. A self-acknowledged girl's girl, Davenport says she adored the period costumes. "It's so cool to wear some clothes you don't normally wear. These clothes are so sweet! Why can't girls wear these clothes now? You never find cute dresses like these in normal stores." Davenport was decidedly unenthusiastic about the changes the filmmakers had planned for her hair, however. "I dyed my hair brown, and it is normally blond. I was kind of weirded out. But, I mean, I feel exactly the same until I look in the mirror." Davenport quickly struck up a friendship with costars Abigail Breslin and Zach Mills. "We made up nicknames for each other and played games, ran around and hung out with each other off set. So even though much of the story is about people losing

their money and their homes and stuff, we all managed to have a really good time because everyone was so nice and the set was a lot of fun.”

Mills, who appeared opposite Dustin Hoffman and Natalie Portman in *MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM*, plays Stirling, a boy who comes to live at Kit's house as a boarder after his parents lose their house. “My mom and I end up renting a room while my father goes off to look for work. The sad part is he doesn't write to us like he said he would,” says Mills. “Something I learned about doing this role was that the Great Depression wasn't all that great and people lost everything they had and sometimes they lost each other, too. Kit's story is all about overcoming things like that.”

At the center of the mystery is a young hobo named Will, played by actor Max Thieriot, familiar to many young movie fans from his appearances in family films including *THE PACIFIER* and *NANCY DREW*. Seventeen-year-old Thieriot, however, admits he had never heard of the American Girl dolls or books. “As a teenaged guy, American Girl was never really on my personal radar,” says Thieriot. “Once I knew that I might be cast in this movie, I went to the American Girl store in Los Angeles just to check it out and I could not believe how popular the place was. It just blew my mind watching these little girls and how they act and react with all the dolls and clothes and books. I realized I was going to be a part of something very, very big and, if the crowds at the store were any indication, a lot of people will be seeing this movie.”

British-born actress Julia Ormond, who plays Kit's mother, was fascinated by the amount of research that comes with each American girl doll. “It's really a journey of discovery about what people in America went through in the Depression in the '30s—how people as a population faced hardship and social stigma. “This is a family that starts off pretty sound economically,” she adds, “and a child who has no real awareness of social issues. She's introduced to people from a social class that she wouldn't normally have encountered, and instead of coming at it with prejudice she comes at it with a lot of heart.”

Ormond has appeared opposite some of Hollywood's premier leading men, including Brad Pitt (*LEGENDS OF THE FALL*), Harrison Ford (*SABRINA*) and Richard Gere (*FIRST KNIGHT*). Even so, she found Breslin to be a formidable acting partner. “Abigail is really remarkable,” she says. “She's in virtually every single scene. For anyone, but especially a child actor, it's an incredible amount of pressure. She has an openness that's completely right for Kit and an easy access to an emotional range that is really quite extraordinary. She also has an incredible comprehension of how things work: camera needs, marks, all those sorts of things.”

Ormond's leading man in *Kit Kittredge* is Chris O'Donnell, who plays her husband. He is, she says, “the quintessential American male. Not just in looks, but also in his stoic determination. He has these very moving scenes where he's struggling to hold it together, to protect the family from what he's really going through. It's kind of a tricky balance of a 1930s male who perhaps

would have a different approach to somebody today, but nevertheless really a touching moment for anybody who feels a responsibility of providing for their family.”

For O'Donnell, who is probably best known for playing Robin to Val Kilmer's Caped Crusader in *BATMAN FOREVER* and for his starring role opposite Al Pacino in *SCENT OF A WOMAN*, *KIT KITTREDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL* was a special project. “I really wanted to do something for my daughter and it's a great script. It's a great American tale of a time that was really tough in our country, the Depression, and you get a chance to see how families stuck together. Today we're just super-consumers, and people are buying, buying, buying. But it wasn't always like this. It really puts things in perspective.”

The actor acknowledges that the quality of the cast says a lot about the script, as well people's familiarity with American Girl dolls. “Talent attracts talent. When a cast like this gets put together, people start to say, ‘I want to be a part of that, too.’”

“Abigail's as mature as any adult actor I've ever worked with, so that's been fantastic,” says the actor. “And Patricia Rozema, the director, stays real focused. She keeps people in good spirits and she really listens. I think it's real easy as a director to sit back and watch the monitor, but she's always listening. She pays attention and makes sure you hit all the right beats in a scene.”

KIT KITTREDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL's supporting cast is rich with actors known for their commitment and talent. Stanley Tucci, recently seen in *THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA* plays Mr. Berk, a boarder in the Kittredge household who is a magician by profession.

“Kids will instantly love the mystery of it,” says Tucci, a two-time Emmy winner. “It's a wonderful story to be told through a child's eyes. The story is always pertinent, because there's always poverty no matter how wealthy a country we are. The moral is everybody pitches in together and does what they have to do to help each other as a community to get through the tough times.”

Tucci came to the set immediately after finishing another film and had little time to prepare. He credits the director and the script with making it easier for him to jump onto the fast moving train that was the *KIT KITTREDGE* production. “It's a good script and very clearly written,” he says. “Patricia thinks very quickly and she's not afraid to change things instantly and be spontaneous. Only a director who thinks that way and takes everything in stride—and also has a great sense of humor, which she does—could make a movie this way.”

Magician David Ben was brought on to teach Tucci the tricks of his character's trade. Ben says he taught the actor a broad range of things he can do around the dinner table with everyday objects for the people who are living there. “Part of my own career is reconstructing magic from different time periods, particularly from the '20s and the '30s,” says Ben. “The

filmmakers wanted a period levitation. Magicians have been floating people since around 1900 and you see still Criss Angel and David Blaine do it, but there was a particular style to how people floated in the '30s. And that's what the filmmakers wanted to recreate.”

Academy Award® nominee Joan Cusack turns in a memorable performance as Miss Bond, the dizzy mobile librarian who is levitated by Mr. Berk. An admirer of Patricia Rozema since she saw the director's interpretation of the Jane Austen novel “Mansfield Park,” she was thrilled to work on the project. “It's a very empowering movie about little girls and about confidence,” says the actress. “If I was a little girl and there was a little typewriter and a little bed and the little glasses and all the little things they have that go with the doll, I would love it.”

For the role of Miss Dooley, the man-hungry dance instructor who also boards with the Kittredges, the filmmakers brought in Jane Krakowski, who won a Tony Award for her work in the Broadway musical “Nine.” “They had assembled an amazing cast of people, so I said yes immediately,” she says. “I get to dance a little bit in the movie and it's been fun to sort of learn all the dances of 1934, like the Shorty George and the Lindy Hop and the Shim-Sham. It's a little blast back into that time period.”

Dylan Smith, who plays Frederick Burke, calls his role in Kit Kittredge “a dream part.” “Playing a bad guy is always lots of fun, plus it's a children's movie, so there's room for real colorful imagination. Then there's the monkey, whose name in the movie is Curtis. I had to work very closely with the monkey.”

Curtis proved to be a temperamental co-star “There was a memo to the cast and crew, outlining all the dos and don'ts with monkeys,” remembers Smith. “Don't wear a hat around the monkey. Don't find yourself in a confined space with the monkey. Don't stare the monkey in the eyes, and no sudden movements around the monkey.” The first day of shooting with the monkey, Curtis, Stanley Tucci and Smith were in a car backing up, remembers the actor. “The monkey's in a confined space. Stanley's wearing a hat. He had to turn the car around to back the car out, and when he turned around, he was facing the monkey, wearing a hat, staring at him in the eyes. He panicked slightly, hit the horn and the car sort of jilted back. So it was smooth sailing after that; nothing else really could go wrong.”

Wallace Shawn, who plays the editor of the Cincinnati Register, brings some first hand knowledge to the role. The well-known character actor is the son of William Shawn, legendary editor of The New Yorker. “I think being a journalist is a great thing to do. If you want to be a reporter, and you want to be a good reporter, you have to be willing face the reality of the world, which can sometimes be upsetting. But it is a great deal of fun to be a reporter because you get to meet all kinds of people and ask them things you would never dare to ask them if you just met them in the street or on an airplane or at dinner. You get to ask them whatever you like really, until they throw you out.”

In addition to the distinguished cast of professional actors, *KIT KITTREDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL* marks the film debut of four very lucky and talented young girls. Jordan Rackley, Elisabeth Perez, Erin Hilgartner and Brienne Jansen were selected from more than 2,400 fans during a nationwide talent hunt for four “real American girls” to play Kit’s next-door neighbors and classmates.

“We held the open auditions at our three American Girl Place stores,” says producer Ellen L. Brothers. “Two days each in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. We received thousands of emails and letters from girls saying they would love to be in an American Girl movie. The number of girls who showed up exceeded our expectations. They waited hours and hours just for the opportunity to audition.”

Jordan Rackley, who plays Lillian, came to Chicago with her best friend Haley for the audition. She had previously appeared in community theater productions of “Peter Pan,” “Beauty and the Beast” and “Annie” in her hometown of St. Louis. “One of my aunts was born during the Great Depression,” says Rackley. “So it’s kind of neat because I feel like this is probably what she felt like in these clothes and stuff. And I feel really different when I’m in them.” Normally poised, Jordan admits that when she got the call to be in the movie, her scream of excitement was so loud her dog barked in celebration, too.

Elisabeth Perez, who plays Eleanor, another one of Kit’s classmates, is ten years old and lives in Napa Valley, California. Even before being cast in *KIT KITTREDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL*, she had written and staged her first play, which was based on the life of Helen Keller. Perez had plans to be a professional actress and was thrilled to launch her career with such a special project. “It has been a dream to be in a movie and even more of a dream to be in an American Girl movie,” says the youngster. “When I was five, my Aunt Mary gave me my first American Girl doll and when I was even younger, my older sister Madeleine read me the books.”

Just eight years old when she was cast as Kit’s next-door neighbor Florence Stone, Erin Hilgartner lives in Ithaca, New York. When she saw the lines at the open call in New York, she was afraid that she wouldn’t get a chance to audition. “But they saw every single girl who was in line,” she says. Hilgartner says she enjoyed “absolutely everything” about being in the movie—travelling to Canada, all the special treatment she received from the hair, makeup and wardrobe departments and meeting all the famous Hollywood stars. Now, she can’t wait to see herself on the big screen.

Eleven-year-old Brienne Jansen surprised everyone in her family when she decided to audition for the movie. After being caught in a frightening hostage situation with her family seven years ago, Jansen had been understandably reluctant to put herself in new situations. This experience has renewed her self-confidence. “I’ve learned that being myself is the best way to be,” she says. “I was picked for this role because I didn’t try to be something that I’m not. I learned that I can dream as big as possible because dreams do come true.”

“With kids who haven’t acted, you sometimes get something remarkable,” says director Rozema. “Something way better than kids who already have these expectations of how to present themselves. They all brought a passion for American Girl and they took the work very seriously. It was an absolute joy for the entire cast and crew and I think they will all be very happy when they see themselves in the movie.”

RECREATING DEPRESSION ERA CINCINNATI

In *KIT KITTREDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL*, present day Toronto stands in for Kit’s hometown of Cincinnati more than 70 years ago. Production designer Peter Cosco was responsible for faithfully replicating the era for the film.

The first step for Cosco was finding the Kittredge home. He was looking for a house built in the mid 1920s, but it also had to be in a neighborhood where everything around it was appropriate. “So much of the story takes place in the backyard and side yard. Sometimes we’d see a house that looked perfect from the street, but when you went into the back yard, there was a big addition, or the neighbors had a big addition.” The filmmakers eventually chose a house that backs out onto a ravine, which eliminated the problem of having an apartment building or a modern house across the way.

The interior of the Kittredge home was built from scratch on a soundstage. “You can control everything, you could lay it out for your needs when you build it,” he says. “It gives you the advantage of making it a little bit bigger or just reconfiguring the insides.”

For the home’s furnishings, Cosco got help from the American Girl books and accessories. “Often the best thing is to go to actual source material from the period, like magazines or catalogs of the day, like Sears,” he says. “In this case, American Girl already had a wealth of material. For instance, we knew that in Kit’s attic she’s got a little roll-top desk, a little chair that goes with it and this metal-frame bed that’s got flower stencils on it, so we found the bed and then created the stencils. It was really helpful to have this very specific, and very accurate, source information to work from.”

A serendipitous find at the house translated into an overall decorating scheme. “We found a coach light on a post, a little leaded glass thing that was original and I decided that it would inform all our decisions,” Cosco says. “The house already had some Arts and Crafts details, so we used that as our starting point and really ran with it, creating an Arts and Crafts theme that was a popular decorative style in the ‘20s.”

For Kit’s hideaway, Cosco needed to fabricate not just the perfect tree house, but the perfect tree, as well. “It’s a refuge for Kit, where she goes to write, and Patricia wanted it to be a very magical space,” the designer says. “We constructed a tree with a steel armature, and welded on the branches. The bark is cast plaster and burlap. The actual tree house was placed onto this structure, and then a canopy of leaves was put on top of that.”

One of the most complex and visually rich settings in the film is the Hobo Jungle, which Kit first visits in search of a story for the newspaper. Cosco found the perfect location under an old bridge by a river. “It’s an open bridge, so it’s got many of the qualities railway bridges of the time would have had,” he says. “We did a lot of research to recreate what a hobo settlement would have looked like.”

The set included an open fire pit, a cooking area, a laundry area and many tents and sheds. A path that snaked through the woods gave the effect that the hobos had their own individual spaces, which also helped to give the location a real sense of dimension and scope.

The evening before shooting began at the Hobo Jungle, flash flood warnings were issued in Toronto. “A section of the set literally washed away,” remembers Cosco. “I stood there watching bits of our set dressing floating by in baskets or washtubs. Odetta, our set decorator, jumped in and I followed her. I’ve said to her since that if I didn’t see her jump in, I probably wouldn’t have. The two of us were almost waist-deep in water fishing out these things as they were floating by.”

Kit’s father is a car dealer, so naturally automobiles figure prominently in the film. Beau Boyd, the picture car captain of *KIT KITTREDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL*, was responsible for finding and maintaining a fleet of about 70 vintage cars. “We had to find pre-1934 cars that run semi-decent and look new,” says Boyd. “Some of them had to seem brand new, because there was a dealership scene with eight brand new cars.”

Finding the vehicles involved a lot of legwork. While there are companies that rent vintage cars to movie shoots, Boyd prefers to work with collectors. “Collectors generally put more money and time into their car. We go to car shows and meet people, give them a card, and say, ‘I’d like to rent your car for a movie.’ That’s the best way to find them.”

The fleet includes Ford Model As, Grahams, a Maxwell, a Peter Witt streetcar, some trucks and a trio of extremely rare cars. “The prize is the 1934 Chrysler Airflow,” says Boyd. “The Air Flow is important to the story because Kit’s dad is one of the few people with a very upscale car. When he loses his dealership and loses the car, it changes the whole tone of the film.

“They only made it one year,” explains Boyd. “And we have three of them. It’s a very pretty car, in addition to being very rare. At the time, most of the cars were square-bodied and this was a departure because it was very art-deco and way ahead of its time. It only lasted one year because it didn’t sell well. It was too radical.”

For costume designer Trysha Bakker, the film was a return to familiar territory since she also had served as costume designer on two of the made-for-television American Girl movies. Among the challenges for each film has been replicating the main doll’s signature outfit. “We have to find the fabric that looks like it, and if we can’t find the fabric then we have it printed.”

One of the problems the costumer faced during the film of Kit Kittredge was the difficulty of finding authentic Depression-era clothing for the shoot's more than 100 costumes. She ended up creating many of them from scratch using old catalogs like Sears Roebuck and vintage photographs by Dorothea Lange to find the right designs.

As the film progresses, Kit and her family have less money to spend on clothing and the costumes reflect that. "The characters start to wear the same clothes over and over again and they started to get a little more threadbare," says Bakker. "We used sandpaper and rasps and we put the clothes in TSP and washed them over and over again to take the color out and age the garments down."

One of the most heartwarming days of filming for Bakker and the entire cast and crew was July 4, 2007, when the production was honored to host a vivacious 6-year-old girl from eastern North Carolina named Eliza Bourg, who has been battling Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. Through the work of the Make A Wish Foundation, the production learned that Bourg is a huge fan of American Girl and Kit Kittredge in particular. She also loves movies and television. Bourg was invited to visit the sound stage in Toronto and was immediately whisked into her own "star" trailer. She was put through the hair and makeup process and then costume designer Trysha Bakker brought in a special little hobo dress just for her. Without telling Bourg or her parents, the filmmakers had decided to include her in the Thanksgiving dinner scene at the Kittredge house. Eliza has now completed chemotherapy treatment and is doing well.

"Having Eliza visit the set was the purest example of what making this movie was all about," says producer Elaine Goldsmith-Thomas. "On the most important American holiday, this sweet little American girl courageously battling an illness stepped on set and opened all of our eyes to what adversity and hardship is really like. It was as if a modern-day Kit had joined us all for the Thanksgiving feast."

Director Rozema adds, "Words really can't describe the impact Eliza had on all of us that day. Her spirit seemed to mirror Kit's. It was a reminder of the sense of community human beings can share when faced with crisis. Her story inspired all of us that day and we certainly hope that Kit's story will inspire people as well."



CREDITS

(Credits are incomplete, preliminary and not contractual)

PICTUREHOUSE and NEW LINE CINEMA present

In Association with

HBO FILMS

A GOLDSMITH-THOMAS Production

In Association with

RED OM FILMS

Directed by

PATRICIA ROZEMA

Written by

ANN PEACOCK

Based on the "Kit Kittredge" stories by

VALERIE TRIPP

Produced by

ELAINE GOLDSMITH-THOMAS

LISA GILLAN

Produced by

ELLEN L. BROTHERS and JULIE GOLDSTEIN

Executive Producer

JULIA ROBERTS

Executive Producer

MARISA YERES

Co-Producer

TERRY GOULD

Co-Producer

JODI GOLDBERG

Director of Photography DAVID BOYD, ASC

Production Designer PETER COSCO

Editor JULIE ROGERS

Casting by NANCY NAYOR, CSA

Costume Designer TRYSHA BAKKER

Music by JOSEPH VITARELLI

ABOUT THE CAST

ABIGAIL BRESLIN (KIT KITTREDGE)

Abigail Breslin is one of the most versatile, charismatic and sought-after actors of her young generation. A talented and engaging performer, she had the enviable role of playing leading lady to Mel Gibson—at the tender age of five. She was recently seen in the summer 2007 film *NO RESERVATIONS* for director Scott Hicks, co-starring opposite Catherine Zeta-Jones and Aaron Eckhart, and in the 2008 films *NIM'S ISLAND*, opposite Jodie Foster and Gerard Butler, and *DEFINITELY MAYBE*, with Ryan Reynolds.

Since starring opposite Gibson in M. Night Shyamalan's 2002 film *SIGNS*, Breslin has showcased her unique talents in both comedy and drama as well as quirky and unusual roles.

Breslin earned an Academy Award© nomination for her memorable performance in the critically acclaimed *LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE*, an irreverent comedy that created a sensation at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival. As Olive, the ambitious young girl who is obsessed with winning a beauty pageant, Breslin displayed guileless wisdom combined with an endearing klutziness. For her performance, she received a Best Actress Award from the Tokyo International Film Festival and was also nominated for SAG and BAFTA Best Supporting Actress honors.

Earlier, Breslin also made an impression with her performance in *RAISING HELEN* for director Garry Marshall, in which she starred opposite Kate Hudson as well as her older brother, Spencer Breslin. She has also completed roles in the independent drama *KEANE*, directed by Lodge Kerrigan and produced by Steven Soderbergh; *THE ULTIMATE GIFT*, co-starring James Garner; and *THE SANTA CLAUS 3: THE ESCAPE CLAUSE*, playing a surprise role as a perky Elf.

On television, Breslin has had guest roles on “Law and Order: Special Victims Unit,” “Navy N.C.I.S.,” “What I Like About You” and “Grey's Anatomy.”

JOAN CUSACK (MISS BOND)

Joan Cusack has received two Academy Award© nominations—the first for her comic portrayal of a Staten Island secretary in *WORKING GIRL* with Harrison Ford and Melanie Griffith, and the other for her role as Kevin Kline's jilted bride in the critically acclaimed *IN AND OUT*. She was the recipient of an American Comedy Award for Best Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture for her role in *RUNAWAY BRIDE*, opposite Julia Roberts and Richard Gere. She recently received a Daytime Emmy Award® nomination for her work in “Peep and the Big Wide World.” Cusack is currently in production on P.J. Hogan's *CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC*, co-starring Isla Fisher, and Nick Cassavetes' *MY SISTER'S KEEPER*, with Cameron Diaz and Abigail Breslin.

Raised in Evanston, Illinois, Cusack studied acting at the Piven Theatre Workshop. While at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where she graduated with a degree in English, she appeared with the improv group The Ark.

Cusack has appeared in films including FRIENDS WITH MONEY, with Jennifer Aniston and Catherine Keener; ICE PRINCESS, with Kim Cattrall; RAISING HELEN, with brother John Cusack and Abigail Breslin; SCHOOL OF ROCK, with Jack Black; ARLINGTON ROAD, with Jeff Bridges; director Stephen Frears's HIGH FIDELITY; director Tim Robbins's CRADLE WILL ROCK, with Bill Murray; and WHERE THE HEART IS, with Natalie Portman. Her filmography includes comedic femme fatale roles in ADDAMS FAMILY VALUES, GROSSE POINT BLANK, NINE MONTHS, THE CABINET OF DR. RAMIREZ (directed by Peter Sellers), CORRINA, CORRINA, TOYS, HERO, MY BLUE HEAVEN, MEN DON'T LEAVE, BROADCAST NEWS, SAY ANYTHING and SIXTEEN CANDLES, among others. She made her screen debut in Tony Bill's MY BODYGUARD, at age 15.

Cusack's appearances on the small screen include a regular role on "Saturday Night Live" during the show's 1985-86 season and a starring role alongside Anne Bancroft in the BBC production of Paddy Chayefsky's "The Mother."

Her theatrical work includes the premiere of "Brilliant Traces" at New York's Cherry Lane Theatre, "The Road" at La Mama, and "Cymbeline" at The Public Theatre in New York, in which she played Imogen. She portrayed Helena in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at The Goodman Theatre in Chicago, and was directed by Joanne Akalitis in "Tis a Pity She's a Whore."

The actress resides in Chicago with her husband and their two sons.

MADISON DAVENPORT (RUTHIE SMITHENS)

At a mere 11 years of age, the gifted and talented Madison Davenport already has a body of work that could rival that of an adult actor with a decade of experience.

When Davenport was seven, her singing ability and love for the theatre prompted her family's move from San Antonio, Texas to Hollywood. It did not take long for industry professionals to recognize this amazing young talent. Shortly after arriving, Davenport's dramatic skills were showcased on hit TV shows such as "Bones," "Numb3rs," "CSI: N.Y." and "Close to Home." She was even able to show her comedic side when she guest starred on the ABC comedy "Hot Properties." Davenport also had a lead role in Lifetime's made for television movie "While the Children Sleep." The story centers on the chaotic family environment that ensues when a troubled 25-year-old live-in sitter is hired to take care of the household.

The young actress soon had four projects out on the small and big screens. Her motion picture roles have included a lead role opposite Frances Conroy in the film HUMBOLDT COUNTY, a true-life story of a counterculture community in Northern California's redwood forest that recently premiered at the South by Southwest festival. Davenport also had a lead role in the indie feature A MONSTER IN THE ATTIC, about two children trapped in an ominous house who must discover the truth behind the mysterious creature haunting them.

Davenport was heard as the voice of Eugene Levy and Catherine O'Hara's daughter, Quillo, in

DreamWorks' animated feature film, *OVER THE HEDGE*. She lent her voice to the animated telefilm "Christmas is Here Again" as the story's central character, Sophiana. The movie also stars the voices of Ed Asner, Andy Griffith, Kathy Bates, Brad Garrett, Jay Leno and Shirley Jones. Madison was truly honored when she was asked to sing a duet with Jones, her longtime idol. The movie is slated for broadcast on ABC and ABC Family later this year.

Aside from acting, singing and just being a kid, this imaginative young lady is also developing a children's book called *Sunshine Star*, inspired by Davenport's life experiences. Its purpose is to teach values, colors and shapes in an unprecedented way. She has pitched her idea to several book publishers, all of whom are interested in being in business with this potential future mogul. Davenport is also quite the little fashionista—she loves to draw and design clothes.

Davenport currently lives in Los Angeles with her younger brother, mother, father and her dog, Maggie.

GLENNIE HEADLY (MRS. HOWARD)

Glenn Headly's ability to light up a screen allows her to move effortlessly between comedy and drama. The *Orlando Sentinel* once noted that "she's been hailed in just about everything she's ever done on stage, be it serious drama or light comedy." Headly recently appeared on ABC's hit drama "Grey's Anatomy" and in the features *THE AMATEURS*, *COMEBACK SEASON* and *THE NAMESAKE*.

Headly gave memorable performances in *DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS*, in which she played the cunning "victim" who gets the best of con artists Michael Caine and Steve Martin; in the blockbuster comic strip parody, *DICK TRACY*, in which she portrayed the girlfriend to Warren Beatty's lead; and in the CBS miniseries "Lonesome Dove," in which she played a pregnant wife in search of her husband, garnering the first of two Emmy nominations. She recently starred in *RAISING FLAGG* as a popular radio talk show hostess who dispenses common-sense advice.

Before making her film debut in 1981, the award-winning actress began her career in theater. After graduating with honors from New York's High School of Performing Arts, she completed college in Europe on an academic scholarship, then returned home in 1976 to break into the profession while waiting tables in Chicago. She found her opportunity as a member of Chicago's prestigious Steppenwolf Theatre Company, working with the likes of Gary Sinise, Laurie Metcalf and John Malkovich, and received four Jefferson Awards. In 1984, she won the Theatre World Award as outstanding newcomer for her performance in the off-Broadway production of Lanford Wilson's "The Philanthropist."

Headly also appeared in the Broadway production of George Bernard Shaw's "Arms and the Man" with Raul Julia and Kevin Kline, directed by John Malkovich. At the same time, she delivered memorable performances onscreen in such films as *Mr. Holland's Opus*, as Richard Dreyfuss' long-suffering wife, *Mortal Thoughts* and *Breakfast of Champions*, opposite Bruce Willis.

After a 10-year hiatus from the theater, Headly returned to the stage in "Aunt Dan & Lemon" with Miranda Richardson at London's Almeida Theatre. She appeared in "Detachments" and "The Guys" in Los Angeles. She also starred in the world premiere of Garry Hynes' one-woman show, "My Brilliant Divorce," in Ireland.

Her television work includes the live CBS presentation of "On Golden Pond," with Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer, and "Bastard Out of Carolina," for which she received an Emmy nomination.

JANE KRAKOWSKI (MISS DOOLEY)

Jane Krakowski stars as Jenna Maroney, the star of "The Girlie Show," in NBC's Emmy Award-winning "30 Rock," a workplace comedy set behind the scenes of a live variety show. Krakowski, along with her "30 Rock" cast-mates, was nominated for a 2008 Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series. She recently lent her voice to the animated film Open Season for Sony Animation.

An award-winning actress, dancer and singer, the New Jersey-born Krakowski has numerous film, theatre and television credits. She won Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics awards for her stunning and sultry portrayal of Carla in Broadway's "Nine," opposite Antonio Banderas, as well as an Olivier Award for the West End production of "Guys and Dolls," with Ewan McGregor. Her other acclaimed stage performances include Broadway productions of "Grand Hotel," "Company," "Once Upon a Mattress," "Tartuffe" and "Starlight Express."

During her five-year stint on the Emmy, Golden Globe and SAG award-winning series "Ally McBeal," Krakowski received a Golden Globe nomination for her portrayal of Elaine Vassal. Other television credits include appearances on NBC's "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit" and "Everwood."

After making her film debut as Cousin Vickie in National Lampoon's VACATION, with Chevy Chase, Krakowski has starred alongside Jude Law in ALFIE and with Evan Rachel Wood and James Woods in PRETTY PERSUASION.

In addition to singing on several original Broadway cast recordings and the "Ally McBeal" Christmas episode compilation CD, Krakowski recorded the hit single "You" with Jim Brickman on his recent album "Lovesongs and Lullabies."

ZACH MILLS (STIRLING HOWARD)

Twelve year-old Zach Mills was born in Lakewood, Ohio and moved to California with his parents in 2004. Within months of arriving in Los Angeles, Mills had caught the eye of a casting director who helped him find his first agent. From there, his career catapulted from his first commercial to working alongside some of the most revered film actors in the entertainment

business. Mills was recently named by Wonderland Magazine one of a select few "mini-stars" who are set to make their mark in the industry. Mills' feature film credits include the 2007 holiday film MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM, opposite Dustin Hoffman, Natalie Portman and Jason Bateman; HOLLYWOODLAND, with Adrien Brody, Ben Affleck, and Diane Lane; as well as STEAM, THE SANTA CLAUSE 3, and THE VALLEY OF LIGHT. Television credits include appearances on the series "Ghost Whisperer," "Malcolm in the Middle," "Cold Case," "Scrubs" and a recurring role on "October Road."

COLIN MOCHRIE (MR. PENNINGTON)

Comedian Colin Mochrie books more than 100 tour dates a year at sold-out venues all over North America. He is best known for being a regular on the TV show "Whose Line is it Anyway?" In April 2000, Mochrie won a Canadian Comedy Award for Best Male Improviser. One year later, he grabbed another Canadian Comedy Award for Best Male Performance in a Television Series ("Whose Line is it Anyway?"). Mochrie appears in the just-completed satirical drama INCONCEIVABLE, alongside Jennifer Tilly and Andie McDowell. He is in production on a new feature film, THE YELLOW WOMAN, from Film Bianca Inc. His production company is also in development on a new television series for the CBC called "The Tinkerer."

Mochrie was born in Kilmarnock, Scotland, and grew up in Montreal and Vancouver. At 16, he was dared by a friend to join a high-school play, in which he played the part of an undertaker. It was then that he got his first laugh (by splitting his pants) and since that moment he has "craved nothing but more laughter."

After attending acting school for four years, Mochrie teamed up with stand-up comic Ryan Stiles to do improv. Shortly after doing Expo '86, Colin moved to Toronto. There he auditioned for The Second City, the famous North American comedy theatre group, where Ryan Stiles was working at the time. He was hired by Debra McGrath and in 1989 they were married. Two years later, they had a son, Luke. Colin worked with The Second City for three years before the couple moved to Los Angeles, where McGrath worked on a TV series with Second City colleague Linda Kash. They hated it there and after spending their last few weeks selling off their CDs to buy diapers for their son, the family moved back to Toronto.

Mochrie has acted in various small roles in movies and series, including SPACE HUNTER: ADVENTURES IN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE and THE REAL BLONDE, starring Kathleen Turner and Matthew Modine. His first TV series was "Downtown Saturday Night," a sketch comedy/talk show shot in Vancouver.

CHRIS O'DONNELL (MR. KITTREDGE)

Chris O'Donnell's charm and diverse acting skills have allowed him to become one of Hollywood's leading male actors. In August 2007, he starred in the Golden Globe and Critics' Choice Award nominated TNT miniseries, "The Company." He also played the sexy veterinarian Dr. Finn Dandridge, aka "Dr. McVet," in the Golden Globe winning drama "Grey's Anatomy."

O'Donnell is currently in production on *MAX PAYNE*, an action drama in which he stars with Mark Wahlberg and Mila Kunis.

O'Donnell made his motion picture debut with a critically acclaimed performance as Jessica Lange's rebellious son in the Paul Brickman feature, *MEN DON'T LEAVE*, followed by a memorable cameo in Jon Avnet's Academy Award®-nominated *FRIED GREEN TOMATOES*, and the romantic drama *MAD LOVE*, opposite Drew Barrymore.

In 1993, O'Donnell was nominated for a Golden Globe and won the Chicago Film Critics Award for his starring role opposite Al Pacino in the multiple Academy Award-winning *SCENT OF A WOMAN*, directed by Martin Brest. He then played the swashbuckling D'Artagnan in *THE THREE MUSKETEERS*, for which he was named the NATO/ShoWest Male Star of Tomorrow in 1994.

O'Donnell adopted an Irish dialect to star in the romantic comedy sleeper *CIRCLE OF FRIENDS*. He won over audiences worldwide with his stand-out performance as Robin in the highest grossing film of 1995, *BATMAN FOREVER*.

Other film credits include the independent drama *THE SISTERS*, opposite Maria Bello; the Golden Globe-nominated *KINSEY*, opposite Liam Neeson; the action thriller *VERTICAL LIMIT*; and the romantic comedy *THE BACHELOR*, opposite Renee Zellweger, which was produced by O'Donnell's company, George Street Pictures, in association with New Line Cinema. Additional film work includes the legal thriller *THE CHAMBER*, the period romance *IN LOVE AND WAR* and Robert Altman's critically acclaimed comedy, *COOKIE'S FORTUNE*.

Broadway credits include a starring role in Arthur Miller's "The Man Who Had All the Luck," opposite Samantha Mathis.

O'Donnell resides in Los Angeles and Chicago with his wife and five children.

JULIA ORMOND (MRS. KITTREDGE)

British actress Julia Ormond had several solid years of stage work to her credit, as well as the starring role in the made-for-cable Catherine the Great biography "Young Catherine" (1991) when, at 27, she co-starred in the expansive HBO biopic "Stalin" (1992). Most of the publicity guns were aimed at Robert Duvall's portrayal of the Soviet dictator, but at least one observer singled out Ormond's performance as the long-suffering Mrs. Stalin as one of the highlights of the picture. That observer was director Edward Zwick, who later cast Ormond as the heroine in his big-budget theatrical feature *LEGENDS OF THE FALL*. She was recently seen in David Lynch's *INLAND EMPIRE* and just completed work on David Fincher's *THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON*, opposite Cate Blanchett and Brad Pitt.

Born in Epsom, Surrey, Ormond was a self-admitted tomboy who excelled at field hockey, became involved with the theatre in school plays, and, following a stint at art school (both her grandparents were abstract artists), studied drama at London's Webber-Douglas Academy of Dramatic Arts. Following graduation, she landed her first professional work in TV commercials and then acted in a series of plays until her breakthrough role in "Young Catherine."

During the mid-90s, the graceful Ormond played Guinevere opposite Sean Connery's King Arthur in *FIRST KNIGHT* and was cast in the title role of Sydney Pollack's remake of *SABRINA*. Ormond has starred in such international pictures as *SMILLA'S SENSE OF SNOW* (1997), *SIBIRSKIJ TSIRYULNIK (THE BARBER OF SIBERIA)*, 1998) and *RESISTANCE* (2003).

Ormond is also a well-known social activist on issues related to HIV/AIDS, anti-trafficking and poverty alleviation in Africa. She is Founding Co-Chair of FilmAid International, a non-governmental organization that uses the power of film to alleviate refugee despair and psychological trauma, combat isolation and communicate with disenfranchised populations in Afghanistan, East Africa and the Balkans. Together with Transatlantic Partners Against AIDS, Ormond also fights HIV/AIDS in Russia and Ukraine by advocating for improved prevention and treatment policies, raising awareness through media appearances, and mobilizing the creative community in both countries.

WALLACE SHAWN (MR. GIBSON)

Wallace Shawn is one of the film industry's most recognizable character actors with a long list of movie and television credits. He may be best known for his unforgettable turn as Vizzini in Rob Reiner's modern classic *THE PRINCESS BRIDE*.

Shawn, a New York City native, was once an educator, teaching Latin and drama in New York and English in India. A lifelong writer whose playwriting career began in 1967, Shawn translated Machiavelli's play "The Mandrake" for a Joseph Papp production in 1977 and was asked by the director to appear in it, marking his acting debut. Since then he has appeared in "Uncle Vanya," "Carmilla," and many other plays. In 2005, Shawn co-starred opposite Ethan Hawke in the enormously successful run off-Broadway of David Rabe's "Hurlyburly." In 2007, he starred off-Broadway in a production of his play "The Fever."

His other playwriting credits include "Aunt Dan and Lemon," "Marie and Bruce" and "The Designated Mourner," which was produced by the National Theater in London and featured Mike Nichols and Miranda Richardson. The two stars reprised their roles in the BBC Films production of "The Designated Mourner," released to critical acclaim in the summer of 1997.

Shawn's play "The Fever" was recently produced as a cable film for HBO starring Vanessa Redgrave, premiering in June 2007. His play "Marie and Bruce" was produced as a feature film starring Matthew Broderick and Julianne Moore. In the spring of 2006, Shawn had two plays open in New York: "The Music Teacher," an operatic play co-written with his composer brother

Allen, which made its premiere off-Broadway; and, on Broadway, his translation of Bertolt Brecht's "Threepenny Opera" was staged starring Alan Cumming and Cyndi Lauper.

Casting director Juliet Taylor saw Shawn in "The Mandrake," then recommended and ultimately cast him in Woody Allen's MANHATTAN. Allen later used him in RADIO DAYS, SHADOWS AND FOG, THE CURSE OF THE JADE SCORPION and MELINDA AND MELINDA. Shawn went on to appear in four films by Louis Malle: VANYA ON 42ND STREET, MY DINNER WITH ANDRÉ, ATLANTIC CITY and CRACKERS. Shawn appeared in Amy Heckerling's CLUELESS, Blake Edwards's MICKEY AND MAUDE, Stephen Frears's PRICK UP YOUR EARS, James Ivory's THE BOSTONIANS, Rebecca Miller's PERSONAL VELOCITY and THE HAUNTED MANSION, starring Eddie Murphy. Other notable credits include MY FAVORITE MARTIAN, SCENES FROM THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN BEVERLY HILLS, THE HOTEL NEW HAMPSHIRE and THE MODERNS.

In addition to having a recognizable face, Shawn's distinctive voice fueled the performance of the nervous dinosaur, Rex, in Pixar's classic TOY STORY, as well as its sequel Toy Story 2. He can also be heard in the animated feature films THE INCREDIBLES, THE GOOFY MOVIE and TEACHER'S PET: THE MOVIE, as well as on the animated television series "Family Guy" and The Disney Channel's "Stanley."

Shawn has appeared on such highly regarded television series as "Murphy Brown," "The Cosby Show" and "Taxi," along with special appearances on "Desperate Housewives," "Sex and the City" and "Ally McBeal." He has had recurring roles on "The L Word," "Crossing Jordan," "Clueless" and "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine." Movies made for television include "Monte Walsh" starring Tom Selleck, "Mr. St. Nick" starring Kelsey Grammer and "Blonde," with Poppy Montgomery as the legendary Marilyn Monroe.

WILLOW SMITH (COUNTEE)

Kit Kittredge: An American Girl is the second feature film for seven year-old Willow Smith. Smith's motion picture debut was 2007's I AM LEGEND, opposite her father Will Smith.

MAX THIERIOT (WILL SHEPHERD)

Max Thieriot was most recently seen in Doug Liman's JUMPER, opposite Hayden Christensen and Rachel Bilson, playing a young version of Christensen's character. Next up for Thieriot are two starring vehicles: DRIVING LESSONS, opposite Hope Davis and Dylan McDermott, and PICTURES OF YOU, in which he plays an awkward teen searching for the girl of his dreams with only a picture to guide him.

Thieriot was born in Los Altos Hills, California. His paternal grandfather was Charles de Young Thieriot, the owner and publisher of the San Francisco Chronicle, and a descendant of the de Young brothers, founders of the Chronicle.

Thieriot starred in NANCY DREW as Emma Roberts' love interest, Ned Nickerson, and also

appeared in THE ASTRONAUT FARMER as the son of Billy Bob Thornton's character.

Thieriot started his professional career modeling for GAP and appearing in two short films before being cast in the 2004 teen comedic thriller CATCH THAT KID. He then landed a role in 2005's THE PACIFIER as one of the family members under the protection of a Navy Seal played by Vin Diesel. Thieriot also performed all of his own songs in the film.

In his free time, Thieriot enjoys basketball, hunting, surfing, fishing and wrestling.

STANLEY TUCCI (MR. BERK)

Stanley Tucci has appeared in more than 50 films and countless television shows. In the past few years he has appeared in films such as THE TERMINAL, HBO's "The Life and Death of Peter Sellers," LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN and ROAD TO PERDITION. He is no stranger to the theater and has appeared in over a dozen plays, on and off-Broadway.

Most recently, he starred in the Golden Globe nominee THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA, alongside Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway. He has finished filming WHAT JUST HAPPENED? alongside Bruce Willis, John Turturro and Robert De Niro. After seven years, Tucci was again behind the camera to direct the upcoming BLIND DATE.

In 2002, Tucci received critical acclaim for his work in DreamWorks' ROAD TO PERDITION, co-starring Tom Hanks, Jude Law and Paul Newman. He also appeared in the Barry Sonnenfeld comedy BIG TROUBLE, co-starring Tim Allen, Rene Russo, Omar Epps, Janeane Garofalo and Jason Lee. Tucci also graced screens in SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK, written and directed by Edward Burns and starring Heather Graham and Brittany Murphy; AMERICA'S SWEETHEARTS, opposite Julia Roberts, John Cusack, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Billy Crystal; and "Conspiracy," alongside Kenneth Branagh and Colin Firth, a highly acclaimed HBO drama for which Tucci earned both an Emmy and Golden Globe nomination for Best Supporting Actor in a Made-for-TV-Movie or Miniseries. He also received a Golden Globe and an Emmy Award for his portrayal of Walter Winchell, a founder of American gossip, in the HBO original film, "Winchell," one of the juiciest roles of his diverse career.

"The Life and Death of Peter Sellers," in which Tucci played the role of renowned director Stanley Kubrick, premiered on HBO in 2004. The Stephen Hopkins drama starred Stephen Fry, John Lithgow and Miriam Margolyes and tied for the year's most Emmy nominations with 16 bids. Also in 2004, Tucci starred opposite Richard Gere and Jennifer Lopez in the romantic comedy SHALL WE DANCE, directed by Peter Chelsom. He co-starred in the James Redford film SPIN, with Dana Delany and Ruben Blades, and worked alongside Tom Hanks in Steven Spielberg's THE TERMINAL. In 2005, Tucci lent his voice to Fox Animation's ROBOTS as the Herb Copperbottom character.

Other film credits include DECONSTRUCTING HARRY, A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, THE ALARMIST, A LIFE LESS ORDINARY, THE DAYTRIPPERS, KISS OF DEATH, MRS. PARKER AND THE VICIOUS CIRCLE, IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU, THE PELICAN BRIEF, PRELUDE TO A KISS, BILLY BATHGATE, IN THE SOUP and SLAVES OF NEW YORK.

Tucci's multiple talents have led to a very diverse career. Not only an accomplished and gifted actor, he is a writer, director and producer. His most recent directorial effort was JOE GOULD'S SECRET, which starred Ian Holm as bohemian writer Joe Gould and Tucci as Joseph Mitchell, the famed writer for The New Yorker.

BIG NIGHT, Tucci's first effort as co-director, co-screenwriter and actor on the same film, earned him numerous accolades. Prizes included the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award at the 1996 Sundance Film Festival, a recognition of Excellence by the National Board of Review, an Independent Spirit Award, The Critics Prize at the 1996 Deauville Film Festival as well as honors from the New York Film Critics and the Boston Society of Film Critics.

Tucci wrote, directed, co-produced and starred in THE IMPOSTORS, an Official Selection at the 1998 Cannes Film Festival that was acquired by Fox Searchlight Pictures.

Tucci's work on television includes appearance on TNT's "Bull," "Equal Justice," "Wiseguy," "The Equalizer," "thirtysomething" and "The Street." He also starred as Richard Cross in the Steven Bochco drama "Murder One," a performance for which he earned an Emmy nomination. More recently, he appeared in the season premiere of "Monk."

Tucci, no stranger to the theater, has appeared in many plays including "Execution of Hope," "The Iceman Cometh," "Brighton Beach Memoirs" and "The Misanthrope." He has also performed in a number of off-Broadway plays, at Yale Repertory Theater and SUNY Purchase, where he first studied acting.

Tucci resides in New York with his wife and three children.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

PATRICIA ROZEMA (DIRECTOR)

Patricia Rozema's (pronounced Rose'-ah-ma) feature film credits include MANSFIELD PARK, WHEN NIGHT IS FALLING, WHITE ROOM and I'VE HEARD THE MERMAIDS SINGING, all of which she wrote as well as directed. Rozema won an Emmy Award in 1998 for Outstanding Classical Music-Dance Program for "Yo-Yo Ma: Inspired by Bach." Her television credits include The Beckett Project's "Happy Days" as well as the pilot and additional episodes of the HBO series "Tell Me You Love Me," among others.

ELAINE GOLDSMITH-THOMAS (PRODUCER)

Elaine Goldsmith-Thomas has been a producer for eight years. As a partner at Revolution Studios, Goldsmith-Thomas produced an impressive slate of films such as MAID IN MANHATTAN, which was directed by Wayne Wang and starred Jennifer Lopez, Ralph Fiennes, Bob Hoskins, and Stanley Tucci; MONA LISA SMILE, directed by Mike Newell, starring Julia Roberts, Kirsten Dunst, Julia Stiles, Maggie Gyllenhaal and Marcia Gay Harden; 13 GOING ON 30, directed by Gary Winnick, starring Jennifer Garner and Mark Ruffalo; LITTLE BLACK BOOK, directed by Nick Hurran, starring Brittany Murphy, Holly Hunter, Kathy Bates and Ron Livingston; and PERFECT STRANGER, directed by James Foley and starring Halle Berry, Bruce Willis and Giovanni Ribisi. Goldsmith-Thomas is currently in production on WILL, a musical coming-of-age film for Walden Films and Summit Entertainment starring Vanessa Hudgens ("High School Musical") and Lisa Kudrow.

Additionally, Goldsmith-Thomas has produced a number of award-winning television movies based on the American Girl dolls. KIT KITTREDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL marks the first feature film produced under her own banner, Goldsmith-Thomas Productions. These films will be produced along with Goldsmith-Thomas' longtime associates Julia Roberts and Lisa Gillan, and their Red Om Films shingle.

Under the Goldsmith-Thomas Productions banner, she is readying several projects for production in 2008, including CLASS ACT, a theatrical film that Halle Berry will star in and produce alongside Goldsmith-Thomas for DreamWorks, which tells the true story about a teacher who runs for Congress on the condition that her students agree to run the campaign, written and to be directed by Doug Atchinson (AKEELAH AND THE BEE); "Possible Side Effects," a one-hour series for Showtime about the politics and drama inside and outside a family-owned pharmaceutical company, written and to be directed by Tim Robbins; "Luna," a Latin-based series of films for Nickelodeon and a slate of films for MGM/United Artists.

Prior to joining Revolution Studios, Goldsmith-Thomas was a senior vice president at International Creative Management, a position she held since joining the company in 1991. At

International Creative Management, Goldsmith-Thomas represented such talents as Julia Roberts, Jennifer Lopez, Jennifer Connelly, Tim Robbins, Susan Sarandon, Darren Star, Rupert Everett, Matt Dillon, Spike Lee, Roger Michell and Jonathan Lynn. She began her career as a secretary at the William Morris Agency, where she was promoted to agent in 1985.

LISA GILLAN (PRODUCER)

Lisa Gillan is currently head of production and development at Red Om Films. Along with partners Phi Rose and Julia Roberts, she has several works in various stages of development. These include FLOWERING EVIL (The Joan Root Story) and BABY DINNER, both with Working Title; and FRIDAY NIGHT KNITTING CLUB and GOOD GRIEF with Universal. She began producing as an executive producer on the independent feature film NOTHING TO LOSE, starring Adrien Brody.

As an actor, Gillan has appeared in numerous film and television productions including the features JOURNEY OF AUGUST KING, MONA LISA SMILE, RUNAWAY BRIDE and RAISING HELEN and the TV series “Friends,” “Law & Order,” and “Sex and the City.” Gillan was an executive producer of all three previous made-for-TV American Girl movies: “Samantha: An American Girl Holiday”; “Felicity: An American Girl Adventure”; and “Molly: An American Girl on the Home Front.”

ELLEN L. BROTHERS (PRODUCER)

Ellen L. Brothers is president of American Girl and executive vice president of Mattel, as well as a member of Mattel’s management committee. As president of American Girl, Brothers is responsible for the strategic vision and day-to-day operations of the organization, which include direct marketing, experiential retail and publishing channels.

Brothers joined American Girl, which is headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1995 as vice president of catalogue marketing. She was named president of the company in 2000, succeeding founder Pleasant T. Rowland. Under Brothers’ direction, American Girl has grown to become one of the top 25 consumer cataloguers in the country and has expanded into the entertainment industry. In addition, American Girl is one of the nation’s leading children’s publishers and experiential retailers, with its renowned American Girl retail destinations in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Dallas.

Brothers currently serves on the board of directors of the Children Affected by AIDS Foundation (CAAF) and Kids In Distressed Situations (K.I.D.S.). Brothers is also a member of the Committee of 200, an organization of leading women entrepreneurs and corporate business executives in the United States, and she oversees American Girl’s Fund for Children, the company’s grant program, which has awarded more than \$7 million to local children’s charities since its inception in 1992. A wholly owned subsidiary of Mattel, Inc., American Girl has devoted its entire business to celebrating girls ages 3 to 12.

JULIE GOLDSTEIN (PRODUCER)

Julie Goldstein is senior vice president, HBO Films, for Home Box Office. Prior to joining HBO in 2007, Goldstein worked as an independent producer and consultant on projects including the HBO and BBC co-productions Golden Globe-winner "Longford" and the upcoming "Frequently Asked Questions About Time Travel" and "Grey Gardens."

Spending most of her film career at Miramax Films, Goldstein has an extensive credit list of acclaimed and honored films, including among others Golden Globe-nominee PROOF, Academy Award®-winner FINDING NEVERLAND, Best Picture Academy Award®-winner CHICAGO, Academy Award®-nominee DIRTY PRETTY THINGS, Golden Globe and Academy Award®-nominee BRIDGET JONES' DIARY, Golden Globe-nominee AN IDEAL HUSBAND, Best Picture Academy Award®-winner SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE, Golden Globe-nominee THE MIGHTY, Academy Award®-nominee EMMA and ELLA ENCHANTED.

She is the recipient of two Screen Actors Guild Honor Awards for CHICAGO and SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE, a Golden Laurel Award from the Producers Guild of America for CHICAGO and a Humanitas Prize for DIRTY PRETTY THINGS.

JULIA ROBERTS (EXECUTIVE PRODUCER)

Julia Roberts most recently appeared in director Mike Nichols' film CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR, alongside Tom Hanks. She is currently filming DUPLICITY, directed by Tony Gilroy, which reunites her with her Closer co-star, Clive Owen. Recently, she made her Broadway debut in Richard Greenberg's "Three Days of Rain."

Roberts and Red Om Films produced MONA LISA SMILE, in which she also appeared, and executive produced "Samantha: An American Girl Holiday," "Felicity: An American Girl Adventure" and "Molly: An American Girl on the Homefront."

Roberts can be heard as the voice of Charlotte in CHARLOTTE'S WEB. She appeared in the ensemble crime capers, OCEAN'S ELEVEN and OCEAN'S TWELVE, directed by Steven Soderbergh. Roberts was seen in George Clooney's directorial debut, CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND, as well as in FULL FRONTAL, her third role in a Steven Soderbergh film. Roberts received the Academy Award® and a Golden Globe Award for her portrayal of ERIN BROCKOVICH, also directed by Soderbergh.

ERIN BROCKOVICH followed the success of two box-office smashes: NOTTING HILL, directed by Roger Michell, in which she co-starred with Hugh Grant; and RUNAWAY BRIDE, in which she was reunited with Richard Gere, her PRETTY WOMAN co-star, and their director, Garry Marshall.

Roberts starred in THE MEXICAN with her OCEAN'S ELEVEN co-star Brad Pitt and James Gandolfini, and AMERICA'S SWEETHEARTS, in which she starred alongside Billy Crystal, Catherine Zeta-Jones, John Cusack and Hank Azaria.

In 1997, Roberts starred in the box-office smash MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING, directed by P.J. Hogan, and the Richard Donner-directed thriller CONSPIRACY THEORY, co-starring Mel Gibson. Following that, Roberts starred opposite Susan Sarandon and Ed Harris in the Chris Columbus film, STEPMOM.

Roberts has starred in many of Hollywood's most successful films. She first came to the attention of audiences with her critically acclaimed role in MYSTIC PIZZA. Her role in STEEL MAGNOLIAS resulted in her first Academy Award® nomination. Her next film, PRETTY WOMAN, was the top-grossing film of 1990 and brought Roberts her second Academy Award nomination. Her memorable performance in that film was followed by a series of notable films including FLATLINERS, SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY, DYING YOUNG, THE PELICAN BRIEF and SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT.

MARISA YERES (EXECUTIVE PRODUCER)

Marisa Yeres has worked with Elaine Goldsmith-Thomas for eight years and currently serves as Senior Vice President of Goldsmith-Thomas Productions. At Revolution Studios, Yeres developed such films as MAID IN MANHATTAN, MONA LISA SMILE, LITTLE BLACK BOOK and PERFECT STRANGER. Additionally, she has executive produced three television films based on the American Girl characters: "Samantha: An American Girl Holiday," "Felicity: An American Girl Adventure" and "Molly: An American Girl on the Homefront."

Yeres began her career at Julia Roberts' production company, Red Om Films.

ANN PEACOCK (SCREENWRITER)

Ann Peacock has written the screenplays for THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE, NIGHTS IN RODANTHE, COUNTRY OF MY SKULL and the upcoming THE KILLING ROOM.

Peacock won an Emmy in 1999 for Outstanding Writing for a Miniseries or a Movie for her work on HBO's "A Lesson Before Dying." Her other teleplays include "Cora Unashamed" and "Pictures of Hollis Woods."

DAVID BOYD (DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY)

David Boyd's feature film credits include Renny Harlin's 12 ROUNDS, LENEXA, 1 MILE, A QUESTION OF LOYALTY, THE MAKING OF DANIEL BOONE and the Academy Award-winning short film TWO SOLDIERS.

Boyd shot the pilot episode of "Friday Night Lights," directed by Peter Berg, and the first season. He also directed five episodes of the series. Additional television credits include David Milch's "Deadwood" and "Big Apple," "Without A Trace," "Threat Matrix" (pilot) and "Buddy Faro."

PETER COSCO (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)

Peter Cosco has served as production designer for feature films including JACK AND JILL VS. THE WORLD, NOTHING, NEMESIS GAME, PERFECT PIE and GARAGE.

His extensive work for television includes episodes of “Tell Me You Love Me,” “Beautiful People,” “Jake 2.0” and “Total Recall 2070,” as well as the telefilms “Widow on the Hill,” “Naughty or Nice,” “Gracie’s Choice,” “Finding John Christmas,” “Framed,” “Guilty Hearts,” “Deliberate Intent,” “Mr. Rock ‘n’ Roll: The Alan Freed Story” and “The Time Shifters.”

TRYSHA BAKKER (COSTUME DESIGNER)

Trysha Bakker earned Gemini Awards for Best Costume Design for her work on “Shattered City: The Halifax Explosion,” as well as the 1995 telefilm “The Man in the Attic.” Her feature films credits include URBAN LEGEND: FINAL CUT, THE GATE and PRETTY KILL.

Bakker designed the costumes for two previous made-for-television American Girl movies: “Samantha: An American Girl Holiday” and “Molly: An American Girl on the Homefront.” Additional television credits include episodes of “1-800-Missing,” “Tarzan” and “The Twilight Zone.” She also costumed the Canadian miniseries “The Arrow” (1997) and numerous made-for-TV movies, including “Prince Charming,” “Sounder” (2003), “The Interrogation of Michael Crowe,” “Jane Doe,” “The Facts of Life Reunion,” “Mr. Rock ‘n’ Roll: The Alan Freed Story,” “The Time Shifters,” “My Father’s Shadow: The Sam Sheppard Story” and “A Child’s Christmas in Wales.”

JULIE ROGERS (EDITOR)

Julie Rogers’ credits as editor include the feature films CURIOUS GEORGE, RACING STRIPES, STUART LITTLE, MICKEY’S TWICE UPON A CHRISTMAS and THE DOGWALKER. She served as first editorial assistant on the films HEARTS IN ATLANTIS, GRACE OF MY HEART, A DANGEROUS WOMAN, LOSING ISAIAH and TOMBSTONE.

EVYEN KLEAN (MUSIC SUPERVISOR)

Eyven Klean founded Neophonic, Inc. in Hollywood, California in 1980. His involvement in artist management, music publishing and studio recording earned him a reputation for excellence as well as strong relationships within the entertainment community. By 1987, Neophonic shifted its focus to music supervision. Since then, Eyven has supervised and consulted on over 60 films and hundreds of hours of television. From full service soundtrack production and supervision to creative and technical consultation, Neophonic has worked with nearly every major studio, network, and independent producer alike. Neophonic has enjoyed a fruitful working relationship with HBO Films, as their de facto music department, for well over a decade. Recent credits include HBO telefilms such as “Recount” (2008), “John Adams” (2008), “Bernard & Doris” (2008) and “Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee”(2007), as well as the theatrical features Rocket Science (2007) and Idlewild (2006).

JOSEPH VITARELLI (MUSIC)

Joseph Vitarelli most recently enjoyed success as a composer of the highly acclaimed HBO epic “John Adams”. He is perhaps best known for his iconic score to John Dahl’s modern film noir THE LAST SEDUCTION, which starred Linda Fiorentino and Peter Berg. Other film credits include the score to Nathaniel Kahn’s Academy Award® nominated MY ARCHITECT; SHE’S SO LOVELY, directed by Nicholas Cassavettes, starring Sean Penn, John Travolta and Robin Wright Penn; COMMANDMENTS starring Aidan Quinn and Anthony LaPaglia and directed by Daniel Taplitz. Vitarelli also scored the film adaptation of Jon Robin Baitz’s play THE SUBSTANCE OF FIRE directed by Daniel Sullivan and starring Ron Rifkin, Sarah Jessica Parker and Timothy Hutton.

In addition to his feature film work, Vitarelli has scored numerous films for HBO including “Boycott”, “First Time Felon” and “And Starring Pancho Villa As Himself”, directed by Bruce Beresford, written by Larry Gelbart, starring Antonio Banderas. In 2001 he produced the Emmy Award winning score with Arturo Sandoval for “For Love Or Country,” starring Andy Garcia and directed by Joseph Sargent. He has composed music for many television series and specials including “Equal Justice,” “The Beast” and “Under Suspicion” as well as the adaptation of Neil Simon’s play “Laughter On The 23rd Floor,” directed by Richard Benjamin and starring Nathan Lane. In 2005 He received an Emmy nomination for his score to the NBC “maxi-series” “Revelations”.

NANCY NAYOR (CASTING)

Nancy Naylor Battino began her casting career off-Broadway at Manhattan Theater Club in New York, then moved to Los Angeles where she worked as Senior Vice President of Feature Film Casting for Universal Studios. There she oversaw the casting of the studio’s slate of films for Steven Spielberg, Spike Lee, Ron Howard, Oliver Stone and John Hughes. She opened her own freelance casting company in 1997 and has since cast such films as ROAD TRIP, THE WHOLE NINE YARDS, THE GRUDGE, EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE, WHEN A STRANGER CALLS, as well as NIM’S ISLAND with Jodie Foster and THE CODE with Morgan Freeman and Antonio Banderas.