

Danny Roebuck begins filming new movie at Historic Hotel Bethlehem

“Saint Nick of Bethlehem” will feature many Lehigh Valley locations

By Laurie Monteforte

Bethlehem, PA (November 13, 2023) - Bethlehem native Danny Roebuck will begin filming his newest feature film at Historic Hotel Bethlehem today. The film, “Saint Nick of Bethlehem,” is based on the true story of a man who found purpose in adopting a Santa Claus persona after a family tragedy.

Roebuck and his team will shoot at locations throughout the Lehigh Valley for one week in November and three weeks in March. They decided to make this movie in Bethlehem after hearing that Hallmark Channel was filming a movie about Bethlehem in another country. “I love Hallmark,” said Roebuck. “I’m just surprised to learn that they were making a movie called “Miracle in Bethlehem, PA” but shooting it in Winnipeg, Canada - 1,597 miles away,” he chuckled. “Of course, we’re just teasing our friends at Hallmark. As a producer, I understand why they are filming there. It has everything to do with the movie tax credits offered in Canada, which Pennsylvania simply doesn’t match. That said, we have made “Getting Grace,” “Lucky Louie,” and, “The Hail Mary” here, all without such credits and so, we figured, let’s do it again.”

Pennsylvania filmmakers work together on new film

Pennsylvania filmmaker, Spencer Folmar, collaborated with Roebuck on the story. Folmar said, “The script was nearly complete, and Danny called having had an epiphany after hearing about the Hallmark film, ‘Let’s set our story in Bethlehem PA!’ he suggested. Well, I have seen all of the films shot there and knew that it would be the perfect background for our Saint Nick.”

Roebuck, a 40-year veteran of Hollywood, has appeared in nearly 150 films and over 300 episodes of television. In addition to acting, he writes, produces, and directs. He made three of his first four films as a director in the Lehigh Valley - the last two through his non-profit, A Channel of Peace.

Bethlehem community pulls together to make holiday movie magic

While it typically takes months of advance planning to pull off a feature film, Roebuck and his team only have a small time window to capture Bethlehem in all of its holiday glory. The first stop was connecting with Bethlehem Mayor J. Willie Reynolds. Producers said the mayor and his staff were immediately on board with the plan. Then, Roebuck reached out to Historic Hotel Bethlehem’s managing partner Bruce Haines to coordinate shoots at the hotel, including important scenes in the 1741 on the Terrace Restaurant, which features a view of the Bethlehem Star. Haines said, “Capturing the Star of Bethlehem while dining in 1741 on the Terrace is special at Christmastime and all year long.” Roebuck agreed, “It’s gorgeous all year and absolutely breathtaking at Christmastime. The holiday decor is the perfect backdrop for Saint Nick of Bethlehem.” This will be the third time the hotel has served as a shooting location for a Roebuck film. Haines said, “It’s a privilege to work with Danny and his team to feature not only the hotel, or our beautiful city, but also the true heart of Bethlehem and the spirit of Christmas.”

“Saint Nick of Bethlehem” filming locations

“Unlike some production teams,” Roebuck said with a wink, “I’m filming this Lehigh Valley-based film completely in the Lehigh Valley.” Locations include:

- Bethlehem’s Historic Main Street
- Christkindlmarkt at SteelStacks
- Hotel Bethlehem
- Saint Luke’s Children’s Hospital
- The Kiffle Kitchen Bakery
- The Star of Bethlehem
- About the filmmakers

Folmar’s production company, Hard Faith, Daniel and wife Tammy Roebuck’s Magic Bean Entertainment, Doug Tschirhart and Ben Daniele’s Scatter Brothers, and James Marlowe’s The Marlow-Pugnetti Company will produce “Saint Nick of Bethlehem.”

Roebuck will star as the title character. The cast also features Cathy Moriarty, Marsha Dietlein Bennett, Duane Whitaker, Timothy E. Goodwin, Stelio Savante, and Elias Kemual. Lehigh Valley actors, Jennifer Poratta, Kathy Patterson, and Keith Willis, among others, will also make appearances.

The film will also employ many Lehigh Valley-based crew members including costumer Kristin Dundon, Ubifire’s Craig Friebolin, and Greg Roth. Vista Grill in Nazareth, which Dr. Susan and TJ Bostian own, will provide catering. Like all of Roebuck’s films, Hollywood composer Alex Kovacs, formerly of Allentown, will score the film.

