

Movie shoot coming to Whitney this fall

By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Lights, camera, action! Most of the scenes for an upcoming movie will be shot in and around Whitney in South Algonquin Township this September. The production company Banana Moon Sky Films, run by actor, screenwriter and producer Jonas Chernick, is currently looking for local extras and a baby to play the child of the main characters during one of the scenes, according to the township's Facebook page. Anyone who is interested can get in touch with Chernick at info@bananamoonskyfilms.com with your contact information and a recent photo.

Banana Moon Sky Films (www.bananamoonskyfilms.com) is an award-winning Toronto based production company run by Jonas Chernick, an actor, screenwriter and producer. They are looking for background actors to play wedding guests in a wedding scene, and they're also looking for a baby to play the child of the movie's main characters.

Chernick says that the movie will be set at a cottage rental resort near Algonquin Park, and although they'd planned to film the whole movie inside the park, plans changed, as he notes they tend to do in the movie business. They decided to shoot the movie in and around Whitney, as they had previously scouted the town to accommodate the cast and crew during the shoot.

"I had visited a couple of times, met with some of the local vendors, business people and residents, and I was really taken by their warmth, enthusiasm and kindness. So, when we decided not to film the movie inside the park, we pivoted to shoot the movie in Whitney. Not just one scene, by the way. We'll be filming most of the scenes in and around Whitney," he says.

The movie is called *The Time we Met*, and Chernick says it's a romantic drama about a love affair. He offered up the official synopsis; Alena and her husband spend a summer up at Luna Lake Resort. J.B. runs the place. He and Alena begin a dangerous and passionate secret affair. Summers only. That's the rule, until they break it. A sexy and tragic love story-told backwards.

As for the wedding scene that they're looking for local extras for, Chernick says he won't divulge any more details, but he did say it's one of the most exciting scenes in the movie.

Chernick says that the response from the residents of South Algonquin has been incredible, and that they'd gotten a flood of emails from people interested in getting involved in the movie.

"I was worried we wouldn't find any families with a baby who were interested, but there have been dozens. I think you may be experiencing a baby boom in the South Algonquin area. I suspect I know what most people were doing up here during the pandemic lockdowns," he says.

Anyone local who is interested in being an extra can get in touch with Chernick at info@bananamoonskyfilms.com with your contact information and a recent photo.

Councillor Bongo Bongo thought the movie was exciting news for South Algonquin Township and as he understands it, accommodation providers in Whitney will be hosting part of the film crew and the Mad Musher restaurant will be catering their meals.

"It's really beginning to feel like the community is behind this movie. We have a wonderful hospitable staff that have been in contact with the production team. So far, the township has supported the movie by doing some social media outreach to recruit for extras. There's a wedding scene in the film that will require a significant number of extras, including a baby. When the township posted the advert asking for locals to step forward to be considered for this scene there was a tremendous response from the community. South

Algonquin is very excited about being a movie set, and being movie stars! he says.

Bongo thinks that being in South Algonquin is like being in a movie as it is so beautiful, and so he feels that it was only natural that Banana Moon Sky Films chose Whitney to shoot the movie. After two years of dealing with COVID-19 and its restrictions, he says that this is an ever more exciting event for the community and also will provide a great boost to the local economy.

Businesses are being contacted to provide services to the production crew, and of course the success of the movie will provide intangible marketing for South Algonquin. Films have a tendency to make their set locations iconic, and tourists make pilgrimages to visit filming locations of their favourite movies. This could well happen with this production. The whole community is buzzing, he says.

Chernick told Bancroft This Week that he wanted to express his gratitude to South Algonquin Township and the people and business of Whitney.

You've welcomed us with open arms and we feel very fortunate. We're all looking forward to spending our September up there with you all! he says. See you soon!