



## A new film makes you want to go ‘down the shore’ again

| 1 year 36 weeks ago | Comments 2

By Jim Vanore

Benicio (David Fumero) and Catch (Paul Sorvino) have a confrontation in “Greetings from the Shore.”

So many Jersey Shore residents started out as visitors. We came here for vacations as children; we stayed on as adults...if we could.

Anyone who has lived this dream (or just dreamed) would thoroughly enjoy the forthcoming film, “Greetings from the Shore,” which will be screened during the Tenth Annual Rehoboth Beach Independent Film Festival in Delaware, Nov. 7 through 11. Shot on location up the Jersey coast at Lavallette, just north of Seaside Heights, the film is an autobiographical coming-of-age tale, co-written by Gabrielle Berberich and Greg Chwerchak, both New Jersey natives.

It’s a poignant story about Jenny, a girl on her way to college, who wants to spend one last summer at the Jersey Shore resort that holds for her, so many fond memories—the strongest of which are those related to her dad, who recently passed away.

If you spent some of your youth “coming to the shore,” you’re going to probably see yourself somewhere in this film.

“Jen is the movie Gabrielle,” said Berberich, who lived the events presented on screen.

“Almost all of the elements are true, with a little literary license thrown in.

“The Jersey Shore is part of who I am. I’m the youngest of six kids, and my parents always somehow managed to take us to the shore for a vacation in our station wagon.” Originally from Hackettstown, Berberich, like Jen, spent summers working in a pizza joint in Lavallette, and like Jen, lost her father at an early age.

Chwerchak, born in Montclair, had made his reputation directing commercials, music video, and shorts. “Greetings” is his first feature film.

“This is a different experience,” he said. “It resonates emotionally. At a recent screening, I looked sideways at the audience, and in the dark, I could see wet cheeks. I don’t experience that reaction with music videos. If you paint with a broad enough brush, you connect with people.”

Chwerchak, the film’s director, uses the borough of Lavallette brilliantly as his canvas. From the opening credits, that are run over a background of Jenny driving her beat-up old Oldsmobile down the coast, to the many panoramic sunsets and island-wide shots, the title becomes clear.

“The first character in the movie is Lavallette,” said Berberich. “The color, the tones, the light, the angles...”

“I’ve traveled the world,” she continued, “I’ve stood at the tip of the African cape, gazing out at the sea, and said to myself, ‘I’d rather be in Lavallette.’”

One of Jersey’s many barrier islands, Lavallette was chosen for more than it’s historical significance to the story.

“It was filmed on an island to bring the sense of isolation of the human experience,” said Berberich. “Each character is ‘on their own island.’”

And such a location can confuse viewers who are unfamiliar with the Jersey coastline.

“I’ve actually had people in California ask me, ‘Where did you really film this?’”

Chwerchak noted. “They just don’t imagine New Jersey as this picturesque.”

Berberich admitted she wanted to tweak the nose of the New Jersey stereotype.

“Some people don’t realize the diversity of New Jersey,” she said. “They don’t know there are islands off the coast. One man in Canada asked me where it was, saying, ‘I want to go to a place like that.’”

Through it all, ‘the shore’ is always there; there as you’ll no doubt remember it from your earlier visits, although the period portrayed is contemporary.

“The setting is timeless,” said Berberich. “Viewers may ask each other, ‘When do you think this is?’”

It’s hard not to feel for Jenny as she struggles — sometime happily; sometimes heartbreakingly — through her summer. Whether you’ve gone through a summer romance yourself, or known someone who has, you’re going to feel right at home walking through the frames of this picture.

You’re going to recognize the people: the boarding house landlady, the crusty old fisherman, the transient workers, the pompous pseudo-aristocracy...and you’ll certainly recognize the Jersey Shore.

Chwerchak and Berberich hope to interest a distribution company in “Greetings from the Shore.”

“We’re aiming for a 2008 theatrical release,” Berberich said.

The writer-director duo already have another project in the works: “Lucker Mucker,” a romantic comedy also set in New Jersey.

Why not? The state showed well in this, their first feature effort. And I thought the writing was very well done — and told Berberich so.

“It’s a thrill to have a writer like the movie,” she said. “This is why you go into the arts. You know it every time you connect with someone.

“We showed the film in Florida, and a man came over afterward and told me he hadn’t been to a movie in 20 years, but this brought him back to his childhood.”

Some movies set in or near this coastline fail to capture our seashore. This one has it nailed.

“One (film critic) told me, ‘I’ve never seen the shore represented so well,’” said Chwerchak.

I agree.

If you’re new to the Jersey Shore, or a veteran, you could spend 118 minutes of your time in a lot worse ways than viewing “Greetings from the Shore,” which will be showing at Rehoboth Nov. 7, 9, 10 and 11 ([www.rehobothfilm.com](http://www.rehobothfilm.com)).

I’ve never been to Lavallette. Like so many other south Jerseyites, Atlantic City has become an imaginary northern boundary for my personal ‘Jersey Shore.’ After seeing the borough share a starring role in “Greetings from the Shore,” I think a visit to the island may be in my near future.

And after watching Berberich and Chwerchak’s little “postcard from the shore,” I’ll

never be able to write the co-joined words Jersey and Shore without capitalizing the latter word.