

**published September 11, 2008**

**by Michael Elkin, Arts & Entertainment  
Editor**

From under the boardwalk to above the marquee has had a soft salt-water taffy of a tug at the heart of executive producer Robert Schulman, whose *Greetings From the Shore* is a warm summer breeze of bonhomie opening this Friday.

It's all boy-meets-girl-meets-sunshine as a young couple in love goes la-la in summertime Lavallette, N.J.

It's the Jersey boys -- and girls -- with one season, as Jenny Chambers opens the valves in her heart to sputter over an illegal alien sharing hurt and hearth at the same seaside and sailing resort at which she shows up as English teacher to those whose mother tongue is tied up in knots.



*Smokin'! David Fumero and Kim Shaw share goals and games in "Greetings From the Shore."*

A small-budgeted summer rental with a heart as vast as the Atlantic, "Greetings" hugs the Jersey coastline as if embracing its sheer shimmer of sunlit diamonds.

And Schulman, whose "coming of age" comedy of complications captures "the idea," as he puts it, "of the Jersey shore," knows his turf: This is the projected first in a trilogy about the Garden State, tolls and all.

"The authors," he says of native, not new, Jersey fans Gabrielle Berberich and Greg Chwerchak, "feel Jersey gets a bad rap, and they want to make it look like the crown jewel that it is."

### **Remember Chelsea?**

For Jews who recall Chelsea as a beach, rather than a First Daughter, "Greetings" is a seashell of shaloms, even if the main characters are more apt to boogie on boards than bellow for borscht.

"This movie is timeless; it is sentimental -- and any ethnic group could be switched for the characters," allows the Jewish exec producer, whose own wild days were spent cavorting in Wildwood.

### **A Boy Like That...**

"This easily could have been about an Hispanic and a nice Jewish girl" as it is about a young college hopeful and the "Russian" roustabout she meets and greets who has his own five-year plan for success.

*Surf Side Story?* No bored walk amid the wild woods here: The catch-in-the-throat is not so much that it's Jenny and Benicio as star-crossed lovers -- turns out he's as Russian as a rigged roulette game -- but star Paul Sorvino, the accomplished actor whose character of Catch almost lets life slip through his houseboat-hardened fingers.

There are life lessons to be learned, sure, but this is no on golden pontificate: The stars -- newbie Kim Shaw as naif Jenny and the smokin' David Fumero as her illegal inamorata -- add a glow of sunrise, sunset that sets this flick apart.

"The Jersey shore has always meant a time of peace, a place to relax in the great mosaic that it is," understates producer Schulman.

The movie's undertow is deceptively powerful, a picture postcard with a Cubist's perspective. And while this edition isn't Jewish inherently, it is an inheritance offered of gentle Jewish ambitions and dreams, which may, says the producer coyly, be part of another in the trilogy's series.

But for now, it is the weave of water comfort and the balm of sandy-beach bonding that makes *Greetings From the Shore* merit a timeless tip of the lifeguard cap as a white-foamed capper to the end days of summer.