

SCREENWRITER THRILLED TO MAKE MOVIE HERE

Her horror story, 'All Saints' Eve,' is filming in and around Evans City.

ROSS

BY DAVEEN RAE KURUTZ

TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Elizabeth Rossi hates being scared. Never a fan of slasher flicks, Rossi, a screenwriter, is the last person her friends would expect to write and produce a horror movie.

That's why she expects a lot of laughs on the set of her first movie, "All Saints' Eve."

"I get scared very easily," said Rossi, 35, of Ross. "It's probably going to be a bit funny with me being on the set with all of this spooky stuff going on. It's kind of crazy."

Rossi opened production on the feature film last week at an old farm house in Evans City. The film tells the tale of the release of an evil curse after a farmer was murdered by a sinister preacher in the 1700s.

"It kind of delves into the distance between organized religion versus a very simple, seriously based faith," Rossi said. "I had this idea that kept coming back and back again. I knew it should probably be written."

Rossi wrote the script in 2005 after doing research on saints and martyrdom. A stranger to the horror genre, she researched the world of medicine to ensure her gruesome scenes were true to life.



Rossi

A Web developer by day in Marshall, Rossi said the decision to film in the Pittsburgh area was easy. The area has been a popular location for films lately, with "Bridge to Nowhere" beginning production this month in McCandless. "Dogma" director and producer Kevin Smith will begin filming a new movie in Pittsburgh in January.

"The film industry is really ramping up here, and honestly it's a lot easier to do a movie here than in LA," Rossi said. "Plus, it's set in a rural setting, so it's better to film here."

That setting provides the perfect tone for the film, said production manager Karen Catanzaro. While the changing fall foliage serves as the backdrop to a creepy old farmhouse, the gloomy weather last week caused some setbacks on outdoor filming.

Despite some delays, Catanzaro thinks the film is going

to be success.

"I honestly think it's going to be something big," said Catanzaro, 43, of Shaler. "It's a really, really good script. It's not one of those silly — for a lack of a better word — horror films. It has a story and a lesson to it."

Some well-known Pittsburgh names will make cameos in the film, which is expected to be in production through January, Rossi said. Pittsburgh Steelers right tackle Max Starks has agreed to make an appearance. Local country band Povertyneck Hillbillies will lend some music to the soundtrack, she said.

One of the biggest hurdles for Rossi has been financing. After talking to other independent filmmakers across the country, she decided to offer a "fund-a-frame" program to back production costs. For a donation, backers can sponsor a frame of the movie featuring cast members of their choice.

"It's been very well-received," Rossi said. "It amazes me how excited people, including the cast and crew, are getting about this production."

Rossi hopes the movie will have a nationwide release in February.

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SUBMITTED PHOTOS

This house in Evans City sets the stage for much of Elizabeth Rossi's movie, "All Saints' Eve."