

# A film with a hometown flavor

Shot in St. Joseph, 'Wednesday Morning Breakfast Club' will premiere Friday

By **LILA CHANDLER**  
HP Correspondent

If Main Street in the film looks quite familiar, it's because "The Wednesday Morning Breakfast Club" was shot here.

Duke Street Productions' debut film was filmed in downtown St. Joseph, largely in Thornton's Hometown Café. The film will have its public premiere at 8 p.m. Friday at The Chapel, 4250 Washington Ave., St. Joseph.

The multigenerational film was created by 20-somethings. Producer and director Justin Barber is 25; cinematographer Seth Haley is 23; and script writer Amanda Barber — Justin's sister — is 28.



Photo provided

**Cinematographer Seth Haley (from left), actress Stacey Bradshaw, director Justin Barber and graphic artist Amos Haley at work on "The Wednesday Morning Breakfast Club," which was filmed after-hours at Thornton's Hometown Café in St. Joseph. The film premieres Friday.**

As a kid, Justin Barber motivations were immature. He reconnected with film while watching Sherwood Productions' films, including "Courageous," and seeing that wholesome, Christian films could be produced independently.

Barber met Haley, a talented photographer living at that time in Lawrence, around 2008. Both interested in filmmaking, they put their heads together. About that time Haley bought a Canon 7D and began toying around, experimenting with some 5-minute shorts. Then Barber approached his sister

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Waitress Megan, portrayed by Stacey Bradshaw, serves three customers, played by Hans Willar, David Maysick and Werner Riedel, in a scene from "The Wednesday Morning Breakfast Club." Photo provided

## FILM

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and asked her to write a screenplay, which she did in the summer of 2011.

His vision: a story told well, its subtle message not preached but intrinsic in the action of the story.

In the film, newly hired waitress Megan gets a taste of customer service when three crotchety, eccentric old men walk into the restaurant one Wednesday morning. Despite her initial impressions and snide comments from Martha, her co-waitress, Megan rolls up her sleeves and endeavors to be the best server possible for these three regular customers. Unexpectedly, deep friendships form.

"Back when I was looking for locations to film at, I stumbled across Thornton's," Justin Barber says. "I loved it. I gave a copy of the script to Kathy Thornton and asked her if we could use the restaurant as our main location. She was so thrilled with the story and how it seemed to mirror her experiences with faithful customers that she graciously worked with us to accommodate our filming schedule."

The three men were played by locals Hans Willar, Werner Riedel and David Maysick. David Cade of Watervliet took the role of the store owner. Amanda Barber is Martha, the snide waitress. A professional actress Justin Barber met at an independent film festival, Stacey Bradshaw, stars as Megan. She,



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Siblings Justin and Amanda Barber collaborated to make "The Wednesday Morning Breakfast Club." Justin Barber directed the film from a screenplay by Amanda Barber. Their father, Dick Barber, wrote the musical score.

like the other actors, donated her time to the project.

Duke Street Productions filmed for 10 days over the course of a month in summer 2012 between everyone's hectic schedules. The director and cinematographer both worked full work weeks, the actors were all volunteer, and the restaurant remained open for business, allowing the film crew just four hours a day after-hours.

The Barber siblings, who live in St. Joseph, enlisted the help of their father, too. Dick Barber, formerly a music teacher at Watervliet Grace Christian School

by watching rough edits."

Amanda Barber scrambled together a volunteer orchestra from the Kalamazoo College Symphonia Orchestra, of which she is a member, as well as the Kalamazoo Junior Symphony Orchestra and friends. Most received the score with scant notice. Duke Street Productions spent precious funds to rent a studio.

"We had just six hours to record the soundtrack," Justin Barber says. "That was more nerve-wracking than filming for me."

The youngest violinist was 13 years old; the oldest cellist 86.

"The message of the movie worked its way out in both filming and the soundtrack," Amanda Barber says.

A Beverly Hills distribution company showed interest in the project... until they laid eyes on Barber's paltry \$2,000 budget and decided Duke Street Productions wasn't serious enough to pull it off.

About 50 minutes long, "The Wednesday Morning Breakfast Club" stayed within budget because of the generosity of so many who volunteered their time, equipment and props, the Barbers said.

Making rounds at independent film festivals and in film contests with "The Wednesday Morning Breakfast Club," Duke Street Productions is exploring options for its next project. Meanwhile, DVDs of "The Wednesday Morning Breakfast Club" will be available soon locally and on Amazon.com.

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**JUSTIN BARBER**  
"The Wednesday Morning Breakfast Club" director

and now lives in Colorado, wrote the score.

"He had composed dramatic (musical) motifs from reading the script," says Amanda Barber, who is now a music teacher herself, "and wrote the score