

# Pulling best lens forward

*Film neophyte  
stretches budget  
to make first flick*

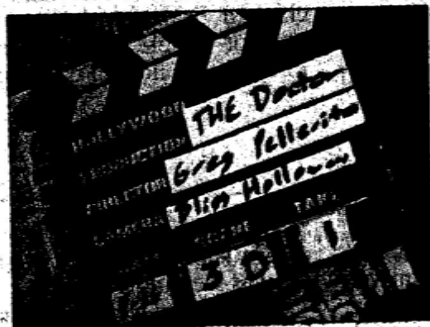
By Jeff Morganteen  
Special Correspondent

STAMFORD — Greg Pellerito focused on a 15-inch television screen yesterday, watching his father, Joe, ad lib lines into a cell phone.

A few botched takes later, Joe Pellerito said, "I wasn't made for this stuff." After a few more takes, though, he nailed the scene, resulting in peals of laughter from family, friends and hired actors.

He was filling in for an actor who didn't show up. Such are the trappings of independent filmmaking on a shoestring budget.

Greg Pellerito, a Stamford resident who graduated from Quinnipiac University last year, spent yesterday filming in a vacant medical office on Elm Street. Last summer, the



A Clapperboard documents the progress of the film.



Greg Pellerito, left, sets up a shot with actress Anna Koonin while filming a short film, 'The Doctor,' yesterday at an unused medical office in Stamford. Below, Pellerito, second from right, his brother J.J., right, and Rick Rainone evaluate a shot on a monitor.

23-year-old director and writer formed a film production company, Core Collective Productions, with help from his family and friends.

Yesterday's filming was for "The Doctor," a short comedy that Pellerito intends to show to potential investors who are interested in backing other projects. After months of planning and development, the short film will be Pellerito's first production.

So far, the fledgling film director has survived on funding from

his parents, saying he hasn't made a penny yet. Pellerito's father, who is his manager, put up his own money for most of the \$1,500 film budget.

"It's been a long process," Joe Pellerito said. "Greg puts in a tremendous amount of hours. He has the passion for what he's doing, and we back him. We believe in what he's doing."

The offbeat comedy focuses on a single day in a medical office, where the doctor misdiagnoses his patients to inappropriately examine them. Pellerito calls the film "American Pie" in

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Chris Prevolos/Staff photos

## Film

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the doctor's office.

Pellerito studied cinema at Quinnipiac, where he won best of show at the school film festival his senior year. He cites Tim Burton and Cameron Crowe as major influences. Instead of spending several years working his way into the film industry, he wanted to make films right away, Pellerito said.

"It would have been easy to go out and get a job in an office and hate life," Pellerito said. "I didn't want to take that way out."

He plans to enter "The Doctor" in large film festivals such as Sundance, but also smaller, local competitions.

Because of a tax incentive the state began to offer last year, major motion pictures, such as "Old Dogs" starring John Tra-

volta and Robin Williams, and "The Righteous Kill," starring Robert De Niro and Al Pacino, are being filmed in the Stamford area now. Pellerito said the tax credits eventually will help his startup company.

"With all the major film stuff going on here, it's crazy," he said. "It's not like you have to be in L.A. any more."

Actors in "The Doctor" received little compensation, looking more for acting credits than paychecks. Anna Koonin, a 23-year-old bartender and aspiring actress living in Manhattan, said she found the casting call listed on the Web and was attracted by the script.

"You could tell they had a lot of fun writing the film," Koonin said.

Pellerito said the film should be edited and completed in about a month.