

# Fantasy comes to town

## Former 'Baywatch' star adds experience to local filmmaker's comedic take on midlife crisis

Hollywood actress Krista Allen flew in for two days of filming last weekend in Newport, a coup for local filmmakers shooting the independent movie "All Along."

"The guys were great," she said taking a break from filming in the Drass Insurance Office at 205 N. James St.

"It's fun to watch people grow and fun to watch people's dreams come true. It's flattering that these guys chose me to make it happen. And I like that on a project like this you get to collaborate."

"All Along" is the passion of 43-year-old lead actor Bill Page of Milltown. That he is making the film after three years of planning is hard to believe at times. That Allen signed on is even better.

She's a veteran, having had recurring roles in "Baywatch" and "The Days of Our Lives," as well as lesser roles in films such as "Liar," and "Confessions of a Dangerous Mind," directed by George Clooney, with whom she's been romantically linked.

"Krista was very encouraging," Page said. "That was nice. She's had so much more experience."

"All Along" is a comedy about a 40-year-old married man who needs help understanding fantasies consuming his life. Actually when turning 40, the concept popped into Page's head while visiting an amusement park.

Unable to let it go, he jotted down ideas in a hotel room, worked for months on a script, found experienced writers to rework what he'd written and pitched the movie to investors, many of them friends, to share the \$150,000 needed to hire a crew.

And he's not bashful about saying that he's still seeking money to pump up postproduction.

"I didn't want to be the guy who was always gonna do something, but ..." Page said.

That his retirement fund is invested in the film is beside the point. His three children are grown, and his wife told him to go for it -- as long as they don't lose the house.

"My husband can do anything he sets his mind to," says his wife Lee. "If he starts something, he is determined to make it happen."

An actor in Wilmington productions such as Greg and Gordon DelGiorno's "Franks & Weiners," Page decided to star in the new film, though in everyday life he owns a travel business.

"Entertaining people is what I've always wanted to do," he said.

In that guise, he was a local wrestler as a teenager and in recent years he's portrayed a fanatic hockey fan at Flyers games known as The Hair Man. In his early 20s, he left for Hollywood to try acting, but the big break never came. So he returned East, living on Long Island for a time, where he was a stockbroker.

Eventually he returned to the Wilmington area and reconnected with Lee, a friend from high school. They fell in love.

"He didn't flinch from becoming a stepdad to my three children," Lee said. "And he's been a very good dad."

In the film, Page's character obsessively fantasizes about what happiness would look like if he had more women and more adulation. Yet the fantasies backfire because he fails to understand the richness of his everyday family life.

He imagines what it would be like to be a pro wrestler and gets body-slammed. Those scenes were shot during the first night of filming at the Greater Newark Boys & Girls Club in Bear.

As with many of Page's fantasies, he was cheered at first, then took a pounding. In this case, it was at the hands of local wrestler Freak Nasty, otherwise known as John Boykin of Wilmington.

Page's son in the film is played by Charlie McDermott, a 16-year-old Salesianum student. He's building a body of professional acting credits after landing a small role in "The Village," which was filmed in the area by M. Night Shyamalan.

During the wrestling, McDermott rallied to his father's defense, sneakily hitting Freak Nasty with a chair. Eventually, McDermott was tossed from the ring.

Page got creamed, too. Watching Freak Nasty throw her husband against the ropes and lift him in the air, hurling him down, Page's wife said: "He's going regret this in the morning."

He did. He ached all over.

"Good God," said director Robert Angelo Masciantonio watching the scene on a monitor.

"The crew joked that I would be filming the rest of the fantasies from a wheelchair as a paraplegic," said Page, holding a bruised backside.

Fortunately there was no filming the next day.

"One thing about Bill -- he gives you 110 percent," said Lou Leoni Jr., a producer on the film.

Page and Leoni grew up with together in Elsmere. Leoni is an investor in the film, too. So is his dad, Lou Leoni Sr.

A few days after the wrestling, the crew took over Blue Diamond Amusement Park along U.S. 13.

In one scene, Page was surrounded by an entourage of seductive women on a bumper car. They urged him to disrobe. Unfortunately, they were a fantasy, too. They proved to be a group of old ladies, not so interested in seeing Page in his underwear. They had him arrested.

"I can't say enough about how great the people here were in letting us use Blue Diamond," Page said. "They turned on any ride we wanted and gave us the run of the place. It's been pretty much like that everywhere we've gone."

Later in the week, the 35-year-old Allen was called on to help Page with his troubled thoughts, though you might think that she would be the subject of a wayward fantasy. Her first bit of fame was in the soft-core sex series "Emmanuelle." Last Friday, the dark-haired beauty portrayed a New Age psychologist helping Page control his uncontrollable mind.

Leoni said her two days of work cost the production \$15,000, first-class travel, a hotel room and \$60 a day in walking-around money. The expense was worth it, he said.

And she was gracious in what she had to say about the filmmakers. "This will tell Bill and his friends a lot about how deeply they want to be involved in making movies," said Allen, who is hoping to produce a reality series. "There is so much to this business."

Friday night she joined the executive producers and their significant others for dinner at Deep Blue before moving on to Catherine Rooney's for karaoke. She sang a pretty good version of "Fever," Leoni said.

By Monday, when shooting resumed at Baynard Stadium and Allen was back in L.A., Page was feeling optimistic. He'd already cut his grass and checked on his travel business. He felt scenes with Allen had gone well and early differences with the director had quieted. In addition, the producers were especially pleased with the work of Philadelphia cameraman Andy Cifelli, a veteran.

In several days the filming will end, then the footage will be edited and scored. By early 2007, Page and his buddies hope to hold local viewings and see if the film generates buzz on the festival circuit.

It's a heady time for a guy pursuing his dream of being an entertainer. As Lee says about her husband, "It's all part of the adventure that Bill calls his life."

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**WANT TO BE IN A MOVIE?**

"All Along" filmmakers are seeking extras to be part of shooting at 8 p.m. Monday at Kahunaville on the Wilmington Riverfront. An Aerosmith tribute band will be performing in scenes. To learn more: [www.apprenticeproductions.com](http://www.apprenticeproductions.com)