

Into Hollywood

Entrepreneurship major is in movie business

by Nancy Ridgeway

Marquee lights danced around a sign in front of the Apollo Theatre in downtown Peoria, heralding the March 30 premiere of *Into the Woods*, a 55-minute thriller produced by entrepreneurship major **LEVI OBERY '09**.

Cameras flashed and applause followed the cast and crew as they walked along the red carpet.

This was the fifth film for Obery and David Zimmerman III. The pair made four films, including one based on the *Halloween* franchise, while in high school. When Obery decided to form a corporation, he named it Ten Thirty-One Pictures Entertainment Inc. in honor of their first film (since the date of Halloween is "Ten Thirty-One"). While they were students at Metamora High School, they were asked to create *The Only Way*, an educational film showing the causes and effects of a school shooting. They later made *Before the Storm*, a short film about a troubled relationship.

He tells how the idea for *Into the Woods* evolved. "David and I brainstormed for a weekend. We talked about possible scenarios and kept narrowing them down based on resources and time frames. That's when we came up with the idea of people trapped in the woods. We don't need fancy sets. We had a variety of ideas; not all were this genre."

Production took about two months, off and on, as they worked around the schedules of their volunteers.

Obery's experience in movie production led to a Hollywood link. About a month before the movie premiere, Obery was in Hollywood producing another movie. The owners of an independent film company had seen his Web site, **1031movies.com**. Obery says, "They liked the work we've done. It fit perfectly into what they wanted to do for their next project, so they e-mailed me the script and asked if I would be interested in working on this project. The script was really good and fits our company's mission of making original, cutting-edge work. I said I would be glad to help."

He was in Hollywood from February 16 to March 4 to work as line producer for the film, a coming-of-age story currently with a working title. "I was in charge of making sure people were where they needed



LEVI OBERY '09, second from left, owner of Ten Thirty-One Pictures Entertainment Inc., is on the set during the filming of *Into the Woods*, the fifth movie Obery has produced.

to be, actresses had make-up and were on set on time, the catering people were there—the day-to-day operations. It rained the first day of production, so we had to frantically rearrange the schedule and call actors in to do other scenes."

The people involved with the film have worked in the film and television industry before. The company is in preliminary negotiations for a theatrical release. "Some of the people involved have connections at some of the larger studios and hope they will purchase the rights for it. If not, we will hit the film festival market and release a DVD."

Obery is in negotiations to co-produce another movie in 2009. If negotiations are successful, "my work would begin immediately to find financing. *Into the Woods* may be the last movie we film around here."

In the meantime, Obery finds his business classes valuable, as his career goals are to work on the business side of the film industry. "I can take my own business and my experience into class."

And once he graduates in May 2009, he plans to head to Hollywood.