

# Lifestyles

## The Little Tin Man comes to Loretto

**By Emily Weathers Kennedy**

Have you ever been at the right place at the right time and known something really special was happening? Like you were watching *The Tonight Show* when Robin Williams or Ellen DeGeneres first performed and saw that spark that meant something big was about to happen? You said to yourself, “Now that person is going places!”

In August my husband, Kerry, and I were invited to the screening of a new film at none other than Nana’s Pizzeria in Loretto. In fact, anyone in the area who heard the word on Facebook, Twitter, or by mouth was graciously welcomed to this event. We went because we appreciated the efforts of Nancy Fleming and Ante Sekelja, the owners of Nana’s, to bring a little

cultural excitement to our tiny abode. We had no idea what we were in for. They waited for the sun to go down so that we could see the movie on a screen they attached to the wall in the main dining room of the restaurant. We moved our chairs around, and the main star of the film, Aaron Beelner, introduced himself. We had already met him on the patio over pizza, so his appearance was not a surprise. As the sun sank beneath the tall windows lining the walls of Nana’s, the movie began. There was Aaron, larger than life on the screen. This man who had charmed us when he met us, opened himself to us from the first moments of dialogue, and we were mesmerized.

Directed by Matthew Perkins, *The Little Tin Man* follows the acting

career of Herman Mitchell (Beelner), a little person perennially cast as a munchkin, leprechaun, or one of Santa’s elves. These early casting calls, humiliating to Herman the actor, nonetheless provide wickedly funny scenes that reveal two things. One, being a little person actor can be painfully typecasting, especially when an actor is quite capable of regular roles. Fortunately for the audience, the other revelation is that we are allowed a laugh at the hilarity of the situation, given that we are laughing along with Herman who rolls his eyes and disdains the normal size people who are ridiculously insensitive to him.

Set and filmed in New York, the plot of the film centers around Herman, who, while auditioning for little person roles encouraged by his agent, finds himself at the brink of despair when personal tragedy and career frustration strike at once, leaving him wondering where to go with his life. As he auditions for yet another munchkin role in a remake by Martin Scorsese of *The Wizard of Oz*, he decides to try out for the role of the Tin Man. Fortunately for him, his rather quirky friends, Miller (Kay Cannon), Gregg (Jeff Hiller), Pete (Chris Henry Coffey), and Juan (Emmanuel



The cast of *Little Tin Man* includes Jeff Hiller, Aaron Beelner, Kay Cannon, and Emmanuel Maldonado.

Maldonado) rise to the occasion for a one-of-a-kind audition tape.

I sat watching Aaron’s antics as Herman and stole glances to the table next to me where he sat. Something incredibly poignant happened in the film, yet it was accompanied by intense humor that can only be described as *Napoleon Dynamite* meets *The Flight of the Conchords*. As I stifled a laugh, wondering if it would be inappropriate given that it was at Herman’s expense, I looked at Aaron. His eyes were glued to the scene as he silently mouthed each line. Then he laughed, and I knew I was supposed to have the freedom to laugh too! It was his gift! He seemed to say, “Laugh along with me at this horrible situation I am in because you know I find it just as ridiculous. I am better than this, smarter than this, and so much more talented. I just deserve a chance to prove myself.”

This is what Herman sets out to do: prove himself. Aaron explained to me in a later phone interview that the use of a little person for a major role is the impetus to a much greater issue. He says, “We are all trying to improve ourselves and conquer goals and objectives—to improve our lives. And so the character of Herman Mitchell is about being recognized as a person with heart, with soul, who is merely trying to be worthy of a chance, of a possibility. Everybody wants a chance; being a little person emphasizes that theme with fervor. Brings the situation more attention.”

I wondered if there were any autobiographical aspects to *The Little Tin Man*, and after interviewing Aaron, I could see a few parallels.

Aaron explained that his parents were go-getters; his stature gave him no crutch or excuse in life. This incentive to prove himself inspired his character’s competitive nature. A father himself with two

girls, he champions their ambition and spunk and encourages their individual talents. He also enjoys entertaining them with the many characters he plays in his stand-up routine and

*Continued on Page A-9*



“The Little Tin Man will premiere exclusively on Time Warner Cable’s Vutopia™ starting September 1st.”

## KIDS have all the answers



**TRENTON BRADLEY**

*Who’s your favorite superhero?*  
 “Batman, because sometimes when he throws a boomerang it blows up.”



*How old should you be when you get married?*

**JAZMINE MCGEE**  
 “25, ‘cause that’s what my mama told me.”

*Debbie Scott’s First Grade, Ingram Sowell*



**ELIJAH HINTON**  
 “I agree with Jazmine.”

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Ben Luna assists as Aaron Beelner narrates at the Loretto screening of Beelner’s film “The Little Tin Man” at Nana’s restaurant.



Author and Loretto native Emily Kennedy with star Aaron Beelner after the screening.

The Lawrence County Advocate

We’re proud to be part of this community!







# Words Between Friends

by Courtney Mann Magee

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THE ANNUAL SACRED HEART LABOR DAY FESTIVAL has been in the works since last year's festivities ended, as each year just gets bigger and better. This year's excitement will begin early in the morning on Monday, September 1st as the BBQ sales, Yard Sale, and Bake Sale all begin at 7:00 a.m. Breakfast will also be served so you can do a little eating while you are shop. Registration

for the 5k and Fun Run will also begin at 7:00 a.m. At 8:00 a.m., the Country Store will open, and those that have entered the 5k will take their marks and dash for the finish line! The Fun Run will begin when the race ends. If you are one to enjoy a friendly game of horseshoes, head up to Sacred Heart at 10:00 a.m. for the Horseshoe Tournament. Also starting at this time will be the Mr. and Miss Labor Day- the first time ever for this contest! 11:00 a.m. marks the beginning of the Labor Day Bake Off Contest. It also marks the opening of the grill. Be ready to help yourself to a plate

of a hamburger, hotdog, or even a bbq sandwich. Finish it off with french fries, ice cream, popcorn, and drinks- and lunch is complete! This is also the time that the carnival type games begin. There will be various games, inflatables, face painting, kiddie cars, putt putt golf and even a hay ride. An auction will begin at 1:00 p.m. inside the gym. There are already several pictures on the Facebook website of some goodies that will be up for grabs during the auction. From 4:00 p.m.- 7:00 p.m., the famous, mouth watering chicken and bbq dinner will be available. There is the opportunity to

dine in or carry out- which ever dining preference suits your needs more!! Dinner will include a little musical accompaniment this year as well. Beginning at 5:00 p.m., Nothen Short will take the stage before Grace and Tony take the stage at 6:00 p.m. Then, the grand finale of the evening will be the announcement of the raffle winner. At 7:00 p.m., two names will be drawn out of the raffle entrants. The first prize winner will win \$1000 while 2nd prize will go home with \$500. Whether you can only make it for lunch or dinner, or if you can make a whole day out of it, make sure you make plans to stop by Sacred Heart this Monday to take part in this awesome event!

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NOTHING SAYS FALL LIKE MUMS ON THE front porch. Lawrence County High School softball is selling 2 gallon mums now through September 12th, and they are scheduled to be delivered by September 20th just in time to get those fall decorations set! You can purchase one for \$15 or two for \$25. You may also pick your color of choice out of the following types: burgundy, yellow, purple, white & bronze. Contact any LCHS softball player or the school to make your order!

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THE HAPPIEST OF BIRTHDAY WISHES GO OUT TO Adrienne Jones, Lawren Methvin, Peggy Wilson, Pam Purcell, Josie Brown, Abby Clayton, Graysen Elliott, Anna-Leigh Killen, Madison Dollar, Heather Robey, Linda Swift, Shannon Sisseck, Stephanie Johnson, Lee Ann Smith, Barbara Parkes, Cathy C. Cunningham, Frances Odeneal, Heather Luttrell, Chris Smith, Lucille McComb, Christi Rawdon, Charles Borum, Larry Attkisson, Lindsey Shaw Hartsfield, Stacey Tingle, Tiffany Marie Webb, Dustin Gipson, Brandon Luna, Dusty Nelson, Jeremiah Parunak, Mary White, Lucas Beecham, Kathleen Sullivan, and Faye Looney on Monday, September 1st. Bryan Magee, Daniel Wimbs, Jo Blair, Tanya White, Skyler Green, McKayla Broadbent, Bryce Vanderdiver, Blaine Morse, Peyton Heatherly, David Williams, Donnie Thompson, Robert Lovell, Britney McDonald, Donnie White, Joe Earl Thomas, Toni Douglass, Casey Reedy, Brad Dixon, Brandon Dollar, Kylan Henson, David Rigsby, Jason Wilburn, Rachel Russ, Tyler Beckman, Matt Roberson, Bubba Staggs, Todd Vanderford, Sarah Evers, Alexandria Niedergeses, Linda Stem, Olen Yocum, and Joseph Beuerlein on Tuesday, September 2nd; and Trent Garland, Ben

Moore, Chasity Staggs, Will Hobbs, Judy Crowder, Susie Doss, Presley Gobbell, Mike Wilson, Linda Grooms, Jacey Purcell, Bethanie Nielson, Cameron Hernandez, Candi Hernandez, Florence G. Kenon, Darshan Patel, Brandi Smith, Dan Buie, Jimmy Beasley, Wanda Brannon, Bobby Entekin, Michael Abbott, Melissa Hutchens, Kerri S. Gambrell, Beth Ladner, Emily Holden, Kyler Bryant, Larry Wilburn, Randy Johns, Megan Henson, Kenneth Fowler, Wesley Bishop, Jonathan Risner, Janie Marks, and Roger Luncford on Wednesday, September 3rd.

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THE HAPPIEST OF ANNIVERSARIES TO Martha Ann and Randall Kennedy, Margie and Ben Weather-

ford, Jane and Frank Tindall, Emmy and Ryan Kress, and Mr. and Mrs. Jamie Cozart on Monday, September 1st; June and Bill Hunter, Cathryn and Doug Shelton, Brenda and Ronnie McMasters, Joann and Scotty Hannah, Mr. and Mrs. Neal Tucker, and Mr. and Mrs. David Ellis on Tuesday, September 2nd; and Jennifer and Charlie Dover, Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Taylor, Robin and Chad Shannon, Tonya and Chris Bradley, Dylilah and Gene Hill, Wyvonia and Willie Walters and Mr. and Mrs. Gary Russ on Wednesday, September 3rd.

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JUST A FEW SHORT DAYS LEFT TO ENJOY this long weekend. After a long day of football yesterday, it is time for those Volunteers to kick off tonight!



Debrah Lenhert, Gary Belew and Aurelio Ramirez enjoy the Loretto screening of The Little Tin Man.

## The Little Tin Man . . . Continued from A-2

reading books to them using voices. He says, however, that the girls are now tired of his act. Though he delights in embarrassing them with his antics, they are no longer amused. He chuckles as he describes their eye rolling to me on the phone. He reminds me of Dr. Cliff Huxtable in *The Cosby Show*. I always

wondered if Bill Cosby could turn that character off at night with his own children. I'll wager he couldn't.

I asked Aaron what he thought made the film so darn funny. I admitted that I couldn't stop laughing even when I thought I should be more reverent. I wanted to feel sorry

for him but just couldn't keep from laughing with him. Did that make sense? He said he quite understood and that my reaction was what they hoped to achieve. He explained that the film has a cast of wonderful improvisational actors; probably 40% of the film was improvised. They would give the editor two takes and then do the scenes by improvisation. I recalled seeing the same actors in other films, including the hilarious Jeff Hiller in *Ghost Town*, and I understood.

Kerry and I witnessed something spectacular at Nana's; this little independent film that cost a mere \$100,000 to make over 18 days is bound to surge to the headlines and into America's hearts just like *Napoleon Dynamite*. It'll be the little movie that could with its star, the little man who can do anything. I'm tickled to be one of the intimate crowd who got the first peek of *The Little Tin Man* in little Loretto, and I thank Nancy for bringing her old friend to Nana's to entertain us.

Great things are happening in our hometown, you just have to step out and open your eyes to witness them!

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