

# Actress returns 'home' for Miami movie shoot

BY GARY ALAN RUSE

Karen Gordon — a local actress who spent years in Miami-Dade County, living and working in such places as Coral Gables, South Miami and Miami Lakes — went on to pursue a successful film, television and stage career in Hollywood and beyond. She recently returned for a juicy role in Fox Studio's feature film, *Bachelor Party 2*, and was thrilled at the opportunity.

"South Florida is heaven-on-earth, in my opinion," Gordon said after filming had wrapped. "In another lifetime, I know I would work for the South Florida tourism empire. I rave about this place to anyone who will listen. To be able to film here, where I grew up, surrounded by friends and family who still live here — what a dream."

Gordon, a lovely and vivacious performer with energy to spare, has had supporting roles in the feature films *American Dreamz*, *Bad News Bears*, *Meet the Fockers*, *Legally Blonde 2* and others, and in TV movies-of-the-week *A Perfect Husband* and *Hunter: Back in Force*. She has appeared in such television shows as *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Strong Medicine* and *Joan of Arcadia*.

Gordon relished the chance to tackle a lead role in *Bachelor Party 2*.

"I play Autumn Jordan-Grant, sister of the bride. I plan the bachelorette party for her," Gordon said. "The film is basically a 21st Century update of the 1984 Tom Hank's original; it's definitely a remake, as opposed to a sequel. The story is about loyalty and 'love conquering all,' and of course...there's a generous dollop of laughter along the way."

To Gordon's mind, the only significant difference between filmmaking in Hollywood, CA, and South Florida are the numbers of films in production, but she hopes even that may change someday.

"The level of professionalism and expertise of everyone involved in this production — from the producers and the cast and crew to location folks and support staff — was so high, that geography sort of dissolved for me," Gordon said. "It felt like we could have been on any really well-oiled set in Hollywood, New York — you name it.

"Hollywood has a massive amount of production going on regularly, and a teeming infrastructure of people and resources to support it. Having had the pleasure of growing up and working in South Florida before heading west, I know there are people and resources here that match L.A. without question. The scale is simply smaller."

When asked what she likes about living and work-



Actress Karen Gordon is pictured with her script for *Bachelor Party 2*.

(Photo by Vanie Poyey)

ing in South Florida, she hardly knows where to begin.

"My list is huge," Gordon said. "It's a wonderful melting pot; I love the people. The vibration feels so mellow and relaxed to me. It's warm — okay, hot — except for the three weeks of annual winter, and I'm one of those odd people who love and miss the humidity. The sky is a gorgeous, clear blue. The food is fantastic. The air is among the cleanest in the country. The ocean is often as warm as a bathtub.

"There's a tremendous arts culture here, from the theater universe, to the improv troupes and comedy clubs, to the amazing variety of dance, music, lectures...art galleries and museums and exhibits...the list goes on."

Gordon worked in the corporate world for years when she lived here, as a public relations and advertising copywriter, a radio writer/producer/casting director, and "for about five minutes as a drive-time radio news anchor." All along she kept auditioning and performing when she could, keeping the dream alive and looking for a way to launch her acting career.

"I am really drawn to multi-layered characters who lead with humor, and have lots of 'stuff' churning just beneath the surface," Gordon said. "I love characters that undergo radical transformations, and 'wake up' during the course of a story...the audience gets to wake up and ponder along with them, and that's very satisfying."

Gordon said she never has had more fun than she did bringing the character of Autumn to life in *Bachelor Party 2*.

"I had a really great experience working with this director," Gordon said. "He allowed me tremendous freedom to create this character, and to play on set."

She also enjoyed playing wacky Anita Focker in *Meet the Fockers*, especially since in both it and in television's *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, she was allowed to improvise.

"Working without script was what I imagine bungee jumping would feel like," Gordon said. "Terrifyingly magnificent."

Gordon spent years performing with an improv troupe in Coconut Grove called "Mental Floss," and credits it with honing her acting skills and teaching her how to make a character unpredictable.

What's next? Gordon says that she constantly is visualizing and dreaming about the next role, a fun, powerful part of the process for her. She is finishing a one-woman show that she hopes to have produced in L.A. and South Florida with 10 characters, male and female, ages 7 to 93.

"My long-term goal is to have a career that spans the next several decades, and to bring joy and light to the planet through creative expression," Gordon said. "What would I most like to do? Hmm...well, how about...star in a runaway, smash-hit sitcom or 'dramedy' that runs for years and years, and films in South Florida?"

For professional inquiries, Karen can be contacted through her manager, Kathy Colorado, at 1-818-209-3321.

"It was such a great pleasure to work here, and to live here," Gordon said. "No matter where I go, South Florida will always have my heart."