

ALLIANCE

May 2005

Letter from the Chair

Dear Members,

Wow! Our first eNewsletter in a huge year of WMFVA firsts! Let me take just a moment to remind you.

We've only been official since January and we are kicking butt: Oscar-winning Hollywood star Ernest Borgnine endorsed Michigan filmmaking and his Traverse City director Rich Brauer (*Barn Red*) at our first celebrity event sporting a packed screening, swanky reception and lots of TV/radio coverage. We followed up with a terrific turnout at our first annual membership meeting at the Wealthy Theatre, a Board of Directors that meets at least once a month, six "staffed" strategy teams (Events, Professional Development, Grants, Education, Marketing/Sponsors/Membership, Website), two seminars ("Acting for the Camera" coming up next on May 21), a well tended active website, and a Bylaws Task Force.

Plus, organized networking, organized partnership with the Michigan Film Office and regional economic development officials--putting the pieces together to promote film and video production as a major economic powerhouse in West Michigan. That takes dedicated leadership and dedicated membership. We've set a standard for our performance as an organization to serve the best interests of our members, and our membership has responded.

We know everything our strategy teams are working on is not visible to all of you all the time. We know there's a lot more to do. In part, that's the inspiration for this eNewsletter. Even though our meeting minutes are posted on the website (check 'em out!) here we plan to tell you what's coming up, not just what we've done.

I especially want to thank the members of the Board of Directors for everything we know they do on behalf of this organization and for everything they do for the Alliance we'll never know about--the small stuff that would fall through the cracks if they didn't stoop to pick it all up: Vice Chair Ed de Jong, Treasurer Paul La Vigne, Secretary John Harper Philbin, Events Chair Jax Baker, Bylaws Task Force Chair Chuck Peterson, Education Chair Susan Joy Reagan, Grants Chair William Rude, Archive Chair Mark S. Schroeder.

You're in very good hands. Thanks for the privilege of working with you all. It's really more like playing!

Love,
Deb Havens

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West Michigan Film Video Alliance
p r e s e n t s

ACTING FOR THE CAMERA **A Seminar for Actors & Directors**

Saturday, May 21
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Grand Valley State University
Pew Campus, Grand Rapids
Register online at wmfva.org

MAY 2005 CALENDAR

Casting Calls

May 1-7

GVSU *The Gospel According to Roy*

Principal roles are paid. Four males early 30s, two males age 60-80, three females age 30-50. Call 447.9686 for more info.

May 1, 1-4 p.m.

May 2, 5-8 p.m.

in Room 136E DeVos Center, GVSU

May 3, 4-7 p.m.

at iGroup Talent Agency, Southfield, MI

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Low Budget Indie Film

Men and women, ages 21-55.

May 7, 2-4 p.m.

at Healthy Path Grocery Store

1503 Lake Dr. SE (Eastown)

Call 791.0752 for more info.

Michigan Film Office meeting

May 3

The Board of Directors is meeting on May 3rd with Michigan Film Office Director Janet Lockwood in Lansing. The purpose is to further develop a relationship with her that supports our intention to have a thriving film and production industry in West Michigan. She will give us her appraisal of where we are now compared to the rest of the state and other states, how we can be more competitive as a region, and how we can play a role to support her office in moving forward together.

Confrontation with Polish Cinema May 6-8

Three Great Movies in Three Days at the Wealthy Theatre located at 1130 Wealthy Street S.E., Grand Rapids. 451-8001.

"Angel in Cracow"

Giordano, an angel, visits the souls in Purgatory far too often. He is fascinated with rock 'n' roll and generally leads an outrageous lifestyle for an angel. He is sentenced to life on Earth, where he must perform at least one act of kindness a day. He winds up in Krakow, Poland. He is so deeply enchanted by its atmosphere that he asks his heavenly superiors to let him stay there.

"Angel In Love"

A man in love can be happier on Earth than an angel in Heaven. "Angel in Love" is a sequel to "Angel of Cracow". Giordano, an angel, begins seriously contemplate life on Earth since he cannot return to Heaven. He finds that with a little optimism and faith in God's ways, he can live happily despite the sadness around him.

"Pornography"

In Nazi-occupied Poland, two middle-aged men, Frederik and Witold, journey out to the country estate where they encounter German soldiers and partisans, young lovers and even younger murderers, patriots and Catholics. In this drama, imagination works to keep the war at bay for a while. But eventually neither music, gardening, or the matchmaking game can shield them from a terrible and soul-shattering event from the past. The "pornography" referred to in the title is a drama of the mind that gradually builds up to explode in the violence of the finale, portraying the shocking lower limits a desperate human is capable of reaching.

***Kalamazoo Animation Festival
May 13-15***

Animation as entertainment, education, employment and art will be in the spotlight when the third Kalamazoo Animation Festival International (KAFI) is staged the weekend of May 13-15, 2005. Close to 500 films were submitted this year.

Professional-development seminars and events will feature *Eric Goldberg* speaking on the Art of Chuck Jones. *John Fountain* of Nickelodeon, *Brian Tindall* of PIXAR, *Ed Newmann* and *Monica Kendall* of Calabash, *Ellen Besen*, *Brian Lemay*, *David Small*, *Tina Seemann* and other special guests.

The Educator's Conference at KAFI will be discussing how to educate the next generation of animators. Special thanks to the Cartoon Network who will once again sponsor the Networking Picnic.

Nuts-and-bolts information about the KAFI events and activities is available on the web at <http://kafi.kvcc.edu> or 269-373-7883.

***WMFVA Social in Kalamazoo
May 14***

Join Alliance members and friends at KAFI for an informal social gathering-- open to all!
Saturday, May 14 at 6:00 p.m.

Bell's Brewery
355 E Kalamazoo Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007
Phone: (269) 382-2332

Come on down and join the party!

***Acting for the Camera seminar
May 21***

For 20 years, Lela Ivey made a living as an actress in films (*Pleasantville*), series television (Party of Five), soaps (The Edge of Night) and theatre while living in New York City and Los Angeles. She'll discuss methods and techniques for camera acting, including how an increase in listening awareness will ultimately allow the screen actor to bring greater simplicity, honesty and emotional depth to their work. In addition, professional actors will have their scene work videotaped, played back and discussed.

West Michigan's premiere casting director Maureen Dreher will give us an overview of the talent scene, a little history and background, what's being done here now and how best to approach the future, including what casting directors look for, what producers look for and how to make West Michigan more competitive.

Commercial/industrial director Ken Schmidt will share his 20+ years of experience with the director-actor relationship, including how to give and get the best performance on the set.

Other topics throughout the day will include the pros and cons of acting in low-budget indie films; the Screen Actors Guild in Michigan; insider tips from local actors including how to get the best head shots; and finally, a panel discussion with all our our guests. Register online at: www.wmfva.org or call 842.3337.

COMING SOON...

LOCALLY-MADE SHORT COMEDY TO PREMIERE IN JUNE

"Sushi Saki Hot!"

Starring Joe Anderson

Written by B. David Downs & Adam Stielstra

Edited by Keith Golinski & Chris Randall

Directed by Adam Stielstra

LOCAL DOC IN THE WORKS

"Kalamazoo, River: US" (directed by Matt Dunstone) explores the toxic pollution of a small river in southwest Michigan. The Kalamazoo was described in the late 60s as "having the color and consistency of a blueberry milkshake." The movie is an exploration of both the relationship between a natural waterway and the city that took its name, and of the broader relationship between industry and nature. This relationship has led to over a century's worth of pollution and to the river's current status as a U.S. EPA designated Superfund site.

WMFVA ECONOMIC SUMMIT

The Board of Directors is exploring the opportunity for an Economic Summit meeting in the fall that would bring representatives from the tourist, hotel, convention and recreation industries together with regional economic development experts to meet with WMFVA and other representatives of the professional film/video community. The purpose is to develop a plan that will encourage filmmaking and video production in West Michigan and generate new industry opportunities for the region.

WMFVA GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The Board is also exploring grant possibilities to fund ways to develop a "thriving film/video production community." Board member Bill Rude is a grant-writing expert who has started the board on a path to seeking foundation and grant support to further the WMFVA mission. Concepts such as developing a West Michigan version of "Project Greenlight" (without all that Hollywood interference!) will be analyzed and prioritized within the next two months.

GROWING WMFVA SPONSOR LIST

Blue Water Technologies
Calvin College
Celebration Cinema
Chase Creative Unlimited
Digital Video Services
Fletch.com
Fulvew
Grand Valley State University
Lawrence Productions
Loving Light & Grip
Picture This
Roscor Media and Information Technologies
Rose's Express
Tape Central
Wealthy Theatre

WMFVA.ORG

Check out what's happening on our website:

- mission statement
- calendar of events
- minutes from board meetings
- jobs database
- Michigan film festival links
- other film/video related links
- press room

PHP programmer needed! Contact paul@wmfva.org