

# Women in Film and Video of Maryland

www.wifvmd.org ~ 410-685-FILM

November/December 2007

## Letter From The President

Dear Members:



I would like to thank everyone who attended our first annual WIFV-MD Screen Scene '07 conference. It was a great success because of you! We kicked off our morning with our keynote speaker Jack Gerbes, Director for the Maryland Film Office. Attendees were enlightened about current issues facing the film industry in Maryland. Our fifteen-minute makeover was a great success as women lined up to have our makeup artist, Carolyn Marie, work her makeup magic. If you are interested in knowing more about her skills, you can visit her site at [www.makeupbizz.com](http://www.makeupbizz.com). We would like to thank Mr. Steve Wallace from Presentation Media for making all our audiovisual needs a reality. Our volunteers were truly exemplary and we would like to thank Roberta Lyles, Linda Fausnet, Khrista Fauntleroy, Felicia Barlow, April Marie Broyles, and Cathy Kades for the tremendous job they did in helping to decorate the conference facility and keep our guests happy.

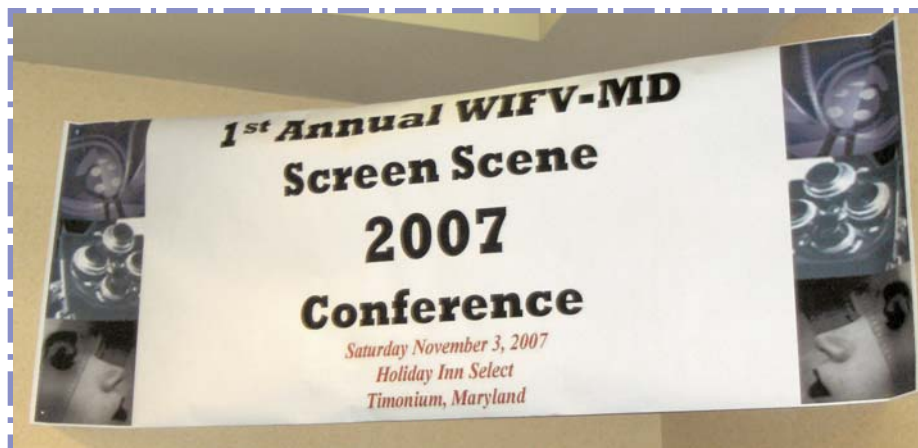
We want to thank Michelle Farrell from Absolute Independent Pictures for doing all the shooting of the conference events and workshop sessions. Our workshop sessions were a great success because of the contributions of knowledge from some of the greatest speakers Maryland, DC, Virginia and Philadelphia has to offer. Our conference attendees came from as far as Delaware. Our afternoon networking lunch was graced by the eloquent words of Sloane Brown, The Sun paper's Society Reporter. She painted a visual picture of what women faced in the industry over a span of many years. Our vendor demonstrations were excellent with much needed information from Renegade Studios, Studio Unknown, Serious Grip, Presentation Media, and Wired Different Media. Members and guests enjoyed the screenings of WIFV-MD members and local independent filmmaker's short films. The networking lunch allowed us to see old friends and make new ones. The food was an enjoyment to the eye and the taste buds. The Holiday Inn Select staff was very helpful and assured that we were able to have a great event!

With the conference behind, us we look to kick off our twenty year anniversary with our holiday screening party and in-depth Screenwriting for Film, Movies & TV workshop on December 8, 2007 with Marc Lapadula from Yale University. You will have the privilege of learning the basics of writing and selling a screenplay. McLean native Marc Lapadula is a full-time lecturer at Yale University where runs the screenwriting program in the Film Studies Department.

The workshop will begin at 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and be held at Johns Hopkins University in the 10 East 33rd Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21218. The workshop includes a workshop package that costs \$65 for Non-WIFV members and \$50 for WIFV-MD members. The holiday screening party will begin at 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. The holiday screening party will cost \$30 for Non-WIFV members and \$20 for WIFV-MD members. The Holiday screening party will be held at Johns Hopkins University at Charles Commons 10 E. 33rd Street Baltimore, MD 21218. Charles Commons, which is a residential, dining, and retail complex in Charles Village, on 33rd Street between North Charles and St. Paul streets. If you attend the in-depth screenwriter's workshop, the holiday screening party will be free. We want to celebrate your accomplishments so we intend have screening of members shorts during the holiday party. There are so many great things coming in the New Year as we move forward. WIFV-MD will be twenty years old! We hope to have many wonderful events to celebrate this momentous occasion. We hope that you will join us as we are going to try to make this the greatest anniversary celebration ever. We want to celebrate the great women and men of WIFV. We celebrate all the contributions that brought us to this point and we look forward to greater years to come. If you have any questions please go to [www.wifvmd.org](http://www.wifvmd.org) or contact Arlette Thomas-Fletcher at [president@wifvmd.org](mailto:president@wifvmd.org). Hope to see you at the holiday screening party event!

Sincerely,

Arlette Thomas-Fletcher  
WIFV-MD, President



### Advisory Board

Gayle Economos  
Jack Gerbes  
Kurt Klaus, esq.  
Bonnie McCausey  
Betsy Royall  
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### 2005-2007 WIFV MD Board Members

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- **Webmaster:** Whitney Hahn ([webmaster@wifvmd.org](mailto:webmaster@wifvmd.org))

## HOW DO YOU FINANCE AND DISTRIBUTE INDEPENDENT NARRATIVE FEATURE FILMS?

- From Carol Bidault de l'Isle's talk at our October 11, 2007 WIFV-MD Meeting

You've made your shorts. You may have even won awards and now you want to make the leap to features. You've paid back all your labs and other services, you sent thank you notes, did a great cast and crew party, you still own your house, and you are still in good graces with your best friends, family, and especially your Aunt Bernice who has made wise investments. You know it was hard to raise money for your shorts; will it be impossible to raise money for features? How will you raise private equity? How will you attract stars to your project? Can you get pre-sales? When can you approach distributors? First, let us go over the five phases of film distribution:

CREATION/DEVELOPMENT

FINANCING OF FILM PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION

DISTRIBUTION/COMMERCIALIZATION OF CONTENTS

REVENUES AND RECOUPMENT

Creation/Development: This is the most important stage as it is the place where the groundwork is laid. This is the least expensive stage, but the one that you should spend the most time on. It is also the time to build alliances and talk to agents and the local unions. Even if your film is not a union film, you should still talk to the Screen Actors Guild (SAG), because you will most likely need them at some point. Most importantly, find yourself a lawyer. You may have an Aunt Bernice who is a lawyer, has a lot of money, and was first in her class at Harvard Law, but she does not know the film industry. You are much better off approaching someone with less money but more experience in negotiating film or even television deals. In any case, find someone, anyone, with experience, even if you have to pay for one hour of their legal advice. If you have a quick question, you can even call the DC Independent Film Festival (DCIFF) at 202-537-9493 or email [legal@dciff.org](mailto:legal@dciff.org). DCIFF will try to help you. The advice is free to DCIFF and local filmmakers.

Financing of Film Production: This is a challenge for all productions. Most independent productions are financed with a combination of private capital and industry investment. See below.

Production: Currently, the new digital technologies have brought costs down, making it more accessible for almost everyone. This is also the area in which most filmmakers don't need much help as they are extremely creative and resourceful. So you, too, can make a film!

Distribution/Commercialization of Content: For independent filmmakers, signing up a distribution company to sell a film in the different markets is the most important phase in recouping their investment and getting credibility for the financing of their next film. You DO know what your next film is going to be, right?

Revenues and Recoupment: The challenges and risks of investing in the film sector are high, but the rewards can be spectacular. A small film with above average success can

make back 2 to 3 times its cost. If production costs are kept low (average production costs for independent films are below \$3 million), then its chances of recouping internationally with a complete distribution roll out (theater release, home video/DVD, television, etc) are good. In the United States alone, success can mean gross box office revenues in the region of \$10 million. That means you must convince a distributor that you can sell 1 million tickets. However, most independent films do not have all the elements that secure their place in the market, such as well-known stars and huge production values. Therefore, the chances of gaining market share are based largely on festival awards, critical acclaim, and word of mouth. Due to these risks, banks and private equity firms are usually unwilling to get involved. Most productions must find financing from the private sector, like your Aunt Bernice, remember her? Sure you do, she financed your short.

In general, the various financing scenarios include studio financing, single-source financing (Hello? Aunt Bernice?), private equity, or industry financing and distribution. Financing is linked with distribution because, as your film's potential for earning money at the box office grows, so does your chance of distribution.

Today, the line is blurred between real independents and Indie independents, like us. The film *Ray*, directed by Academy Award winning Taylor Hackford, cost \$35 million and starred Jamie Foxx. Even Foxx could not find studio financing for his film. He found it from one source of financing. Even then, he went to the studios for distribution, and had Universal not picked it up, the film would be sitting up on the shelf. It made over \$115 million worldwide.

In conclusion, my advice is to keep it simple, keep the budget low, remember your friends, family, and community members who were behind your short. They will be behind you for your features as well. Be kind, be creative, and just go out and do it!

For more information, contact:

Carol Bidault de l'Isle

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## UPCOMING INDUSTRY EVENTS

### December 8

#### **Screenwriting: Writing for Film, Movies & TV**

by Yale University Professor Marc Lapadula

DATE: Saturday, December 8, 2007

TIME: 9:30am - 4:30pm

See [www.wifvmd.org](http://www.wifvmd.org) to register

Learn the tactics of writing and selling a feature-length screenplay in this dynamic seminar. The instructor will provide in-depth analysis of the structure of several famous films: 'PSYCHO', 'CHINATOWN', and 'DOCTOR STRANGELOVE'. Students will be assigned to watch these classic movies and others as well as read screenplays to learn by example. Participants will learn how to develop their own work: plotting the story, creating dimensional characters, writing compelling dialogue, and operating in the correct screenplay format. Participants will closely examine what is necessary to enable them to market their work professionally.

LOCATION: Johns Hopkins University, Sherwood Room, Levering Hall,  
3400 North Charles Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21218

### December 8

#### **20th Year Anniversary Celebration and Holiday Screening Party**

DECEMBER 8, 2007 from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00p.m.

FOOD, FUN, FESTIVITIES  
SHORT FILM SCREENINGS  
NETWORKING  
BUFFET

### ASK AARON MARCUS

**Question:** I have sent out my resume and headshot out to 3 agencies and the response I get is we have put your resume and head shot on file for a period of one year. As opportunities arise we will contact you. My question is should I keep sending postcards every month so they know that I am still interested or sooner than that? - Jared, CT

*Aaron Marcus is a full-time actor, and has been booked 1085 times (to date). He is the author of *How to Become a Successful Commercial Model*, and offers free acting and commercial print advice at his site, [www.aaronrobertmarcus.com](http://www.aaronrobertmarcus.com).*



**Answer:**

Dear Jared:

You definitely want to stay in touch with these people. I would not just sit back and wait for the phone to ring. You might want to call the agencies and see if they have open calls. That is where they see new people. That way you can make a personal connection with the agents. You can ask if they believe your head shot will market you well, or if you need different photos. You can also ask how they prefer you stay in touch with them. Some agents request weekly calls or e-mails, some will say post cards a month or two.

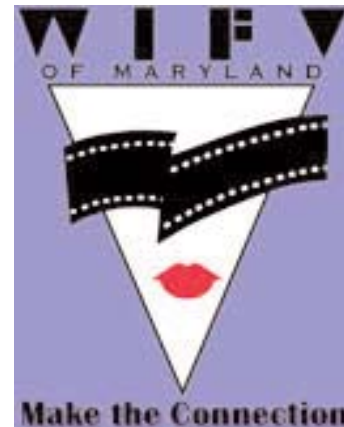


## MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

### Greg Coale

**Greg Coale** is starring as Ebenezer Scrooge in a musical of Dickin's holiday classic *A Christmas Carol*. December 7-14th Fri & Sat - 7:30 p.m. Sun - 2:30 p.m. Tickets: \$15 (\$12 Members), \$8 Children 12 & under Chesapeake Arts Center Studio Theatre  
194 Hammonds Lane, Brooklyn Park, MD  
410-636-6597  
[www.ChesapeakeArts.org](http://www.ChesapeakeArts.org)  
[www.MusicalArtistsTheatre.com](http://www.MusicalArtistsTheatre.com)

**Last year's show played to sold-out houses.  
Reserve your seats early!**



**Linda Fausnet's** feature-length comedy screenplay, *QUEEN HENRY*, was a Finalist in the 2007 Progress Writers Competition. The logline for the script is as follows: "An experimental asthma drug turns a pro baseball player gay and he must hide his new sexuality from his teammates and the media."

The script received positive feedback from the judges:

"It has been a pleasure to read *QUEEN HENRY*. What a fun and uplifting story. Your descriptions are rich and purposeful. The dialogue reads as genuine and realistic. The script meets industry formatting which, although always expected, is a comfort to see done correctly. The absolute highlights of the script are the depth and range of the characters. The relationship between Henry, Sam, and Thomas is well crafted. Also, the supporting characters serve their purpose without becoming overbearing."

- Reader Notes from Rich Majkut, Progress Writers

For more information on Linda's screenwriting and other projects, please see [silverscreenwriting.southroad.com](http://silverscreenwriting.southroad.com).

We have lots of exciting news from **Craig Herron!** *Freedom Dance*, the 30 minute animated documentary produced by Craig Herron and Steven Fischer and narrated by Mariska Hargitay has won the 2007 ITVA Peer award for short documentary. Steven Fischer

(co-producer, co-director, co-editor, and writer was present for the ceremony in Washington D.C., along with Phil Rosensteel who did the music for the documentary.

*Freedom Dance* was screened in the Utopia Film Festival, held in October in Greenbelt, Maryland. Steven Fischer, and Craig and Barbara Herron attended the festival.

Craig Herron is currently directing and working on various aspects of an animated 3D cartoon being produced in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Craig and Barbara Herron, along with WIFV members Gregg Landry, Kevin Hill, Michelle Farrell, Christina De Leon, Phil Rosensteel, and Paul Sulsky are working on a version of Poe's famous story *The Fall of the House of Usher*.

They are producing the film with no budget and looking for people who would like to become involved. The 15 minute short will be shot by Michelle Farrell and Gregg Landry at Blue Rock Studios in Baltimore. They are especially in need of help with costumes and some small set pieces and props. The Fall of the House of Usher will be shot with live actors against the green-screen in HD and using 3D computer graphics for backgrounds of the house. This technique is being used quite widely now in various forms (Sin City, 300, Beowulf) so it will be a good learning experience for all. Contact Craig Herron at a meeting or at: [craigh9557@aol.com](mailto:craigh9557@aol.com)



**Send Members in the News or any informational articles to [Silverscrn@aol.com](mailto:Silverscrn@aol.com).**

Special thanks to Zann M. Wasiljov for technical assistance on the newsletter.