Keesha’s House Wins Southeastern Media Award

By Spencer Moon and Pamela Cole

Steve Coulter and Dee Wagner recently received the 2006 IMAGE Southeastern Media Award for their script, Keesha’s House. The script was adapted from a book by the same name written by Indiana author/poet Helen Frost. Coulter and Wagner are well known fixtures in the Atlanta theater and film community. In fact, Coulter was the hilarious emcee this year’s IMAGE Gala Awards and was voted the 2004 “Best Actor in Atlanta” by Creative Loafing. He has acted for over 20 years in film and television. Wagner is a psychotherapist who has co-written and produced theater, dance, and film. For 18 years, this married couple has been making beautiful collaborations, most recently, The Etiquette Man. See Keesha on Page 14.

Perry Shoots at Aquarium

By Pamela Cole

ATLANTA—In case you haven’t noticed, Robert Townsend is in Atlanta a lot these days. In truly bi-coastal fashion, Townsend has put down several roots in the ATL in the last couple of years. While he still calls Los Angeles home, that may have to change if his plans pan out. The man who established the credit card as a viable filmmaking fund (Hollywood Shuffle in 1987 was famously financed by maxing-out multiple credit cards), now wants to create a new business model for the Georgia film industry.

“Since I’ve been in Georgia off and on for the last two-and-half years, I’ve seen the tremendous talent here. This project will act as a funnel to bring that talent forward,” said Townsend describing his vision. “Let’s take a page from hip hop and do what they’ve done. Between OutKast and Big Boi and Dallas Austin—that’s half of the sound of America. We want to do the same with film.”

Townsend has been keeping his eyes open for local writers, actors, and directors through his work as CEO/President of Production at the Atlanta-based Black Family Channel (BFC), and his position as Artist-in-Residence at Georgia State University’s Digital Arts Entertainment Lab (DAEL). Townsend has been offering master classes for writers and actors at DAEL for the past year. His Playhouse 22 program at BFC is a reality show version of what happens when “24 groups of aspiring writers, directors, actors and producers are challenged to develop an original dramatic scene for Hollywood icon Robert Townsend.”

“Ultimately, it’s about empowerment. With the success of Tyler Perry and Ed Banuel—the question is, how do we continue...”

See Townsend on Page 14.
Happy Anniversary!

One year ago this month, we published the first edition of Southern Screen Report—with high hopes, big dreams, and a slight sense of insanity. It’s hard to believe, but we’ve survived our virgin year. This issue is 16 pages, our biggest edition yet, and twice as long as that first edition. Our web site (www.screenreport.com) now holds our overflow of news, updated as often as we can manage, but never often enough to keep up with the constant stream of news that now comes to our door. We’ve inspired imitators and welcome the competition—there’s enough southern film and video news for everyone!

At one of our first hopeful staff meetings, we hatched the idea of creating a “Sweet 16” list of local female filmmakers for our anniversary issue. I’m pleased to announce that we’ve followed up on that wishful thinking: this issue contains an article spotlighting 16 southern women filmmakers nominated by our readers. Putting together the “Sweet 16” article was inspiring to me on so many levels—as a woman, and a filmmaker, and an editor-in-chief fulfilling the dreams of a bright-eyed staff.

I want to welcome Ruksana Hussain to our staff as our new Associate Editor. Ruksana is newly arrived from India to join her husband (a filmmaker) here. She has an extensive background in corporate communications in India and is willing to share her time and expertise with Southern Screen Report. We are so grateful (and desperate!) for her help.

Managing a volunteer organization of this size has been challenging. I’ve worked with over 20 generous volunteers in the last year and I believe that in the near future, as a result of their hard work and our success, we may have more to offer our staff than just the satisfaction of being part of the premiere film and video production news source.

There are so many people to thank: volunteers, advertisers, loved ones. Southern Screen Report was a crazy idea I had that seems to be working, so far. Putting together each issue had also been the most fun I’ve ever had, while working with the nicest people I’ve ever known. I’ve been blessed with this opportunity for the last year. I invite you to join us—as a volunteer, advertiser, business partner, subscriber, or cheerleader.

Here’s to one more year!

Pamela Cole, Editor-in-Chief

On Page 6:

Yollanda Zealous
Suzan Satterfield
Rosa Norman
Suzanne Niedland
Kristen McGary
Amy McGary
Shandra L. McDonald
Tracy Martin
Lyn Lamousin
Kasia Kowalczyk
Kathleen Kelley
Gala Jamison
Erica Crabb-Moon
Fran Burst-Terranella
Linda Burns
Angi Bones
Out There in Pictures

(L-R) Erroll Bailey, Parrish Smith, Leonard Roberts, Shandra McDonald, and Ed Banuel, Jr., cast & crew from The Last Adam, at the June WIFA program

Out There in Pictures

(DP Ly Bolia on the set of American Identity (photo by Anthony Derek Jackson)

September 30, 2006


Camp New Look: (right) Festival Director Eric Panter and Mark Wynns; (below) Matt Ruggles and Cary Linton (photos by Tracy Martin)

Camp New Look: (right) Festival Director Eric Panter and Mark Wynns; (below) Matt Ruggles and Cary Linton (photos by Tracy Martin)

DAILIES Project: Lee Harrop and Michael Bay. (below) George Faughnan as Pumpkin Head (photos by Tracy Martin)

DAILIES Project: Lee Harrop and Michael Bay. (below) George Faughnan as Pumpkin Head (photos by Tracy Martin)

WIFA President Linda Dunkoski and Nancy Howard (pre-baby) at June WIFA program.

Rockmond Dunbar and Melissa Randle on the set of Dirty Laundry

Rockmond Dunbar and Melissa Randle on the set of Dirty Laundry

(R-L) Erroll Bailey, Parrish Smith, Leonard Roberts, Shandra McDonald, and Ed Banuel, Jr., cast & crew from The Last Adam, at the June WIFA program

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(DP Ly Bolia on the set of American Identity (photo by Anthony Derek Jackson)
Location, Location, Location

Fishing Village
Virginia Key, Florida
by Boyd Baker

Looking for a location on the water? Something secluded? Maybe a little funky? The Fishing Village on Virginia Key, between Miami and Key Biscayne, might be just what you’re looking for. This unique Caribbean-style village is very rustic with a collection of brightly painted dilapidated shacks and a working fleet of shrimp and fishing vessels.

Possibly the best part of the village is Jimbo’s. Around since 1954, Jimbo’s sells bait, shrimp, cold beer, smoked fish, and good times. Think of it as a secret rendezvous where smugglers, misfits, and adventurers meet to play some bocce ball and share their darkest secrets. Kings and paupers are all the same here.

Virginia Key looks like it could be a remote island with lush tropical vegetation everywhere, yet it is only a five-minute drive across the Rickenbacker Causeway to Miami. This gives you the best of both worlds in that you can have a remote locale during the day and the incredible energy of Miami Beach at night.

Wild Things, True Lies, and 2 Fast 2 Furious are a few films that have shot on Virginia Key. Music videos for Sugar Ray and Ziggy Marley, as well as the television shows CSI Miami, Miami Vice, Flipper, and the new Showtime series, Dexter, have all found this to be a truly unique locale, which is friendly and easily accessible. So, if you’re looking for that perfect secluded beach feeling without crossing the Pacific, give Virginia Key near Miami, Florida a try.

For more information, contact Jeff Peel, Director, Miami-Dade Mayor’s Office of Film & Entertainment, 305-375-3288, jeffp@miamidade.gov. (Photos courtesy of Miami-Dade Office of Film, Arts & Entertainment.)

Who is Nikola Tesla?

Or What is Megahertz?

By Pamela Cole

Ever hear of Nikola Tesla? Well, that’s about to change if radio DJ and now film actor-producer Jordan Graye gets her way. Graye is normally heard around Atlanta from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on FM radio station B98.5. But she admits she is obsessed with Tesla, the turn-of-the-century Serbian scientist who discovered alternating electrical current (the AC in AC/DC) and radio waves, among other things.

“I was at this Celtic goddess workshop in 2002 and for some reason they were talking about Nikola Tesla,” she told me from the set of Megahertz, her film about Tesla, finally come to fruition after four years. “I went home and Googled him and from the minute his picture came up, I was just obsessed.”

Graye is executive producing this film about a modern-day radio personality who travels through time to interview Tesla. “I work in radio, and Tesla really invented the radio, even though Marconi got all the credit,” she told me earnestly, as if it was the most overlooked fact in the world. Graye said she just really wanted people to know who Tesla was and what he had done.

“I’ve tried to put this project down a few times, but I just knew that I had to do this or else I would die a very unhappy woman.”

Graye seems to be exuberantly happy this day, as she prepares for her role in the film as Brigh Montgomery, a contemporary radio DJ stuck in another dimension with Tesla, played by David Devries. Yes, she is acting, as well as producing and screenwriting, though she admits, “I’ve only done two plays in my life back in the 80s, and NO, I’m NOT a writer...I’ve never written a screenplay in my LIFE!” She says she is taking all her vacation time from WSB “in one lump sum” for the 14 days of filming at the Frazer Center Hospitality House near the Cator Wofford garden in Atlanta—“and just enjoying every minute!”

Megahertz is being directed by Kristen McGary and produced by Amy McGary, whom Graye knew through a friend at B98.5. “I had just about given up on the project, after negotiations with Amanda Bearse (Married With Children) to produce fell through. Then, the next day I got this e-mail from Amy that said, ‘Let’s do it!’”

Kristen McGary is also DP-ing behind her new 24p JVC ProHD camera for Megahertz. “I hate to shoot video, but this camera has the look we wanted,” without the cost, she explained, which was vital for the micro-budget film. “This film represents my life savings, my home equity, and my credit!” Graye said, waving her new credit card checks at me.

Graye expects to have Megahertz ready for the 2007 festival circuit, including the Atlanta Film Festival. §
By Vince Rogers

As students nationwide return to campus this Fall, they look forward to meeting with professors, advisors, and maybe a career counselor, in hopes of landing that dream job. Film students, on the other hand, search for the perfect script and actors, and yearn for an outlet to show their masterpieces to somebody other than classmates, family, and friends.

It just so happens that such an outlet now exists, and it is the brain-child of four students from Emory University, right here in Hotlanta. Founded by David Roemer, Dan Costa, Vijay Makar, and Ajay Pillarisetti, Campus Movie Fest (CMF) provides young filmmakers with the technology, the training, and the outlet to produce and screen quality, creative short films. The foursome founded CMF in 2000, according to Roemer, as “a way to make a lasting change on our college campus by starting something new, enhancing school spirit, and demonstrating the importance of excitement and creativity.” What started as an idea to boost school morale and promote creativity has since grown into the “World’s Largest Student Film Festival.”

Like most innovative ideas, the key to CMF’s success was taking a simple idea and adding inspiration, hard work, vision, and extreme dedication. The initial thought was to give every freshman residence hall at Emory the tools to tell a cinematic story. The CMF team managed to round up enough equipment to turn this dream into a reality. Upon the overwhelming success of the initial festival at Emory, which resulted in 90% of the halls at the school producing a film, the team behind CMF decided to expand their vision.

After graduating, they formed a company called Ideas United, with the goal of “…taking Campus Movie Fest to campuses across the globe and forming partnerships with companies that let us offer moviemaking equipment to students at no charge,” Roemer says.

With the assistance of its key sponsors, Delta Airlines and Coca Cola, and their official technology partner Apple Computers, each student filmmaker has access to the latest laptop computers and Apple’s iMovie editing software. The students receive a training course to use the technology. They even have access to music created by local bands that submit their music to the contest, or to create their own soundtracks using Apple’s Garageband software.

According to Communications Director, Chad Cooper, “Thousands of students will participate in our events and be able to tell their stories in ways that etch their often unheard voices and visions into the minds and hearts of their fellow students, and millions of others.”

This combination of cutting edge technology in the hands of trained filmmakers with youthful imagination has spread CMF from Atlanta all the way to Scotland. The festival’s most noteworthy film so far has been a creation from a group of students in Atlanta at Georgia State University. The film, 55: A Meditation on the Speed Limit, chronicled what would happen if motorists traveled the posted speed limit of 55 mph in all four lanes of Atlanta’s notorious interstate, I-285. The five-minute film, produced by CMF team leaders Jordan Streiff and Amanda Hunter, depicts what happens when people follow a law that might be outdated or may not be in the best interest of the people. The film caught the attention of local and national media outlets and helped bring well-deserved attention to CMF. It also helped establish that this project could result in a fresh exploration of creative topics by bright young minds using the art of filmmaking.

CMF continues to set new benchmarks, reach new milestones, and blaze new trails. The festival recently completed its 2006 Spring Festival, which made stops in Boston, Florida, and Scotland. This tour resulted in the participation of 30,000 students and a regional Grand Finale held at venues that included Atlanta Symphony Hall and St. Andrews Hall in Scotland. There was also an International Grand Finale held in conjunction with the Atlanta Film Festival. Some of the best films in the festival have been seen on The Today Show, ABC World News Tonight, and CNN. Some filmmakers have been given the opportunity to produce short documentaries for The History Channel.

The next stop on the tour will be the Bay Area Festival, which will make stops at such schools as UC Berkeley, Stanford, and UC San Francisco. The Grand finale will take place October 20th at the California Theatre in San Jose. They also plan to partner with Turner Classic Movies to create the Turner Classic Short Film Awards, which will coincide with the upcoming “West Coast” swing. The 2007 tour will kick off again in January starting in Atlanta.

According to Roemer, “Every new school is a great new experience.” Along with Dan Costa, who is responsible for establishing new relationships with colleges and other partners, Roemer has been lucky enough to follow his dreams during and after his college days. He says of their experiences that, “We’re all living our dream — which is good, because we don’t sleep enough these days to dream at night.” To learn more about Campus Movie Fest, go to www.campusmoviefest.com.
Yollanda Zellous
Producer, Director, Writer, Zellyo Productions

BEST ADVICE: Love yourself inside and out. You must never give up on your dreams. Your dream can come true, just keep faith. God will place you where you need to be at the right time. Sometimes doors open when you least expect them to. I started off as a customer service rep. That led me to public speaking classes at work. That led to take acting classes. Then things started really happening. I was an extra on a feature film set. Then I was principle actor in a play. Then to a principle part in an indie film, and now I am a producer, director, and writer of my very own documentary. I am loving being me.

BIGGEST INSPIRATION: My mom is my biggest and greatest inspiration. She is very strong, classy, and independent. She doesn’t play when it comes to business and her money. She can do almost anything a man can do and I truly admire her for that. She can change a tire, change the oil, install the VCR, work on tractor engines. She still cuts her own grass, paints, tiles the floor. I always wanted to be strong and bad just like my momma. My mother told me when I was 20 yrs old to go out and do all the things she couldn’t do and I did it. I still have more to do but I won’t give up. I have only just begun to live my dreams and make my mama even prouder!


LAST WORD: Never let anyone tell you you’re too old for something. Do what you do best and be the best at yourself.

Suzan Satterfield
Executive Producer, Salt Run Productions & Managing Partner, Picture Window Productions, LLC

BEST ADVICE: Be realistic, but adventurous. Push yourself out of your comfort zone and find out what you’re capable of doing.

BIGGEST INSPIRATION: Every time I see an exceptional film or television series, I watch the credits closely. When I see that the writer, producer, or director was a woman, I feel even more inspired and encouraged that I can accomplish greater things.

RECENT FILMS/PROJECTS: Ground Breakers, series on Home & Garden Television; Herren’s: A Sweet Southern Spirit, documentary

LAST WORD: I think one of the best things I’ve ever done is build a network of strong, creative people — especially women that I can call on when I need to brainstorm, need advice, or need a resource. Whenever I’m venturing into unfamiliar territory, I know I can look to my network for guidance. (And a business coach can be invaluable, too.)

Rosa Norman
Editor’s Note: We could not reach Ms. Norman in time for our deadline. The following excerpts are taken from the three nominations she received.
(Pictured: daughter Amber and Rosa Norman)

Rosa Norman of Atlanta has taken her many years of experience as Associate Producer & Editor at CNN’s World Report and at Channel 46 News, and used that experience to educate the general public on many important issues deeply impacting our society. She has single-handedly created a series of inspirational DVDs under “RC-Norman Productions” and has distributed them for free. They have been beautifully put together from the actual filming to the editing to the music score. Her most impressive DVDs were her awe-inspiring coverage of Hurricane Katrina. Equally compelling was her Memorial video created in the memory of Mrs. Coretta Scott King. Overall, she is an inspiring person and even more inspiring are her DVD documentaries.

Suzanne Niedland
President, BusEye Films, LLC

BEST ADVICE:
1. Network, network, network!! Attend festivals, conferences and join relevant organizations like WIF and AWRT.
2. Believe in yourself and believe in your project, because if you don’t, nobody else will.
3. I “reinvented” myself and graduated with my master’s degree in documentary filmmaking from U.F.’s Documentary Institute at the age of 40. It is never too late to follow your dreams, but you must take the steps to make it happen.
4. Set your goals and work towards them. Whether it is finally setting a date to begin production on your film or getting involved in someone else’s production, now is the time to make it happen.
5. ALWAYS pay it forward and pass it on! Good luck and I look forward to cheering you on!

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: My parents have been my greatest influence in my life. My father (a natural story teller) taught me tolerance, acceptance, and compassion. My mother has always been an independent thinker and is the ultimate example of a true survivor. Both parents raised me to appreciate the arts and exposed me to different cultures through travel.

I am most inspired by people who are working to make a positive difference in the world; they are the ones who keep me humble and focused on what kind of projects I want to produce. Lillian Smith, the subject of Miss Lil’s Camp, is an example of someone whose life inspires me to be a better person and to try and inspire others with my work and actions.

RECENT FILMS/PROJECTS: Miss Lil’s Camp, documentary; Race of Truth, documentary; Daddy’s Little Girl, documentary; untitled narrative feature in development

LAST WORD: It is an honor to be selected as one of Southern Screen Report’s Sweet 16 Anniversary Edition and I applaud the decision to profile and bring attention to women filmmakers. We need more women involved in filmmaking because of their keen intuition and sensitivity, which provides a unique outlook and perspective to stories. Media has incredible influence on others, and women can do amazing things with film to bring attention to causes they believe in, whether through documentaries or narrative.

At one of our first staff meetings, we decided to include a feature spotlighting 16 southern women filmmakers as part of our anniversary issue. We were shocked by a study out of San Diego State University that said, “The percentage of women working as directors, executive producers, producers, writers, cinematographers, and editors ... has declined from 19% in 2001 to 16% in 2004.” (“The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women in the Top 250 Films of 2004,” Martha M. Lauzen, Ph.D.)

We received far more than 16 nominations and made our selections after carefully considering each nominee.

Here they are, nominated by our readers: the Sweet 16.
too will smile and be proud of the memories and adventures that make up your life in this difficult, wonderful, crazy, roller-coaster ride of a business called film.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: Saturday morning black and white movies from the 30’s and 40’s, southern writers, my family, friends, loves and lost loves, any and all independent filmmakers, Makers Mark and soda... and of course, the art department with all of its amazing, talented characters and their amazing ability to create miracles.

RECENT FILMS: Megahertz, (producer); Murder... Most Fabulous! (producer); We are Marshall (add’l set decorator ); Broken Bridges (set decorator); The Adventures of Ociee Nash (director/photographer, 20th Century Fox feature film); Flannery (co-screenwriter, director/photographer, feature film in development)
LAST WORD: I once read somewhere this great quote from a filmmaker whose short had just won a prize at the Cannes Film Festival. He said, “90% of filmmaking is getting the door slammed in your face.” I have to say that this was quite insightful and helped me realize that I was not alone in all of the pitfalls of making movies. Other really successful filmmakers have terrible failures at some point during their projects and knowing this makes me feel a bit less like a loser.

Kathleen Kelley
Director of Photography and Vice President of Production for Journey Productions

BEST ADVICE: Develop with other people in the industry. Not only does it make the working together more enjoyable, it can offer invaluable council in your greatest time of need.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES:
An Experimental Photography professor I studied with in France named Riwan Tromeur. I asked him one day, “How do I know if I’m talented enough to make it work pursuing the life of an artist?” He laughed and said, “You Americans are so funny. You think when you get out of art school you should have your work in the Modern Art Museum. My advice to you is to continue working and refining your craft, go out and experience life. Travel, get your heart broken, have some kids. And when you’re 40, 50, maybe 60-years-old, you’ll actually have something to say with your work from your life experience.”

RECENT FILMS/PROJECTS: Producing a couple of short films for Hilton Hotel and preparing to make a feature film called The Note. I continue to freelance as a Director of Photography. I’ve been developing a documentary called Soccer in the Streets for several years. I started the Documentary support group with Women in Film & Television/Atlanta and Executive Produced three PSAs with Women In Film & Television/Atlanta for the Marriage Task Force to stop child prostitution in Atlanta and the Juvenile Justice Fund.

LAST WORD: Be of service. Be kind. Be respectful.

Gala Jamison
Documentary
Producer, Director, Writer

BEST ADVICE: Find your passion and follow it, because it will take you through difficult moments. Be honest and fair, don’t be afraid to admit mistakes. Talk to others in the field and learn from their successes and failures.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: All of the many wonderful women I’ve worked with and learned from. Also, since I work in the area of human rights and social justice, I’ve been influenced by the dogged determination of people who work in those areas throughout the world.

Erica Crabb-Moon
Producer, Director, Camera Operator

BEST ADVICE: Forget the fact that you are a woman and just be yourself. Go for whatever your dreams inspire you to do. Be persistent.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES:
For film? Agnes Varda, Maya Deren, Jean Luc Godard, Martin Scorsese, Dorothy Arzner, Alfred Hitchcock and many more...

RECENT FILMS/PROJECTS: Producing a series entitled SWAT USA for CourtTV. Directed a PSA produced by Women in Film/Atlanta, in association with Mayor Shirley Franklin and the Juvenile Justice Fund on the topic of Ending Child Sexual Exploitation. Directed the short, Give Us This Day, which won Best Director and Best Original Score for the 48 Hour Film Project.

LAST WORD: While I am very honored and excited to be nominated for the Sweet 16 Edition of the Southern Screen Report there is some irony involved here. I dislike it when I am referred to as a “Woman Director.” I don’t believe that directors should be categorized based on their gender, race, religion, creed, sexual orientation, height, weight, eye color, etc. To say, “you’re a really good Woman Director,” is a back-handed compliment. I mean, come on, we don’t tell Spike Lee that he is a good “black man” director, or do we?

Fran Burst-Terranella
Producer, Director, Writer, Teacher

BEST ADVICE: Always work with the very best, most talented people you can. Learn how to handle money and do it with confidence.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: Every woman director who succeeds in making good films inspires me – the first was French filmmaker Agnes Varda in 1967. Thirty years later, I got the opportunity to meet Ms. Varda in Paris and share stories about our experiences as women directors. My family and friends also inspire and influence me every day, especially my husband, son, and sisters.

RECENT FILMS/PROJECTS: This summer I produced and directed the 30th anniversary celebration video for Habitat for Humanity International. I’m also writing a murder mystery novel with an environmental twist. And, as a faculty member at the Art Institute of Atlanta, I am shepherding four student teams completing short fiction films including a Zombie comedy and a political suspense drama. LAST WORD: Believe in yourself. Know what you want and tell everyone — so you’ll be sure to pursue your dreams.

Ectes:

Linda Burns
Producer, Line Producer, and Production Manager for Commercials, Industrials, Stills, Televison, and Independent Film

BEST ADVICE: Educate yourself. Read books, take workshops, and study media for what works and what doesn’t. The greater the knowledge, the smarter your assessments and decisions will be. Don’t be afraid to take a risk and fail. Don’t assume you can’t do something or listen to someone who tells you that you can’t. Don’t be afraid to try something new, but don’t pretend to know something when you don’t. Ask questions and be honest. Fight for what you believe in. Speak your mind, and earn respect by doing so.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES: I figured out how to do my job by doing my job. I don’t really have a mentor or career influence. Film Festivals are my greatest inspiration. I love watching independent film, hearing a director discuss his or her vision, and the conversation a good story will spark. Independent film should influence and inspire.

RECENT FILMS/PROJECTS: The Signal. Flush - a Telly Award winning ad, and Hurricane, both directed by David Edmond Moore. The Academy Awards Pre-Show Live on TNT - a one-hour show hosted from the Kodak Theater. The Dance of Bhutan – a narrative feature on Buddhist monastic dance. Traveling 6 weeks in Bhutan researching and scouting. I also teach workshops as part of an exchange program for a worldwide exhibition on Bhutanese culture. City of Refuge – a promo piece directed by John Petri garnering 4 Telly Awards.

LAST WORD: I’m proud to be on the Boards of IMAGE and DAILIES, two non-profit arts organizations giving filmmakers the opportunity to learn and grow as artists by offering workshop and screening opportunities. IMAGE has a new Executive and Festival Director. Complemented by the current staff, we should see some exciting changes. DAILIES has a re-invigorated mission, offering thought provoking short film challenges focusing on process over product. To watch filmmakers improve with each project, to see them find their voice as artists, it’s inspiring.

Angi Bones
Producer, Director

BEST ADVICE: Stay focused. Obsession breeds success.

BIGGEST INFLUENCES:

RECENT FILMS/PROJECTS: Season of Death (director/producer); Motives 2 (producer); Daddy’s Little Girls (2nd AD)

LAST WORD: It is an honor to be nominated. §
Perry Shoots at Aquarium

By Pamela Cole

Tyler Perry took *Daddy’s Little Girl* to the coolest location in Atlanta on July 19 when the cast and crew congregated at the Georgia Aquarium for a night of fishing—uh, shooting.

“This is definitely the first film that has been made at the Georgia Aquarium,” said producer Roger Bobb as he walked through the Ocean Voyager exhibit, underneath a flock of flying stingrays. “We feel very privileged about that.”

Perry, a very non-Hollywood fellow by all accounts, prefers to work in his home base of Atlanta. “We also shot at Table 1280, the new restaurant at the High Museum, and at the Intercontinental hotel,” said Bobb. “We’re trying to show the new Atlanta, so we’re shooting in some funky new places.”

“Our worst day of shooting was last Friday. We were doing a riot scene. We had a helicopter, and a car crash, and some crane shots—all in one night. We had to shoot from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. but we got it done. Thanks to the Mayor’s office.”

At the newly-opened Georgia Aquarium, Bobb was culminating day 22 of a 29-day shoot, using what has become the Tyler Perry formula for success. *Daddy’s Little Girl* marks the third Perry film in as many years written and directed by Perry, made for under $10 million in Atlanta, and released by Lions Gate films. Following the good-luck formula, this film will be released in February 2007, like *Diary of a Mad Black Woman* (February 2005) and *Madea’s Family Reunion* (February 2006). “It’s been done pretty much like the other films,” said Bobb who whipped out his Palm Pilot to double-check the release date. “Yep,” he confirmed, “February 23.”

Such attention to detail is the norm on a Perry production; they are models of project organization. The atmosphere on set was entirely different from the chaos and panic that prevails over many low-budget features. The air was calm and controlled. Crew members moved around silently, almost reverently, quietly keeping tabs on everyone (including me) through their wireless mouthpieces. Eerily, when I first arrived, the young man in charge of admitting and directing extras knew who I was, and why I was there before I even told him my name.

Bobb was pleased to hear that. “When people come to the set for the first time, they remark about how nice it is. We want people to leave here saying what a great experience it was working and being on set.” And they do. More than once, I’ve heard extras compliment the way they were treated on the set of a Tyler Perry film (read “Your WAM Stories” in our online edition). At the Aquarium, the 100+ extras were held in the cafeteria atrium, adjacent to rest rooms and an assortment of snacks and drinks. It was very cool, comfortable, and air conditioned for the crowd of mostly children and parents who waited for their turn in front of the camera.

There is one change in the formula for this film: Perry doesn’t act in *Daddy’s Little Girl*. He just writes and directs.

“It’s a role change for Tyler. One that he is relishing,” said Bobb who has worked with Perry for three years since *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*. “It’s his chance to kind of step back and prove himself as a director.” Perry also didn’t act in *House of Payne*, the television sitcom recently shot at Krog Street Studios in Atlanta (which Perry now owns).

“Hey, he’s a 35-year-old man,” laughed Bobb. “He knew he’d have to take the dress off someday.”

Bobb said 85-90% of the 80 crew members on *Daddy’s Little Girl* were local. “It’s pretty much the same crew we’ve had on all three films. It’s a family now.” And it’s a “profanity-free” set, according to Bobb. I’ve also heard that Perry begins all production meetings with a prayer.

Perry plans to rent out the recently purchased Krog Street Studios to other productions when he is not using it. “Up until now, of course, we’ve kept it pretty busy,” said Bobb. “But we’re trying to bring other projects to Atlanta. Krog Street Studios is one-stop shopping. It’s got a stage and studio as well as personnel.” (NOTE: Given that Turner Broadcasting renewed *House of Payne* for 100 extra episodes after this interview, that plan may have changed.)

“There’s been a real increase in production in Atlanta since *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*,” said Bobb proudly. “I’d like to think we had a little something to do with that.” §
Reflections on the Sundance Director’s Lab with Kristin Gorell

By Kristi Porter

Returning from the screenwriter’s portion of the Sundance Director’s Lab held in June, Atlanta resident Kristin Gorell now understands better how art can imitate life. In fact, given the right circumstances, sometimes they actually overlap each other.

Gorell’s innate aptitude for visual and performance arts was a creative outlet from an early age and continued to develop throughout her life as it expressed itself through writing, painting, drawing, and acting. Though she enjoyed the arts immensely, she saw them more as hobbies and pursued her undergrad at Stanford University in physics only to later receive her degree in religious studies. While getting her masters at Georgia State University, she decided that she wasn’t a scholar, but finished her degree anyway. It was at this time that she started taking herself more seriously as an artist.

About three years ago, Milford Thomas was looking for a writer to help him develop a script and contacted her friend Richard Guess. Guess introduced Gorell and Thomas. Out of that partnership came Uncloudy Day, the collaboration that was one of just 12 screenplays selected for the 2006 Sundance Screenwriter’s Lab held in January (see Southern Screen Report, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 19, 2006).

Both Milford and Gorell were shocked to be chosen for the Sundance Director’s Lab, the follow-up to the Screenwriter’s Lab. (Not all screenplays go on to the Director’s Lab. In fact, just nine went on this year. The Labs are part of the Sundance Institute, which also sponsors the Sundance Film Festival.)

“It was an amazing, remarkable, unforgettable experience. In fact, it was probably my greatest experience as an artist. I learned so much and felt validated in my work for the first time.”

At the Director’s Lab, participants lived in the mountains of Sundance, Utah for a week and were assigned six advisors, made up of writers and directors. The advisors went through the script with them and listened to their approaches on concepts, characters, and writing. They also discussed what worked and didn’t work, and offered suggestions. “It’s very much its own community up there in the wilderness. Everyone dines together for meals but breaks into their groups at other times. It’s like a little family—separate pieces but still interdependent. I loved getting to meet the amazing, talented artists and I still keep in touch with many of them.”

Now that Gorell is part of the Sundance family, they will help her promote her work and get an agent. They will always be there to answer questions and to support her as much as possible.

When asked what advice she would give others about to follow in her footsteps, Gorell says, “Be open and honest with the process. It is fascinating to hear others suggestions. There are always some that resonate and help improve the work. Some have spurred on current ideas we had and some were completely new.”

Since the Sundance lab, Thomas and Gorell have revised Uncloudy Day and the screenplay is almost complete. The script is set in the 1930s in a small town in Alabama and is designed to be shot as an early talkie in black and white. There is no sex and the violence is very Hitchcock-esque

“The story is both funny and dramatic, a lot like real life,” Gorell notes. And also like life, there are always lessons to be learned. “Listen for the song in your heart and pray for the courage to sing it,” is the message we want people to take from this film,” she says. “We both feel like so much of the media is pushing personal respect out of the way. Our society makes it so hard to feel by the way it desensitizes individuals. This film will hopefully open people up without an in your face approach.”

The next step is to start sending the finished screenplay to producers in hopes of actually getting it onto film. There has already been some interest shown and hopefully production will start in spring 2007.

Gorell says again and again how grateful she is to everyone who has been involved in this process, and says she feels so lucky to have met Thomas and been able to work on this script.

“God smiled on me with this project.”

Though attending the Director’s Lab was huge in itself, it was the result of the event and what Gorell took home with her that has made the most profound impact. “My biggest takeaway from Sundance was a realization that I hadn’t given myself enough credit. I always have a lot to learn, but I am a good writer already. The Sundance experience completely changed the view I had of myself. I didn’t own my own gifts.”

Ironic, since that is the moral of Uncloudy Day. §
In the Spotlight

By Boyd Baker

So your birthday is September 10 and you have your party at the famed Windows on the World restaurant in the north tower of the World Trade Center. Sounds like a pretty good start to a new year in 2001. Friends who can’t make your party call from Boston to sing “Happy Birthday” and say they’ll meet you in Los Angeles that weekend. The next day, their American Airlines plane crashes into a World Trade Center tower.

That’s what happened to Stephen Rollins on his 26th birthday. What could he do? Rollins, a native Atlantan, actor, and film producer, wanted to find a way to pay tribute to his friends without exploiting the images and families of 9/11. Three days after September 11, 2001, he had written a first draft of American Identity, a short film telling how 9/11 affected two soldiers. He sent the story to friends in Hollywood that he had met as an actor and through working at Sony Pictures Entertainment, handling distribution and talent negotiations for Columbia and Tri-Star Films. People were excited about the script. Rollins didn’t have the funds to move forward, so he put the story on the shelf.

Sometimes you can’t keep a good idea down and so it was with American Identity. In March 2006, Rollins began getting phone calls from star talent who had read his treatment. Then, two distributors read it and contacted him.

“American Identity is a film that is a tribute to friends lost on 9/11. To be honest, the project basically developed itself,” says Rollins. “Because of the strength of the story, a friend came forward and wrote me a check for the full financing. A post-production house has donated their services in exchange for credit, so now we have all the pieces in place. It’s been an amazing adventure,” he added.

Rollins plans to expand the script into a feature. “The short is a test. I’ve already adapted the script for a feature-length film and my production company, Lightning Pictures, has a deal to develop the feature based on the results of the short. We’re very lucky to have such supportive partners,” Rollins admits.

Principal photography began in August in Atlanta. The 11-day shoot filmed in Georgia, Alabama, New York City, and California. The film was shot on Super 16mm, which will be transferred to HD for editing and then printed on 35mm. Rollins expects American Identity to wrap at the beginning of September 2006. From there, the short will join the festival circuit.

“We with the loss of my friends, this project was born,” Rollins said. “I wanted to find a way to take this horrible chapter in our history and make something better. I plan to donate my share of any proceeds from the short to the wives and children of those lost in 9/11.”

Organizational Editing

Editor’s Note: This is the first of a new ongoing column by professional editor, Craig Tollis. Tollis is an Atlanta-based freelance editor and filmmaker with ten years of experience. His web site is: www.Level2Media.com.

Editing is one of the most invisible, difficult to describe elements of filmmaking. It’s not obvious where the subtleties and nuances lie in cutting together shots to make sequences, sequences to make scenes, and scenes to make a story. Despite the fact that audiences have an immediate, intuitive appreciation for good editing over bad, many of the details and niceties of the craft only start to make sense once you’ve sweated for a while over why something does or does not work.

In the ten years I’ve worked and trained as an editor, I’ve learned something from every project I’ve been on, and from every editor I’ve worked with. This article is not intended to be a comprehensive explanation of the edit process, which would take an entire book. I’ll try to touch on a variety of basic concepts which I’ve found important and helpful or difficult and confusing in my own experience.

Editing is, in the end, a personal and subjective art. Every editor has his or her own preferences about what is done and how it is done. Yet, while there is no one right way to edit, there are lots of wrong ways. At least, there are counterproductive ways and things that you think will work but don’t. There are also the basics that you never seem to be able to get away from.

So, for the sake of discussion, let’s break editing down into three elements: 1) organizational, 2) technical, and 3) creative. Depending on the size of the team and the budget of the project, some of these responsibilities might be taken on by assistants or other post-production facilities, but the editor has ultimate responsibility for the project coming together to getting a good result, and so he or she should still be aware of these issues.

Organizational

Everyone in the production process should be involved in keeping things organized, but since the edit suite is the place where it all comes together, the ultimate practical responsibility tends to fall to the editor. Good organization is essential on a
Editing
Continued from Page 12

complex project with hundreds of tapes and multiple editors, but it’s an advantage on any sized project.

Organization on the front end enables creativity on the back end - because you’ve already gotten the boring stuff out of the way. When you sit down to edit a scene, you want quick and easy access to your footage, to see your options immediately, and to be able to get into the groove and feel of what you’re cutting, not constantly puzzling and searching over locations of shots or wondering what your options are.

Tape Organization

This seems dead obvious, but tape organization is one of the most common issues that arise on a project. It’s potentially one of the most expensive and embarrassing problems you can have if you lose footage and have to reshoot. Where’s the tape from the second half of last Saturday? Didn’t we shoot something down at the hospital? Where’s that? Is it still in the camera? Whose camera was that?

Tapes should be rounded up as soon as possible after shooting. Someone in camera department should be responsible for this, but it doesn’t hurt to ask nicely what their process is and perhaps suggest what is helpful to you in editorial. Most of the time you’ll want tapes removed from all cameras at the end of the day, even if you only shot a little on a tape. The cost of another blank tape is a lot less than having to reshoot something if you lose the footage.

Printing out labels with a unique tape ID is a good idea. It reduces the chances of assigning duplicate tape numbers. Typically one label is put on the tape itself (being careful not to obstruct the mechanism) and a second with the same ID is put on the tape box. Plan where shot tapes will be stored, usually in the edit suite, where they can be ready for capturing. It’s best to get tapes out of bags, cases or cars as soon as possible and into a temperature controlled environment.

Projects, Bins, Folders and Sequences

As non-linear editing systems have become more powerful and more flexible, it’s become increasingly important that editors choose to be organized. The tendency is to let your project develop in an ad hoc way as footage comes in and you start to work on it. However, there’s a huge advantage to taking time beforehand to think about how you’re going to arrange things.

If your project breaks down into sections, e.g., by scenes, segment or topics, consider organizing your bins and folders to group elements together for each section, plus a few for miscellaneous. They key is to give yourself an easy way to find related footage during the edit. As you go along, make sure any new material goes into the correct bin for its purpose. This also makes it easier to see what footage you have and what you’re missing at any particular time.

On long form projects, we frequently use multiple sequences divided up in a similar way - by scene number, topic or program segment. Working with short sections simplifies things and reduces the chance of making a mistake that impacts your entire project. It also makes you think about the length, content and meaning of each section against the others in the project before you start putting them together.

Organizing Clips

There’s a temptation to capture footage in large slabs for the sake of convenience. If you have time, however, it’s always better to log your footage shot by shot and capture clips in short sections. This will sometimes make your captures more reliable, and will often make your edit system more stable. It generally gives you more flexibility when dealing with these shorter media files, especially if you’ll need to move them around or share them.

There are a variety of different schemes for naming clips. If you’re cutting a feature, you should have scene and take numbers. Alternatively, you might want to include brief shot descriptions (WS, MS, CU, pan left, push in, etc.) in the clip names or in comments. For sound bites it’s not unusual to use the interviewee’s name followed by the first and last few words of the clip.

Whatever method you choose, it helps to be consistent. The key, again, is to think about the clip in terms of how you will use it in the finished piece - what the clip means to the project.

Organizing the Timeline

I’m a huge fan of timeline readability - using tracks, particularly audio tracks, in a consistent way, having meaningful names for clips, and generally keeping things as simple as possible. If you always lay your music onto channels 5 and 6, for example, you can look at a sequence and instantly know where you’ve laid music and where you haven’t. We typically break our sound out on the same tracks every time this way (primary voice, voice over, natural sound, music, sound FX). It’s also valuable if you can keep your video tracks laid out in a simple way so you see what is going on at a glance: titles, visual effects and so on.

Timeline readability also plays a big role for me in reducing mistakes, or finding and correcting them: locating black holes or flash frames, seeing where sound or music might be missing, noticing where something has been accidentally added or deleted or is out of sync. If you stick to a regular plan in the way you lay out your timeline, mistakes and problems will jump out at you immediately, rather than having to be caught during an output or at a screening.

Next Time: Technical Editing. Please send your questions to craigt@level2media.com. §
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**Short Ends:**

- **Dirty Laundry**, filmed in three-and-a-half weeks in Atlanta in April, is making the circuit rounds to high acclaim. Written and directed by Maurice Jamal (*The Ski Trip*) the gay-themed film is screening to sold-out audiences on a 12-city “outreach tour,” sponsored by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the largest gay rights organization in the U.S. *Southern Screen Report*’s own Melissa Randle acted in the film (see picture on page 3). The film won two awards including the Blockbuster Audience Award for Best U.S. Feature at the American Black Film Festival (ABFF).

- The **Alabama Film Office** and the **Butler County Commission for Economic Development** reported that two-time Academy Award nominated writer/director John Sayles will direct his next film entitled **Honeydripper** in Butler County in September. Sayles’ films include *Eight Men Out, The Secret of Roan Inish,* and *Lonesar*. He is recognized as one of the most respected writer/directors in the film industry and is a noted author. Sayles and producer Maggie Renzi scouted locations in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi before choosing central Alabama. The film is set in the early 1950s and will star Danny Glover along with famed blues guitarist Keb’Mo and legendary vocalist Ruth Brown.

- Georgia Public Broadcasting, the Georgia Council for the Arts, the Digital Arts and Entertainment Lab at Georgia State University and the Georgia Department of Economic Development are introducing **C-47: Georgia Short Film Showcase**, a new initiative that provides an opportunity for Georgia’s independent filmmakers to broadcast their films. The C-47 project combines broadcast and digital technology to create a multimedia website (www.cforty7.com) centered on the art and technique of filmmaking, as well as a monthly broadcast showcase devoted to Georgia filmmakers and their short films. Each month, two filmmakers and their films will be featured on the C-47 program over GPB’s satellite and overnight open-air broadcast outlets, discussed at length on the C-47 website, and recognized as superior Georgia filmmakers. At the end of each year, one film will be chosen via audience and industry voting as the top short film for that year in Georgia. Deadlines for film submissions are September 30, 2006; December 31, 2006; March 31, 2007 and June 30, 2007. For more info, go to www.cforty7.com.

- Spotted filming in downtown Atlanta: **One Missed Call, Revenge of the Nerds,** and **Daddy’s Little Girl**.

- **IMAGE** has finally selected a new Executive Director: Gabriel Wardell has worked for festivals and non-profits for over a decade, programming the AFI Silver Theatre and producing the inaugural edition of SILVERDOCS: AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Festival. Welcome, Gabe! And good luck!

- Congrats to Eric Panter and another successful **Atlanta Underground film Festival**! Next Up: **Atlanta HorrorFest** (www.atlantahorrorfest.com).

- Love that Laura Mulvey? Here’s a chance to get your male gaze on, ladies. **The Women’s Angle** is a short film project designed for the new or established woman director who wants an opportunity to gain a fuller understanding and appreciation of her voice as a filmmaker. For more info contact: Tracy Martin at illustratedfilms@bellsouth.net.

**Hey! Say you saw it in Southern Screen Report!**

Got news! Send it to news@screenreport.com. That’s what we’re here for!
Continued from Page 1

(2001), a 20-minute film that aired on the Sundance Channel and screened at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. It should come as no surprise that it would take home the grand prize from IMAGE’s 30th Atlanta Film Festival.

“We flew to Indiana for a screening of The Etiquette Man and met Helen Frost when she came to the screening,” said Coulter explaining how they found the book, Keeshah’s House. “Several months later she sent us her book. It’s a narrative novella written in sestina, a complex poetry form from Italian and French sonnets.”

Wagner says she was the first of the couple to read it. “It’s a series of monologues in poetry. You cannot tell it’s poetry because there are no rhymes. A sestina is the last word of each line of a six line stanza and it gets repeated in the next stanza, so it’s kind of like a bell tolling. It’s a very subtle thing in the background, but you’re not aware that it’s poetry.”

Writing together as a couple can be volatile depending on the script, says Coulter. He described how their 13-year-old daughter could tell when they were writing.

“She’d ask ‘Are you guys going to write, meaning are you guys going to fight?’ She would close her door while we wrote,” laughed Coulter. “We fight for our ideas,” Wagner added.

To date, they’ve done 20 drafts of Keeshah’s House, which has six different teenage characters with intersecting stories over five days. “But it’s not just a teen movie,” stressed Wagner. “It’s for the teen in all of us that never got successfully launched.”

The couple plans to film Keeshah’s House over 25 days in February 2007. They have cast Lisa Arrindell Anderson (Madea’s Family Reunion), and report that Ruby Dee is reviewing a requested script in New York. (Just before our press time, Coulter e-mailed to let us know that he and Wagner have been hired by Tyler Perry as writer’s for Perry’s recently renewed sitcom, The House of Payne. Perry hired them immediately after reading a copy their script for Keeshah’s House.)

The Southeastern Media Award includes over $100,000 in in-kind production services (including a half-page ad in Southern Screen Report for the finished film). Since 1995, IMAGE has awarded the Southeastern Media Award annually to a narrative or documentary work-in-progress that will shoot in Georgia during the coming year. The winner is judged on the finished script (or treatment, for documentary works-in-progress), budget, artist statements, and the backgrounds of the producer and director, one of who must be from the southeast. Past recipients include Academy Award winner, The Accountant, by Ray McKinnon (2001) and The Last Adam (2005) by Erroll Bailey and Shandra McDonald.

Continued from page 1

the flow? We want to develop screenplays and scripts and use the resources here to make it work.”

Townsend says he has spoken with Jesse Crawford of Crawford Communications (Atlanta) and Scott Tigchelaar of Riverwood Studios about partnering on his idea for a Georgia film project. “We’re proud to partner in the efforts of Mr. Townsend and others to achieve critical mass with Georgia’s film industry,” says Scott Tigchelaar, Riverwood Studios president. “All of the pieces of the puzzle are here, and Robert is pulling them together.”

Indeed, Townsend says he is actively putting together his team and searching for the best project. An important part of his model is to provide film content for multiple platforms such as the Internet and cell phones. “People want content for anything, anywhere, anytime. They want to know, can I watch it on my cell phone, on my TV, on my computer? Other countries may not have the cable infrastructure we have here, so they’re especially interested in multi-platform content.”

“There is no need for a state with such diverse locations, crew depth, international transportation, acting talent, sound stages, visual effects, and post-production facilities to depend on film projects coming from outside Georgia.”
Sister Moon. Cool People Entertainment. submissions@coolpeopletent.com. Status: Pre-Production. Drama. Feature (>60 min). Start Date: October 2006. Location: Atlanta, Georgia. Synopsis: Ernestine Lenox and her four daughters, all assumed to be witches, must come to terms with their mysterious lifestyle. (09/02/2006)


Para Empezar. The Sweet Gherkin Ensemble. www.myspace.com/sweetgherkin. sweetcherkinensemble@gmail.com. Post-Production. Drama/Comedy. Mid (30-60 min). Start Date: July 21 - July 27. Location: Atlanta. Cast: Yakini Horn, Reid Jupin, Craig Williams, Maria Sanzone, Orlando Vicente. Synopsis: Based on true events, Para Empezar is told with the backdrop of Atlanta’s racial divide. Two stories and five characters are separated by one of Atlanta’s most populous streets, Ponce De Leon. (08/06/2006)


Eyes on the Young. Divine Law Entertainment. Dharma D. Jackson, www.divinelawent.com, DivineLawEnt@aol.com. Post-Production. Drama. Short. Location: Atlanta. Cast: ShanQuilla Robinson, Rico Ball, Danita Johnson, Chauntea Murphy, DaShon Waters, Diane Dixon. Synopsis: In an Atlanta lower middle class community, pimping and drug use is the order of the day. The leading man, Chris (Rico Ball) is handsome, charismatic, witty and charming. He is the epitome of a Smooth Operator. Chris is on a mission to prove to his mentor, Tim (Da'Shon Waters) and his crew of friends, that he is more astute at influencing young women to work for him, than any man around. (7/8/2006)


Classifieds

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