



Dependable Packers' Driver ultimate team player

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FRIDAY			
Tonight: partly cloudy; low, -1°			
SAT.	SUN.	MON.	TUES.
High 3°	High 11°	High 19°	High 14°

End of event? Forum set to decide Christmas Walk fate

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January 18, 2008

BIFF passes out the popcorn

Filmmakers, locals mingle at launch of film festival

By Ashley Rhodebeck

Daily News staff writer

A loop of films played for two hours Thursday evening at the Beloit International Film Festival launch party, yet at this BIFF event the soundtracks became nearly inaudible as Stateline Area residents and filmmakers — actors, writers, directors, producers — mingled.

"Everybody's feeling the buzz," said sponsorship chairperson and BIFF co-founder Becky Rogers, adding organizers were very happy with the turnout.

Navigating through the first floor of the ABC Supply World Headquarters was nearly impossible to do without bumping into someone else, and often a BIFF-issued lanyard identified that person as a filmmaker.

About 70 filmmakers were expected to attend the festival throughout its four days, Rogers said, estimating about two-thirds participated in the launch party.

Among them were people attached to well-known films, such as "The Passion of the Christ" producer Steve McEveety and "Airplane!" executive producer David Zucker. But many were novices, ready to show their work to an audience for the first or second time.

For her first full-length feature, "Prairie Rose," Rebecca

Tulloch enlisted the help of Civil War re-enactors to create an atypical battle movie: The story of a woman rescuing her husband from a prisoner-of-war camp in 1862 Chicago.

Operating under a low budget was challenging, forcing the self-taught filmmaker to work several positions, such as a cameraperson and producer. Her actors, including married couple Stan and Ruth Bukowski, donated about 10 weekends to the project.

"It was exhausting fun," Stan Bukowski said. "It made you really tired, but you didn't know it at the time."

The film's sole BIFF screening got a "very good turnout," Tulloch said, calling the showing special because she could see how the audience reacted while Ruth Bukowski said it was "thrilling" to see herself on screen.

Wanting the audience to correctly react to his movie, "The Path to Come," was a concern of 18-year-old Eddie Kunz, who began the story as a Confirmation project for church.

"It definitely turned into a really big undertaking," Kunz said, summarizing the film as an inspirational story about a group of teens involved in a summer car accident that killed three. The plot focuses on the driver and how he will move on with his life.

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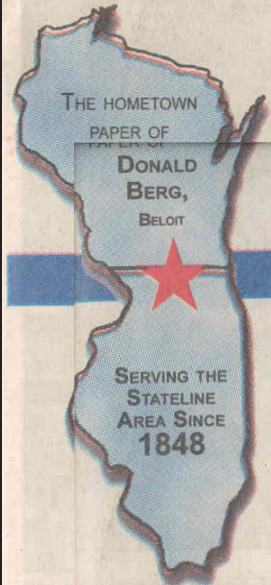


Staff photo by Clint Wolf

Above, a healthy crowd braved the cold Thursday night to attend the Beloit International Film Festival Launch Party at ABC Supply. Visitors were able to meet with film makers and view some short films during the party. Right, David Zucker, film director and producer, chats with local residents at the Beloit International Film Festival Launch Party. Following the party, Zucker welcomed visitors to the Eclipse Center for a showing of one of his zany comedies, "Airplane."



Staff photo by Ashley Rhodebeck



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Opinion

Veto vote

Wisconsin voters should have the chance to decide if the governor should have the "Frankenstein veto."

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Sports

Denied

Beloit Turner's wrestling team ran into red-hot Evansville squad Thursday.

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Living

Exhibits

Two new exhibits will open Tuesday at the Logan Museum of Anthropology at Beloit College.

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BIFF

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While some of the filmmakers came from nearby Madison or Chicago, others traveled hundreds of miles to attend BIFF, such as Los Angeles casting director Charisse Reneau.

For two-and-a-half years, Reneau produced her first feature film, "Rapping with Shakespeare," a documentary that mixes rap music with William Shakespeare's works and is about inner-city Los Angeles teens whose teacher shows them how their lives emulate one of Shakespeare's plays.

Showing the film for the first time felt invigorating and gave Reneau a "sense of completion," she said, explaining she was determined to finish the product to show the kids, who often hear empty promises, that projects can come to fruition if they don't give up.

Although most films shown

at BIFF were made within the past few years, Greg Lamberson, director of horror film "Slime City," used the festival as a way to celebrate the movie's 20th anniversary.

Lamberson attends about 10 film festivals a year and said nothing compares to BIFF.

"You can tell there's an actual celebration of film here," he said, explaining some festivals try to exploit the filmmakers by milking money out of them. "I've never been treated so well."

Breaking into the film industry is tough, Lamberson said, because with the prevalence of digital cameras about 10 times more people make movies and complete them quicker than ever.

"This is the best way to get independent films shown," Lamberson said.

Film festivals are also important, Zucker said, because the attendees often love film "are seeing past just the popcorn of it."