

REEL NEWS

Spring 2004

Detroit Area Film & Television (DAFT)
An Educational Association

2004 MICHIGAN STUDENT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL

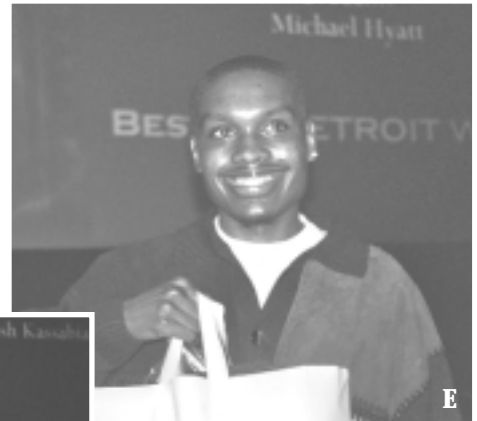
By: Patricia Wedhorn Hogarty,
Director, Michigan Student Film & Video Festival

After months of work, the 35th annual Michigan Student Film & Video Festival concluded on Saturday, May 1, 2004, in the historic theater of the DIA. This year was spectacular with amazing productions by students across the state of Michigan, including the Upper Peninsula. Over 50 videos were entered in the Elementary & Junior Division, more than in the past, of which 11 went on to Best of Show and were included in the Festival. We had fewer Senior entries, only 329, but we had many more recommended to Best of Show than in past years. Senior finals judges viewed 62 videos and 29 of them were selected for Best of Show reel shown at the Festival.

With grants being reduced, funding for the Festival gets more difficult each year. Due to the difficult economy, some of the regular contributors to the Festival declined to donate, but fortunately new contributors came through so the Festival funding continued and great prizes were given to our winning students. Our biggest contributors this year were the Michigan Counsel for the Arts and Cultural Affairs and the Detroit Institute of Arts. We received significant contributions from other generous corporate and educational institutions.

On behalf of the Festival Committee, I would like to thank all the volunteers who worked on the festival, all the judges who spent many hours viewing programs to select this year's winners, all the companies who donated funds and prizes for the winning students, the teachers who bring out creativity and excellence in their students, and finally, the students themselves who won't settle for anything less than extraordinary.

I look forward to seeing more exciting, interesting and inspiring video productions again next year.



(A) Wayland Union Middle School, "Helping Others 2004" (B) Louis Holland and Steven Anderson (C) Kailey Bladow and Lance Red, "Penguin" (D) Elementary "Best of Show" winners (E) Cortez Robinson, Best of Detroit, "Meeting the Measure"

THREE-PEAT ~ WOAK WINS STATE TELEVISION/ VIDEO CHAMPIONSHIP FOR THIRD TIME IN A ROW

by Dick Rockwell

WOAK Advanced Video and Media Production students Chaz Hornbacher and Ron Rafalski (Dondero seniors) were awarded the SkillsUSA-VICA First Place Gold Medal state championship in the Television Production category at competitions in East Lansing, MI. Twenty teams, the most ever in the TELEVISION PRODUCTION category, competed. This victory was the third year in a row that WOAK teams have won the SkillsUSA Television Production category in the state contest. Last year's WOAK team went on to win the national championship in Television Production at the SkillsUSA competition in Kansas City, MS, so the state victory gives this year's team a chance to defend WOAK's national title.

To make the win even sweeter, a second Television Production team from WOAK, Meghan Covell and Jeff Buck (Dondero seniors) took home the Silver Medal for second place. Third place went to a team from Utica Schools.

The teams were given only two hours to shoot video and two hours for editing to convey the theme of the SkillsUSA competition - "Champions at Work!" Shooting locations were the Lansing Center and Lansing Community College where hundreds of other students competed in welding, auto repair, CAD-cam, graphic design, photography, carpentry, auto service, architectural drafting and many other growing technical and trade areas.

In all, over 2,500 students in other SkillsUSA vocational areas demonstrated their skills in over 100 trade and technical areas to win a chance to represent Michigan in the national championships in Kansas City, MS in late June.

Using a Sony mini-dv camcorder and Final Cut Pro non-linear editing software, Chaz and Ron were able to create a 60-90 second news feature that expressed the theme of the competition in a style suitable for broadcast on Lansing television evening news.

Dick Rockwell, WOAK Instructor, said, "Their news piece captured the heat and heart of the competition. It effectively conveyed the intensity of

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DAFT BOARD NAMES TEACHER OF THE YEAR

The DAFT Board (*Detroit Area Film & Television*) has named SCOOP instructor Maureen McCarthy as Teacher of the Year. McCarthy is being recognized for her years of outstanding teaching in southeast Michigan and her commitment in helping young people express themselves through digital media.

McCarthy has been a teacher for more than 30 years, influencing students in Royal Oak, Grosse Ile, Farmington, Wayne and Detroit. DAFT reports, "She is such a great instructor because she brings her veteran experience of production to the classroom."

She has been an intricate part of JW Productions Inc. for almost 20 years. This trail-blazer produced and



directed the first cable and PBS program for seniors entitled 'Senior Focus.' McCarthy has been the editor and artistic director of an award winning video newsletter, she created the first newsletter for Public Benefit Corporation, and beat out other instructors in the national contest to participate in the annual "New Voices, New Activists' Youth Media Workshop in Connecticut." After

she joined the SCOOP staff in 1998 the completion of student productions went up 80%.

McCarthy was honored at the Michigan Youth Arts Festival at Western Michigan University on Friday, May 14, 2004.

Congratulations, Maureen McCarthy, you are. . . TEACHER OF THE YEAR!

~ article reprinted from Michigan Vue

NO TELEVISION?

This was written by an 8th grade girl in response to the question "How would the world be different if there was no television?"

If there was no television we would get outside a lot more and see stuff and do stuff for real instead of just watching someone else do it. We would be healthier and would be able to figure things out ourselves by reading newspapers and magazines. We would also get our imaginations back.

So, what are you planning on doing after dinner?

Submitted by Annette Alexander-Frank

REVIEW –

HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG

By Alan Elias

What happens when the American dream becomes the American nightmare? That's what you'll find out if you see HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG, which I highly recommend. And don't let the movie trailer fool you. Although the preview shows clips completely out of order and presents it as a movie full of suspense and mystery, I think it is better described as a thought provoking drama that will leave you contemplating American values, American bureaucracy and the real meaning of terrorism. The writing is multi-layered, portraying American culture and Iranian culture in a "photo-realistic" way we don't often see, with the actors breathing amazing life into some very difficult characters.

The story focuses on Kathy Nicolo (Jennifer Connelly), a recovering

alcoholic trying to figure out how to pick up the pieces of her broken life, Massoud Amir Behrani (Ben Kingsley), a once affluent and prosperous Colonel in the Iranian air force now living in America, secretly working menial jobs as pride forces him to keep his wife and son living in the same lavish way they did in Iran and the broken down house that both Kathy and Massoud see as their salvation.

Through a series of unfortunate circumstances and bureaucratic mistakes, Kathy loses the house left to her by her father, the last thing she feels she has of value in her life. Massoud buys it in a state auction, moves his family in, hoping to fix it up, sell it quickly and make a large profit, finally beginning their path to

American prosperity. As Kathy becomes obsessed with getting the house back, she becomes romantically involved with a Deputy Sheriff (Ron Eldard) who has his own view of justice and just what defines an American. The road they all travel takes them on a collision course of cultures, wants, needs and desires that will leave you rethinking what is really important in life and realizing just how fragile our own personal reality can be.

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REVIEW –

THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS

By Ross Grossman

Come to movies at DAFT without having called the night before. If I call, I may not come; "real life" gets in the way too often, I want to sleep late, or I make a value judgment about a film I don't know nearly enough about. For me, whether it's a movie I want to see or one I never would pick on my own, at best I get a "free" show, at worst, my brain gets exposed to another viewpoint, as I watch a movie on our Saturdays. For December, I'm glad

to say DAFT has shaken, not stirred, my brain again, with THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS.

At first it seemed like any other gritty movie about families — a father dying, a reluctant son — yet another movie about reconciliation. Yes, it's a movie about connecting back to our parents as adults, and shedding some of our preconceived notions about them, too. But in waiting for the story to "give up" the title of the movie (it's true, I do this), I realized this movie is a pearl inside a dirty old oyster.

Once this lazy American got over having to read subtitles (hey, I can admit it!), I settled into the rhythm of this terrific

French/Canadian movie. I found the film was not only about a son's opportunity to show how much he cared about his father and that he could ease his father's imminent death, but was also a commentary on the way harsh realities intrude on how we expect life to be. Whether it is how we would prefer to view our parents, or the tragedy of 9/11 on American feelings of security, or the way we feel OUR lives should go, "barbarians" often threaten the gates of our perceived safety. Sometimes that safety is an illusion — how much control we think we have in the world.

I'm really glad I didn't call the DAFT hotline the evening before; I might have slept in, and missed a really good flick!

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FIRST LOOK: 'POLAR EXPRESS'

When moviegoers take a ride on The Polar Express this November, they'll see a new film technology that director Robert Zemeckis likens to an oil painting.

"I wanted it to look like a movie in an oil painting, then have all the warmth, immediacy and subtleties of a human performance," Zemeckis says in this first look at the movie. It's due in theaters Nov. 19. A trailer from the movie will be shown on television Thursday and will be in theaters starting June 4.

The classic children's tale by Chris Van Allsburg is about a boy who takes a night train to visit Santa in the North Pole. It stars Tom Hanks, who also is executive producer of the film, and Nona Gaye, the late Marvin Gaye's daughter.

Actors recently finished shooting the movie, which involved an unusual process to achieve the painterly effect. Unlike most movies, it was filmed in the chronological sequence in which the action occurs in the book.

Here's how it works:

- The actors film the story in what is called a "black box theater," where they perform their scenes as if in a theater in the round. But they are wearing more than just makeup: Their faces are painted with hundreds of reflective dots on every muscle, eye-

lid, eyebrow and locus of expression.

- Computers with infrared receptors surround the actors, recording the nuances of their performances.
- That digital information is transferred to a computer, which then places the actor's image in a painted setting from the book.

To achieve the artistic effect, Zemeckis called upon a team of artists led by Doug Chiang, who created the palette for the way the images will look, based on Van Allsburg's distinctive illustrations.

"When Tom (Hanks) and I were thinking about how we could do this book as a movie, we scratched our heads and asked, 'How do you do a train going to the North Pole at night on Christmas Eve?' We decided to explore all aspects of digital cinema. We tried human characters against a blue screen. We went through every possible technique.

"Then we tried this very new form, and when we got the results back, we decided this is the only way we can do it." Because in this process scenes are shot from beginning to end, a lot more of the script is covered in a shorter amount of time.

"The actors don't have to stop for set-ups or camera angles," says Zemeckis, who also directed *Cast Away* and *Forrest Gump*. "Everything is in continuity. So it's wonderfully liberating for the actors: They can just act. They don't have to think of all the technical things," he says.

The shoot was finished in 40 days, fast for a big-budget movie. Screenwriter William Broyles Jr. (*Cast Away*) added more elements to the slim holiday tale.

"There are lots of nice little surprises and a whole adventure that goes on," Zemeckis says. "We're very faithful to the book. The one thing we wanted to do is keep the spirit of it."

~ Doug Chiang is a former MSFVF winner and grew up in Westland, MI

NEW PLAY AT PURPLE ROSE THEATRE

Join DAFT members to the new play, *DUCK HUNTER SHOOTS ANGEL*, written by Detroit's Mitch Albom. We have tickets for the Sunday, 2:00 PM matinee, on the 27th of June.

Full of zany characters, *DUCK HUNTER SHOOTS ANGEL* is an out-of-this-world tale full of magical surprises and unexpected second chances. This new play will keep you smiling long after you've seen it.

Mitch Albom is a best-selling author, nationally syndicated newspaper columnist for the *Detroit Free Press*, nationally syndicated radio host for ABC and flagship station WJR-AM Detroit, and television commentator.

Tickets are \$25.00 each and a portion is tax deductible. Call the DAFT office to reserve your tickets at: (248) 547 0847.

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ART ON THE MOVE: AN ANIMATION WORKSHOP

Have you ever wanted to add a new dimension to your own art? Or sought to bring an exciting multi-disciplinary art form into your classroom? Art on the Move is a new workshop presented by Detroit Area Film & Television that is designed to provide an intensive hands-on experience in animation for classroom teachers and other interested adults or mature high school students. The instructors have many years of class-

room and professional experience in animation and promise a week full of learning and fun.

WHEN: Art on the Move will meet July 19- 23, 2004. Classes meet daily Monday – Thursday from 9 am to 5pm and Friday until 3 pm at the beautiful Howell Nature Center.

FEES: Tuition for Art on the Move is \$585, which includes most materials, lunch, and a compilation tape of

all work produced. University credit (3hours) is offered through Central Michigan University for an additional fee paid to CMU. Overnight accommodations in dorms are available for an additional \$100 (4 nights), including breakfast (dinner on your own).

For more information call Annette Alexander-Frank at 248/547-0847 or email areyoudaft@hotmail.com

FOCAL POINT VIDEO WORKSHOP

Focal Point is an intensive week of “hands-on” video study designed to give adults and mature high school students an opportunity to work with video from conception to finished product in one week. Students of all skill levels are welcomed and course work can be geared to accommodate specific interests and needs.

Staff includes **John Prusak**, award-winning cinematographer and media educator; **Dick Rockwell**, telecommu-

nications instructor and scriptwriter; **Steve Julin**, certified AVID and Final Cut Pro trainer; and **Annette Alexander-Frank**, art and video teacher.

Focal Point meets from 9 am to 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday, July 12-16, 2004 in the production studios of Royal Oak Dondero High School.

Topics covered include scriptwriting, storyboarding, camera operation, editing, graphics, special effects, and digital audio manipulation. Demon-

strations by professionals and presentations by guest artists will also be added to the rich mix.

Tuition is \$585 and includes instruction, use of equipment, most materials, lunch, a compilation tape of all student work and a Focal Point T-shirt. University credit is available through Central Michigan University.

To register or for more info call Annette Alexander-Frank at (248) 547-0847 or e-mail areyoudaft@hotmail.com.

THREE PEAT

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the contestants and skills needed to become a champion. Chaz’s editing and camera work were terrific and Ron made a great news reporter.”

Chaz, Ron, Meghan and Jeff were presented with their Gold and Silver medals at a Sunday morning awards ceremony presided over by the state officers of SkillsUSA. Over 3,000 contestants, their advisors, friends and family were present. At the conclusion of the ceremony, first place winners were briefed on how to prepare for the SkillsUSA national championship to be held June 21-25, 2004 in Kansas City where the competition will be held on a staging area as large as 8 1/2 football fields, with over \$25 million in equipment, and over 7,000 contestants.

The only problem now for Chaz and Ron is getting there. They must raise \$1,600 for contest registration, airfare and hotel lodging. WOAK will sell dubs of upcoming graduations, pop concerts and dance club performances to raise funds to send the team to the championship.

Rockwell said, “It would be a shame if we won the state championship and then couldn’t raise the money to defend the national title. We studied a composite reel of last year’s national Television Production entries and Chaz and Ron are ready to compete and win on that level. I know they can do it.”

Chaz and Ron have received awards at DAFT’s Michigan Student Film and Video Festival which was show-

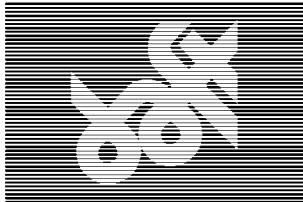
cased at the Detroit Institute of Arts Film Theater on Saturday, May 1, 2004. Chaz and Ron’s videos “The Royal Oak Foundation Golf Outing” won an EXCELLENCE AWARD in the Documentary category, and “Sixth Hour” won an EXCELLENCE AWARD in the General Entertainment category. Two other videos they made won HONOR awards.

The students plan on continuing their work in video production next year when they enter college. Chaz Hornbacher and Jeff Buck are planning on attending Wayne State University, Ron Rafalski plans to go to Oakland Community College, and Meghan Covell will be checking out the new video labs at Macomb Community College.



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DETROIT AREA FILM & TELEVISION

Detroit Area Film & Television

An Educational Association

Detroit Area Film & Television is a not-for profit organization whose stated mission is to promote visual literacy. We hold monthly general membership meetings where a short informational session is followed by the screening of a feature film. We conduct workshops, conferences and festivals for teachers and students, and give support to emerging film and video producers. We receive generous support in our efforts from the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs.

2003-2004 DAFT SEASON

- Sept. 20 *Underworld*
- Oct. 18 *The Human Stain*
- Nov. 15 *Master and Commander*
- Dec. 13 *The Barbarian Invasions*
"Best Foreign Film Oscar Winner"
- Jan. 17 *Against The Ropes*
- Feb. 21 *Welcome to Mooseport*
- March 20 *The Girl Next Door*
- April 17 *Laws of Attraction*
- May 15 *Valentin*

**DAFT MEETING DATES
 2004/2005 SEASON**

- Sept. 18, 2004. *(3rd Saturday)*
- Oct. 16, 2004 *(3rd Saturday)*
- Nov. 20, 2004 *(3rd Saturday)*
- Dec. 11, 2004 *(2nd Saturday)*
- Jan. 15, 2005. *(3rd Saturday)*
- Feb. 19, 2005 *(3rd Saturday)*
- March 19, 2005. *(3rd Saturday)*
- April 16, 2005 *(3rd Saturday)*
- May 21, 2005 *(3rd Saturday)*

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