

# Erie Times-News

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## Flipped Out Over Flicks

By Dave Richards, Staff writer

The 3rd annual Great Lakes Film Festival has it all — filmmakers and semi-big stars (Luke Perry, Adam West), Erie horror movie 'Axe Murder Hollow,' political documentaries, and a movie about the making of a porn film. The fun starts tonight at the Roadhouse.

The third annual Great Lakes Independent Film Festival has a little bit everything for cinema lovers today through Sunday at Roadhouse Theatre. Mostly, it's got wall-to-wall films — more than any year so far. From more than 600 entries — an all-time high — festival director Steve Opsanic and several judges selected more than 70 works.

"The really great thing is we're not only getting more films, but the quality of them just gets better every year," Opsanic said. "From cinematography to acting to you name- it, they're just getting better, which impresses me and surprises me a little bit."

Several films feature faces you'll recognize. Adam West, TV's "Batman," hosts a "Night Gallery"-styled horror anthology, "Tales from Beyond," that sounds like cheeky fun. (At press time, Opsanic was holding out hope West might visit the festival).

Former "Beverly Hills 90210" heartthrob Luke Perry is trapped in a car with friends (but not Jason Priestly) on a dangerous mountain slope in "Fogbound." Henry Gibson of "Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In" (but also "Nashville" and "Magnolia," so give him a break) stars in the fast-paced short "The Goldfish."

SHOWCASING A FEW FILMS WITH NAME actors is cool, but this festival isn't trying to become the next Cannes. It's a forum for new and up-and-coming filmmakers to showcase works and get feedback. Nearly 60 filmmakers will visit Erie during the festival, more than the previous two years combined. Among them will be California's Bobby Logan, who won the best director and Founder's Vision awards for tonight's opening feature, "Yard Sale."

"There are festivals everywhere, but you want to go to the ones that are either going to be special or showcase your work in a professional manner," Logan said. "I wanted into the Great Lakes Festival because some friends of mine had a film in there, 'I Don't Know Jack.' They told me about it and had some very good things to say."

Logan relishes showing "Yard Sale" far away from film-obsessed Hollywood or New York.

"The people in Pennsylvania are a great audience; they're not affected by show business. They just want a good story and good characters and a good movie. That's why it was a pleasure to be accepted and more than a pleasure to get the Founder's Award and best director. It's most humbling; I'm just really pleased. I feel like John Kerry winning California."

Like most filmmakers, Logan will attend the screening of his work and talk about it afterward.

"Invite me over for a cup of coffee! I'm more than happy to speak about the film," he said with a laugh.

FIRST-TIME FILMMAKER SHAWN PHELPS of Erie awaits tonight's screening of "The Appointment," a 15-minute short he shot at the Boothby Inn.

"It's going to be fun to see the reaction from a whole room full of people who don't know who I am or what the film's about," said Phelps, the production director for Erie's Community Access Television (CAT). "This will be good feedback for the next one — seeing what people react to and what they like."

Similarly, Erie's Matt Detisch will showcase "Axe Murder Hollow," which he co-directed with Adam Fish, on Saturday at midnight

"I'm a little nervous about the crowd response, but I think in the spirit of indie filmmaking, everyone will enjoy the fact it was done locally in Erie, and hopefully, they'll enjoy the way we shot it," said Detisch, who was just 15 when he and Fish began shooting the film.

Detisch said they shot "Axe" — based on Erie's infamous horror legend — on next-to no budget. Still, they created some ingenious bloody effects that would probably earn the film an R rating.

"The violence is pretty gratuitous, you could say," Detisch said.

"Axe" will precede a showing of the original "Night of the Living Dead," which will feature zombies roaming the aisles. Also, actor Bill Hinzman will attend both the Friday and Saturday night screenings of "The Flesh Eaters" and "Night of the Living Dead." He appeared in both horror films.

IN THIS ELECTION YEAR, GREAT LAKES Film Festival features two political documentaries of note: Robert Greenwald's "Uncovered: The Whole Truth about the Iraq War" and "There's Something about W," the winner for best documentary short. "W" interweaves serious, fact-based analysis with humorous commentary from Molly

Ivons, Daniel Ellsberg, Michael Moore, Arianna Huffington, Bill Maher, and Al Franken, among others.

"In showing these films, I'm not trying to side with any political party or put any political party down," Opsanic said. "But the fact of the matter is they were good films — very, very good films. Anyone who liked 'Fahrenheit 9/11' would want to come see these two films. They're not going to be disappointed."

The documentary with Rather — and former Texas governor Ann Richards — is about skewering beef, not politicians. "Barbecue: A Texas Love Story" also includes musicians Chris Layton (Double Trouble), Kinky Friedman, and Art Alexakis (Everclear).

Opsanic said one film is definitely for an 18-and-up audience. The title pretty much explains why: "Sex Sells: The Making of Touche." It's about a retiring porn director who wants to go out with a bang by filming the largest orgy in history. The cast includes Adrian Zmed as porn star Lance Long. Yup, it's a comedy.

"It's a narrative feature, done as a documentary, about the making of an adult film that has everything an adult film should have," Opsanic said. "We don't rate films, but people should know this is for a mature audience."

ODDLY, PORN STAR JEREMY IS in a film that's not a porn film — "People," the narrative feature winner that chronicles the downward spiral of three childhood friends. John Hensley ("Nip/Tuck") and Joshua Harto ("Oz," "Law & Order") also appear.

The festival weekend includes an after-hours show with live music on Friday at Docksider and Sunday's Best of the Fest, with all the award-winning films.

The don't-miss, says Opsanic: "North of Providence," which won the best-of-the-fest award for best entry regardless of category. The narrative short is based on an off-Broadway drama about a depressed son trying to come to terms with his dying father. Mark Belasco earned the festival's best-actor award for his performance as the family's slacker brother.

"He's the black sheep of the family, and the film shows the metamorphosis of this person," Opsanic said. "The acting is unbelievable. Outstanding. The way they do it is very understated, but it comes through. It doesn't hit you in the face. It's a very good film — probably one of the best films I've seen since I've done this festival."

### **Great Lakes Independent Film Festival Schedule**

The Great Lakes Independent Film Festival opens tonight, which makes the following a sneak preview, of sorts. See below for some film tidbits, as well as basics on admission and screening rooms.

- Admission is \$6 for Opening Night tonight. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., the first short rolls at 7 p.m. at the Roadhouse Theatre, 145 W. 11th St.

For the rest of the weekend, admission is \$3 for each block of films. Also available: A \$25 all-access pass, good for all showings and festival events, including the awards presentation; or \$10 for an all-day pass. Tickets are available at the Roadhouse.

- Unlike the past two years, all films will be shown at Roadhouse Theatre, which will feature three screening rooms, divided by genre. The main screening room will feature narrative shorts and features, the Best of Fest winners on Sunday, and tonight's opening films. Capacity is approximately 200. Last year's opening night sold out, so get your tickets early.

A downstairs screening room, with seating for about 40, will feature all documentary shorts and features. The Roadhouse's backstage coffeehouse will show experimental and animated films.

- Free popcorn will be available throughout the festival. Also available: Beer, wine, and soft drinks.

- Both Friday and Saturday will feature Midnight Madness with horror shorts and a feature attraction. Bill Hinzman, who appeared in both "The Flesh Eaters" (shown Friday) and George Romero's original "Night of the Living Dead" (Saturday) will attend both nights.

Saturday's shorts will include the festival's last-ever showing of "Timmy's Wish" and locally created shorts, "Easter Madness" and "Axe Murder Hollow."

- Best of the Fest will include the Run and Gun winner "DuaLife," written by Franklin's Amy Krizon, on Sunday at 8:30 p.m. Krizon will shoot, edit, and screen the film during the festival. The plot? By day, the protagonist in "DuaLife" works for "Families for Morality." At night, she's an exotic dancer.

- In addition to Hinzman, another special guest for the event is author Jamian Snow, whose "Shroud of Insanity" may soon be turned into a movie. He'll also appear at Great Lakes' next event, an Eerie Horror Film festival, set for Oct. 8 and 9 at the Roadhouse.

- At press time, directors, producers, and/or actors from the following works were scheduled to attend: "Air," "Axe Murder Hollow," "Dirt = Money," "Drummer Boy," "Easter Madness," "Gathering Circles," "Grim," "Love Scene," "The Fallen," "Ride of the Mergansers," "Tales from Beyond," "Tentative," "The Arsonist," "The Art of Trash," "The Bugman," "The Crypt Club," "The End of Suburbia," "The Mortuary," "The Appointment," "The Trial of Jack," "The Weather Report," "White Skies," "Westless American," "Yard Sale," "DuaLife."

• Lack of space precludes Showcase from publishing a synopsis for each film. For that or other festival-related questions, visit the festival's Web site [www.greatlakesfilmfest.com](http://www.greatlakesfilmfest.com).

## **The Features**

**Tonight, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday at the Roadhouse Theatre, 145 W. 11th St.**

### KEY

**AN** Animation

**DF** Documentary feature

**DS** Documentary short

**EX** Experimental

**NF** Narrative feature

**NS** Narrative short

### TONIGHT

**7 p.m. Narrative shorts program No. 1.** "Air," 0:22. "Sweetheart," 0:13. "North of Providence," 0:30. Room 1.

**8 p.m. Narrative shorts program No. 2.** "Killing Kevin," 0:16. "The Goldfish," 0:18. "Look," 0:16. Room 1.

**9:30 p.m. Feature presentation.** "Yard Sale," NF, 1:42. "The Appointment," NS, 0:15. Room 1.

**11 p.m. Opening-night reception. Room 1.**

### FRIDAY

**12:30 p.m.** "Drummer Boy," NF, 1:47. Room 1.

**12:30 p.m.** "A Day in the Light," DS, 0:30. "The Royal Academy," DF, 1:00. "Tentative," DS, 0:11. Room 2.

**2:15 p.m.** "Containment: Life After Three Mile Island," DF, 1:00. "Rational Dissent," DS, 0:15. Room 2.

**2:30 p.m.** "Fogbound," NF, 1:37. "The Rules," NS, 0:29. Room 1.

**4:40 p.m.** "Upper Crust: Let Them Eat Rock," DF, 1:27. "Living the Blues," DS, 0:35. Room 2.

**4:55 p.m. Animation shorts program.** "Magnetism," 0:13. "Willis Sillim's Tall Tale," 0:07. "Musica Magica," 0:04. "Rockfish," 0:08. "Flyaway," 0:11. "The Devil and Manny Sheckstein," 0:07. "Roland's Trouble," 0:02. "Moving Things While the Camera Is Off," 0:02. "A Strange Story, Volume 1," 0:03. Coffeehouse.

**4:55 p.m.** "Photo Finish," NF, 1:32. "Grim," NS, 0:17. Room 1.

**6:55 p.m.** "Art of Trash," NF, 1:10. "Thanksgiving," NS, 0:13. Room 1.

**8:20 p.m.** "Uncovered: The Whole Truth about the Iraq War," 0:56. "There's Something about W," DS, 0:40. Room 2.

**8:35 p.m.** "Tales from Beyond," NF, 1:55. "Date 1.0," NS, 0:12. Room 1.

**8:35 p.m. Experimental shorts program.** "String," 0:04. "Pillow Girl," 0:06. "Happy Crying Nursing Home," 0:30. "Roothold," 0:11. "White Skies," 0:19. "Process to Symbols," 0:12. Coffeehouse.

**11 p.m. Shorts program.** "Visage," 39:33. "Timmy's Wish," 0:10. Room 1.

**12:05 p.m. Midnight Madness presentation.** "Flesh Eaters," 1:27. The 1964 horror film starring Jack Curtis, Martin Kosleck, Rita Morley about a group trapped on an island by a deranged scientist and threatened by tiny sea creatures who then consider a merger. Room 1.

#### SATURDAY

**11:25 a.m.** "Love Scene," NS, 0:24. "Peoples," NF, 1:36. Room 1.

**11:25 a.m.** "Barbecue: A Texas Love Story," DS, 0:46. "Dirt = Money," DS, 0:32. "A Touch of Greatness," DS, 0:54. Room 2.

**1:40 p.m. Narrative shorts program.** "Redemption," 0:09. "Burning the Bed," 0:13. "Every Seven Years," 0:11. "The Weather Report," 0:25. "The Bugman," 0:23. "Mother's Book," 0:23. Room 1.

**1:40 p.m. Animation shorts program.** "Magnetism," 0:13. "Willis Sillim's Tall Tale," 0:07. "Musica Magica," 0:04. "Rockfish," 0:08. "Flyaway," 0:11. "The Devil and Manny Sheckstein," 0:07. "Roland's Trouble," 0:02. "Moving Things While the Camera Is Off," 0:02. "A Strange Story, Volume 1," 0:03. Coffeehouse.

**2 p.m.** "The End of Suburbia," DF, 1:18. "Officer Steve," DS, 0:24. Room 2.

**3:55 p.m.** "Sex Sells: The Making of Touche," NF, 1:36. "The Trial of Jack," NS, 0:09. "The Arsonist," NS, 0:15. Room 1.

**3:55 p.m. Experimental shorts program.** "String," 0:04. "Pillow Girl," 0:06. "Happy Crying Nursing Home," 0:30. "Roothold," 0:11. "White Skies," 0:19. "Process to Symbols," 0:12. Coffeehouse.

**4 p.m.** "Shelter," DF, 1:40. "Gathering Circles," DS, 0:21. Room 2.

**6:10 p.m.** "The Fallen," NF, 1:55. "The Americans," NS, 0:12. Room 1.

**6:30 p.m.** "Making Waves," DF, 1:40. "The Other Side of AIDS," DF, 1:26. "Ride of the Mergansers," DS, 0:12. Room 2.

**8:30 p.m. Awards reception. Room 1.**

**10:15 p.m. Shorts program.** "The Crypt Club," 0:23. "Easter Madness," 0:06. "Timmy's Wish," 0:10. "Axe Murder Hollow," 0:45. Room 1.

**12:10 a.m. Midnight Madness presentation.** "Night of the Living Dead," 1:36. George Romero's 1968 classic horror film in which seven people barricade themselves inside a farmhouse while an army of flesh-eating zombies await outside. Room 1.

#### SUNDAY / BEST OF THE FEST

**1 p.m.** "Making Waves," DF, 1:04. "There's Something about W," DS, 0:40. Room 1.

**3 p.m.** "Rock Fish," AN, 0:08. "String," EX, 0:04. "The Arsonist," Best of the Fest award, 0:15. "Yard Sale," Founder's Vision award, 1:42. Room 1.

**6 p.m.** "Gay by Dawn," NS, 0:10. "Peoples," NF, 1:36. Room 1.

**8:30 p.m. "Run and Gun" presentation. Room 1.**

**9 p.m. Closing-night reception. Room 1.**