

imagine

WWW.IMAGINENEWS.COM

AUGUST 2003

IMAGINE ■ WWW: WORKS, WRINKLES & WRAPS

WWW STANDS FOR WORKS (IN PROGRESS), WRINKLES OR WHOOPS (WHENEVER THEY HAPPEN), AND WRAPS (COMPLETED FILMS AND PROJECTS OF ANY KIND). YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE ENCOURAGED. EMAIL TO PUBLISHER@IMAGINENEWS.COM.

WORKS

LEF Foundation Announces Second Round of Grants to Independent Filmmakers

We like to mention good works in IMAGINE, and here we are happy to report the meaningful work of Lyda Kuth and the LEF Foundation (see IMAGINE May 2003 feature article). The LEF Foundation continued its investment in New England's independent filmmaking industry with the awarding of 25 grants, totaling \$189,500, from the Foundation's Moving Image Fund. It is especially gratifying when we look at the list and note several recipients whose names and stories have appeared in IMAGINE over the past almost six years. The newly established Fund (2002) invests in films that push boundaries, and contribute to New England's creative economy (a key word per PUB). It's dedicated to providing grants for project development, production, and distribution to individual film and video artists, as well as to selected programs that support filmmakers.

"We are interested in providing funding for distinctive, independent voices in filmmaking, including people who are making their first films as well as nationally-known artists," said Lyda Kuth, Director of LEF New England. "With these grants we hope to demonstrate that important work can be made here — that filmmakers do not have to leave New England for some other city or region in order to find support for their work."

LEF is committed to making strategic investments in the early stages of a project's life, and to following those projects over time. Two films that received distribution grants this year — Jocelyn Glatzer's *THE FLUTE PLAYER* and Jared Katsiane's *EVERYDAY IS NEW* — have received previously development or production grants from LEF. "We are fortunate to be able to take risks to fund projects in their early stages," says Ms. Kuth, "and are thrilled to see those risks pay off."

Of the 25 filmmakers receiving grants this year, 16 are residents of six different Massachusetts cities and towns, six are from Rhode Island, and one is from Vermont; two are filmmakers residing outside the area who are working on projects dealing with New England subjects.

The LEF Foundation is a private family foundation that supports the creation and presentation of contemporary work in visual, media, and performing arts primarily in the New England and Northern California regions. LEF funds projects of creative merit, cultural resonance, and timeliness, reflecting a belief in the value of experimentation and in the important role that art and its practice hold in society.

To learn more about the LEF foundation and for a complete list of award recipients visit www.lef-foundation.org.



Lyda Kuth, Director of LEF New England. Her foundation's long term goal is to keep talented filmmakers in the region and increase the visibility of their talent. Photo courtesy of LEF. Photo by Sally Fay Cottingham



Director Zachary Lee (pictured here) and Roadside Pictures begins production on *SHORTNESS OF BREATH*, a film that pays homage to the French New Wave and its affection for film noir. Photo courtesy of Joanna Jefferson.

BELOW: Director Zachary Lee pictured here with camera and on the set



Feature Film Production Generates \$112.8 Million FY'03

The Massachusetts Film Bureau announced that an estimated \$112.8 million was generated into the local economy for the fiscal year ending July 1, 2003. Since its inception one year ago as a nonprofit, following the closure of the state film office, the MFB has facilitated production for 5 feature films including: *SPARTAN*, starring Val Kilmer, directed by David Mamet; *Castle Rock's ALEX AND EMMA*, starring Kate Hudson and Luke Wilson, directed by Rob Reiner; *Twentieth Century Fox's STUCK ON YOU*, starring Matt Damon and Greg Kinnear, directed by Peter and Bobby Farrelly; *Columbia Pictures' MONA LISA SMILE*, starring Julia Roberts, Kirsten Dunst, Julia Stiles, and directed by Mike Newell; and *Warner Bros' MYSTIC RIVER*, starring Tim Robbins, Kevin Bacon, Sean Penn, Laurence Fishburne, Laura Linney, directed by Clint

Eastwood. The various films shot throughout Massachusetts in Rockport, Gloucester, Wellesley, Framingham, West Bridgewater, Cambridge, and Boston.

MFB Executive Director, Robin Dawson, said: "It is rewarding to have secured this business for Massachusetts. This industry is an important economic engine for the Bay State. Through the support of many local businesses, the MFB is continuing the tradition of filmmaking in Massachusetts which is also, an integral tool to increase tourism."

SPARTAN wrapped production in Boston on July 3 after shooting at landmarks at Copley Square, the Back Bay's Charles Street and the new Lenny P. Zakim Bridge. There are six feature film projects that shot in Massachusetts due for release in the next eight months.

"All of these recent films showcase Massachusetts' spectacular locations and architecture. Upon the international release of these movies, tourism will be substantially increased as well," stated Dawson.

The operation of the Massachusetts Film Bureau has existed on donations and fundraisers.... You can visit their new website at www.massfilmbureau.com.

Feature Film, *SHORTNESS OF BREATH*, Schedules to shoot this September in Somerville, MA
This September, local filmmaker, Zachary Lee and Roadside Pictures will begin production on *SHORTNESS OF BREATH*, a film that pays homage to the French New Wave and its affection for film noir.

SHORTNESS OF BREATH is the story of Michael and Patricia, two lovers who find themselves increasingly alienated by their pursuit of the "American Dream." To counter this, they seek refuge in the past, a past almost wholly defined by crime films of the 40s and 50s. But, when the pair is involved in a convenience store robbery, their game transforms into something more serious.

"Film history has a time and a chronology all its own. Films can connect to each other over several years, but still exist in the same place at the same time," Lee says. "I [ve] tried to construct a film that would be true to this — a film that is new and has its own sensibilities...while remaining tied and paying tribute to the films that have come before it."

The two-week shoot will be filmed entirely in and around the Somerville area, in a Super16mm format. The final intention, however, is to release prints in 35mm. Local support has been, and will continue to be, vital to the success of the production. For more information about *SHORTNESS OF BREATH*, visit the website at www.roadsidepictures.com.

THOREAU ON A THOREAUVIAN BUDGET

Producer Charles Cook believes the way to make a feature film about Henry David Thoreau is on a Thoreauvian budget. He showed preview scenes from *Thoreau* — a Re-creation in July at the Performing Arts Center in Concord, Massachusetts.

He calls his film a *CITIZEN KANE* meets *OUR TOWN*, as a reporter tries to find out who paid Thoreau's taxes when he refused to support the Mexican American War because it would bring Texas into the union as another slave state.

Over 135 actors, both SAG and non-union, auditioned for parts in the film, most of which was cast and shot in and around Concord.

Charles Cook's first feature film was a colonial period piece about how Ben Franklin secretly negotiated the French-American alliance a year before the Revolution began.

Continued on page 29