



## *Darrell Fetty* *Keynote Speaker*

**WV born Writer, Actor  
and Producer.**

**Produced the record  
breaking cable miniseries  
“The Hatfields and McCoys”  
starring Kevin Costner  
and Bill Paxton.**

**Topic:  
The World Needs  
Storytellers.**

# First Annual Martinsburg Apollo Film Festival

**Friday March 13 - Sunday March 15, 2026  
at the beautiful Historic Apollo Civic Theater**

- Festival Passes From \$10-\$49 (open to public)
- Over 20 Hours of Quality films (Local and International)
- Meet The Filmmakers
- Friday, Saturday, and Sunday socials!
- Sunday awards ceremony
- Pitch your film idea to a major producer!
- Discounted hotel rooms



**A little art, a lot of fun!**

**Tickets available at [www.MartinsburgFF.com](http://www.MartinsburgFF.com)**

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# *Welcome*

Welcome to the **First** annual Martinsburg Apollo Film Festival! We held the festival in Berkeley Springs for 4 years and this year moved to Martinsburg WV.

30 films will be screened at 4 different venues within walking distance in downtown historic Martinsburg, providing over 25 hours of entertainment. The films are not rated and some contain foul language (noted in the film's description), but none contain nudity. Also, we told filmmakers not to submit films having to do with COVID or political themes. We figure you get enough of that on TV. 6 films were made in West Virginia, and 4 more in Maryland. Most are low budget films but some have significant investments. Many of the films will be debuting at our festival!

The festival does not have a "theme". The judges select films based on good entertainment and production value, not the message, so we have films of various genres ranging from feel good dramas, documentary, animation, sci-fi to horror.

In addition to providing a great program for viewers, we wanted to make our festival very supportive of filmmakers. While some have mastered the technical aspects of the art form and are making a living wage, most are struggling. Film festivals mean a lot to independent filmmakers. They provide a venue for filmmakers to see their hard work (many of whom spend hundreds or thousands of hours on a project) shown to an audience for the first time. Our festival also supports filmmakers by providing a free festival pass, free seminars, lots of awards they can use for promotion, prizes, and an opportunity to network with other filmmakers to collaborate on future projects.

Film festivals also provide a rare opportunity for filmmakers to get direct audience feedback in order to learn and grow in craft and art. There will be a brief Q&A after each block of films, where filmmakers can answer questions. Please also take some time to meet the filmmakers, compliment them on their accomplishments, and share your thoughts on their film. Also please show your support and encouragement by staying for the Awards Ceremony from 3:00 to 3:30 PM Sunday afternoon. We promise it will be entertaining.

If you are interested in film, introduce yourself to a filmmaker whose work you like, and offer to volunteer on their next project. They are always looking for people to share their passion and effort.

Now get some popcorn, sit back, and enjoy the show!

Sincerely,  
Brett Hammond – Festival Director

# ACCOMMODATIONS

## Tru Hotel by Hilton - The Official Hotel of the MAFF



Tru by Hilton Martinsburg



Welcoming the  
Martinsburg Apollo Film  
Festival



Please call 304-262-8240

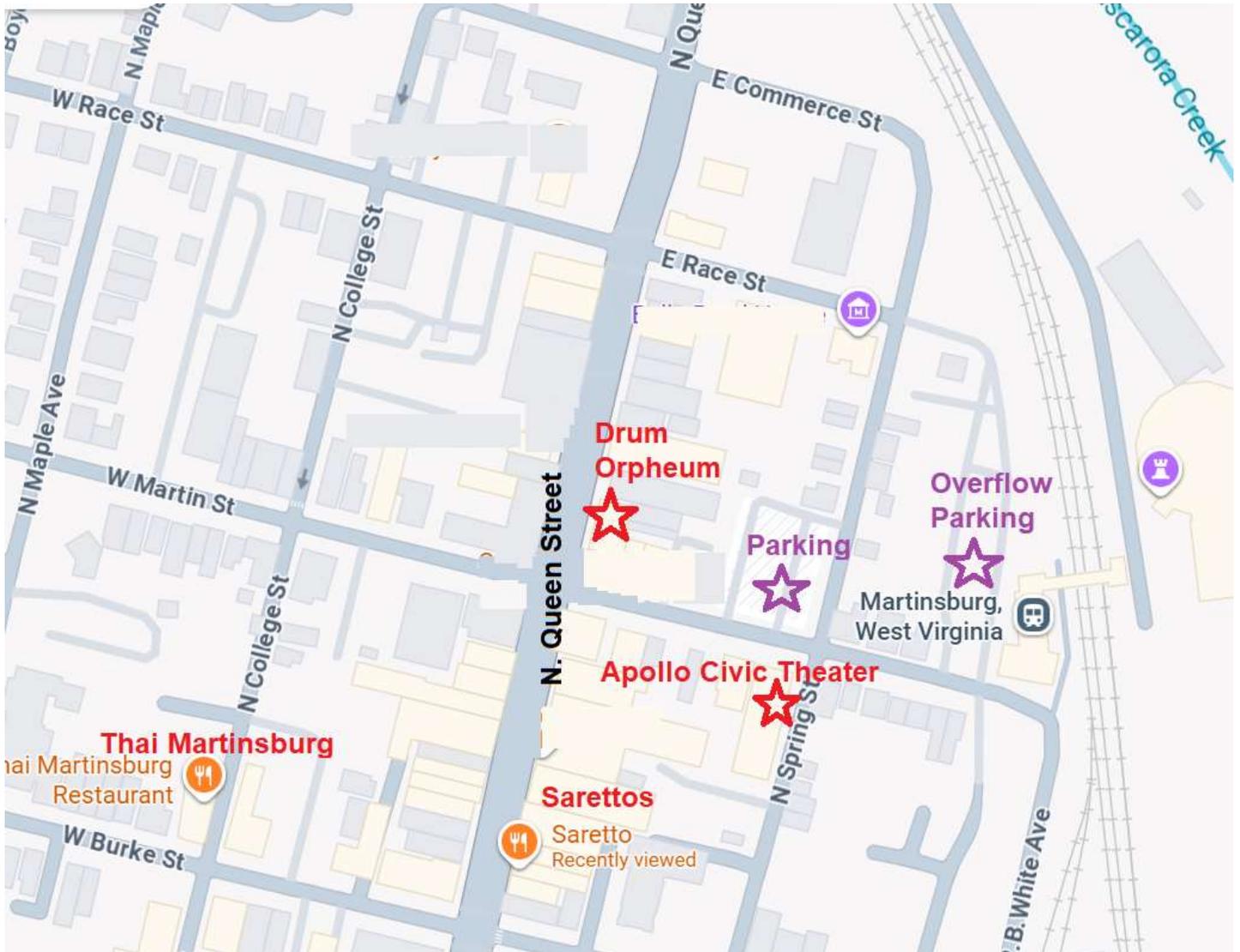
Free hot breakfast, EV charging, and  
Fitness Center. Also, Pet Friendly!

The brand-new Tru Hotel by Hilton is the Official Hotel of the 2026 MAFF! We have negotiated a reduced rate of \$99 per night including free breakfast, free wifi, fitness center and free parking. So plan to come Friday so you don't miss the great seminars early Saturday morning and stay for the festival all weekend! Rooms are set aside for us until March 1, after which the discount rate depends on availability, so book early! You may make a reservation by calling the hotel directly at 304-262-8240, then press 0 for the front desk and ask for a room in the MAFF Film Festival group block. Or you may make reservations online at MAFF Discount

Check-in is after 3 PM and checkout at 11 AM. Free cancellations at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

Tru by Hilton Martinsburg  
801 Snapp Street  
Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401

## Map of Venues



Parking is free downtown after 5 PM on Friday and all day Saturday and Sunday. Park once until it's time to go to bed, and it's a short walk to all venues in beautiful downtown Martinsburg. Saturday will be busy downtown with the St. Patrick's Day festival that starts about noon, so I suggest arriving early on Saturday to get a good parking spot and enjoy the morning filmmaker seminars. Our venues:

[Apollo Civic Theater](#)  
128 East Martin Street  
Martinsburg WV 25401

[Saretto Restaurant](#)  
109 North Queen St.  
Martinsburg WV 25401

[Drum Orpheum](#)  
205 North Queen St.  
Martinsburg WV 25401

[Thai Martinsburg Rest](#)  
200 West Burke Street  
Martinsburg WV 25401

## Filmmaker Seminars

Our mission is to be supportive of independent filmmakers and this year's seminars certainly do that. All seminars take place in either Saretto's Restaurant or The Drum Orpheum. Our Keynote Speaker will take place in the theater. You do not have to be a filmmaker to attend seminars, but you do need a valid pass for the day of the seminar. However, you can attend the keynote speaker without a festival pass because it is sponsored by the WV Film Office.

### **Keynote Speaker - Darrell Fetty**

3:45 PM to 4:45 PM Saturday at the Apollo Civic Theatre



Darrell Fetty is a writer, producer and musician. His credits are endless (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0275368/>), but may be most well known for producing his record breaking miniseries The Hatfields and McCoys starring Kevin Costner and Bill Paxton. He will present the keynote address "The World Needs Storytellers" followed by an audience Q&A. He will also chair a pitch session where attendees will get a rare opportunity to pitch their favorite movie ideas to an established major motion picture producer (time limit 2 minutes per pitch to allow time for feedback, and may be limited to 12 people by random drawing at the time).

### **Pitch Session - Darrell Fetty**

8:00 AM to 9:00 AM Sunday at the Drum Orpheum

### **Low cost VFX options and Legal use of AI - Dan Trezise**

8:00 AM to 10:00 AM Saturday at the Sarettos



Dan Trezise is a filmmaker and visual effects supervisor with more than three decades of experience bringing ambitious cinematic stories to life, including work on Spider-Man, The Matrix, Star Trek, and Moon Knight. A VES Award nominee and award-winning director, he is dedicated to empowering filmmakers to use technology in service of story.

Dan Trezise will lead a discussion on where the film industry is headed and how independent filmmakers can position themselves within that changing landscape. The workshop will highlight affordable tools and real-world workflows—from visual effects and real-time engines to emerging AI platforms—along with an honest conversation about their strengths, limitations, and impact on storytelling.

## **Storycraft: The Screenwriter's Toolkit - Adam Jones**

8:00 AM to 10:AM Saturday at the Drum Orpheum



Adam Jones is a writer, actor, director, and producer, and has worked on over 130 episodes of TV (including Saturday Night Live and The Sopranos) and numerous feature films. He cohosts StoryOsophy, a podcast that explores screenwriting and storycraft, and works as a script doctor and story consultant. A full list of his credits is viewable here on IMDb: [www.imdb.me/doctajones](http://www.imdb.me/doctajones) .

Join Adam Jones for a 2-hour screenwriting seminar. Explore unique approaches to structure, character, and scene work while learning to write performable dialogue and action, track compelling arcs, and build narratives for maximum audience immersion. Come explore

how to make writing easier through nonlinear construction and create an enjoyable workflow that frees you from writer's block and keeps you excited about the process—perfect for writers at any level.

## **The New Indie: Making Movies on Your Own - Adam Jones**

8:00 AM to 10:AM Sunday at Saretto's Restaurant

Learn how to bring your film ideas to life on a shoestring budget. This 2-hour seminar covers new perspectives on the filmmaking pipeline—everything from writing, producing, and casting to directing, shooting, editing, and distributing your work. Walk away with practical tips, strategies, and the confidence to make your project a reality. The first person who will make your film a reality... is you.

## **The Production Checklist – Jen Davis**

9:00 AM to 10:00 AM Sunday at the Drum Orpheum



Jen Davis is a Writer, Producer, and Production Designer with years of experience across multiple departments and disciplines. She's an avid supporter of in-state filmmaking and independent production, having helped produce several movies and TV shows in West Virginia.

Jen will lead a 1-hour seminar about the needs of production that independent filmmakers often overlook. From tax incentives and the use of pass-through companies to insurance, contingency, and other important production considerations, Jen will walk you through a bullet-point checklist you can use to ensure your project

is ready for production. A blend of creativity and practicality, this seminar will explore tips on how to maximize your budget and make your production shine.

**FRIDAY MARCH 13, 2026**

## **The Apollo Civic Theater Doors Open**

3:30 PM - Friday

Theater doors open so you can pick up your Festival Pass and grab a seat in the theater.

## **Film Block 1 at the Apollo Civic Theatre**

4:00 PM to 6:28 PM – Saturday



### **Eugene O'Neill's - The First Man (148 min)**

Directed by Hardeep Giani

This is the first-ever film adaptation of The First Man - an early and rare story from the pen of Nobel laureate and Pulitzer prize winner, Eugene O'Neill.

This psychological romantic drama set in 1920s Connecticut, delves into themes of obsession, grief and betrayal.

World renowned anthropologist Curtis is consumed by grief over his young daughters' deaths. He finds solace in immersing himself in preparations for his upcoming expedition to Asia, where he aims to unravel the mystery of "The First Man." However, he must confront an undercurrent of family conflict as he battles against his relatives' unsettling suspicions that his wife Martha is carrying his best friend Bigelow's child.

## **Film Block 2 at the Apollo Civic Theatre**

6:45 PM to 8:45 PM – Friday



### **Annihilator Unleashed (120 min)**

Directed by Waqar Peter Gill

**Contains violence.** A reclusive ex-cartel enforcer is drawn back into bloodshed when he saves a singer from murder, leading to a confrontation with a vengeful crime lord seeking revenge against him.

## Film Block 3 at the Apollo Civic Theatre

9:00 PM to 10:30 PM – Friday



### Valley of the Shadow (90 min)

Directed by Thomas Whitus

When a serial killer posing as a Reverend murders two families in 1877 Colorado, the survivors from each family join forces to track down the killer in an attempt to deal out their own version of Western justice.

## Friday Party Mixer

10:30 PM to ???

## SATURDAY MARCH 14, 2026

### SEMINAR - Low cost VFX options and Legal use of AI - Dan Trezise

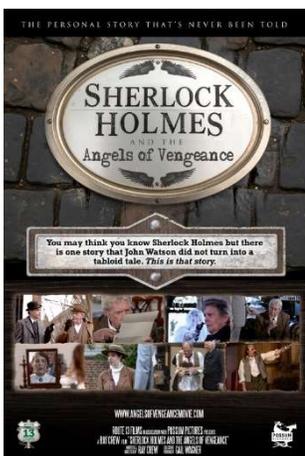
8:00 AM to 10:00 AM Saturday at the Saretto's. Details on page 6.

### SEMINAR - Storycraft: The Screenwriter's Toolkit - Adam Jones

8:00 AM to 10:AM Saturday at the Drum Orpheum. Details on page 7.

## Film Block 4 at Saretto's

10:00 AM to noon – Saturday



### Sherlock Holmes and the Angels of Vengeance (120 min)

Directed by Ray Crew

In 1899 the famous consulting detective is newly and happily retired until a mysterious visitor steps out of the pages of American history to ensnare him in a conspiracy that began with the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and threatens both the Crown and civilization. In the process he and Watson will have to face their own demons--addiction, guilt, shame, lost love, and loneliness--as they are drawn deeper into an abyss from which they and the world may never return..

## Film Block 5 at the Drum Orpheum

10:00 AM to 11:58 AM – Saturday



### Misfits (118 min)

Directed by Kris McMenamin

**Contains foul language.** From childhood innocence to the chaos of adulthood, we follow Josh—a widowed father—and his loyal band of misfit friends as they fight to save his family and home. In a last-ditch effort, Josh and his best friend Ryan enter a holiday-themed high-stakes wrestling match. As the crew rallies together, unexpected allies surface and signs from Josh's late wife Sandy appear, guiding their turbulent journey. What follows is an

unpredictable mix of calamity, comedy, and camaraderie—leading to a gritty and moving conclusion.

## Film Block 6 at the Apollo Civic Theatre

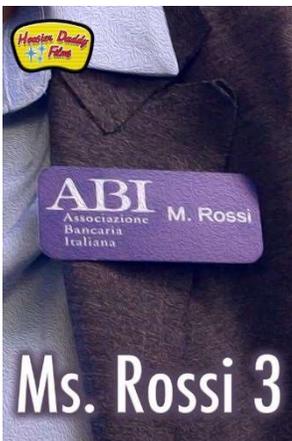
10:15 to 11:45 AM – Saturday



### MIAZEL (17 min)

Directed by George Dogaru

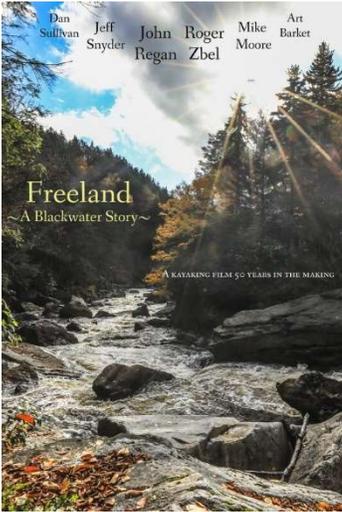
The dystopian future depicted in "Miazel" is one in which Romania's ethnic minorities are sent to labor camps. A common citizen's life in this new society takes an unexpected turn once he is suspected of descended from impure Romanis.



### Ms. Rossi 3: Ms. Rossi Meets the Mob (20 min)

Directed by Pat Battistini

While traveling for work, Ms. Rossi gets picked up by the wrong driver at the airport.



## **Freeland ~ A Blackwater Story (53 min)**

Directed by Justin Harris

The follow up to A White Grass Story, this film dives into the history of the Blackwater River in the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia, and the kayaking community that has developed around it. Blackwater Canyon contains world class whitewater, with 17 miles of Class IV-V+ rapids. This river is home to the birth of steep creeking, and A Blackwater Story reviews the early history of the sport, told by those who were here to live it. The film explores the topic of death in whitewater, and the impact social media plays on the next generation of whitewater kayakers.

## **Film Block 7 at the Martinsburg Thai Restaurant**

12:10 PM to 1:57 PM – Saturday



## **Slouching Towards Branson (107 min)**

Directed by Will Wood

Enjoy this film while dining at one of Martinsburg's best Thai Restaurants! Limited seating, so arrive early.

In his new comedy special Slouching Towards Branson, singer-songwriter and alt-comic Will Wood performs for audiences across the U.S., intertwining songs from his discography with a drug-addled, rat-filled, spiritually confused about as true as a true story can be while still being a story.

## **Film Block 8 at the Apollo Civic Theatre**

Noon to 1:24 PM – Saturday



## **Supersedure (72 min)**

Directed by Marti Steiner Unger

A girl. A mentor. 80,000 bees. What could go wrong? Dylan (Andi Johnson) is a guarded teen on the edge of adulthood when she's pushed into an unexpected apprenticeship with Dave (Ken Mattson), a seasoned beekeeper. What begins as a reluctant job among thousands of honeybees becomes a lifeline: a place to belong, a mentor to trust, and empowerment that shows up in ways Dylan never expected. d



### **HR & B (12 min)**

Directed by Ron Scott Jr.

Coworkers try and figure out a fool proof way to talk to women.

...don't forget the music.

## **Film Block 9 at the Apollo Civic Theatre**

1:45 to 3:30 PM – Saturday



### **Wardensville: Tales from Tiny Town (105 min)**

Directed by Paula Warden Orndoff

Appalachian storytelling documentary gathers and preserves the collective stories, voices, and memories of the greater Wardensville area in West Virginia's eastern panhandle.

## **Keynote Speaker at the Apollo Civic Theatre**

3:45 to 4:45 PM – Saturday

Keynote address: The World Needs Storytellers by Darrell Fetty. Details on page 6.

## **Film Block 10 (dark films) at the Apollo Civic Theatre**

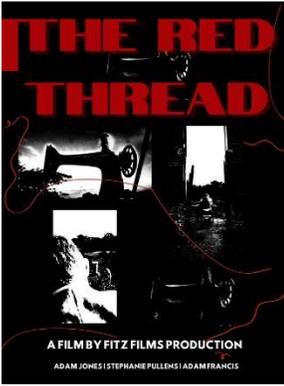
5:00 PM to 6:57 PM – Saturday



### **Hunger Short Film (19 min)**

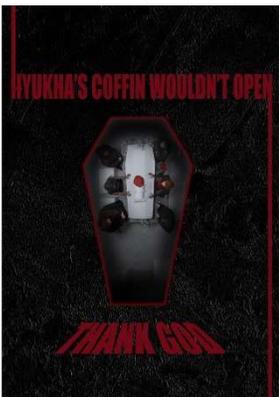
Directed by Ken Carlson

A group of trappers lost in the wilderness of the 1830s Pacific Northwest must face more than hunger.



**The Red Thread (12 min)**  
Directed by Peyton Rhian Fitz

Émile Dufour is a talented, reclusive tailor in a quiet (European) town. His fame stems from the exquisite, hand-sewn suits he creates, each finished with a single strand of a strange, red thread. The thread is his secret signature, and while some customers claim it brings good fortune, others whisper of inexplicable misfortunes that follow them. Unbeknownst to most, Émile didn't choose this thread, it was forced upon him through a chance encounter with a woman named Selène, whose ominous warning has haunted him ever since.



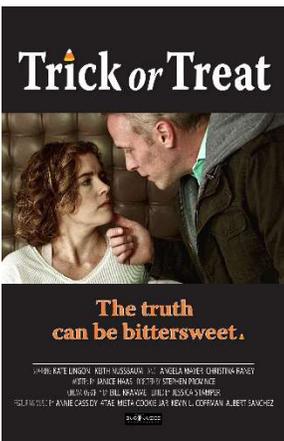
**Ilyukha's Coffin Wouldn't Open. Thank God (30 min)**  
Directed by Alexandra Sher

When the seven people closest to Ilyukha come to his funeral to say goodbye, they discover that his coffin is closed, and each of them has their own version of how the deceased met his end



**Opposite But Equal (29 min)**  
Directed by Jeff Madzai

**Contains foul language.** The drug game has many player, but no real winners

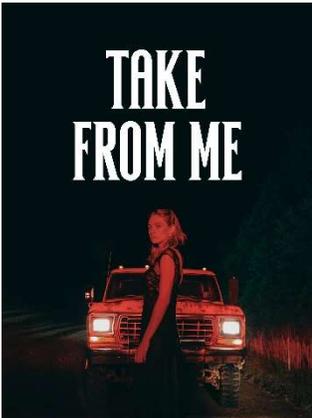


**Trick or Treat (26 min)**  
Directed by Stephen Province

**Contains adult subjects.** Josie wants to keep things good with her relationship with Derek...but can she get past his walls? "Trick or Treat" is a slice of life story of Josie Gold and her hot and cold relationship with Derek Payne. The film is a drama with a classy vibe to it.

## Film Block 11 at the Apollo Civic Theatre

7:15 PM to 9:10 PM – Saturday



### Take From Me (110 min)

Directed by West Eldredge

**Contains foul language.** Take From Me centers on John, a troubled man whose life has unraveled to the point where he can't let go of the farmhouse he once called home. After a mysterious woman buys the property and moves in, John begins secretly watching her—drawn by a mix of resentment, curiosity, and a longing for the life he lost. His fixation deepens as he convinces himself that something about her presence doesn't add up.

## Party Mixer at Saretto's Restaurant (bar area)

9:10 PM to whenever – Saturday

## SUNDAY MARCH 15, 2026

### SEMINAR - The New Indie: Making Movies Your Own - Adam Jones

8:00 AM to 9:00 AM Sunday at the Drum Orpheum. Details on page 7.

### SEMINAR - The Production Checklist – Jen Davis

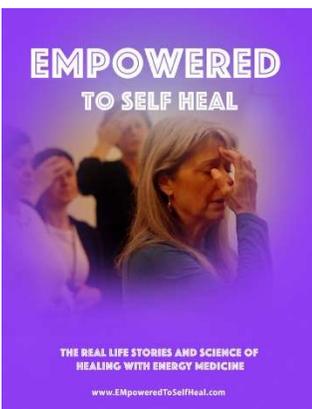
9:00 AM to 10:00 AM Sunday at the Drum Orpheum. Details on page 7.

### SEMINAR - Darrell Fetty's Pitch Session

10:00 AM to 11:00 AM Sunday at the Drum Orpheum. Details on page 6.

## Film Block 12 at the Drum Orpheum

10:00 AM to noon – Sunday



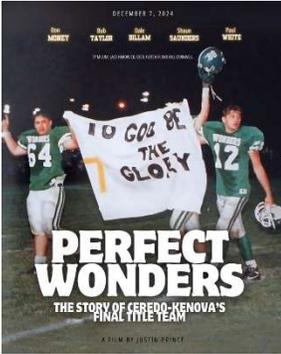
### EMpowered to Self Heal (45 min)

Directed by Tara Roberts Zabriskie

A documentary film about the healing power of energy medicine and the impact Donna Eden has had on the lives of many people in a life-changing kind of way. This film highlights case studies and testimonials of real people who have found a way to heal when the traditional medical system had no solutions.

# Film Block 13 (short docs) at the Apollo Civic Theatre

10:00 AM to 11:38 AM – Sunday

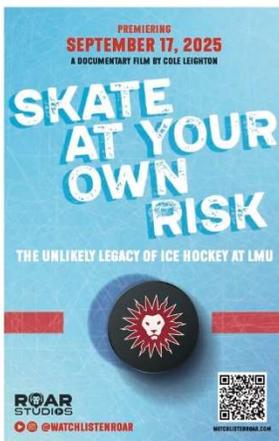


## Perfect Wonders (40 min)

Directed by Justin Prince

Perfect Wonders: The Story of Ceredo-Kenova's Final Title Team tells the story of the 1994 C-K High School State Championship football team. 30 years after amassing a perfect 14-0 record and winning the school's 12th ever state title the 1994 Wonders are still regarded as one of the most dominant high school football team's in West Virginia history. This film takes an inside look at the tradition of Ceredo-

Kenova football, its impact on the community and most importantly brings the greatness of the 1994 team to a new generation of West Virginia high school football fans.



## Skate At Your Own Risk (15 min)

Directed by Cole Leighton

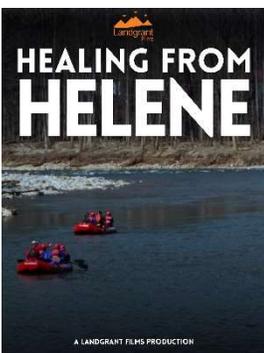
In 2005, a group of college boys started the LMU Ice Hockey Club. In the years since, they've become a staple of ACHA men's hockey. Now, 20 years later, LMU Women's Hockey is doing the same. From the studio that brought you "How to be Seen" and "Game Changer," ROAR Studios presents: "SKATE AT YOUR OWN RISK," a new documentary film from director Cole Leighton.



## Born Secret (20 min)

Directed by Riley Fitchpatrick

A filmmaker returns to his hometown that built the atomic bomb. There he meets the workers who created humanity's greatest weapon that now wrestle with their legacy, while their grandchildren inherit a world on the brink of nuclear catastrophe.



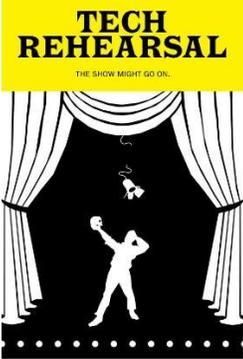
## Healing from Helene (23 min)

Directed by Eli Patterson

People in communities like Hartford and Newport lost virtually everything in Helene's flooding. This is their story of healing amid the hardship of restarting.

## Film Block 14 at the Apollo Civic Theatre

Noon to 1:38 PM – Sunday



### Tech Rehearsal (12 min)

Directed by Blayne Weaver

The show might go on. The arrogant director of a community theatre struggles to lead his bickering and volatile cast and crew through a marathon tech rehearsal. Will the company unite before curtain?



### AIR SHIFT (86 min)

Directed by Chris Maes

During an overnight shift at a small FM radio station, a frustrated DJ becomes the target of a local serial killer. What begins as a hostage standoff escalates into chaos when a nearby disturbance turns an excavation crew into violent attackers, forcing her to fight for survival.

## Film Block 15 (Animated Films) at the Apollo Civic Theatre

1:45 PM to 2:49 PM – Sunday



### SnowBugs (3 min)

Directed by Jenny Schuermann

During a snow day, three girls find themselves in a tricky situation after one of them accidentally goes too far during their snowball fight.



### Itsy Bitsy Problems (10 min)

Directed by Kenneth Cassidy Tyner

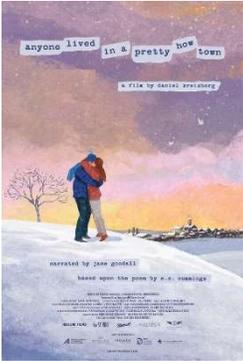
A spider moves into his new home, and faces some realities of home ownership.



### **What we imagined (3 min)**

Directed by Shubhavi Arya

In a magical park, two children meet across a divide — one fast like a cheetah, the other once feared. Through questions, sketches, and a desktop of dreams, they invite us into a story of transformation, truth, and imagination. Their message is simple but powerful: Be who you are. Even if you're still figuring it out.



### **Anyone lived in a pretty how town (9 min)**

Directed by Daniel Kreizberg

In a picturesque town, a man named “anyone” rejoices in the beauty of everyday life and celebrates the natural world. The people around him, however, are more focused on conforming to modern society, and ostracize anyone for being different.



### **Mightyclaw ( 38min)**

Directed by Gary Fierro

When young Jake Carole gets lost in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, his only companion is his toy, Harlow Mightyclaw. But Harlow isn't just a toy—outfitted with advanced video and radio tech, he becomes Jake's lifeline in the wilderness. As Jake's family searches, they turn to Austin Carole, the reclusive creator of the Mighty Pals. With time running out, Jake must face his fears and trust the magic within Harlow.

## **Award Ceremony at the Apollo Civic Theatre**

3:00 to 3:30 PM – Sunday

Please show your support for the filmmakers by staying in the auditorium for the Award Ceremony! We promise no long speeches and it takes less than 30 minutes! Acceptance speeches are limited to 60 seconds or less. This is a very exciting time for filmmakers to be recognized for their efforts and we hope you can share in the excitement.

## **After Party at TBD**

3:30 PM – Sunday

After the Award Ceremony, please join us for the After Party downstairs in the Panhandle Room off the main dining room. Enjoy an adult beverage, join us for dinner, or just mingle and make new friends. One of the best parts of the festival is the opportunity to socialize and network with filmmakers, cast, and crew. Volunteer to help a filmmaker whose films you enjoy or find collaborators for your next project. Many fruitful connections have been made at the BSFF!

# The West Virginia Film Office Information

**For Content Producers:** Locations, Locations, Locations: We have nearly 5,000 unique sites listed in our Locations Directory, Click [here](#) to peruse those [https://wv.reel-scout.com/loc\\_results.aspx](https://wv.reel-scout.com/loc_results.aspx)

**Log Your Project and Needs:** Are you doing a production in West Virginia or curious about doing so? Go online [here https://share.hsforms.com/13LgiMUHLTGOB--oyV9PWYyw1iilq](https://share.hsforms.com/13LgiMUHLTGOB--oyV9PWYyw1iilq) to submit information about your project and we will contact you to assist anyway that we can.

## Crew Services Directory

[https://wv.reel-scout.com/crew\\_directorylist.aspx?type=C&cl=C](https://wv.reel-scout.com/crew_directorylist.aspx?type=C&cl=C)

**Discover More:** Go online at <https://westvirginia.gov/wvfilm/> and check out this video at <https://youtu.be/MMageME4NSk>

## Production Testimonial

<https://youtu.be/zEk4qi0poJE>

## Sizzle Reel

<https://youtu.be/MMageME4NSk>

**For Middle School and High School Teachers:** The West Virginia Film Office has teamed up with Film Pittsburgh's Teen Screen program, which thanks to a Benedum Foundation grant, offers free screenings of regionally-made films to help teachers tap into film as an additional source of education. Teen Screen and its team of educators selects films that best support school curricula and build programs around them, including teaching materials, additional resources, and guest speakers. Within the fall semester alone, they shared films with schools across Ohio, Kanawha, Wetzel, Marion, and Monroe Counties in WV. They've worked with hundreds of students, enhancing their learning experiences in various subjects while helping them and their teachers meet West Virginia academic standards. Their films include features, documentaries, and shorts that highlight topics such as Civil Rights, Environmentalism, The Holocaust, Innovations in STEM, Cultural Relativism, The Power of the Arts, Women's Empowerment, World Languages, and various Literary Themes. You can also learn more about Teen Screen programs and peruse their Virtual Film Roster by visiting <https://filmpittsburgh.org/pages/teen-screen> and contact Teen Screen director, Lori Sisson at [lsisson@filmpittsburgh.org](mailto:lsisson@filmpittsburgh.org) and Andrew McGowan, Teen Screen Program Manager, at [amcgowan@filmpittsburgh.org](mailto:amcgowan@filmpittsburgh.org).