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Local talent gets play at film fest!



OPENING NIGHT! Calhoun High School's Jill Schissel gets opening night billing with her film "Mildred Richards," a murder-mystery produced by her company, Radio Film Pictures, LLC. Meanwhile, Bellmoreite Sal Di

Guidice's film "Miracle Ball," premiering Sunday, July 10, at 4 p.m., promises to unravel a decades-old baseball mystery.

by Lauren Urban

The 13th Long Island International Film Expo (LIIFE) at the Bellmore Movies from Thursday, July 8 through Sunday, July 18, will be flooded with celebrities, parties, panels and 156 short- and feature-length films from 20 countries.

Local-area residents especially can look forward to viewing films from local talent who are taking to independent filmmaking in diverse yet serious ways, and looking to get their art into respectable theaters.

Indeed, 1995 Calhoun High School graduate Jill Schissel's film "Mildred Richards" will receive opening-night honors with a 7:30 p.m. showing on Friday, July 9.

Ms. Schissel started Radio Film Pictures, LLC in order to combine her passion for filmmaking with the golden age of radio. "Mildred Richards" is her

first Radio Film Picture.

"As I started attending film festivals...people would say that [director Marc Kess and I] were breaking new ground for filmmakers," Ms. Schissel told Bellmore Life.

"Prior to hearing these comments, my focus was on presenting authentic radio dramas to an audience, so I thought I was involved in preserving history, and I was surprised to realize I was potentially making history," said Ms. Schissel.

The groundbreaking film tells the tale of Mildred, an egomaniacal, nearly bankrupt actress, who enlists the help of her reluctant brother, Gerald, to steal their elderly aunt's fortune. Mildred has nothing short of murder on her mind, but after arriving at her aunt's country estate, things get complicated by her aunt's caretakers.

"Making a film is a collaborative endeavor and 'Mildred Richards' has a

great cast and crew. To have our hard work recognized as an Opening Night Official Selection of LIIFE...is a real blessing.

"My hope is that the audience is entertained. I want them to enjoy and appreciate the film, while also recognizing that this is a unique opportunity to watch a film that incorporates an authentic old time radio drama," concluded Ms. Schissel.

Sal Del Giudice is another local filmmaker, showing for the second time at this year's festival.

"As a Bellmore resident, participating in the Long Island Film Festival affords my family and friends the opportunity to see the film in a festival setting. I think, most importantly, it gives our film ["Miracle Ball"] some incredible exposure," said Mr. Del Giudice, the film's producer/director.

"Miracle Ball," showing on Saturday, July 10, during the 4 p.m. film block,

examines a filmmaker's journey as he searches for an infamous piece of sports memorabilia - Bobby Thomson's 1951 home run ball that seemingly vanished into the stands after it was hit.

Mystery finally revealed

"After 57 years the world will finally learn who walked out of the stadium with the famous baseball that day and where it has been hidden for nearly six decades. This is a sports story for the ages," continued Mr. Del Giudice.

The Bellmore native has produced three films and has three in various stages of development.

Local filmmaker Lou Yablonsky of North Bellmore is also a graduate from Calhoun High School.

Mr. Yablonsky has written and directed over 15 shorts while at New York University, culminating in "Bathtub Gin," the story of amateur

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School and later Hofstra University.

Mr. Bieber's film "The 5th Quarter," getting opening-night world-premiere treatment on Friday, July 9, tells the story of Jon Abbate, who lost his 15-year-old brother Luke in a fatal car crash. Jon, driven by the tragedy, helps to lead the Wake Forest Demon Deacons to the most successful season in school history.

The film stars Andie McDowell and Aiden Quinn.

Grappling with a problem

Another local filmmaker, Matt

Rosenberg, is a 2007 Island Trees High School graduate from Levittown.

Mr. Rosenberg will be a senior film major at Five Towns College this year. He has produced 10-12 films, including "A Bloody Mess," which is getting its world premiere at the festival.

"A Bloody Mess," premiering on Thursday, July 8, during the 7 p.m. film block, is a 12-minute film that

took three weeks to film. It tells the story of Roy Offerman, a teenager facing a very mature problem at a very immature time in his life.

"I was sitting in scriptwriting class with Ryan [O'Leary, the film's director/writer]. We didn't know each other, but he pitched the idea for the film to the class, and I loved it. I thought it was a great concept," said Mr. Rosenberg.

Mr. Rosenberg is looking forward to

his second year participating in LIIFE for the networking opportunities, but also is hoping "to have a good time and meet new people."

Anyone interested in the art of filmmaking, or just seeing some films, is encouraged to come to the Long Island International Film Expo from July 8-18 at the Bellmore Movies, 222 Pettit Avenue, Bellmore.



You're invited!

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