



2015 Panelist Biographies

Words to "Action"!



Monica Lee Bellais is a screenwriter/producer with considerable know-how that blends experience working in Hollywood, Washington, DC and international markets. Monica has worked at James Cameron's Lightstorm Entertainment, DreamWorks SKG, Warner Bros. Records, Smithsonian Networks, Discovery Communications, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), and TeleProductions International (TPI). As an executive producer at TPI, she cultivated a worldwide network of multimedia professionals that leveraged knowledge of local cultures to develop authentic international programming. Monica conducted international business development and led interaction with local fixers and foreign officials and with filmmakers and film production companies in many countries including Egypt, Pakistan, Lebanon, Italy and Thailand. She managed the development and production in the United States and United Arab Emirates in non-fiction programming initiatives for broadcast via film, television and new media for audiences in the Middle East, Europe, North Africa and Asia. Monica penned the feature film TRI, which shot in the Washington, DC area this year. She's on the Advisory Board for The Stan Lee Foundation and Washington West Film Festival, and she's a Board Member of Women in Film & Video.



Arla Bowers won a Cine Golden Eagle award for her short narrative comedy FACING THE FIRST. She earned screen credit for the direct-to-video feature THE LOST STALLION. Her short script TWENTY QUESTIONS was highlighted at the International Family Film Festival in Los Angeles and is currently in pre-production. Arla has received scriptwriting honors in numerous competitions, including the Academy Nicholl Fellowship and the Maryland Independent Artist Award. She regularly serves as a judge for The Scriptwriter Network's Hollywood Outreach Program and as a speaker at WIFV's ScriptDC. She produced the cable-aired MARY PICKFORD'S GIFT TO A NEW GENERATION and created the three-year moving image curriculum "Lights, Camera, Literacy!" being taught across the country. She is a member of the Alliance of Women Directors, as well as the Dramatists Guild, and is represented by a major independent literary agent in Los Angeles.



Jeanne Veillette Bowerman is the Editor and Online Community Manager of *Script Magazine* and on Stephanie Palmer's list of "Top 10 Most Influential Screenwriting Bloggers." She is Co-Founder and moderator of the weekly Twitter screenwriters' chat, #Scriptchat, and wrote a Tracking Board Top 25 Launch Pad Competition selected script, the narrative adaptation of the Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *Slavery by Another Name*, with its author, Douglas A. Blackmon, former senior national correspondent of *The Wall Street Journal*. Jeanne also is President of Implicit Productions and [consults with writers](#) on how to build and strengthen their online and offline networks as well as face their fears in order to succeed in writing and in personal peace - a screenwriter's therapist. More information can be found on her blog, jeannevb.com. Follow [@jeannevb](https://twitter.com/jeannevb) on Twitter.



Giovanna Chesler (<http://www.g6pictures.com>) directs and produces narrative and documentary films that address the body, sexuality, and gender. These have included the short melodrama *BYE BI LOVE*, comedy short *BEAUTEOUS*, transmedia project *TUNE IN HPV*, documentary feature *PERIOD: THE END OF MENSTRUATION* (<http://www.periodthemovie.com>), and PBS / LOGO documentary *OUT IN THE NIGHT* (Producer) (<http://www.outinthenight.com>). Giovanna is an Associate Professor and Director of the Film and Video Studies Program (<http://favs.gmu.edu/>) at George Mason University.



Joan Darling was the first woman nominated for an Emmy[®] for directing. She was nominated four times winning both the Emmy[®] and the DGA Award. She is considered the first woman director of the modern age. She has lent her talents as both a director and actress. In the early 1970s, Joan got an acting role as a recurring character in the television series *OWEN MARSHALL, COUNSELOR AT LAW*. In her early directorial career, Joan directed the pilot and many other episodes in the first season of the hit TV series *MARY HARTMAN, MARY HARTMAN*. She also directed episodes of *M.A.S.H.*, *RICH MAN, POOR MAN*, *MAGNUM PI*, among others. She directed the “Chuckles Bites the Dust” episode of *THE MARY TYLER MOORE SHOW*, which was named “the number one TV episode of all time” by *TV Guide*. *The New York Times* named it “the funniest episode ever on TV”. Her first film, *FIRST LOVE*, was released in 1977, and was named one of the year’s ten best by CBS. Joan created the Directing the Actor workshop for the Sundance institute and has taught directing at the Sundance Lab for twenty years.



Robyn De Shields is a marketing and event management consultant. Her experience includes more than 30 years of strategic marketing management; campaign development; promotion; public television station relations; event management and community relations for national and regional public broadcasting organizations, television and radio producers, non-profit organizations and corporate clients. In 1996 she founded De Shields Associates, a firm specializing in marketing public broadcasting programs and series, special event management and strategic marketing. During her career Ms. De Shields has provided marketing representation for more than 200 radio and television productions. Her event management experience spans three decades and includes the management of events of all sizes and configurations from small intimate corporate dinners to outdoor concerts.

Ms. De Shields’ professional background includes serving as Director of Broadcast Marketing and Promotion for the Independent Television Service; Director of Communications for American Public Radio (now PRI); Associate Director of Station Relations and National Scheduling for WGBH; National Marketing Coordinator for WGBH Radio; Director of Communications for The Massachusetts Association for Mental Health; Public Relations Manager for WAMU-FM and Executive Assistant to the Executive Director of Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington.



Through insight gained from both ORANGE JUICE IN BISHOP'S GARDEN (OJBG) and 20/20 Productions, **Otessa Ghadar** recently wrote and published the digital media industry's first textbook, THE WILD WEST OF FILM. This DIY-guide for creative professionals teaches novices and experts alike how to create, market and manage in the digital age. As one of the web series medium's earliest adopters, Otessa Ghadar is a true forerunner of digital media. OJBG started as her MFA thesis at Columbia University's film school and is now the longest continually running show online. With an international audience in over 145 countries, OJBG has been recognized not only by a loyal global following, but also by industry heavy hitters. OJBG is a five-time Telly Awards Winner, a four-time LA Web Fest Winner, a two-time Webby Awards Official Honoree, among others.

Otessa is also the Founder and Owner of DC-based digital media company 20/20 Productions. With its content, the company has become the destination for non-geoblocked, globally available programming. The company is currently planning its 4th Annual DC Web and Digital Media Festival (DC Web Fest) in 2016. This year's festival has broadened its scope to include all forms of digital storytelling and technology, from gaming, to online publishing and more.



Sheree Guitar is a graduate of NYU's Dramatic Writing MFA program, Sheree started her career as a television writer in 1987 as a writer on NBC's THE DAYS AND NIGHTS OF MOLLY DODD. Over the next fifteen years, Sheree continued to work as a television writer on numerous shows including ROSEANNE. In 2003, Sheree decided to open her own boutique literary management and production company, Sheree Guitar Entertainment, where she utilized her talent and experience as a TV writer to find and groom the next generation of writers.



Jenny Halper is director of production and development at Maven Pictures, and has served as development executive on films including THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT, THE WHISTLEBLOWER, and BERNIE. Projects in development at Maven include adaptations of Jennifer Gilmore's THE MOTHERS, Colum McCann's DANCER, and David Lozell Martin's CRYING HEART TATTOOS, as well as TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE (Allison Anders to direct), and several TV series. Her adaptation of Laura Van Den Berg's WHAT THE WORLD LOOKS LIKE WHEN ALL THE WATER LEAVES US was an Athena List winner in 2015. She is a graduate of Northwestern University and Emerson College, where she was the recipient of a 2009 Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Grant.

Jane Love joined the staff of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and Screen Actors Guild in 1989 as a Contract Administrator covering radio and TV commercials, industrial-educational non-broadcast videotapes and feature films. Before joining the union staff, Jane worked for 3 years as a production coordinator on feature films and television movies/specials. She holds a BA in English from the University of Virginia and an MA in Journalism and Public Affairs from the American University. She was promoted to the position of Assistant Executive Director of what was then Washington/Baltimore Local of AFTRA/SAG since 1994 responsible for the administration of all of AFTRA and SAG's national contracts, including the SAGIndie contracts, in Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia. Following the merger of the unions in 2012, she was promoted to Associate Executive Director of the new Washington-Mid Atlantic Local of SAG-AFTRA which was expanded to include North Carolina and West Virginia. She is a past recipient of the Actors Center Theatre Distinction Award and has served on several industry group Boards, including her current post on the Executive Board of the Maryland Film Industry Coalition.



Best recognized for her highly politicized contributions to Polish New Wave cinema, **Agnieszka Holland** ranks as one of Poland's preeminent filmmakers. After graduating from the Czechoslovakian film school FAMU in 1971, Holland worked in television and features. She began her film Poland working with Krzysztof Zanussi as assistant director, with Andrzej Wajda as her mentor. Her first feature film, *PROVINCIAL ACTORS* (1978), was one of the flagship pictures of the "cinema of moral disquiet" and the winner of the International Critics Prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1980. In 1981, Holland moved to France.

ANGRY HARVEST (1985) was Holland's breakthrough film on the international scene. She subsequently earned international acclaim and a score of awards, including a Golden Globe and an Oscar nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay, for *EUROPA EUROPA* (1991). Her version of *THE SECRET GARDEN* (1993) was well received, as was her adaptation of *WASHINGTON SQUARE* (1997). Her most recent films are *Copying BEETHOVEN* (2006) and *IN DARKNESS* (2011), a Best Foreign Language Film Oscar nominee in 2012. Holland also has had a substantial career directing episodic television including *EKIPA*, *THE WIRE*, *COLD CASE*, *TREME* and *THE KILLING*. Holland's direction of the *TREME* pilot in 2010 received an Emmy nomination. Her work on the Polish political drama *EKIPA* (2007) was carried out in collaboration with her sister, director Magdalena Łazarkiewicz and daughter, storyboard artist Katarzyna Adamik.



Brigid Maher is a tenured, associate professor of Film and Media Arts. She is Co-Director of the Center for Media and Social Impact and Associate Division Director of the Film and Media Arts Division at American University. Maher's creative work concentrates on national and international women's issues with a particular focus on the Middle East and more recently women's health. Her latest documentary, *THE MAMA SHERPAS*, is currently screening across the country and follows nurse-midwives, the doctors they work with, and their patients, over the course of two years. The documentary provides an intimate glimpse into what midwives can bring to the birthing process in the hospital system. The film is executively produced by

Ricki Lake and Abby Epstein (*THE BUSINESS OF BEING BORN*) and distributed by Bond/360.

Maher's previous award winning documentary, *VEILED VOICES*, followed three Muslim religious leaders in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon and screened on over 150 public television stations across the United States with multiple national satellite broadcasts. The film was also featured in numerous international film festivals, including Al Jazeera Documentary Film Festival and the Los Angeles Women's International Film Festival and is distributed by Arab Film Distribution. Her other films include the narrative short *AWOL* and the feature film *ADRIFT IN THE HEARTLAND*. Maher's contribution to the academy further includes her roles as the co-executive editor of the online *Journal for Digital Media Arts and Practice*, incoming president of the International Digital Media Arts Association and Conference Vice President for the University Film and Video Association.



For more than two decades, **Joseph Martin** has worked as a producer, location manager and location scout primarily in the Washington-Baltimore region. He left six years of work on Capitol Hill as a policy staffer for Congressman Barney Frank to pursue his other passions in life – film, television and still photography. Martin worked as a producer on the road in Europe and throughout the U.S. on some 225 episodes of cooking and travel shows that screened on PBS and Discovery. From there, Martin moved into location scouting and location managing for Hollywood features, network television series, commercials, documentaries and photo shoots.

Martin's most recent projects include *3 ½ MINUTES TEN BULLETS*, an HBO documentary airing in late November, directed by Marc Silver, that examines racial implications of Florida's Stand Your Ground laws, *I.T.*, a crime thriller starring Pierce Brosnan and EERO SAARINEN, *THE ARCHITECT WHO SAW THE FUTURE*, a PBS/WNET American Masters documentary produced by Peter Rosen.



Lauren Menkes is a seasoned transactional entertainment attorney with over 25 years experience. She spent most of her career in Los Angeles working as an in-house legal and/or business affairs executive for a major film studio (Twentieth Century Fox), television studio (Walt Disney Television), television network (Comedy Central), independent production/distribution companies (Vidmark, PorchLight Entertainment), and also represented a variety of talent working as a business affairs executive for United Talent Agency. After moving from California to Maryland, she practiced entertainment law with Wise Entertainment Law and now has her own law practice,

Law Office of Lauren D. Menkes, LLC, based in Bethesda, MD. Lauren is an active member of the Maryland and New York Bars and an inactive member of the California and District of Columbia Bars. Lauren graduated *magna cum laude* with a B.A. degree from Duke University and received her J.D. degree from Emory University School of Law.



Bob Middleton has been the Director of the Arts Insurance Program, a division of Maury Donnelly & Parr, Inc., since 2006. Bob has over 30 years of experience working as a licensed agent and risk manager. He received a B.A. from the College of William and Mary in 1985 and attended the USF&G School of Insurance in 1986. He is a frequent guest speaker on insurance issues for the Arts Community and sits on the Board of the Maryland Film Industry Coalition and Maryland Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts.



Ron Newcomb has 20 years' experience in the independent film industry, producing several short films along with full-length feature films. He has been a Jack-of-all-trades, but currently enjoys directing. He is currently in post-production on his next project, *THE RANGERS*. Since establishing himself onto the independent film scene in the DC area, Ron has been a script and production consultant on several projects, hosting several speakers on the subject, and presenting his own seminars. He is a founder of the DMV Producers Association. Newcomb is an alumnus of the distinguished Act One Writing Program, the Dov S-Siemens Film School, and is trained in Final Cut Pro. Ron

was voted the AMTC's 3rd overall best Actor in 1997.



Herbert Niles has over 20 years' experience as media industry and government affairs executive. Mr. Niles has worked in content development and production at Orion Pictures; as an independent screenwriter, and served as VP of Film Development and Acquisitions at BET Networks. Mr. Niles is currently Deputy Director, Film & Television Development at the DC Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment (OCTFME). Since joining MPTD in 2010, Mr. Niles has worked on media sector strategy and programs targeted to benefit the local visual content creator community and media economy. Mr. Niles is a resident of Ward 4.



David O'Ferrall is currently the Business Agent for Local 487, I.A.T.S.E. . His responsibilities include the negotiation of agreements, enforcement of those agreements, assist productions in crewing and to engage the State Legislatures on issues important to the film industry such as tax incentives. He has worked in various positions for the Local since 1992 and has been Business Agent since 2011. Prior to working for Local he worked in various positions of numerous motion picture and television productions. He holds a J.D. from the University Of Baltimore School of Law and a B.S. in Mass Communications from Towson University.

Local 487, I.A.T.S.E. represents the craftspeople who work on the technical side of the Motion Pictures, Television Production and Broadcast Sports in Delaware, Maryland, Washington D.C. Virginia and West Virginia. Their work encompasses everything from big budget blockbusters to small independent films, commercial, music videos, political spots, industrial / corporate video, broadcast sports as well as television series. Its' members represent the most qualified, experienced and professional technicians and craftspeople in the region.



Dawn Porter is an award-winning filmmaker whose 2013 documentary GIDEON'S ARMY won the Sundance Film Festival Editing Award and the Tribeca All Access Creative Promise Award. The film broadcast on HBO in July 2013 and was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award and an Emmy. The film has been used across the globe to engage local communities in important conversations about indigent defense, race, the U.S. justice system and socioeconomic influences on crime. GIDEON'S ARMY won the American Bar Association's 2014 Silver Gavel Award for Media and the Arts and received the prestigious Ridenhour Documentary Film Prize. The film was also selected to be included in the U.S. Department of State's American Film Showcase. Dawn directed and produced SPIES OF MISSISSIPPI part of ITVS' 2014 Independent Lens series on PBS. The film tells the little-known story of a state-sponsored campaign to defeat the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Dawn recently completed RISE: THE PROMISE OF MY BROTHERS KEEPER, a documentary film chronicling President Obama's program to help young men and boys of color succeed. She interviewed President Obama for the film, which will air nationally on The Discovery Channel and The Oprah Winfrey Network. She is currently working on TRAPPED, which explores the impact of laws regulating abortion clinics in the South. Dawn's projects have received generous grant awards from the MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Tribeca Film Institute, Sundance Film Institute, Chicken & Egg Pictures and other esteemed organizations.

Prior to her independent filmmaking career, Dawn worked as Director of Standards and Practices at ABC News and as Vice President of Standard and Practices at A&E Television Networks.



Laurie Scheer, Media Goddess, is a former vice president of programming for WE: Women's Entertainment. She has worked as an assistant, d-girl, and producer for ABC, Viacom, Showtime, and AMC-Cablevision.

As a professional speaker, she has appeared at annual conventions for NAB, NATPE, The Great American Pitch Fest, Screenwriters' World, Reel Screen, WIFV, FTX West, the Willamette Writers Conference. She has served as a judge for numerous screenplay competitions, film festivals, and the International Emmys. She is currently a Faculty Associate/Writing Mentor with UW-Madison's Continuing Studies Writing Department where she critiques writers' works, conducts numerous online and in-person courses, and serves as the director of the Writer's Institute.

She is also the Founding Editor of the literary magazine, *The Midwest Review*. Her current interest is in exploring ways to preserve good storytelling within the 21st century transmedia marketplace and sharing her new book *The Writer's Advantage: A Toolkit for Mastering Your Genre* (Michael Wiese Productions, 2014) with writers in-person, online, and worldwide.



Tom Schulman graduated from Vanderbilt University with a B.A. in Philosophy. He studied at the USC Graduate School of Cinema, the Actors and Directors Lab with directors Jack Garfein and Harold Clurman, and more recently with director Joan Darling. He directed the Actors' Studio, West production of Harold Pinter's *THE CARETAKER*. Tom wrote *DEAD POETS SOCIETY* for which he received an Academy Award®. He also wrote *WHAT ABOUT BOB?*, *HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS*, *MEDICINE MAN*, and *HOLY MAN*. He wrote and directed *EIGHT HEADS IN A DUFFEL BAG*. He was an executive producer on *INDECENT PROPOSAL* and *ME, MYSELF, AND IRENE*. He was the writer/producer of *WELCOME TO MOOSEPORT*. He co-wrote and co-produced *THE ANATOMY OF HOPE*, a pilot for HBO. Tom served on the board of directors and then as

vice president of the Writers Guild of America, West. Tom served on the board of directors and then as president of the Writers Guild Foundation. His next film will be *MORGAN'S SUMMIT* starring Terrence Howard.



Nina Gilden Seavey is an Emmy® Award-winning filmmaker and a nearly 30-year veteran of the documentary world. Her films can be seen in theaters, on television, in ancillary media, and in museum exhibitions across the globe. Some of her films include *A PARALYZING FEAR: THE STORY OF POLIO IN AMERICA*, *THE BALLAD OF BERING STRAIT*, *THE MATADOR*, *A SHORT HISTORY OF SWEET POTATO PIE AND HOW IT BECAME A FLYING SAUCER*, *THE WAR AT HOME*, and *4TH & GOAL*. Her most recently completed film is *PARABLES OF WAR* and she is currently in production on *MY FUGITIVE*. Seavey's films have appeared in domestic and international festivals and

have won numerous awards including five National Emmy® nominations (one statue awarded), the Erik Barnouw Prize for Best Historical Film of the Year, The Golden Hugo, Cine Special Jury Prize, The Italian National Olympic Cup for Best Sports Film, among many others.

Seavey is the director of The Documentary Center in the School of Media and Public Affairs at The George Washington University, which she founded in 1990. In 2002, she became the Founding Director of *SILVERDOCS: AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Festival* (now *AFI Docs*). She continued with the festival as Executive Producer, strand programmer, and senior member of the management team from 2004 to 2009.



Bill Svanoë is an award-winning screenwriter and playwright. He has written highly acclaimed and rated television movies including MILES TO GO which won a Christopher Award; TERROR ON THE BEACH; RETURNING HOME; THE DREAMMAKERS; THE CARDBOARD HOUSE, and SPARKS. Feature films include, WALTZ ACROSS TEXAS, starring Anne Archer, and FATAL BEAUTY, starring Whoopi Goldberg. His first play, THE NEWSTAND, won awards in New York and Europe. His plays, THE BLACK DUCK, PUNCH AND JUDY, THE LAST LAUGH, and CALLBACK have been published and are performed around the country. For five years he was the playwright in residence for Zephyr Rep in New York. He taught playwriting and screenwriting at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for seven years. Currently he teaches at festivals and forums around the country and also does private coaching. Bill is also a musician. He was a founding member of the famous group The Rooftop Singers and co-author of their number one hit song, *Walk Right In*.



Allan Topol is the author of eleven novels of international intrigue. Two of them, SPY DANCE and ENEMY OF MY ENEMY, were national best sellers. His novels have been translated into Japanese, Portuguese, and Hebrew. His newest novel, THE WASHINGTON LAWYER received a favorable review in *The Washington Post* when it was published in March. (<http://wapo.st/1NZOXjj>.) SPY DANCE is currently in motion picture development. He is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon and obtained a law degree from Yale. A partner in a major Washington firm, he practices international and public policy law. An avid wine collector and connoisseur, he has traveled extensively researching dramatic locations for his novels.



Audrea Topps-Harjo attended The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA with a major in theatre arts and a minor in dance. She obtained a M.F.A. in film from Howard University. Her thesis film HARD CANDY was nominated for a Student Academy Award in 1993. She moved to Los Angeles, where she worked behind-the-scenes on various films to acquire a broad spectrum of experience on production including, independent film production, high end visual effects, animation, mobile and console games. She was worked for Sony Pictures Imageworks (CONTACT, STARSHIP TROOPERS, STUART LITTLE); Obsidian Pictures (EPOCH OF LOTUS); Cinesite (X-MEN 2); Rhythm and Hues (GARFIELD); Ring of Fire (SKY CAPTAIN); Electronic Arts (MEDAL OF HONOR); WETA Digital in New Zealand (RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES, THE AVENGERS, MAN OF STEEL, PROMETHEUS) and James Cameron's Lightstorm Entertainment (AVATAR SEQUELS). She has been recently asked to serve as global advisor at Saito College in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia to mentor and guide the next generation of digital artists.



Ligiah Villalobos is the Writer and Executive Producer of the independent feature film UNDER THE SAME MOON (LA MISMA LUNA), released by Fox Searchlight and The Weinstein Company. The film was an Official Selection at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival and became the highest sale for a Spanish-language film in the history of Sundance. Made for under \$2M, the film has earned over \$23M worldwide. More recently, Villalobos sold a pilot to ABC titled HALF SISTERS, and she won a Humanitas Prize in 2013 for the Hallmark Hall of Fame movie, FIRELIGHT, produced by Alicia Keys and Mary Martin, which aired on ABC.

Villalobos has developed projects for multiple studios and networks, including NBC, ABC/Family, F/X, Showtime, BET, and HBO. And, she was the Head Writer on the hit children's show GO, DIEGO! GO! Villalobos has consulted on two Pixar movies, PLANES and their untitled DAY OF THE DEAD project, as well as a TV series for SPROUT. In addition to the ABC pilot, Villalobos is currently doing rewrites for projects at Lifetime and The Disney Channel and writing an animated feature film titled, CHITO AND THE LAND OF XO, for a Mexican/Canadian co-production.

Villalobos is on the Board of the Writers Guild Foundation and the Advisory Board of Girls, Inc., Latino Initiative. In addition to her various projects in development, Villalobos is currently getting an MFA in Creative Writing from Antioch University.



Chris Weber began her career at National Geographic in Los Angeles and later moved to Washington DC as a Producer. Her films such as LOST KINGDOMS OF THE MAYA, COMING OF AGE WITH ELEPHANTS, and LAST VOYAGE OF THE ANDREA DORIA, garnered multiple Emmy® nominations and several Emmy® Awards including best documentary for SEARCH FOR BATTLESHIP BISMARCK and U-BOAT: TERROR ON OUR SHORES. Before joining Discovery, Weber launched Tiger/Tigress Productions.

Initially set up to represent UK indies, Tiger Aspect and Tigress Productions in the US, Weber turned TTP into a multi-million dollar production company with commissions from multiple networks including Discovery, History, Court TV, TLC, Food Network, Bravo and National Geographic. In 2007 Weber moved to Discovery Communications. As VP of Production and Development for Specials at Discovery Channel, she and her team have oversaw numerous acclaimed programs and BBC co-productions including NORTH AMERICA, LIFE, HUMAN PLANET, FROZEN PLANET, and MONSTER SQUID: THE GIANT IS REAL as well as Discovery's *Shark Week* programming. After 35 years in broadcast TV, Weber decided it was time to give back. She is currently working as a freelance producer for various non-profit organizations.



Jonathan Zurer has been producing television series and feature films for nearly two decades. Recently he produced the independent feature documentary, START-UP NATION, based on the book of the same name. In 2012, he was Co-Producer and Production Supervisor for the independent feature JAMESY BOY, shot in and around Baltimore. As a Producer at Thinkfilm, Inc., Warner Bros., HBO, and Discovery have entrusted their projects to him, both at home and abroad including Emmy® winner THE WEST WING, the groundbreaking pseudo-reality of K STREET, and deep sea underwater archaeology for TREASURES OF THE ROYAL CAPTAIN. HBO's original series K STREET was the first television show shot entirely on location in DC in decades. With an almost all-local crew (the exceptions were Steven Soderburgh, who shot and edited, in addition

to directing, producing, and writing; and George Clooney, who shot while executive producing), the production was a three month carnival ride of non-actors, real life, and a crew that traveled by foot, taxi, and Metro with its gear on its back, shooting all the while. The last trick? Each episode was conceived, shot, edited, and broadcast in a single week.

In Washington, he has produced location shooting for the films SPY GAME, ARMAGEDDON, DICK, and GI JOE and for television shows such as HOMELAND, BONES and NCIS. All this, in addition to corporate and commercial work for the Hearst Corporation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Heart Association, the American Institute of Architects, the Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration, and PBS.

Conference Organizer: Jane Barbara



After receiving a full scholarship from The Rockefeller Scholarship Fund, **Jane Barbara** graduated with a Fine Arts Degree from Parson's School of Design. She also studied Theater Management with Sir Rudolf Bing, (Manager, The Metropolitan Opera) at Brooklyn College. She went on to live various artistic lives: Costume/set designer, (ANYTHING GOES), Teenage Performing Arts Workshop – New York City Board of Education Music Department summer program. Costumer/Crew (THE NUTCRACKER) Long Island Ballet. Costume/Set Designer, (BOY MEETS BOY), 13th Street Theater. Co-founder of the Bi-Lingual Theater Company of New York, Set Designer (ODD COUPLE, JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT, A CHRISTMAS CAROL), Brooklyn NYC. Political illustrator (*The New York Times*), freelance graphic and book jacket designer, and Publications Designer for Exxon Corporation. After leaving Exxon, Jane was partner/art director of Menu Makers Plus, a full- service design company located in New York City, which serviced the NYC metro area restaurants and gourmet shops.

After moving to Maryland, Jane was able to combine her love of film, art, dance, and storytelling by writing and producing films. She has completed five feature length screenplays, three shorts, and is currently working on developing several television series. Jane is Chair for Women in Film & Video-DC's annual filmmaker conference ScriptDC.

Along with producing partner, Oriana Oppice, Jane recently wrote and produced an award winning comedy short, LOBSTER FRA DIAVOLO – The Movie, which was screened at the 2015 Cannes Court Metrage Shorts Film Corner, as well as a dozen other international film festivals. The LOBSTER screenplay was a finalist at the 2014 Moondance International Film Festival screenplay competition, and a 2014/ 2015 Roy W. Dean Finalist. LOBSTER recently received several awards for Best Comedy, Best Editing and Best Screen Fight.