



# WIFV NEWS

## March 2017

*Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.*

~ Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Nigerian novelist

## President's Message



As I write this in late February, the red carpet is getting rolled out (literally) and the stage set at the Dolby Theater for Hollywood's biggest awards night of the year -

-- the Academy Awards. Across the street in his studio, Jimmy Kimmel is prepping to host this year's Oscars with his team of writers. And by the time you read this message, that famous phrase "And the Oscar goes to . . .", which is emblazoned in gold on every top-secret envelope, will confirm the accuracy of my own Oscar predictions.

In March, Women in Film & Video will be rolling out its own (virtual) red carpet on social media as we celebrate the accomplishments of WIFV members daily with the annual 31 for 31 fundraising campaign. Each day, a different media maker will be highlighted on the WIFV Twitter and Facebook accounts, in the hopes of inspiring you to **donate** at least \$31 to WIFV in the month of March, which is also Women's History Month. Along with funding important initiatives, this campaign helps to raise awareness of the many outstanding, diverse achievements of our membership.



Once again, all donations received through this celebratory campaign will go towards the Seed Fund for Documentary Filmmakers. For 2017, the

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## Roundtable Roundup

### Narrative Directors

March 6, 2017, 6:30 to 8:30 pm

Interface Media Group, 1233 20th Street, NW

[RSVP here](#)

### Documentary: DP Hans Charles - 13th

March 13, 2017, 6:30 to 8:30 pm

Interface Media Group, 1233 20th Street, NW

[RSVP here](#)

### Animation: Behind the Scenes: FIRED UP!

March 15, 2017, 6:30 to 8:30 pm

Interface Media Group, 1233 20th Street, NW

[RSVP here](#)

application deadline to apply for a Seed Fund grant is Friday, May 19th. Help us to reach our goal of \$35,000 so we can continue to award these grants to help documentary filmmakers with start-up funding. The inaugural Seed Fund grants were given to Katie Lannigan and Kimberly McFarland in 2016. This special initiative began during the 35th anniversary of Women in Film & Video under the stewardship of Immediate Past President Erin Essenmacher and Executive Director Melissa Houghton, and our goal is to continue it through the WIFV 40th anniversary and beyond! You can make your donation [here](#).

Changing the world one story at a time,  
*Rebecca*

#### **Makeup & Hair**

March 21, 2017, 6:30 to 8:30 pm  
Interface Media, 1233 20th Street, NW  
[RSVP here](#)

#### **Talent: *Picture Perfection***

March 23, 2017, 6:30 to 8:30 pm  
Interface Media, 1233 20th Street, NW  
[RSVP here](#)

#### **Screenwriters: *Final Draft 10 Demo***

March 27, 2017, 6:30 to 8:30 pm  
Interface Media, 1233 20th St, NW  
[RSVP here](#)

Roundtables are free for WIFV Members. There is a \$10 fee for non-members.

## **WIFV Happy Hour**



**Tuesday, March 28, 2017**  
**5:30 - 7:00 pm**  
Free State Bar  
501B G St NW, DC, 20001

[RSVP here](#)

## **Women's History Month is Here!**

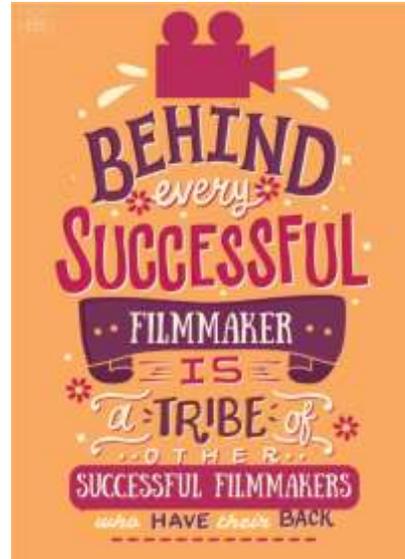


By Sandra Abrams

Box office receipts are the benchmark for how Hollywood measures success. Too often these movies use the three "S" - slick production, special effects and skimpy costumes for the female lead to get those returns. But one film this year has defied the big studio formula on how to achieve box office gold with haul of \$144.5 million dollars as of February 2017, making the movie number one at the domestic box office. The story behind the

movie, **HIDDEN FIGURES**, is based on real women who used their brains and mathematical abilities to support the US space program. These African-American women of a certain age; these "hidden figures," were making history at that time. The screenplay by Allison Schroeder and Theodore Melfi, based on the book by Virginia-native Margot Lee Shetterly was nominated for Best Adapted Screenplay at this year's Oscars. As March is Women's History Month, let the success of **HIDDEN FIGURES**, inspire you to express your talents and be a woman creating history.

WIFV Members can be your inspiration! We are surrounded by a tribe of storytellers who have multi-decade careers or who may just be starting out. In March, we celebrate the achievements of our colleagues during the **31 Women in 31 Days** social media campaign! When you see these women at programs in the coming years, and you will, make sure you make their acquaintance. You might even run into them at the **SWAN Day Dinners** on March 25 and 26. Show how much you appreciate this media making community and **support the WIFV Seed Fund for Documentary Filmmakers** with a tax-deductible donation in March.



## Media Job Fair, Social Media Tips for Networking

The **WIFV Media Job Fair** (April 1) and the April Weds One: **Professional Networking through Social Media** (April 5) are great programs to get you firmly on your career path in 2017.



Each year, WIFV proudly presents the **Media Job Fair**. Job seekers meet with recruiters from media companies throughout the DMV region. People are hired for full-time, part-time and freelance jobs every year.

**Saturday, April 1, 2017**, Noon to 3:30 pm  
Pepco Edison Place Gallery, 702 8th Street, NW  
\$10 WIFV Members / \$20 Public  
OFCTME is offering a \$10 discount to the first 50 DC residents who pre-register! [Register here.](#)

The exhibitor list already includes Atmosphere, C-SPAN, Green Buzz Agency, Interface Media Group, Meridian Hill Pictures, OCTFME, and Word Wizards! We will update the list regularly [here](#). They are looking for entry level and experienced candidates in a range of positions. All Media Job Fair attendees receive information about the exhibitors and the positions they are recruiting for so they can plan their visit and meet the correct recruiters with relevant needs! Pre-register and receive the materials in advance of your arrival!

**Professional Networking through Social Media** will be Wednesday, April 5 at Interface Media Group. Now that you've met your potential employer, how can you successfully stay on their radar screen as they make their final decisions? The WIFV Programming Committee is putting together a program that keeps you in the loop. [Register here.](#)

## SWAN Day - Support Women Artists Now

Ok, we want women artists supported every day, but certainly on March 25!

SWAN Day is an international event designed to showcase the power and diversity of women's creativity. Founded in 2007, SWAN Day is always the final Saturday in March. **We have such a rich, creative community of women artists in DC that we are able to present events throughout the month!** All DC SWAN Day events until 6:00 pm are free and open to the public.



From **March 2 - 28**, women-owned **Baked & Wired** (1052 Thomas Jefferson St NW) will host **/in(t)ər'akt/**, an exhibition of works by artists Jennifer Droblyen, Joy Stern, and Veronica Szalus, curated by Alia Faith Williams.

On Thursday, **March 23** there will be a lunchtime screening of **THE ZOOKEEPER'S WIFE** followed by a Q&A with the film's director, **Niki Caro** (WHALE RIDER, NORTH COUNTRY, McFARLAND, USA) at the E Street Cinema (555 11th St NW). We will sharing the registration link soon!

Thursday, **March 23**, 7:00 pm the **Georgetown Neighborhood Library** (3260 R St NW) will host **Poets on the Fringe**, a reading of works by local women poets. Poets on the Fringe has published three books, created a video series, and participated in public readings in many DC venues.

7:30 pm **Friday, March 24**, the **DC SWAN Day Kick Off** features performances by DC-based singer-songwriters **Lara Supan** and **Heather Mae** at **Baked & Wired**.

On **Saturday, March 25** lower Georgetown will be the site of a collaborative arts project, poetry readings, short film screenplay table readings, short film screenings, and theatrical performances, including devised work, interactive performance, and staged readings of plays by women playwrights.

**10:00 am - 2:00 pm, Hickok Cole Architects** (1023 31st St) will host a series of events coordinated by **Women in Film & Video** starting with an art potluck where instead of bringing food to share, participants bring an object to include in a collaborative artwork, We follow that up with table reads of locally-written short film scripts featuring SAG-AFTRA talent, a selection of short films from around the globe, and a poetry reading. The art potluck welcomes families.

**2:00-6:00 pm, Grace Church** (1041 Wisconsin Ave, NW) will host staged readings, devised, and interactive theatre by Ellouise Schoettler, Naked Theatre, The HBC Playback Theatre Ensemble, Danielle Drakes, McKenya Dillworth, Guillotine Theatre, and other artists.

**6:30 to 9:00 pm** at WIFV Member houses across the region, **networking dinners** will recognize the way WIFV started as a mutually-supportive community that first met over soup in Ginny Durrin's living room! While the organization has grown since 1979, the commitment to the success of each other's careers remains strong. There is also a dinner in Baltimore on March 26. [More info here.](#)

For more information about SWAN Day events happening around the world, please visit [www.SwanDay.org](http://www.SwanDay.org). Click [here](#) for more information about events at Baked and Wired.

## What's Up? Docs! March Film - EXTREMIS

WHAT'S UP? DOCS! - hosted by The Documentary Center at GW - is a new, thought-provoking monthly series of documentaries curated in a way that only one of the top university documentary programs in the nation can offer. Each screening is followed by a Q&A with a forward-



thinker who will lead a discussion that will go beyond what a film is about to what it means in the larger historical and social context.

The spring season asks the question "What Do You Believe?". Each film and post-screening conversation seeks answers to this central human question. The series continues Thursday, March 9th exploring the issue of morality and medical ethics in end-of-life decisions with the Academy-Award nominee **EXTREMIS**.

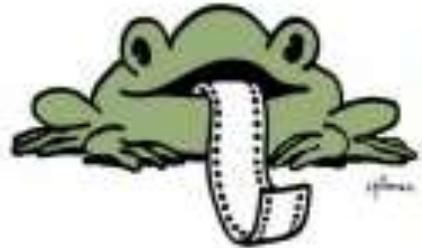
The film will be followed by a post-screening conversation with Marion Danis, MD, Division Chief on Ethics and Health Policy at the National Institutes of Health, and philosopher and bioethicist, David DeGrazia, PhD,

This screening will be held Thursday, March 9, 2017, 7:00 - 9:30 pm at The George Washington University Cloyd Heck Marvin Center Amphitheater (third floor) located at 800 21st Street NW, Washington, DC.

Thanks to the generous support of Discovery Communications, the WHAT'S UP? DOCS! spring season will be FREE and open to the public. [Click here for more information and to RSVP \(space limited\)](#).

## EFF Female Filmmaker Shorts - March 16

Journey through America's toughest terrains, majestic landscapes and remote sites with a stellar trio of environmental films by award-winning female filmmakers presented at the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital on March 16 at the Carnegie Institution of Science, 1530 P Street NW.



GUIDED (USA, 2016, 18 min.) profiles the gentle spirit of Maine wilderness guide Ray Reitze who shares his philosophy of how to live in harmony with the outdoors to the next generation of guides. Directed by Bridget Besaw.

CANYON SONG (USA, 2016, 12 min.) Two young sisters learn about their Navajo culture and history within the sacred walls of Canyon de Chelly National Monument. Directed by Amy Marquis and Dana Romanoff.

ELK RIVER (USA, 2016, 28 min.) Meet backcountry guides and cattle ranchers whose lives are intricately tied with elk and other migratory species that call the Greater Yellowstone home. Directed by Jenny Nichols and Joe Riis.

Discussion with filmmakers Bridget Besaw, Amy Marquis, Dana Romanoff, and Jenny Nichols, moderated by EFF Executive Director, Maryanne Culpepper, follows screening. The screening begins at 7:00 pm. [Get your tickets here](#). Special pre-screening reception for WIFV Members and featured filmmakers begins at 6:00 pm - registration info for reception and screening will be shared with the listserv on March 6!

## INVINCIBLE AND UNSILENCED



On March 8, the 4th Annual Women's Voices Now Online Film Festival will go live. This film festival is a celebration of uncensored and unapologetic voices from feminists and their allies under the theme **INVINCIBLE AND UNSILENCED: WOMEN IN THE WORLD**. Women's Voices Now received 86 films submissions from 24 countries on five continents.

The films will be made available online from March 8 - April 5, 2017 exclusively on the **Women's Voices Now website** for FREE. Women's Voices Now invites viewers from around the world to watch and vote for their favorite films. During this time, a diverse panel of international judges will also be viewing and casting their votes to determine the recipients of the \$10,000 in prize money. Winners will be announced mid-April 2017.

The 36 films featured in the **INVINCIBLE AND UNSILENCED: WOMEN IN THE WORLD** film festival program portray intimate glimpses into the difficulties experienced by women and the victories that highlight a common thread of perseverance and persistence in the face of adversity. From the rural communities of Brazil, Nepal, and Kenya, to the urban centers of Tehran, London, and Fukushima, these are the realities women champion every day.

"The unique contribution of Women's Voices Now to the film festival circuit is that it is both a celebration of bold storytelling through the vehicle of filmmaking as well as a call to action. Providing a platform for the voiceless to be heard in all corners of the globe is a noble endeavor that is most powerfully accomplished through the empathy-generating activity of watching films. While the festival focuses on the voices of women, it is inclusive of the male gaze in order to enjoin men and women in the very necessary work that needs to be done in the sphere of women's rights," says Ehab Al Shihabi, board director of Women's Voices Now and former deputy managing director of Al Jazeera English.

In addition to their annual film festival, Women's Voices Now is home to the "Netflix of feminist films," a free online archive with over 200 international women's rights films that can be viewed for free from anywhere in the world.

## WIFV Members at UMd Career in Film Panel



As part of WIFV's student outreach efforts, WIFV members participated at the University of Maryland's Careers in Film networking panel on Monday, February 28. Executive Director Melissa Houghton was joined by WIFV members, **Brigitte Yuille**, **Sandra Abrams** and **Bannon Preston**. Samantha Piccirillo of Discovery, Eric Glazer of Allied Integrated Marketing and Joche Angbazo rounded out the panel. The speakers gave students advice on how to get an internship and strategies about film and entertainment careers. The students also got information about WIFV's Resume Swap and upcoming Media Job Fair on April 1. A special thank you to Kate Anne Juhl at the University of Maryland's University Career Center. WIFV was happy to participate on this wonderful panel and help the students.

## VA-Made Film Debuts on Netflix March 10

Gerard McMurray's *BURNING SANDS*, an official Sundance selection which was filmed entirely in Virginia, will have its Netflix debut on March 10th. The film takes you on a raw, voyeuristic journey of fraternity pledging through the eyes of one favored pledgee, who is torn between honoring a code of silence or standing up against the intensifying violence of underground hazing. Led by a breakthrough performance by Trevor Jackson, director Gerard McMurray's feature directorial debut brings an emotional honesty to the classic tale of "rites of passage" and the complicated bonds of brotherhood.



*BURNING SANDS*, which also stars Alfre Woodard, Steve Harris, Tosin Cole, DeRon Horton and *Moonlight*'s Trevante Rhodes, was written by Christine Berg and Gerard McMurray and produced by Stephanie Allain, Jason Michael Berman, Reginald Hudlin and Mel Jones. Executive produced by Caroline Connor and Common.

## Global Perspectives: Notes from Abroad

This is the second of a continuing series of articles from women's film organizations from around the globe, coordinated by Judy Meschel and LeeAnn Dance of the WIFV International Committee. Enjoy!

### Creatively Surviving Trauma

By Michelle J. Brezinski, WIFTI Vancouver

Prior to 2012 I remember thinking that mental illness was just a state of mind and one could easily snap out of it if they truly wanted to. But then I got sick.

In the fall of 2010 I had performed CPR on a man who ended up dying of a stroke. When the ambulance finally came, the man's body lay beside me as I kept myself calm in order to oblige my first aid duties...A year later I developed severe PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and was hospitalized. Thoughts of death kept me in constant agony, so much so that I truly didn't want to live anymore.

After three weeks in the hospital it became clear that medication was not the answer for me. I kept hearing about the lucky ones who had found the perfect drug making their lives bearable again. But that was not the case for me and so I had to find another way out from my darkness.

So in the fall of 2012 I decided to start making films. You see when I was a little girl I wanted to be a storyteller but while I was away studying Journalism my mother died in a horrible fire and for almost 30 years my desire to tell stories disappeared.

Perhaps the reason my PTSD was so severe was that I had experienced many traumas in my life, including rape and the loss of a child, and was completely unaware of its hidden danger.

So I needed to channel that trauma and filmmaking became the answer. And though my mind was still plagued with dark thoughts I would force myself to focus away from them by painting set pieces, shopping for wardrobe, meeting with cast and crew or writing a script...any creative moment possible in order to take my mind back.

And by the fall of 2014 I started to feel like my old self again. I slept better, required less and less medications, and my emotional agony finally went away.

What had come back was my inner storyteller, manifesting itself into 3 short films, 2 episodes of a sitcom and several screenplays. My recent film titled MADNESS, reflecting my own PTSD but set during the Black Death, screened globally and garnered many awards. And I couldn't be any more proud of the cast and crew for what we had collectively created.

Filmmaking has given me my life back, elevated my confidence, changed my future's direction and opened my eyes to the truth that mental illness is not something you can just willingly erase.



MADNESS - THE SHORT FILM



## New and Renewing Members

The following joined or renewed their WIFV membership (Feb 1, 2017 - Feb 28, 2017)

Frederic Abramson  
Natalie Baumstark  
Candyce Beatty  
Meigan Bell  
Kate Brekke

Rachel Holmes  
Julia Hoppock  
Lynn Hoverman  
Jean Isani  
Tracey Jewell  
Jeannie Johnson

Amanda Newcomb  
Alison Nichols  
Robin Noonan-Price  
Yvonne Paretzky  
Kristian Perry  
Patricia Perry-Burgess

Sandra Brennan  
Suzanne Brindamour  
Tai Burkholder  
Jennifer Burton  
Sandra Camargo  
Katie Camosy  
Shelaney Campbell  
Jewelle Carter  
Dylan Comstock  
Ivora Cusak  
Katherine W De Francis  
Robyn DeShields  
Julianne DuBois  
Michelle Dumas  
Kate Eberstadt  
Erin Essenmacher  
Gabrielle Ewing  
Angela Forest  
Brian Freeman  
Marcey Lynn Frutchey  
Alan Gaffere  
Katie Gates  
Stephanie Goodrich  
Gina Gribbin

Sheila A. Keenan  
Clara Kelly  
Michelle L. Kim  
Margaret Kivlen  
Peter Kowen  
Lance Kramer  
Joan Lanigan  
Serena Lee  
Amy Leniert  
Elissa Leonard  
Diandra Leslie-Pelcky  
Carlos Macher Barcenas  
Liz Maestri  
Rachel Marquart  
Rhonda McDaniel  
Rory McFadden  
Melanie McGhee  
Beth Mendelson  
Nkechi Mogeke  
Roberta Moore  
Malia Murray  
Taura Musgrove

Ryan Pratzel  
Margo Precht Speciale  
Rachel Rasby  
Robin Reck  
Welma Redd  
Alison Richards  
Melanie Riner  
S. Mari Robinson  
Karen Ruckman  
Christina Ruppert  
K.C. Schillhahn  
Gary Schonman  
Rachell Shapiro  
Carol Slatkin  
Deidra Starnes  
Alexandra Tydings  
Julia Vickers  
Richard Volin  
John Wetmore  
Catherine Wylor

**Corporate Members:**  
Creative Liquid  
SWAY

## About WIFV

WIFV supports professionals in the media industry by promoting equal opportunities, encouraging professional development, serving as an information network, and educating the public about women's creative and technical achievements.



## Send Stories to:

Women in Film & Video  
4000 Albemarle Street, NW  
Suite 305  
Washington, DC 20016  
202-429-9438  
[director@wifv.org](mailto:director@wifv.org)  
[www.wifv.org](http://www.wifv.org)



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