

WIFV NEWS

WIFV People in the News - May 2025

Sharon Sobel, Alyscia Cunningham, Laurisha Yniguez, Debbie Camper, Erika Timmons, Brandon Ferry, Sandra Abrams, Phil Shapiro, Sky Sitney, Eden Raskin Jenkins, K.E. Lanning, Marilyn Atlas, Arlette Thomas-Fletcher, Mike Sobola



PTV “Changes Focus”

Picture This Video LLC has announced that the company has a new vision: “We want podcasters and corporate event planners to recognize the increased reach and marketability that professional livestreaming and remote recording can provide for conferences, video podcasts and webcasts” says **Sharon Sobel**, principal.

The company was established in 1997 to provide video production services, including freelance services, for non-profits, small business and educational entities. In 2010, the company started offering livestreaming services and Sharon was on a contract with the U.S. Courts as their Webcasting Producer/Director. In 2018, the business added video marketing services and strategy to ensure better ROI for its video production clients.

With a deep background in television directing, videography and editing, **Picture This Video** aims to produce livestreamed programs that have the engagement and look of a television program- not a Zoom meeting. Services include IT management and event marketing to ensure there will be confidence in the delivery... and viewers to watch! As an owner/operator for both livestreaming gear and teleprompter services, Sharon continues to be available to be hired by area producers and production companies.



Recap of Cunningham Premiere in February

"The community premiere at AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center on February 16, 2025, of SEEING WITHOUT SIGHT, NEGRO MOUNTAIN, and DOUEN II was a resounding success, and it's all thanks to my unwavering supporters. Whether you contributed directly

or cheered me on along the way, every bit of your encouragement has helped bring these films to life. If you missed the event, enjoy the short video recep of the premiere above."

Alyscia Cunningham

After the sold-out premiere, many asked how they could support the DOUEN feature project, and it's easy! **WIFV is the fiscal sponsor of the project and you can make a tax deductible donation here.** See more about supporter perks and Cunningham's many projects at www.herhousemedia.com

Cunningham was also recently featured in an interview by the Audio Description Network Alliance where she shared her process for providing inclusive screenings, including closed Audio Description. [You can listen to the interview here.](#)

Cunningham is a 2022 WIFV Narrative Script Development Fellow!

Yniguez on Red Carpet

WIFV member **Laurisha Yniguez** celebrated the world premiere of **VERRULED** at the Beverly Hills Film Festival and at the iconic TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood! Laurisha is the assistant director on the film, a contemporary adaptation of Bernard Shaw's play. **VERRULED** marks the narrative directorial debut of Kate Brooks, who transitions from a successful career in photojournalism and documentary filmmaking. The film was shot locally in Northwest DC.

(pictured on the red carpet L to R: Yniguez/Brooks)



Camper & Timmons Films Will Screen at AAWIC

Debbie Camper shared that a notice in the WIFV listserv about a film festival - the African-American Women in Cinema Film Festival (**AAWIC**) in NYC - was the impetus she needed to submit her recent film, **IT'S STILL NOT ABOUT ME**. Get your tickets when they go on sale, as her film has been selected for screening!

Erika "ET" Timmons' directorial debut short film, **WRITERS IN THE SHADOWS**, will also grace the silver screens of not one but two film festivals in May. The first at the 25th anniversary of the African American Women in Cinema (AAWIC) festival taking place in NYC May 15-17. The second will be at the International Black & Diversity Film Festival (IBDFF) in Ontario, Canada May 29-31. **WRITERS IN THE SHADOWS** has already won an award at IBDFF. The category will be announced during the red carpet gala!

Ferry at Ebertfest

Brandon Ferry participated in the 26th annual **Ebertfest**, April 23-26 at the Virginia Theatre in Champaign, IL. Also known as Roger Ebert's Film Festival, Ebertfest focuses on underseen and underappreciated cinema gems from years past and great films that are still awaiting distribution deals. Since Roger's passing in 2013, his multi-talented wife Chaz (co-founder of Ebertfest) has carried on the torch as the festival's producer and host, alongside the festival's director, Nate Kohn.

As the booking producer for **WIFV's MediaMaker Spotlight**, Brandon booked Chaz Ebert on the podcast last month and host **Sandra Abrams** interviewed her (episode to drop later this summer!) Chaz then invited him to this year's festival to both interview attending

filmmakers for the podcast and participate as a panelist on the films' post-screening discussion panels (composed of filmmakers, critics, and film scholars). Be on the lookout this summer for Brandon's *Live from Ebertfest* interviews on *MediaMaker Spotlight* with Susan Seidelman (director of *DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN* and episodes of *SEX AND THE CITY*), Angus MacLachlan (writer-director of **A LITTLE PRAYER** starring David Strathairn & Jane Levy and the writer of Amy Adams' breakout film, *JUNEBUG*), and David Fortune (writer-director of the upcoming father-son drama, **COLOR BOOK**). Be sure to check out [Rogerebert.com](https://www.rogerebert.com) and [highlights of the festival's livestream](#) for more details about this year's Ebertfest!

Photo below from *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* post-film screening panel (L-R) Nate Kohn, Director of Ebertfest; Chaz Ebert, Founder and Co-Director of Ebertfest; Terry Donahue, Musician from The Anvil Orchestra, Omer Mozzafar, Lecturer in Islamic Studies at Loyola University Chicago; Brandon Ferry, Film/TV & Podcast Producer

*Note: *Prince Achmed*, directed by Lotte Reiniger, is the oldest surviving feature-length animated film inspired by the Arabian Nights tales.



Shapiro Reaches One Million!

Phil Shapiro's YouTube channel has collected one million views. While Phil demurs, "That's actually not a large number, but it is a good starting point," that's a lot of views! He encourages you to watch one of his recent music videos (embedded above) and push the counter higher.

Shapiro had a short article published on the [CoolTools web site](#). Folks interested in his music can see him performing at the Crossroads Farmer's Market, in Takoma Park, as one of the hired musicians for 2025. [Watch it here](#). The dates he's performing are listed in the description of the video. Lastly, [this feature article](#), about his recent library award, was published by an online publication from his hometown, Scarsdale, New York. Huzzah!



DC/DOX and Raskin Receive Grants

WIFV is excited to announce that two fiscally-sponsored projects have received 2025 HumanitiesDC grants!

Over four days, June 12-16, [DC/DOX](#) takes place in marquee

venues across Washington, DC, presenting an exceptional lineup of 100+ feature and short documentaries from around the world. Every screening is a Washington, DC premiere and is followed by filmmaker Q&As and thought-provoking post-screening discussions. The Reality Check Forum—a series of panels, masterclasses, and workshops—dives into the evolving landscape of documentary filmmaking, providing a space for discovery, dialogue, and innovation for filmmakers to advance their craft. **Sky Sitney** is the Festival Director and Co-Founder of DC/DOX with Jamie Shor.

NOTES OF A CITIZEN: The Marcus Raskin Story, produced/directed by **Eden Raskin Jenkins**, is a feature-length documentary that explores the personal life of a public figure told by his daughter. The film focuses on a prolific time in Marcus' life in the 1960s/70s when he was indicted with the Boston Five for Vietnam Draft Resistance, involved with the civil rights movement, helped release the Pentagon Papers, and founded a first of its kind progressive think tank that was infiltrated by the FBI. Through the archives he left behind, the music he played, and intimate conversations with the people who knew him best, she explores how a piano prodigy from Wisconsin shook up Washington by becoming the conscience of Kennedy's White House whose activism proudly landed him on Nixon's Enemies List. [Learn more here.](#)

WIFV and these project directors are proud to be part of this year's cohort of Community Grantees and look forward to doing important humanities work that builds connections, reflections, and resilience in our city. #HumanitiesDC2025grantrecipient #humanitiesDC #humanities

HumanitiesDC connects curious people with bold questions to the powerful stories of our vibrant city. Through their grantmaking they support Washingtonians and local organizations interested in helping build a vibrant city where all can engage in intellectual exchange, reflect on our connected stories and celebrate our various cultures. With their public programs they partner with local experts, scholars and creatives to design and host unique initiatives, workshops, discussions, performances, storytelling gatherings and more that explore the culture of our nation's capital. To learn more about the grant opportunities, programs and how you can become involved visit humanitiesdc.org HumanitiesDC grantmaking and public programs are made possible in part through funding from the [DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#).

FADE IN AWARDS

Lanning Receives Grand Prize

K.E. Lanning's sci-fi pilot screenplay, **THE STING OF THE BEE**, was chosen the Grand Prize winner for the 29th Fade In Awards for Sci-fi/Fantasy!

Atlas & Real Women Have Curves on Broadway

The Broadway debut of the musical "Real Women Have Curves" has garnered many positive reviews and much love from audiences. Based on a play by Josefina Lopez and the subsequent 2002 HBO film co-written by Lopez & George LaVoo, the musical stars high-wattage newcomer Tatianna Cordoba as Ana and Justina Machado (In the Heights, Six Feet Under, Queen of the South) as her fierce mother.



With book by noted playwright Lisa Loomer & Nell Benjamin and music and lyrics from Joy Huerta & Benjamin Velez, it offers fun, uplifting ballads focusing on a message of female empowerment and body image acceptance and has received raves from Entertainment Weekly and the New York Stage Review. Its continued topicality on the U.S.' changing policies on immigration as well as the charisma and charm of the ensemble have also earned it strong recommendations from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Chicago Tribune*.

The musical's several iterations have long been nurtured by WIFV fan favorite guest speaker **Marilyn R. Atlas**, who also co-produced the film. The first musical production was launched in L.A. in 2008 by Atlas. WIFV always supports each other's professional

endeavors, so get out and see this feel-good show!

Thomas-Fletcher, EP



Arlette Thomas-Fletcher served as the Executive Producer for her son's short film, **THE LAST MEETING** (watch above). The film focuses on addiction and individuals with disabilities. "There need to be more films that open up conversations for people in these kinds of situations. Please check it out and share it."

Mid-Atlantic Drones on Maryland By Air

Mid-Atlantic Drones' **Mike Sobola** and Luisa Winters spent more than a year flying aerials for MPT's hour-long project, "Maryland by Air". Produced by John Paulson of Paulson Productions, it premiered May 1 on MPT and is playing in IMAX at the MD Science Center in Baltimore's Inner Harbor. Sobola was the Aerial Director of the show, covering the state from Ocean City to Western Maryland. Principal drone Pilots were Mike, Winters, and John Paulson. The helicopter pilot was Roger Crawley, and Richard MacDonald handled the aerial rigging and controls. See a 10-minute excerpt below. Buckle up!



Thanks to the WIFV Sponsors



News Deadline

The deadline to submit your information for the monthly Members in the News e-publication is the 10th of the month. Send your article (100 words or so) and a jpg-format photograph or link to your video project to director@wifv.org.



About WIFV

Women in Film & Video (WIFV) provides educational and networking opportunities for screen-based media makers, celebrates women's creative and technical achievements in media, and advocates for parity both in front of and behind the camera to ensure that all voices can be heard.





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