

WIFV NEWS

WIFV People in the News - July 2025

Mark Ricche, Mark Maxey, Andrea Passafiume, Lysandra Petersson, Sandra Abrams, Rebecca Bustamante, Alyscia Cunningham, Jillian Cardillo, Carly Crickenberger, Jessica Haley, Stephanie Levy, Mira Kelly, Nina Seavey, Samantha Noland, Robin Farmer, Nina Reinharz, Carletta S. Hurt, Tara Zabrieski



Ricche Shares DIY Film Distribution Info with Local Filmmakers

Mark Ricche (CrypticPictures.com) spoke about independent film distribution and other topics with a panel of filmmakers at the inaugural Gaithersburg Film Festival in April. Interested in learning more about indie film distro... be sure to catch Mark along with **Mark Maxey** of Rolling Pictures on Thursday evening August 7, 2025 when they

led the WIFV NSDF Acquisitions and Distribution Master Class. [Sign up here.](#)
Photo credit: L-R Filmmakers Mark Ricche, Andrés Mejía Erik Sutch with Moderator Chris Wallis

Passafiume Moderates at Tribeca!

In June, WIFV member **Andrea Passafiume** hosted and moderated the New York Premiere of the new documentary **MARLEE MATLIN: NOT ALONE ANYMORE** at the 2025 Tribeca Festival with Marlee Matlin and filmmaker Shoshanna Stern in attendance. Passafiume, a long-time Programmer for Tribeca and Sundance, is also Director of Programming for Gallaudet University's upcoming Deaf Way Film Festival in October, as well as the Seattle Deaf Film Festival, which will take place in April 2026. Photo Credit: Erin Reed



Petersson Screens 500 FIREFLIES & Wins!

Director **Lysandra Petersson**, with her company **Deep**



Structure Productions in the Shenandoah Valley, traveled to Oklahoma in June for a screening of her film **500 FIREFLIES** at the deadCenter Film Festival (after a "Virginia run" at the Ampersand, NOVA, and Fredericksburg Film Festivals)!

"We shot this little rural indie in 2021 with our great network of regional crew, and actors both local and national. deadCenter was a terrific creative space and wonderful festival. And we don't just say that because we won **BEST NARRATIVE FEATURE!**" We hope this will help us get distribution for this heartfelt, southern-as-a-potato-gun dramedy about small town life in the '90s.

(From left to right, writer/producer Zan Gillies, writer/director Lysandra Petersson, and producer/actor Zach Laliberte)

WIFV Mems at Nepal America Int'l Film Festival

WIFV member and co-host of MediaMaker Spotlight, **Sandra Abrams**, attended the 2025 Nepal American International Film Festival opening night on June 26 at the iconic AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center. Kicking off the three-day event was the film, **SHAMBHALA**, by Nepalese writer and director, Min Bahadur Bham. Abrams found the film mesmerizing. It was Nepal's official submission to the 97th Academy Awards and was filmed entirely on location in Tibet. It tells the story of Pema, a pregnant woman who sets out on a treacherous journey to find her husband, who disappeared while on a trading trip. The evening started with a ceremonial candle lighting by Nepalese comedian and film actor, Hari Banisha Acharya. He is one of the stars of **THE WORLD'S HAPPIEST MAN**, which made its US premiere during the festival. Abrams also had a chance to chat with Kirtana Banskota, one of the co-producers of that film and a co-founder of the festival. Overall, 30 films were presented from 14 countries during the festival. A wonderful evening. (In photo above Kirtana Bankota, Sandra Abrams, Gurpreet Singh)



The Nepal America International Film Festival featured the work of local DMV filmmakers again this year. Over 128 films were submitted to the festival and 40 were selected, including **DEAR PRA** directed by Nitin Adsul and featuring WIFV member and Past President **Rebecca Bustamante** as a TV reporter (pictured at left with Congressman Shri Thanedar and a crew member from **DEAR PRA**). Rebecca has been a festival

advisor and jury member for NAIFF since 2017 and enjoys spending a weekend in Nepal (virtually) every summer.

Congratulations to all the winners of this year's film festival:

- Jury Award - **CLAY BIRD** directed by Kiran Bhakta Joshi
- Best Short – **THE WITNESS TREE** directed by Raj Bhetwal
- Best of DMV – **THE LAST WILD HERD: Defending Yellowstone's Buffalo** directed by Aayas Joshi and Anna Connors
- Best in Nepal Panorama – **DEVI** directed by Subina Shrestha
- Best Feature Film – **SNOW LEOPARD SISTERS** directed by Ben Ayers, Sonam Choekyi Lama and Andrew Lynch



Backyard Fundraiser DOUEN

Alyscia Cunningham is doing it again—and she would love for you to be there!

After a sold-out AFI Silver Theatre in February, and a packed first backyard screening in May, I'm bringing the community together once more to raise funds for DOUEN.

- Date: **Saturday, July 19, 2025** (Rain date: July 26)
 - Time: 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM (Doors at 5:30 PM)
- Location: Private residence in Silver Spring, MD (address shared upon RSVP)
 - Tickets: **\$50 – Individual / \$75 – You + a Friend** [RSVP here](#)
 - Tickets include refreshments, film screenings, and community Q&A

Enjoy:

- Refreshments sponsored by TPSS Co-op
- Hors d'oeuvres + wine & beer (21+)

Event Highlights:

- Screening of DOUEN II (proof-of-concept short)
- Bonus screenings: SENSES + NEGRO MOUNTAIN
- Director Q&A with me + lead cast
- Raffle: Win 1 of 2 DOUEN II posters
- Community vibe, light bites, and networking
- Recognition: Your name on our upcoming project page!

If you're unable to attend but still want to support DOUEN, here are two ways:

[Donate via Eventbrite](#) or make a tax-deductible donation via [WIFV](#) (my fiscal sponsor)



Warrior Princess 10000

Introducing @warriorprincess10000 who write and produce sketch comedy and release new episodes of their sketch show on the last Friday of each month on YouTube. [You can watch them here](#). Expect the next one on July 25th!

Our comedians are Rasheeda Campbell, **Jillian Cardillo**, **Carly Crickenberger**, **Jessica Haley**, and **Stephanie Levy**, with help from **Mira Kelly**.

L-R: Rasheeda Campbell, Jessica Haley, Stephanie Levy, Jillian Cardillo, and Carly Crickenberger



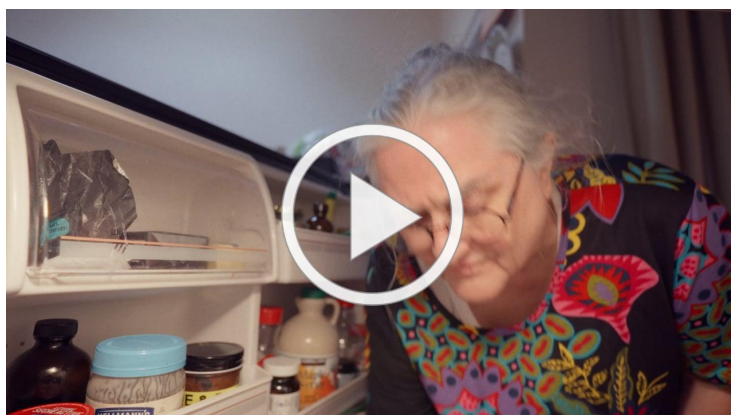
THE MATADOR Featured in the New York Times

THE MATADOR, the 2008 documentary from **Nina Seavey** and Stephen Higgins, was named one of the "Movies We've Loved Since 2000" by *The New York Times*. [Check out the full list here](#)

THE MATADOR was also recently used by Forward Pathway as a higher education teaching resource exploring the tradition and ethical debate around bullfighting. [Read "Exploring Modern Bullfighting Through The Matador" here.](#)

PEOPLE-PLEASER Wins Capstone Fiction Award

Samantha Noland's thesis film, PEOPLE-PLEASER won the Best Graduate Capstone Fiction award at the American University Visions Awards! It also screened at the American Pavilion Next Gen Showcase at the Cannes Film Festival in May 2025. The film follows Sarah as she decides between telling the truth to her family, or keeping secrets. In this coming of age and coming out story, Sarah must choose between her fiancé Lenny and her girl-friend Laura at one tense shabbat dinner table. You can watch the trailer below. Samantha is in the early stages of development for her first feature film which builds off of the award-winning short film.



Farmer in the Running!

Newly-elected WIFV Executive Vice President, **Robin Farmer** is a semifinalist for The Writers Lab. The Lab was founded to amplify the long unheard voices of women and nonbinary writers over 40, support gifted storytellers, build community, and diversify content in world cinema. Focusing on script development, the foundation of fictional narrative filmmaking, the Lab cultivates the work of women writers, supporting the successful realization of their scripts.

Farmer is also a quarterfinalist for the Nashville Film Festival Screenplay Competition for a short screenplay



Update from Reinharz

"The casting call that I sent out on the WIFV listserv for my friends short film lead them to success, they casted David Geraci as their lead! Secondly, I've officially been offered to be a Set PA for a short film filming soon called ALBATROSS directed by Amandine

Thomas in Virginia. The director's two previous films were accepted into Sundance back to back years and the UPM and AD for this film both worked on SHIVA BABY, very exciting things!!" **Nina Reinharz** was the Spring 2025 WIFV Intern, is transferring to SCAD Atlanta in the fall, and is participating in the 2025 WIFV Mentorship Program.



Hurt's Team Wraps Short

The short film, SEE IT, BE IT, is the final installment of *The Route Series*. It wrapped production back in April 2025. *The Route* is a three-part short film series that looks at Black women who made history in the media industry. The beauty of this project is that all of the featured women are alive and well. SEE IT, BE IT shares the story of Yvette Lee Bowser and how she became the

first Black woman to have her own primetime series on network television. The short co-directed by **Dr. Carletta S. Hurt** (WIFV Member, Past Board President) and Cameron Gray (past ImageMakers Participant) was filmed at Bard Early College High School. The screenplay was written by Tiffany Alexander and Cameron Gray. The film is currently in post-production with an anticipated release date of August 22.

Hurt is also excited to receive a grant from DC Humanities in the Community Culture and Heritage category. Announced in May, production for the short film on Brumsic Brandon, Jr starts in July 2025. In addition to support from DC Humanities, Hurt was awarded the DC Camera Film Equipment grant for the same project. Thanks to WIFV and DC Camera! The project, BRUMSIC BRANDON, JR.: A Legacy in Art and Activism, was crafted after working with his daughter, Barbara Brandon Croft, on *The Route Series* about her titled, *Art Imitates Life*. The anticipated release date for the documentary is April 2026 in time for what would have been his 99th birthday!

Pictured above Cast and Crew for SEE IT, BE IT



Zabrieski Film Streaming

Tara Roberts Zabrieski's latest documentary film is now free to stream online and on the PBS app. "The Buzz on Native Plants" shows how a few small acts of planting with native plants can make a huge difference in flooding, erosion, drought, and wildlife habitat.

"I started the planning process for this film back in 2022. In the Winter/Spring of 2023 I applied for and received a grant from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund. I partnered with some organizations in Maine to bring this film to life, they helped me find the stories and ensured the accuracy of the content. As far as the production and post production goes I worked alone. I travelled to Maine in my old Dodge van with my Sony NX100 to film Maine's native plants, the pollinators who rely on them, and to show the beauty and function of planting with native plant species. During the fall and winter I edited the film between other freelance projects I had going on. It seemed to take forever, but there is no better feeling than showing your film to a room full of people for the first time. For me, this was at the Maryland International Film Festival in spring of 2024. Last summer I drove back to Maine to screen it at the Maine Outdoor Film Festival. The greatest compliment I got was from one of the people who I filmed and I was nervous about how they would react to seeing themselves on the big screen. During the Q&A she raised her hand and said "I've seen a lot of films on this and similar topics around climate change, and you really nailed it." Phew! I could finally relax."

This full film is 52 minutes to fit within the standard broadcast times for PBS stations. I also created short clips from the film to be used in classrooms or other educational settings. I've made screening licenses available on my website and I'm working with a curriculum developer to create something for middle and high school classrooms.

I love this work and I hope to continue to find ways to fund and distribute content about nature and science. [Watch THE BUZZ ON NATIVE PLANTS Online Here](#). [See more of Tara's work here](#).

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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