

WIFV People in the News - March 2026

Connie St. John, Sharon Sobel, Kathi Overton, Candice Bloch, Sandra Brennan, Jacquie Greff, Shaunda Patterson-Strachan, Alison Bauer, Tara Jabbari, Lysandra Petersson, sheri ratick stroud, Katherine Brewster, Jodi Sakol, Phil Shapiro, E. Samantha Cheng, MacKenzie Galloway, Robin Farmer, Tara Roberts Zabriskie, Robin Noonan-Price, Lisa Scott, Alyscia Cunningham, Laura Kroeger, Felicia Barlow Clar, Monda Raquel Webb, Maggie Burnette Stogner, Amita Sarin, WIFTI Summit



A Round of Applause

The 2nd Annual Telethon was a success thanks to the amazing group of volunteers led by **Connie St. John** and including **Sharon Sobel, Kathi Overton, Candice Bloch, Sandra Brennan, Jacquie Greff**, and hosts **Shaunda Patterson-Strachan, Alison Bauer, sheri ratick stroud, and Tara Jabbari**. Our gratitude is also extended to those who supported WIFV with their donations!

Thrilled to feature these WIFV Member Shorts and Trailers during the Telethon:

500 FIREFLIES by **Lysandra Petersson**

BATS IN THE BELFRY by **sheri ratick stroud**

200+ YEARS: AMERICAN WOMEN FIGHT AND RISE by **Katherine Brewster**

THE ONLY WAY OUT IS THROUGH by **Jodi Sakol**

MY FESTIVE LIVER TRANSPLANT by **Phil Shapiro**

DORA FUGH LEE: A LIFE IN ART by **E. Samantha Cheng**

WHATEVER MAKES US HAPPY by **MacKenzie Galloway**

DISCONNECTED by **Robin Farmer**

STELLAFANE AND BEYOND (Trailer) by **Tara Roberts Zabriskie**

DEFENDING THE DARK (Trailer) by **Tara Roberts Zabriskie**

HOA VS UFO by **Robin Noonan-Price**

MURDER ON THE 31ST by **sheri ratick stroud**

FLASH BURN by **Lisa Scott**

SENSES by **Alyscia Cunningham**

If you were unable to join us on March 7, you can watch the films on the WIFV YouTube Channel! Donations for WIFV accepted here and gratefully received!

How Laura Kroeger's Career Took Off After Winning Final Draft's Big Break Screenwriting Contest

When **Laura Kroeger** won the 2024 Feature Grand Prize of Final Draft's Big Break Screenwriting Competition she stepped into a year that not only reshaped her career, but also her point of view on screenwriting. Within a week of taking the Final Draft Big Break Feature Grand Prize, Kroeger signed with a manager, an almost unheard-of turnaround in an industry known for its long waits.



Read Final Draft's interview with Laura about what Big Break did for her screenwriting life and career. Laura is a WIFV Narrative Script Development Fellow ('22)



Cunningham Films

Alyscia Cunningham filmed her first scene for *DOUEN* on the islands of Trinidad & Tobago earlier this month!

She didn't raise the funds she had hoped for before traveling, but since she would already be

there for Carnival, and something in her said: *Go anyway. Gather a crew. Make it happen.* She did it! [You can read about her trip here.](#)

Crew on set: Faith Ayoung (Unit Still), Dylan Quesnel (DP), Aaron Brathwaite (Gaffer), BooMTown (AC), Kirk Garner (Sound Recordist), Kirk Brown (Location Manager), Mr. Felix (Home Owner), Azaria (actress), Nathan (actress), Alyscia Cunningham (Writer/Director), Serenity C (Key PA), and Salema West (PA)



Advocating for Maryland Film Funding

On February 24, Maryland filmmakers showed up in force for Maryland Film Day, engaging in grassroots lobbying to strengthen the state's film industry. WIFV members **Felicia Barlow Clar**, **Monda Raquel Webb** teamed up with Ellie Torrez and John Collins to visit their respective

state delegates to advocate for continued and expanded support of Maryland's film tax credit incentive. Their message: for every dollar claimed in film tax credits, Maryland sees a return in film spending and tax revenue, and stressed our industry is a critical engine for jobs and local business growth. The Maryland Film Industry Coalition provided popcorn for advocates to deliver to legislators' offices — a fun touch that staff happily accepted. The group also attended the Ways and Means Committee meeting alongside a strong contingent of industry advocates.

This year's legislative session includes the Delivering Economic Competitiveness and Advancing Development Efforts (DECADES) Act (HB 898), which includes a proposal that would enhance the film tax incentive. The bill aims to remove the current \$10 million cap on the amount of credits a single production can receive and increase the annual pool of available credits — changes supporters say will help Maryland better compete with other states for large film and TV projects.

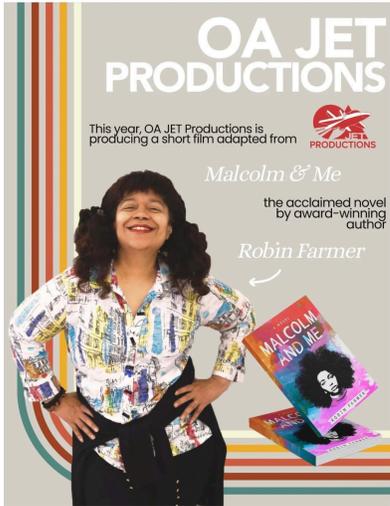
Pictured Scott Ambrose (Recent History Prop Rentals), Felicia Barlow Clar, Monda Raquel Webb, Ian Wilson (Recent History Prop Rentals), Ellie Torrez (Tripod Productions) Photo Credit: Ellie Torrez

Stogner at Wild & Scenic FF

Professor **Maggie Burnette Stogner** screened *UPSTREAM, DOWNRIVER - Uniting for Water Justice* at the 2026 Wild & Scenic Film Festival, and was honored to be the recipient of this year's John de Graaf Environmental Film Award which recognizes lifetime contributions to environmental issues through the power of compelling visual storytelling.

[Read more here.](#)

Photo credit: Mark Decena



Farmer Script in Production

WIFV Executive Vice President **Robin Farmer** is collaborating with Oakwood Arts, a Richmond-based nonprofit that trains young adults for filmmaking careers, to produce her concept short film based on her novel, "Malcolm and Me." Farmer wrote the script and will direct the short film.

Farmer said working with the organization "is an unexpected gift."

The production includes a matching \$20,000 NEA grant. [Tax deductible donations can be made here.](#)

SACRED PIECES OF HOME Awarded!

Amita Sarin and the team behind SACRED PIECES OF HOME have just learned that they are receiving an Award of Excellence from the Religion Communicators Council (RCC) for long form video. The Wilbur Award is the RCC's top honor for projects "deemed to be of excellent quality and unquestionably worthy of recognition" and will be awarded at the RCC Convention held in Cincinnati, Ohio in mid-April.

More than the Elevator Pitch: Why the WIFT International Summit is Your Next "Yes"

By Becky Hellwig

Prior to last November, I didn't know the WIFT International Summit existed. After attending, I realized it is a career essential.

The unofficial theme of that first evening at the Woodlands Hotel was, "Should I stay or should I go?" As we were greeted with drinks and appetizers, I realized a handful of the women I was connecting with had only decided to attend two weeks prior.

Why the hesitation? For many, it was the fear of the unknown. For me, it was that coupled with the hurdle of logistics. Having missed the early-bird rates, I was searching for a roommate to offset costs and have someone to debrief with after a long day. After three emails to the organizers with plenty of questions, I finally got the answer that solidified my "YES."

Unlike traditional conferences where speakers are swarmed for 30-second pitches, this was a masterclass in relationship building. Because the panelists stayed for the full three days, conversations flowed naturally over dinner or on the dance floor. We explored the shifting landscape of our industry—from the rise of vertical micro-dramas

to modern distribution hurdles—without the typical networking stress.

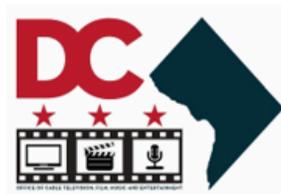
My three takeaways:

1. Track Your "No's": Guneet Monga Kapoor suggested tracking every "No" in an Excel sheet. Eventually, you see the statistical pattern leading to your "Yes". The best "Yes" is always coming.
2. Don't Judge the Process: Trust your unique path and give yourself permission to enjoy it.
3. The Table is for Sharing: Sometimes you are invited to the table because others need to meet you.

Let's lift each other up. Connect with your local WIFV/WIFT organization and find your "Best Yes". See many of the people Becky met below! [Read Becky's full article here.](#)



Thanks to the WIFV Sponsors



Thank You!

We appreciate everyone who took time to write a testimonial about WIFV at Great Nonprofits. We remain a Top-Rated nonprofit on their site consulted by donors and volunteers. You don't need to wait for a call for testimonials, **you can add your insights anytime throughout the year here.**

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. We welcome all genres, genders, and experience levels.





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