



WIFV People in the News - July 2026

Frederick Coffee Group, Paul Grant, Maggie Stogner, SRB Communications, Sheila Brooks PhD, James Mae, Tracy Baumgardner, Judy Meschel, Alyscia Cunningham, Soma Chanda, Ellie Anderson, Kathleen Borschow, Mark Ricche, Laura Seltzer-Duny



Frederick Coffee Group has an Evening Meeting!

Jean Rosolino hosted the group at her house and the sunset was fabulous! L to R seated: **Tod Hopkins, sheri ratick stroud, Malyn Pilard**, Kristin Parker, **Jane Barbara, Jean Rosolino, Thomas McCabe, Melissa Houghton**, Sarah Pletts, **Ayana Ware, Todd Gardner, Nathan Akula** L to R floor level: Ben Holland, Emily Holland, Ramsey Telhami, Tara Zabriskie

Next coffee will be Wednesday, August 5! [More info and RSVP here](#)



Grant Producing EAST OF THE RIVER Series

Paul Grant is producing a three-part oral history and documentary film series, EAST OF THE RIVER, about generational transitions within the predominantly African American communities located East of the Anacostia River—specifically in Ward 7.

Each film will each explore a significant generational moment through the personal narratives of District residents who lived, experienced and were catalyst for the change in this overlooked area. The series is generously supported by Humanities DC and the D.C. Commission on Arts and Humanities. [More info here.](#)

The first installment, WE ARE PENN BRANCH is a feature length film that shares the stories of the first generations of African American families to integrate the Penn Branch neighborhood of roughly 500 single-family homes in Southeast DC, from 1962 through 1971. Their heartfelt stories illustrate the power of finding community wherever you are. The film will be ready for a limited festival run in 2027.

Beyond his films, this fall Paul Grant is launching the **Southeast Cinema Society, Inc. (SECS)** a nonprofit organization that hosts curated film screenings, lectures and other cultural events in communities East of the Anacostia River where there are no active movie theaters or cultural performance spaces for over 70,000 adults, who live in 28 neighborhoods in the District of Columbia.

Emmy for Stogner

Great news! UPSTREAM, DOWNRIVER - *Uniting for Water Justice* won the Capital Region Emmy in the 'Documentary - Cultural/ Topical' category. [Full list of Capital Region Emmy winners here.](#)



Over the last 4–5 years, the Blue Bear Films team, led by **Maggie Stogner**, completed and aired a 30-minute version on Maryland Public Television, distributed the hour-long version on American Public Television affiliates across the country (airing over 1,500 times!), and screened at film festivals nationwide.

The team has expanded the project by launching a new YouTube series: WOMEN WATER WARRIORS! [Check it out, subscribe, and share!](#)

How can you increase impact across media platforms? Check out our new report *Upstream, Downriver/Maximizing Impact: A Media Ecosystem Case Study*. [It is open source and was just published on the Center for Media and Social Impact's website.](#) I hope you find it useful and would love your feedback!



36 Years Strong. The Story Is Still Moving.

Some milestones mark time. Others mark meaning. This year, [SRB Communications](#) celebrates 36 years of doing work that has always meant something. Thank you to our clients, partners, colleagues and friends who have supported us over the years.

36 years ago, a vision was planted. A belief that communications done with purpose, integrity and excellence could change the way stories are told and whose stories get told. Under the leadership of **Dr. Sheila Brooks**, that vision became a firm and that firm became a family. What started as a commitment to

quality communications has grown into decades of impact across industries, communities and platforms that did not even exist when this journey began.

Through every shift in the media landscape, every evolution in technology and every challenge that came with building something lasting, SRB Communications has remained steady. Not because the work was easy, but because the mission was clear. To amplify voices that matter. To tell stories with honesty and intention. To show up for clients, partners and communities with the same standard of excellence every single time.

36 years is not just a number. It is late nights and breakthrough moments. It is clients who became partners and interns who became professionals. It is a body of work that stretches across newsrooms, boardrooms and social feeds. It is a legacy being written in real time.

As we mark this anniversary, we do not just look back with pride. We look forward with purpose.

The story of SRB Communications is still moving and the best chapters are still ahead.

Mae Filming and Recognized

James Mae (they/them) is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, photographer and multimedia storyteller in D.C.

At the end of April they finished their first professional short documentary **HIDDEN IN THE SPOTLIGHT (HITS)**, following Mexican actor and playwright Victor Salinas navigating family, love and sacrifice while pursuing his dream of creating an artistic refuge for his Hispanic, Latine and LGBTQA+ communities 20 feet below Washington DC's surface. **HITS** has screened at Signal Film Festival in MD, On The Fringe Festival in NM and won official selection, an exceptional merit award and a merit award for cinematography at the Hispanic International Film Fest. More local and national screenings are being planned. [Watch the trailer here.](#)



HITS is part of a larger three-part short documentary series exploring race, identity, community and belonging developed by Mae's company **Starlight Productions**. The second film in the series will explore Queerness and Catholicism and the third film will explore the impact immigration enforcement has on local community health. The full series is in the fundraising, ideation and planning phase. If you want to get involved, reach out!

Additionally, James was recently selected as the DC Office of Cable Television, Film and Media's Filmmaker of the Month for June, recognizing their commitment to D.C.'s creative community, and the LGBTQA+ community. [Listen to their interview here.](#)



Baumgardner With Statues!

Tracy Baumgardner, Senior Video Editor at WETA, won Capital Area Emmy Awards for her recent television work for PBS. Her show **SIGNATURE DISH** earned four Emmys, taking home awards in the Chesapeake Heritage, Host, and Lifestyle (Long and Short Form) categories. Additionally, Tracy won a Historical Documentary Emmy for work with fellow WIFV member **Judy Meschel** on WETA Arts:

Reenacting the Revolution at Mount Vernon which also aired in several national markets.

Overall, WETA won a total of 13 Emmys, a grand showing celebrating local production and public television. Congrats to all teams and a massive thank you to all the incredibly talented creators, crew, and storytellers who made these projects possible.

It's a Wrap for DOUEN

It's official...As of May 16, the DOUEN feature film wrapped in Palo Seco, Trinidad and Tobago.

Inspired by the folklore of Trinidad and Tobago, DOUEN is a Caribbean folklore horror film that explores family, generational trauma, healing, and cultural identity through the lens of the supernatural.



"I could not be more proud of the incredible cast and crew who came together to bring DOUEN to life. I'm currently going through the dailies (unedited video and audio footage) and I love what I'm seeing. I had a moment of realization...Alyscia, you did it. I led a cast and crew totaling around 75 people, here in the U.S. and in Trinidad and Tobago, to complete my first feature film. I am beyond grateful and proud of myself, my team, and the cast." [Read more here.](#)

Join **Alyscia Cunningham** and crew at the community screening of DOUEN, on Sunday, November 1, 2026, at the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center in Silver Spring, MD. General Admission: \$45 / VIP Reception & Screening: \$100 (limited availability)

[Purchase your tickets here](#)

Caption: Alyscia Cunningham during rehearsal in Trinidad and Tobago with actresses Jacqueline O'day and Kike Ayodeji and crew Anushka Robinson (Key PA) and Serenity Charlery (AD).

UFC Freedom 250.

Whatever your familiarity with UFC may be, the event itself was a magnificent production effort.

By **Soma Chanda**, DMV Productions

After 12 months of planning and 33 days spent building and breaking down three separate locations, the Lincoln Memorial, the Ellipse, and the Octagon, the scale of the project was hard to ignore. The event brought together more than 2,000 companies and cost \$60 million to put on. And, as if the logistics needed another Jenga block added to the stack, it all happened during a heat wave.

Dana White has already stated on the record that he would never repeat the event due to its logistical complexity.

For me, it ultimately resulted in making great connections, gaining a new perspective, and walking away with a story I will be telling for a long time.

Sometimes, getting into the thick of a project helps clear your head of the assumptions you build around your own work. Being part of such a huge production forces you to evaluate your role, understand your value, and see how your small piece fits into a much larger puzzle.

That was probably the biggest takeaway for me. On productions of this size, no role exists in isolation. Every person, every department, every decision, and every small adjustment matters. It was a reminder that even when your piece of the puzzle feels small, it is still part of what makes the whole thing possible. And I got a photo with Merab Dvalishvili!



MasterClass Licenses Awarded

As a benefit of our collaboration with WIFTUS, three WIFV members have received one-year MasterClass licenses to further their professional development.

Congratulations to **Ellie Anderson**, **Kathleen Borschow**, and **Mark Ricche**.

MasterClass makes it possible to learn from the world's greatest minds anytime, anywhere, with

- Thousands of lessons across multiple categories, including film, business, wellness, food, and more
- Bite-sized content with 10 minutes on average per lesson
- Cinematic learning experience with a unique blend of education and entertainment
- New courses and instructors added every month
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Power of the Office Power of Film

Longtime WIFV member **Laura Seltzer-Duny** shared highlights of her film, **NOBODY WANTS US**, at the introduction of legislation to award a Congressional Gold Medal to American rescuers

of the Holocaust, held on Capitol Hill on Tuesday, June 23rd. Seltzer-Duny spoke about her ancestors, featured in the film along with others, who were compelled to help Holocaust refugees. Prominent descendants of American rescuers, including the family of Eleanor Roosevelt, who was herself a prominent figure in **NOBODY WANTS US**, were in attendance at this commemorative event. [Learn more about the film here.](#)

Caption: Nancy Pelosi and Laura Seltzer-Duny, same podium/same event!

Thanks to the WIFV Supporters



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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Women in Film & Video | 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE | Washington, DC 20003 US

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