The power level in the room at this year’s Women in Focus conference was as jaw-dropping as the films the panelists have written, directed, produced or marketed — from The Hunger Games to The Help, from Kung Fu Panda to Pirates of the Caribbean — as six of the industry’s top women shared their insights on the business with the crowd in the Folino Theater in April.

As The Hollywood Reporter noted in its coverage of the event, “Last year’s panelists had current films with over $271 million in worldwide grosses, but the women on the 2012 panel were fresh off projects grossing over $1.6 billion.”

The panelists were producer and former Walt Disney Motion Picture Group President Nina Jacobson (Hunger Games, The Sixth Sense, Pirates of the Caribbean); DreamWorks Studios Co-Chairman and CEO Stacey Snider (The Help, War Horse); screenwriter and producer Leslie Dixon (Outrageous Fortune, Mrs. Doubtfire); Academy Award®-nominated director Jennifer Yuh Nelson (Kung Fu Panda 2, Kung Fu Panda, Madagascar) and producer Debra Martin Chase (The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, The Princess Diaries, Courage Under Fire).

Dawn Taubin, Professor of Public Relations and Advertising and former head of Marketing at Warner Bros., served as moderator.

The 2012 Women in Focus Conference was sponsored by Tricia Berns, Eve Konyei Ruffatto, Twyla Martin, Laurie Rodnick, Harriet Sandhu and Bonny Schumacher.

WOMEN IN FOCUS

On the importance of role models
• When you see someone who looks like you doing a job, you think you can do it. — Nelson
• I saw a woman win the Oscar for screenwriter as a little girl. It stuck with me. — Dixon

On how movies can change the world
• When you see a great movie, your guard goes down, you surrender to the images and walk in someone else’s shoes. (The movie) Philadelphia was one of the greatest life experiences I’ve had. You can tell people to be tolerant all day long but if they watch Tom Hanks in a loving relationship, they are changed. — Snider
• I was hitchhiking through Spain and two guys we met thought we were drug addicts or prostitutes. I realized that was the only images of black women they’d ever seen. And I realized I could change that. — Chase

On how audiences respond to a story
• There’s only one rule of screenwriting. Does the reader want to turn to the next page? — Dixon

On making it in the industry
• It’s not a level playing field (for women). Just get over it and believe in yourself. — Chase
• There used to be greater barriers to production and distribution, you had to raise a lot of money. Now there’s nothing to keep you from telling your story. If it’s good, someone will notice. — Jacobson

From left: Dawn Taubin, Leslie Dixon, Debra Martin Chase, Professor Alex Rose, Dean Bassett, Jennifer Yuh-Nelson, Nina Jacobson, Stacey Snider.
Chapman Named a Top Ten U.S. Film School

Summer is always a time to regroup; to reflect on the progress of the last school year and to prepare for the next. We chart our progress using various measures — from job placement among our graduates to success in student film festivals to on-going faculty accomplishments — but it is also gratifying to see our efforts recognized by external measures as well.

Thus the recent listing by The Hollywood Reporter of our film school as #13 among the top 25 film schools globally (and #16 in the U.S.) is particularly gratifying. Being recognized at the very highest levels by a major industry publication says a great deal about the fine work of our alumni, students and faculty. Reaching this point truly takes a team effort and we are blessed with a tremendous team and truly talented students.

NEW FACULTY HAVE VAST EXPERIENCE

Barry Blaustein has spent the last 50 years writing screenplays. He directed and produced the award-winning documentary Beyond the Mat. Most recently he directed Peep World, with his writing partner David Sheffield. Blaustein’s feature credits include Coming to America, Nutty Professor 1 and 11, and Boomers. The pair also worked as head writers and supervising producers on Saturday Night Live for three years, developing Eddie Murphy’s more famous characters.

Harry Ufland brings his many years in the industry as an agent with William Morris representing names like Martin Scorsese, Robert DeNiro, Ridley Scott and Harvey Keitel. He has packaged films such as Ragtime and Blade Runner and produced films including Crazy/Beautiful, One True Thing and The Last Temptation of Christ. His most recent project is The Big Wedding, starring DeNiro, Susan Sarandon, and Diane Keaton, due this October.

Steve Hirsen is best known for directing 11 seasons of America’s Funniest Home Videos. He was also the Emmy Award-winning director of Entertainment Tonight, spent more than a decade in live news and events coverage including directing the CBS Evening News Western Edition, live coverage of the Winter Olympics for ABC, and directing local programs in Washington, D.C., such as The NBC Nightly News, Meet The Press, and The Today Show. Hirsen has been the producer of the annual Local Cableace Awards for 11 years running.

Women of Chapman Award Filmmaker Funds

Four Dodge students were presented with $5,750 each for their thesis films as recipients of the first awards from the Women of Chapman (WOC) Endowed Filmmaker Fund. From left, Kelle Leonard, Gena Ford, Dean Basset, Naomi Shepherd and Elizabeth Iversen at the summer luncheon where the students received their awards. The $1M fund was established by the WOC to support students in making their senior thesis films. The selection committee consisted of WOC President Kathy Hamilton, Adrienne Brandes (past president), Donna Bianchi (president-elect), and Jacqueline Penner.

MRS. DOUBTFIRE SCREENWRITER IS FALL FILMMAKER-IN-RESIDENCE

Screenwriter and producer Leslie Dixon (Limitless, Hairspay; Mrs. Doubtfire, Overboard) has been named Dodge College’s Filmmaker-in-Residence for Fall 2013.

“We’ve had the pleasure of welcoming Leslie Dixon to numerous events at Dodge College over the years,” says Dean Bob Basset. “Her humor and realism resonate with students.”


“I’m looking forward to the students’ virgin enthusiasm — they haven’t been jaded, trampled, or rejected,” says Dixon. “I hope they will learn what it takes to visualize something that actually makes it to the screen and, once it does, what works and what doesn’t — they can learn from my mistakes!”

NEW FACULTY HAVE VAST EXPERIENCE

Barry Blaustein (right) working with Director of Photography Tobias Datum on the set of Peep World.

Harry Ufland (left) regularly brings key industry guests such as Amy Pascal, president of Sony Pictures, to Chapman. Steve Hirsen (right), director of the world final for the Tokyo Channel in the recent truck at the Farmer’s Classic ATP Tournament at UCLA in July.

From the recent conference in Cape Town, South Africa, to its most recent conference in Cape Town, South Africa.
The Folino Theater exploded with raucous cheers as Digital Arts Professor Bill Kroyer bounded on stage to the guitar riffs of Dire Straits’ ‘Money for Nothing’ and the words “2012 Digital Arts Show” burst from the flames on the screen behind him. This dramatic opening marked the first time the Digital Arts program hosted its own senior film screening and judging. From the standing room only audience, it was a roaring success.

“This is a mission of monumental importance for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and NASA,” she says, “and one that is close to my heart. In this time of severe budget cuts, public support of our nation’s scientific and technological endeavors has never been more important.”

In making art, always ask yourself what is it about,” Academy Award-winning producer Jon Landau advised Dodge College graduates at their commencement ceremony in May, reminding them that audiences “leave the plot at the theater” but that bigger themes resonate long after. “It’s one thing to be a leader in a career,” he said, “but another to be a leader in life.” As storytellers enabled by technology, this generation has the ability to tell stories “that reach around the world.” Landau expressed the hope that Dodge College grads would use their stories to better the lives of their families, create a greener and more sustainable world, create a better public school system, and help rid the world of racial and religious bigotry. “If you can do these things, you will have truly succeeded,” he concluded.
DODGE STUDENTS ABROAD:
SUMMER ADVENTURES FROM ASIA TO AFRICA TO EUROPE

Dodge College students scattered to various parts of the globe this summer, developing stories, collaborating on projects and experiencing different cultures.

ITALY: RENAISSANCE ART AND RESTORED FILMS

Dodge College students embarked on two separate trips to Italy this summer, focusing on classic cinema and the influence of the world of art.

One group spent a month in Perugia, an ancient Etruscan and Roman city, where they learned how the artistic influence of the Renaissance continues to influence filmmakers today and visited cultural landmarks including the Cinecitta Film Studios in Rome, Fellini’s cinematic home, and the Basilica of Assisi.

The other group visited Bologna for the Il Cinema Riconvato (cinema rediscovered) festival where they viewed film restorations and attended retrospectives on directors and symposiums on cinefilia in the digital age.

AFRICA: NGOS AND A CHANGING WORLD

In late May, Professor Jeff Swimmer led a group of 15 students from Dodge College, Wilkinson College and the Law School to Mozambique. The students created short documentaries profiling innovative NGOs (non-governmental organizations) addressing issues from supporting fisheries to helping improve the lives of those in villages surrounding war-ravaged Gorongosa National Park. When completed, the films will be given to the NGOs to use in their fundraising and outreach efforts.

"After this experience I know without a doubt that my dream as a filmmaker will continue to be one that focuses on making films about human issues that promote a better world for all.”

David Thompson (BFA/Film Prod. ’13)

Dodge College students also embarked on a 10-day journey with Professors Jeff Stanzler and Jurg Walther to Burkina Faso, West Africa, where they created 3-6 minute narrative films on the theme of “A Changing World,” how the lives of today’s youth are different from the lives of their parents. The films will be shown at FESPACO, the premiere film festival of Africa, in February 2013.

HENGDIAN, CHINA: The World’s Largest Backlot

Fifteen students from Dodge College, including one from Chapman Singapore, embarked on a two-week trip to Hengdian World Studios in Hengdian.

“This is the largest studio backlot in the world so it is a great opportunity for our students to not only learn about Chinese culture but about China’s position in the industry overall,” says Associate Dean Michael Kowalski, who accompanied the students on the trip.

Film Production, Production Design, and Screen Acting students collaborated on the time-traveling love story written to utilize the resources of the backlot.

TAIPEI, TAIWAN: Crossing Cultures Via Facebook

In July, Dodge College students, accompanied by Professor Roy Finch, participated in an exchange through the Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA) in Taipei, Taiwan. A core group started out at Dodge creating the story and planning the shoot, while initial casting and location scouting were being done simultaneously in Taipei. The two groups communicated via Facebook, which “allowed us to get to know the Taipei film crew as well as plan the shoot so we could hit the ground running,” says Professor Finch.

SOUTH KOREA: Spiderman and Kimchi

Two ongoing exchanges in Korea took place again this summer, with the Seoul Institute of the Arts and Dongseo University in Busan. In each case, students worked on a film in each country.

But it wasn’t all work and no play as the students also participated in field trips, workshops, and screenings in both Korea and Southern California. “The students communicated through the common language of film and food,” says Professor James Gardner who traveled to Seoul. “It’s amazing that after a few days a bulgogi burger and kimchi are as familiar as a big Mac and fries! Language and Spiderman, film students find a way!”
For tapping into the desires of millennials and empowering kids to make healthy decisions, Chapman’s Public Relations and Advertising teams were honored by the annual National Student Advertising (NSAC) and Public Relations Student Society of America Bateman Case Study competitions this year.

The NSAC team designed a multicultural marketing campaign for Nissan targeting Chinese American, African American, and Hispanic American millennials. The team came in third in the district’s competition against eight other schools, marking the fourth year in a row that the Chapman team has received recognition at the district level.

“It’s a bit of a Pippi Longstocking story,” says Gragg, director of the student-produced game. “It starts out with this little gear, named Axle, that’s been created by a toy shop inventor to fix broken toys. Eventually, Axle is discovered by a business tycoon and gets whisked away on a series of adventures to fix other machines.”

Axle players must navigate past crushers and steam vents by spinning the character over a series of rotating gears. “We did a lot of research and could not find any games that had the same rotational navigation that we had,” says game designer Liz Fiacco. “We had to come up with our own rules for jumping and even for what the controls should be.”

The students are now working with Chapman’s incubator program, eVillage, to start their own gaming business. The students are working feverishly to put the finishing touches on Axle for the Google Android. They’re also initiating a Kickstarter campaign to raise money for tests on the iPhone and iPad operating systems. For information about Axle and to sign up on their mailing list, visit their blog (http://axlegame.weebly.com/). You can also look for Axle in the Google Play App Store.

PR AND AD TEAMS HONORED

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“Multicultural millennials are a generation of doers trying to distinguish themselves in the world, even if it means staying up late to complete life’s tasks, while everyone else is sleeping,” says Ashley Coffey (BA/PRA ’12). “That’s something we felt connected multicultural millennials to Nissan, a company that is working just as hard to distinguish themselves from other car manufacturers, which is how we came up with our campaign slogan, ‘The Rest Just Dream.’”

The Bateman team members created a public relations campaign aimed at fighting childhood obesity in 10-11-year-olds, called Power Up!

Power Up! was a five-day program implemented at the Boys & Girls Club of Garden Grove that involved several community partners, including the American Heart Association, the Garden Grove Police and Fire Departments, Chapman athletes, and the Sapphire Laguna restaurant program, dedicated to providing healthy meals for young school children. The team was recognized as one of top 15 projects out of 70 schools that entered. This marks the eleventh time Chapman has received national recognition over 14 years of entries.

STUDENT GAME DESIGNERS TAKE TOP PRIZE

Chapman students took first place out of 36 schools at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Gaming Conference this year for their platform video game, Axle. Produced by seniors (shown from left, above, with Computer Science Professor Michael Fahy) Liz Fiacco (BFA/DA ’12), Lauren Gragg (BFA/DA ’12), Jessica Kernan (BFA/DA ’12), Alex Solano (BS/CPSC ’12), and Bryson Thill (BS/CPSC ’12), Axle is the culmination of an interdisciplinary collaboration between the departments of Computer Science and Digital Arts.

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Hiyam Abousaid (MFA/F ’02) secured a job as the office coordinator for Passion Pictures (Resepex) two days before commencement.

Joey Andrade (BFA/F ’04) and his wife Maria have written a children’s book titled Effjot, that is being print published and turned into an Ebook narrated by Jim Cummings (Winnie the Pooh, Tigger, David D. D. Didd, starring Jane Lynch (Glee), Mark Hamill (Star Wars) and original music and the voice of the main character by Kenny G. http://4thbook.com/.

Michael Ashley’s (MFA/Screenwriting ’07) web series “Red Lane” was nominated for Best Comedy series by Stay Tuned TV-Net for the iTVFest/STTV awards to be held in tandem with Pop Con LA. Other alumni involved with the project are writer/creator, along with Michael, Valerie Ashley (MFA/Screenwriting ’08), producer M. Elizabeth Hughes (BFA/Film Prod. ’03), director Tom Flynn (MFA/F ’08), guest director Sean Taylor (MFA/F ’08), cinematographer Benjamin Kantor (MFA/F ’08), and editors Bryan Tuck (MFA/F ’08), Willie Talbert (MFA/F ’07). The cast included Michael Ashley, Valerie Ashley, M. Elizabeth Hughes, Mike Danner (MFA/F ’08), Sean O’Brien, Willie Talbert. www.hadlove.tv

Janet Avrel (BFA/TB ’07) has joined CBS affiliate KSWT-TV in Yuma, AZ, as a general assignment reporter.

Kent Basset (MFA/F ’08) was nominated for an Emmy in the Outstanding Picture Editing For Reality Programming category for his work as part of the editing team on Top Chef.

Charles Borg (MFA/Screenwriting ’07) and Michael Ashley (MFA/Screenwriting ’07) were recently named two of 100 “Hot New Faces” on Movieline, an original new animated series that just made its fundraising goal via an independent Kickstarter campaign.

Jen Braeden (MFA/Screenwriting ’05) is now a staff writer on MTV’s new scripted show Undressed, and recently sold a show to Teen Nick called “The Main Line.” Braeden was hired to adapt an article about internet sensation Kiki Kinnabill from Rolling Stone Magazine into a movie for MTV.

DJay Brawner (BFA/Film Prod. ’04) currently runs Anthem Films, a film and music video production company. Brawner is in post-production on the feature film Measure which he directed and produced with Chapman alumni Mike Longnebach (BFA/F ’05) and Joseph Ruggieri (MFA/F ’04). The film will premiere at the Cincinnati Film Festival in September. Brawner has directed music videos for the bands Shinedown, The Foo Fighters, Gym Class Heroes, Flo-Rida, Fefe Figurine, and Day 26. His video for Gym Class Heroes’ “Stereo Hearts” was nominated for an MTV OMA Award. Brawner is in pre-production on the feature film Present Time which he will be producing with Ruggeri.

Jason Michael Brescia (BFA/Film Prod. ’09) film, The Newest Pitch, has been acquired by Lionsgate for domestic distribution and is slated to be released this October! The feature film was written and directed by Brescia, edited by Alex Oppenheim (BFA/Film Prod. ’08), shot by director of photography Trevor Wineman (BFA/Film Prod. ’11), produced by Bob Burnett (BFA/Film Prod. ’10), and stars several Chapman alumni.

Darren Bunkley (BFA/Film Prod. ’98) was nominated for an Emmy in the Outstanding Reality – Competition Program category for The Amazing Race. Bunkley is a supervising producer on the hit show, and was nominated for his work on the producing team.

Matthew Cella (BFA/Film Prod. ’07) and his wife, Katie Cela, successfully fundraised through Kickstarter to complete their feature-length documentary Off the Floor: The Rise of Contemporary Pole Dance. The film follows Jaggard, a contemporary pole dance company founded in Los Angeles. www.offthefloormovie.com

Daniel D’Alimonte (MFA/F ’10) is starting a six-month directing residency at Norman Jewison’s Canadian Film Centre next month where he will develop his feature projects. The program is very selective and only admires 5 directors from across Canada each year.

DJ Dodd (MFA/Producing ’12) recently began working as an associate producer for Hot Snakes Media, a NY-based production company specializing in reality television. Dodd is currently working on two new reality series shooting in Pennsylvania for TLC and Discovery.

Andy Erzik (MAE/F ’08) had his first book published earlier this year, William N. Self, the Man Who Invented Hollywood. Erzik recently spoke at Oxford University and later this year will be a principal speaker at a prestigious film festival in Italy.

Andy Fielder (BFA/Film Prod. ’03) was recently accepted into the PGA’s Producer’s Council. Fielder’s studio is running a Kickstarter campaign to finance an independent animated feature. More information can be found at http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/dickfigures/dick-figures-the-movie.

Coltan Gibby (BFA/Film Prod. ’02) was recently promoted to Manager, Alternative Programming & Development at FOX Broadcasting Company. Gibby has been with FOX more than 8 years.

Tyler Holtman (BFA/Film Prod. ’10) has been working as a post assistant on a movie called Werewolf: The Beast Among Us, a film for Universal. Last fall, Holtman went on a tour across the country on an ethanol-fueled bus promoting a documentary about alternative fuels called Freedom with acclaimed documentarian Josh Tickell (Fuel). Holtman filmed behind-the-scenes of the tour for websites online.

Jenny Hou’s (BFA/Creative Prod. ’11) senior thesis, Stik, won the College Television Award from the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Foundation for Alternative Programming.

David Jibladze’s (MFA/F ’08) drama Beholden was selected as Judges Choice by SeeFik’s panel for their fall 2011 competition. The jury included Michael London, Shann Black and Luis Guzman. Jibladze received a $7,500 cash prize and earned an additional $20,000 for taking the top prize. The prize also includes a meet in L.A. with Endeavor by Kenny G. http://elfbotbook.com/.

Laura Jones (BFA/Film Prod. ’08) was nominated for an Emmy in the Outstanding Special Visual Effects category for Once Upon a Time. Jones is a visual effects producer for the show.

Lauren Kacura (BFA/F ’09) is now the Assistant Director of Admissions for Dodge College of Film and Media Arts.

Misay Laney (BFA/Film Prod. ’11) is working for the Sundance Institute in Artist Services.

Rob Margolies’s (BFA/Film Prod. ’09) film She Wears Me, executive produced by Charles Shorr, celebrated its LA premiere in April and is slated for release in September in theaters and VOD.

Brian Singhied (BFA/Film Prod. ’04) and Jeremy Schott (BFA/Film Prod. ’08) also worked on the film.

John Waldast Macdonald (MFA/F ’11) and Nicholas Wiesnet (BFA/Film Prod. ’11) were selected as nominees for the 2012 ASC Andrew Lasdis Student Achievement Awards. Macdonald was nominated in the Graduate category for his work on The Butler Gather and Wiesnet was nominated in the Undergraduate category for his work on The Drop. Macdonald and Wiesnet both received an honorable mention for their work.

Dodge College was the only school represented in both categories!

Maria “Majo” Mansilla. (BFA/TB ’11) the Co-Executive producer of Chapman News, launched her professional career as the morning-show producer at KXRM-TV, the Fox affiliate in Colorado Springs, Colo. “Majo” is re-vamping and re-branding the station’s four-hour morning show.

Mark Miller (BFA/Film Prod. ’06) recently took the position of Creative Executive at Clay Barker’s company, Seraphim, Inc.

Michael Mohan (BFA/Film Prod. ’02) romantic comedy Save the Date has seen its sale of all North American rights in a deal with Magnolia from Gilbert Films.

Night and Day Pictures and H厂ffington Prods. The film had its world premier in dramatic competition at Sundance earlier this year.

Stephen Nelson, (BFA/TB ’10) moved from the Rockford Ice Hogs to a sports-reporter role at KEZI-TV, the ABC-affil in Eugene, Ore. Nelson will be covering Oregon State sports including the Olympic Track & Field Trials at stored Hayward Field.

Noelle Novoa (BA/PR ’06) has recently moved into the role of Public Relations Specialist at ASICS America.

Taylor O’Sullivan (BFA/CP ’12) had the opportunity to go to the Cannes Film Festival in France to intern with American Cinema International, an international distribution company based out of L.A.

Chris Marrs Piliero (BFA/Film Prod. ’01) won the 2012 MVPFA Award for Best Direction of a Band for The Black Keys’ “Howlin’ For You” music video.

Matt Prichard (BFA/TB ’11) is a general-assignment reporter for WFXL-TV, the Fox affiliate in Albany, Ga. The Atlanta Fox affiliate grabbed a first-week story of “Marty Lees” on a military funeral for his necrocast.
Lesi Sakowitz (BFA/SA '11) has been cast in Sow of Assembly in a regular role as “Fawn Trager.” Tune in when the fifth season premieres this September.

Heather Schlossnagle (MFA/F'09) has accepted a position as the full-time production coordinator for Chapman University’s Panther Productions.

Peter Silverman (BFA/Film Prod. ’07) is now a Producer/Editor for Digital Media at the National Geographic Channel in Washington, DC.

Rachel Skidmore (MFA/Producing ’10) recently became the YouTube Talent Manager at Big Frame.

Brent Hansen (BFA/Film ’11) is currently making a feature-length documentary about whether or not HIV causes AIDS, which will be finished in June of 2013. Watch the trailer at www.hivlive.com.

**FESTIVAL SUCCESSES**

**Hiaym Abousaid (BFA/F’12)** Dear Dead Indie Fest USA, Newport Beach.

Jack Brungardt (BFA/Film Prod. ’11) The Trap: Litchfield Hills, Sunscreen.


Nick Erickson (BFA/Film ’10) Palm County Best Short Film at a Cheekfest.

Alexander Gaeta (BFA/Film Prod. ’11) Show the Moon: Best Actress at Breckenridge, U.S. Short Film and Best of Fest at Kansas City, Best Short Film at Stony Brook, Best Student Film at Provincetown, Best Student Film at Greenwich, Grand Prize Best Student Film at Worldfest Houston, Gold Medal at Lake Arrowhead, Audience Director’s Choice Award in Angelus Awards, Honorable Mention at Fort Lauderdale, Arizona Int’l, Austin, Badalona (Spain), Bermuda, Beverly Hills, Central Florida, Charleston, Clermont-Ferrand (France), Cleveland, Connecticut, Crested Butte, Caculus, Downtown LA, Durango, Encuentros (U.K.), Indianapolis Int’l, Hamburg Int’l (Germany), Krakow (Poland), New Orleans, Newport Beach, Next Real (Singapore), Prescott, Rhodes Island Int’l, Riverside, Rome Int’l, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, Sao Paulo Int’l (Brazil).

Brant Hansen (BFA/Film Prod. ’11) Hay un Diablo 1st place at Idaho Rhone Horror, Lake Arrowhead, Southside.

Arian Harandi (BFA/Film Prod. ’11) Over the Line: Big Island, Desert Rocks Film and Music, Litchfield Hills, Sunscreen.

Scott Hartmann (MFA/F’11) Mascots Excellence in Achievement of Native American Film at Lake Arrowhead, American Indian, Columbia Grove, Greeneville, Red Nation.

Donte Murray (MFA/F’10) The Batting Cage: Comic Con, Riverside.

Oren Peleg (BFA/Film Prod. ’11) The Big Brivis: Breckenridge, Audience Los Angeles Comedy, Desert Rocks Film and Music, Lake Arrowhead, Palm Beach, Riverside, San Luis Obispo Jewish.

Grant Reed (BFA/Film Prod. ’11) Invest: The Musical: Best Comedy Short at Arizona Int’l, Best Student Film at Rainier Independent, Grand Prize in Rehoboth Beach Student Film Awards, Audience Award at Williamstown, Best Student Film at Dam Short; Action on Film, Atlanta, Bahamas, Big Island, Big Sur, Breckenridge, Audience Central Florida, Charleston, Chicago Int’l Movies & Music, Durango, HollyShorts, Jecseom Int’l Music & Film (South Korea), Kansas City, Litchfield Hills, Myrtle Beach, New Orleans, Newport Beach, Palm Springs Int’l, Park City Music, Prescott, Provincetown, Rhode Island Int’l, Riverside, Sacramento Film & Music, Sarasota, Sonoma. 1st Men Best Student Film at SNE Film & Music; Atlanta, Breckenridge, Cleveland, New Fest, Pink Apple (Switzerland), Reding, Chicago, St. Louis Q Fest, Victoria (Canada).

John Rocca (BFA/Film Prod. ’11) Just Say No: A Night of Horror (Australia), Dead Center, Litchfield Hills, Sunscreen.

Gursimran Sambhu (MFA/F’11) Homecoming: Best Short Award at Bahamas, Best Student Film at Breckenridge, Silver Medal at Lake Arrowhead, Audience Award Best Student Film at Sedona, Honorable Mention at Fort Lauderdale; Athens, Atlanta, Bend, Charleston, Central Florida, Chicago South Asian, Durango, Greeneville, Kansas City, Litchfield Hills, Little Rock, New Hampshire, New Orleans, Newport Beach, Ojai, Prescott, Rainier Independent, Rhode Island Int’l, Riverside, Port Townsend.

Nick Snyder (MFA/F’12) Damone Best Costume Design and Best Special FX Makeup at Los Angeles Reel, HollyShorts.

James Sweeney (BFA/Film Prod. ’12) The First Honorable Mention at Athens; Atlanta, Cleveland, Cork (Ireland), Hmothulic Rainbow, Melbourne Queer (Australia), Palm Springs Int’l, Santa Cruz.


Zach Wechter (BFA/Film Prod. ’12) Election Day: Best Student Narrative Film and Best Screenplay at Desert Rocks Film and Music, Honorable Mention in Fort Lauderdale, Honorable Mention in Rehoboth Beach Student Awards; 1 Reel/ Bumbershow, Action on Film, Albany, Be Film Underground, Big Island, Carmel, Central Florida, Dam Short, Detroit Windsor, Durango, Fresno, Gasparilla, Hill Country, Hoboken, Lake Arrowhead, Litchfield Hills, Mycal, Myrtle Beach, Newport Beach, NFFTY, Palm Beach, Prescott, River Bend, Riverside, Sacramento Film & Music, San Antonio, SENE Film & Music, Snake Alley, Soho NYC, Stony Brook, Tupelo, Vail, White Sands, Woods Hole.

Tyler Zelnisky (BFA/Film Prod. ’10) European Sun: Best Student Film at Tuburn; Honorable Mention at Anchorage Int’l, Litchfield Hills, Menlo Park Int’l, Newport Beach, New Hope, Newport Beach, Sacramento Int’l, Saratoga.

Kevin Stanieck’s (BFA/Film Prod. ’01) non-profit arts organization, ISM: A Community Project, is celebrating 10 years of creativity and accomplish- ments with a retrospective book and an exhibition at Grand Central Art Center in Santa Ana. To commemorate the occasion ISM developed three new projects for public participation that will be on display for the anniversary.

Natalie Testa (BFA/CVF ’11) was the producer’s assistant on Sun & Stars: Film & the Humanities.

Neil Thilsehtaan’s (BFA/Film Prod. ’00) film The Accidental Death of Joe By Sue had its TV premiere on the East Coast June 30th on WNET Thirteen (Reel 13), the NYC and Tri-state area’s PBS affiliate http://theaccidentaldeathofjoesyue.com/

Carles Torrens (BFA/Film Prod. ’08) film Apartment 143 (Emerge) was picked up for distribution by Magnolia Pictures and is available On Demand and will be in theaters on June 1st.

Kehley Watts (BFA/TBJ ’07) has moved onward and upward from the ABC-affiliate in Bend, Ore., to the NBC-affiliate KHQ-TV in the highly-competitive and respected news market in Spokane. Wash., Watts, a former Nighthawk executive producer, will be reporting during the week, and anchoring the stations’ weekend morning show.


Nicole Zwierne (MFA/F’10) is currently making an audience participates in a document about whether or not HIV causes AIDS which will be finished in June of 2013. Watch the trailer at www.hivlive.com.

**DOCUMENTARY SUCCESSES**

Among Giants (Chris Cresci) BFA/Film Prod. ’11, Ben Mullinkosson BFA/Film Prod. ’12, Sam Price-Waldman BFA/Film Prod. ’12) Short Documentary at Northwest Film & Music Festival at Cinema Verde, Best Student Documentary at Desert Rocks Film and Music 3rd place at Fort Lauderdale, Best Cinematography at Chagrin Doc, Best Environmental Documentary at Silicon Valley, Best Short Documentary at Columbia Grove; American Conservation, Docom, Atlanta, Big Muddy, Big Sky, Byron Bay (Australia), Chagrin, Desert Rocks, DocMiami, DocsNYC, DOCA (Canada), Greensville, Hope Springs, Hamburg, FesitEvil Films Festival (Italy), New Zealand Mountain (NZ), Port Townsend, River Run, Sacramento, Santa Barbara, Santa Fe Independent, Sausalito, SeattleDoc, Sedona, SilverDocs, St. Louis, Telluride Mountain, Thin Line, Topanga, White Sands, Wild & Scenic, Woodstock.

Hold My Hand (James Parker) BFA/Film Prod. ’13, Virginia Thomasi BFA/TBJ ’11, Ruby Stocking BEVF/’13, Bobby Moser BFA/TBJ ’12) Desert Rocks Film and Music, DocUrth, Thin Line, Topanga.

The Modern Man (David Thompson) BFA/Film Prod. ’13, Malica Cherhzad BFA/TBJ ’11, Haley Quartaarone BFA/TBJ ’13) Desert Rocks Film and Music, DocMiami, Newport Beach, Santa Fe Independent, St. Louis, Topanga.

Mountain Man (Alexandra Santoro) BFA/FS ’12, Jonathan Formation BFA/TBJ ’12, Bobby Moser BFA/TBJ ’12) KJOT La BFA/TBJ ’11) Honorable Mention at Fort Lauderdale; American Conservation, Atlanta, Biografilm (Italy), Cinema Verde, Desert Rocks Film and Music, Newport Beach, Silicon Valley, Soc’l Independent, Topanga.

A Saltine Soul (Greg Balkin) BFA/Film Prod. ’12, Mike Agnew BFA/Film Prod. ’13, Tim Kresin BFA/Film Prod. ’12) 1st place at Fort Lauderdale; American Doc, Bend, Big Sky, Chagrin Doc, Caculus, Desert Rocks Film and Music, DocUrth, Humboldt, Lake Arrowhead, Newport Beach, Phoenix, San Joaquin, Sausalito, Sedona, Tremezzo, Thin Line, Topanga.

A scene from Alexander Gaitis’ (BFA/Film Prod. ’13) film the Moonlight.
Having carved out a career directing music videos for some of the biggest names in the business, Dodge College alumnus Chris Marrs Piliero (BFA Film Prod. ’01) was honored with the Ron Thorton Distinguished Alumni Award at the Cecil Awards held in May. Marrs Piliero’s keen artistic eye for creative directing can be seen in music videos for artists including The Black Keys, Cage the Elephant, Kesha, Yellowcard, Taking Back Sunday and Britney Spears.

In 2010 he received an MTV Video Music Award for Breakthrough Video for The Black Keys’ Tighten Up. Shortly after graduating Marrs Piliero created his own production company, Marrs Attacks, and hasn’t looked back since.

His advice to this year’s Dodge alumni?

“Put as much energy into the business side of your work as you do into the creativity,” he writes in his blog. “Budget your life accordingly and avoid falling into a desperate position that pressures you to sacrifice the integrity of your work.”

You can read Marrs Piliero’s full article at blogs.chapman.edu/dodge.

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“It would be a mistake to assume that documentary filmmaking is all about simply capturing footage of nature,” says Professor O’Brien. “You have to have a strong story to tell and you have to have a strong message to communicate. And you have to be able to tell that story in a compelling way.”

This semester, students had opportunities to visit a wolf sanctuary, work with the National Park Service to produce educational apps for visitors, swim through the underwater kelp forests off Catalina and take aerial shots from a remote helicopter flying over Lake Irvine.

The students also learned about some of the ethical challenges of producing documentaries for entertainment.

“There are a lot of naturalists, biologists, and more conservative filmmakers who are not happy with the direction that cable television is bringing wildlife documentary,” says O’Brien. “If you take a look at some of these cable shows, you get the impression that every grizzly bear is going to attack you in your tent, and that lions and tigers are terrifying. The truth is, we can coexist with these creatures and I want students to think about the messages that we put out there and to decide whether what they’re creating is ethical.”

From the arid deserts of Joshua Tree National Park to the sunny beaches of Catalina Island, the students of Molly O’Brien’s Wildlife and Environmental Filmmaking got firsthand experience in the challenges of filming in the natural world.

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