

# The New York Times

## A Film Festival That's Unabashedly Local

By ANITA GATES

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Correction Appended

WHEN Gabrielle Berberich screened “Greetings From the Shore,” a film inspired by her last adolescent summer in Lavallette, to California audiences, one thing drove her crazy.



Aaron Houston for The New York Times

Diane Raver, executive director of the Sixth Annual Garden State Film Festival, at the Paramount Theater in Asbury Park.

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“People stood up and said, ‘That was great, but where did you actually shoot it?’ ” said Ms. Berberich, who was born in Warren County. The Californians, she explained, couldn’t believe the Jersey Shore was so beautiful. “I told them, ‘This is what New Jersey looks like.’ ”

She should have a more enlightened audience next weekend when “Greetings From the Shore” is the centerpiece of the Sixth Annual Garden State Film Festival in Asbury Park.

“We wanted to shoot kind of like the ‘Mystic Pizza’ or the ‘Dirty Dancing’ of the Jersey Shore,” said Ms. Berberich, who wrote the film, a full-length feature, with its director, Greg Chwerchak (who was born in Montclair). Being at the festival, she added, “is

especially exciting because we're literally on the same grains of sand that we were shooting on."

Come next weekend, that sand will be well trod. Comic-book devotees and music-video fans may be rubbing elbows with greats from the screen's golden age. A film about Nazi war crimes will share the program with one about adorable dachshunds. And right in the middle of it all comes an Abbott and Costello comedy from 1946, with a question-and-answer session featuring Lou Costello's daughter. In other words, the festival has grown in all sorts of directions.

"We went from one venue to — now we're running 9 venues and 153 films," said Diane Raver, executive director of the festival, which she founded in 2003 with the actor Robert Pastorelli.

Of those 153 films, Ms. Raver said, 57 have at least one New Jersey connection (cast, crew or filming location).

"Rock the Paint," for instance, is about a Midwestern boy who experiences culture shock when he moves to Newark. Dallas Brennan, the screenwriter, was born in Ohio but grew up in Montclair and still lives there. He met the film's director, Phil Bertelsen (who grew up in Highland Park), during their college days at Rutgers University.

"The festival is a joy," Mr. Brennan said. "It communicates how many flavors there can be" in the state.

If one town stands out in the festival's roster, it has to be Mr. Brennan's adopted home. There is even a feature film named for it: Michael Ramsdell's "Montclair," a drama about a suburban couple, their neighbors and a local recluse. And the Zara Phillips who directed "Roots: Unknown," a 30-minute documentary about adoption, turns out not to be Zara Phillips, the daughter of Princess Anne of Britain, but a British-born mother of three now living in Montclair.

Out-of-towners are allowed at the festival, however. Paul Sorvino, who stars in "Greetings From the Shore," will be there. Danny Aiello will sing at a benefit screening. The talk-show host Montel Williams will be host of that benefit, a screening of "4Chosen," a documentary about the 1998 racial profiling incident in which New Jersey state troopers shot and wounded several young minority men in a traffic stop.

Perhaps the festival's most revered guest is the screenwriter Budd Schulberg, 94, who won an Oscar for "On the Waterfront" (1954) and wrote the biting indictment of Hollywood values "What Makes Sammy Run?" (1949). Before accepting a lifetime achievement award, Mr. Schulberg will participate in a writers' panel discussion and comment on "Nuremberg," which he wrote more than 60 years ago.

Plenty of film industry people are expected, but Ms. Raver hopes the largest part of the audience will be movie lovers from all walks of life. "This is a festival for the general public," she said.

Festival Highlights

The Garden State Film Festival takes place April 4 to 6 in and around Asbury Park. A \$40 weekend pass includes all screenings and events except the awards dinner. Information: [www.gsff.org](http://www.gsff.org) or (877) 908-7050.

Here are some highlights in chronological order.

“4CHOSEN” Documentary about young athletes shot and wounded by New Jersey state troopers in racial profiling incident. Pre-festival screening and reception to benefit the Montel Williams MS Foundation. Thursday, 8 P.M., Paramount Theater. \$25.

“THE FLYBOYS” Feature about two small-town boys, an airplane and the mob. With Stephen Baldwin and Tom Sizemore. Friday, 8 P.M., Paramount Theater. \$20, including reception.

MUSIC VIDEO PROGRAM Concludes with “A Good Life — The Joe Grushecky Story.” Saturday, 1:15 to 3 P.M., Stone Pony, \$10.

“GREETINGS FROM THE SHORE” Feature about a young woman spending her last pre-college summer in Lavallette. With Paul Sorvino, Kim Shaw and Jason Etter. Saturday, 8:15 to 10:15 P.M., Paramount Theater. \$10.

“THE TIME OF THEIR LIVES” Two Revolutionary War ghosts visit 20th-century New England in Abbott & Costello film from 1946. Q & A with Chris Costello and others. Sunday, 1 to 3:30 P.M., Fifth Avenue Pavilion, \$10.

“LEGENDS BEHIND THE COMIC BOOKS” Documentary directed by Chip Cronkite. Saturday, 1 to 3:15 P.M., Paramount Theater, \$10.

“NUREMBERG: THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY DIRECTOR’S CUT” The Nazis’ own film of their crimes. Q & A with Budd Schulberg, the writer. Sunday, 2:30 to 5 P.M., Paramount Theater. \$10.

AWARDS DINNER Lifetime Achievement Awards presented to Budd Schulberg and, posthumously, Lou Costello. Sunday, 5:30 P.M., English Manor, Ocean Township, \$120.

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: April 1, 2008

A listing of information in the New Jersey section on Sunday with an article about the Garden State Film Festival in and around Asbury Park misstated the date of one screening and gave an incorrect price and admission details for another. “Legends Behind the Comic Books” will be shown at 1 p.m. on Saturday, not Sunday. “Greetings From the Shore,” on Saturday at 8:15 p.m., costs \$10, not \$20, and is not accompanied by a cocktail party and reception.