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Big Bear Lake, CA

BBLIFF Announces Screenwriting Finalists

An important component of the Big Bear Lake International Film Festival (BBLIFF) is its screenwriting competition. This is the 9th year that the Festival has given aspiring writers the opportunity to submit entries, receive evaluations of their work and vie for an invitation to participate in the Festival.

Over 200 entries were read and evaluated by a team of readers. Each entry is carefully considered by readers and the five highest rated screenplays are invited to take part as finalists in the Festival. In alphabetical order by title the Finalists are: *Brothers* by Kirk Weddell of Brighton, United Kingdom; *Chances* by Jeff Trently of Levittown, Pennsylvania and Anthony Stitt of Los Angeles; *Germain's Prime* by L.D. Goffigan of Los Angeles; *Season of the Mists* by Kevin Brodie of Coventry, Connecticut; and *To a Dancing God*, by Robert Horvath of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The top five scripts are currently being read by an eight-member panel of Hollywood professional producers, agents and managers who will select 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners and 2 honorable mentions. Distinguished judges for the 2010 screenwriting competition are Cari-Esta Albert, producer; Cathy Tarr, story-editor, CAA; D.C. Fontana, award-winning writer; Jennifer Good, agent, The Alpern Group; Ashley Berns, manager, Circle of Confusion; Cary Kozlov, literary agent, Leslie Conliff, manager, Intellectual Property Group; and Chris Soth, writer/consultant, Million Dollar Screenwriting.

The BBLIFF screenwriting competition is unique among film festival screenwriting competitions because each entry receives back written evaluations of their script from a minimum of three different readers. Those that make it to the second round receive evaluations by six readers. Screenwriting Competition Director Sandy Steers points out that, "The majority of competitions do not provide writers with feedback and those that do charge extra for it. We receive thank you notes every year from writers who appreciate the level of assistance this valuable feedback has given them."

A previous screenwriting competition winner, Iris Yamashita, realized her dream after participating in the BBLIFF competition. Yamashita was nominated for an academy award for best screenplay for the Clint Eastwood movie *Letters From Iwo Jima* (2006). Yamashita was discovered during the competition by a film festival juror, Catherine Tarr at Creative Artists Agency (CAA). Tarr recommended the screenplay to Paul Haggis and Clint Eastwood who were working on a companion production to "Flags of Our Fathers." Yamashita later returned to Big Bear to participate as a speaker on the screenwriting panel.

The film competition will screen over one hundred films from around the world. 7 feature films, 27 documentaries and over 70 short films. In the line-up are three films shot in Big Bear and this year's sidebar event will screen a few films dealing with classic cars. "The wide variety of subjects, genres and stars insures that everyone will find something to their liking!" says Artistic & Programming Director, Monika Skerbelis. A complete rundown of the films and screening times can be found on the Big Bear Lake International Film Festival (bigbearlakefilmfestival.com) website under Film Competition.

The Screenwriting awards, along with the Film awards will be presented at the Festival Wrap party held on the evening of September 18 at the Performing Arts Center in Big Bear Lake. Director Steers would like to thank the new Screenwriting Competition Coordinator, Cate Salenger, for all the tremendous work she put into the competition this year. “She jumped in with both feet and did a fantastic job of learning at the same time as handling all the competition details.”

The Big Bear Lake International Film Festival and Screenwriting competition this year will be September 17-19, 2010. It features screenings of feature films, shorts, student films, animation, documentaries and the screenwriting competition as well as panels, seminars and parties. For tickets to the BBLIFF or more information on the screenwriting competition and other Festival events go to www.bigbearlakefilmfestival.com or call 909-866-3433.

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