



MILL VALLEY
FILM FESTIVAL

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Media Contacts:

Karen Larsen, Larsen & Associates
415.957.1205; larsenasc@aol.com
Maureen Dixon, MVFF/CFI
415.526.5845; mdixon@cafilm.org
Stephanie Clarke, Hamilton Ink PR
steph@hamiltoninkpr.com

Mill Valley Film Festival's Active Cinema Program: Get Active!

*MVFF Presents a Forum for Audience Members and Activists to Get Involved with
Issues Raised on the Big Screen*

SAN RAFAEL, Calif. (September 15, 2009) — The Mill Valley Film Festival's **Active Cinema** program is a dynamic initiative that connects the dots between activist films, interested audiences and the individuals and organizations working for the causes and issues represented onscreen. This year's program features over a dozen films that address compelling issues, profile inspiring individuals and have the potential to inform and motivate audiences. Most screenings will include Q&A sessions with filmmakers and other guests, including **Daniel Ellsberg, Wavy Gravy, Karina Epperlein, John Knoop, Rick Goldsmith, Judith Ehrlich** and **Denise Zmekhol**; and many are presented in partnership with organizations that address the issues represented onscreen. For the second year running, Bellam Self-Storage & Boxes will be generously sponsoring the Active Cinema program.

In addition to Festival screenings, Active Cinema offers other ways to get involved: Teams of filmmakers are challenged to make a film in a day at **Cinemasports**, beginning at **9:00 am** on **Saturday, October 17** at Old Mill Park in Mill Valley. Filmmakers show up at the introductory meeting and receive a list of "ingredients"—all Active Cinema-themed—to include in a film that has to be made and delivered by that same evening.

At the **New Movies Lab** on **Sunday October 18** at **12:30 pm**, a special Active Cinema panel will address **Strategies for Change**—panelists Michael Lumpkin, Wavy Gravy, Jahanara Romney, John Morrison, Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee under the guidance of moderator Danae Ringelman (co-founder and CFA, IndieGoGo) will offer creative brainstorming and "make-overs" for filmmakers, discussing distribution and marketing strategies as well as next steps in implementing ideas generated in their films.

This year's Active Cinema co-presenters include American Himalayan Foundation, Autism Speaks, Center for Investigative Reporting, Food and Water Watch, Marin American Indian Alliance, Marin Humane Society, Marin Interfaith Task Force on the Americas, Milo Foundation, Oak Hill School and Seva Foundation.

Awakening from Sorrow: Buenos Aires 1997 (John Knoop and Karina Epperlein, US): This poignant documentary profiles children of 1970s activists murdered by the military regime, as they themselves become activists demanding justice.

Hidden Bounty of Marin: Farm Families in Transition (Steve Quirt and Ellie Rilla, US): From heirloom apples to grass-fed beef, succulent oysters to creamy artisan cheese, this is a thoughtful and mouth-watering overview of the local movement for sustainable and organic farming.

HomeGrown (Robert McFalls, US): The little house on the prairie gets a 21st-century makeover in this absorbing meditation on the challenges facing a family that creates an urban farm in Pasadena.

The Horse Boy (Michel O. Scott, US): Spent from the four-hour tantrums, Western treatments and overall emotional toll of their son's autism, a mother and father take a profound leap of faith as they journey through Mongolia's majestic landscape in search of shamans and miracles.

Inside Story (Jacob Simas, US): San Quentin inmates find purpose and meaning when they publish the first newspaper in a California prison in 20 years.

Jim Thorpe, The World's Greatest Athlete (Tom Weidlinger, US): This profile of American Indian sports legend Jim Thorpe uses recreations, old recordings, photos and rare film footage for a warm and personal look at a bigger-than-life and still widely misunderstood 20th-century character.

MINE (Geralyn Pezanoski, US): Forced to leave their pets behind during the Hurricane Katrina evacuation, many owners are still fighting to be reunited with their beloved companions. But what if the adoptive owners are unwilling to return them?

The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers (Rick Goldsmith and Judy Ehrlich, US): This inspiring documentary thriller traces its protagonist's journey from US Marine to upper-echelon Defense Department and Rand Corporation analyst to Vietnam War whistleblower, while reminding us how democracy relies on our potentially "dangerous" men and women in and out of government.

Mustang – Journey of Transformation (Will Parrinello, Nepal and US): On a high Himalayan plateau, the culture of the isolated Forbidden Kingdom of Mustang was on the verge of extinction, until Mustang and its rich history were brought back to life as recounted in this remarkable story of restoration and transformation.

Project Happiness (John Sorensen, US): High school students in California, India, and Nigeria join forces to pursue the eternal question, “What is happiness?” As they each face their own suffering, finding the answer becomes urgent. They go to the source and interview the Dalai Lama.

Race to Nowhere (Vicki Abeles, US): A cogent examination of the mounting pressures faced by American schoolchildren in an education system that increasingly values results over learning—and the alarming, widespread toll taken by this burden.

Saint Misbehavin’: The Wavy Gravy Movie (Michelle Esrick, US): If you thought Wavy Gravy was just a flavor of ice cream, you’re in for an even bigger treat as this lively, loving portrait opens onto whole era-defining vistas around the gentle Berkeley-based trickster and his times.

Skin (Anthony Fabian, South Africa and UK): This gripping feature debut, based on the extraordinary life of Sandra Laing, recounts the experience of a black-skinned girl born to white Afrikaner parents in apartheid South Africa.

Soundtrack for a Revolution (Bill Guttentag and Dan Sturman, US): Focusing on its litany of timeless, soul-stirring anthems—and backed by impassioned new studio performances by Wyclef Jean, Mary Mary, Richie Havens, Angie Stone and others—this gripping documentary relates the history of the Civil Rights Movement to a new generation.

Tapped (Stephanie Soechtig, US): This incisive investigative documentary offers a blistering look at the major economic, environmental and health impacts of the flood of bottled water manufactured and consumed in the United States. You’ll never look at drinking water the same way again.

A Thousand Suns (Stephen Marshall, Ethiopia, Kenya and US): In the fertile African Rift Valley in the Gamo Highlands of Ethiopia, their interconnectedness is the essence of the people’s spirituality. The Gamo want to coexist with nature, not dominate it. But outside forces are threatening this delicate balance, from the evangelists of the Protestant Church to Western aid agencies importing agricultural technologies and pesticides.

Trading Bows and Arrows for Laptops (Denise Zmekhol, US): In order to preserve their culture and their endangered rainforest home, the indigenous Surui tribe of the Amazon turns to Google Earth to, literally, put their people on the map.

California Film Institute

The California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through the presentation of the Mill Valley Film Festival and year-round exhibitions at the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center,

and by building the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through CFI Education. For more information visit cafilm.org or call 415.383.5256.

32nd Mill Valley Film Festival

Presented by the California Film Institute, the 32nd Mill Valley Film Festival runs October 8–18, 2009 at the CinéArts@Sequoia (25 Throckmorton Avenue, Mill Valley), Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center (1118 Fourth Street, San Rafael) and other venues throughout the Bay Area. Tickets are \$12.50 (CFI Members, \$10) unless otherwise noted and are available for purchase on September 20–23 for CFI members only, and beginning on September 24 for the general public. Regular tickets may be purchased online at mvff.com. For additional information, please visit mvff.com or call 877.874.MVFF.

Sponsors

As a nonprofit arts organization, MVFF relies on the generosity of its community to sustain not only the festival, but also the year-round programs of the California Film Institute. The invaluable support of our sponsors, foundation, and individual donors ensures our continued success as we celebrate our 32nd year. CFI is once again proud to acknowledge the leadership support of Christopher B. and Jeannie Meg Smith, and the continued major support of the Bernard Osher Foundation, the Gruber Family Foundation, Jennifer Coslett MacCready, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the Marin Community Foundation, the Zecca Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. We are also fortunate to have the continued contributions of the following Major Sponsors of the Mill Valley Film Festival: Qantas Airways, Maroevich, O'Shea & Coghlan Insurance Services, Frantoio Ristorante and Olive Oil Co., Zaentz Media Center/Wareham Development, Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E), and CFI Membership Sponsor, Wells Fargo. Longtime friend and dedicated supporter of the festival, Bellam Self Storage & Boxes, is also returning as a major sponsor, and will be receiving this year's Distinguished Sponsor Award.

This release and other press materials are available at <http://filmmakers.mvff.com>.
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