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THE OTHER VENICE FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2007 ABBOT AWARD WINNERS

Legendary Director & Producer Tony Bill Receives Local Maverick Spotlight Abbot Award & Presents Venice Community Trust Honors to Youth Filmmakers from Venice High School

Filmmakers from Venice, Studio City, Beverly Hills, Silver Lake, N. & W. Hollywood Take Home Abbots

17 Actors Perform Live Staged Reading, Including Camryn Manheim, Steven Weber, Chris Mulkey & Paul Johansson

- OVFF Receives Certificate of Recognition from Los Angeles City Council -

VENICE, CA, March 20, 2007 -- The Other Venice Film Festival (OVFF), a community event dedicated to screening full-length, short and experimental films that embody the spirit, energy and diversity of Venice, celebrated its fourth season showing 90 films, including 60 world premieres, March 15 to 18 to sell-out crowds at two screening venues in Venice – the Electric Lodge and Switch Studios.

Oscar® winner Tony Bill (Best Picture, “The Sting,” 1973) received the Local Maverick Spotlight Abbot Award (named after Venice, CA founding father, Abbot Kinney) from the inaugural recipient, actor and Venice local Chris Mulkey in front of a packed house at the Electric Lodge at the festival’s closing ceremonies on Sunday. A celebrated constituent of the Venice art community, Tony is a member of the Producer’s Guild of America Hall of Fame, and is known for his work as director, producer and actor. He joined previous Local Maverick Award-winners [Roger Corman](#), Stacy Peralta and the aforementioned Mulkey.

“Nothing pleases me more than being dubbed a maverick – I like to think I still am,” said Bill on receiving his Abbot Award. “When I first came to Venice 30 years ago, there was no one to be seen on the boardwalk – it was completely empty, which shows you how much Venice has changed.”

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Bill went on to thank his family in the audience, including wife Helen Bartlett (who produced NORTH COUNTY in 2006 which, coincidentally, co-starred Mulkey) and brought his two young daughters on stage to help him present Myrna Loy Awards from the Venice Community Trust to four student filmmakers from Venice High School: Jesse Enriquez, who won a new skateboard; and Lauren Oei, William "West" Fort and Nancy Melchor who received cash prizes. Named after the star of THE THIN MAN and many other classic films who attended Venice High School, the Myrna Loy Award is just one way the Venice Community Trust supports its mission of nurturing creativity through arts and education.

Mark Antonio Grant, the Venice Deputy, presented the Other Venice Film Festival and its Co-Founders, Gary Ellenberg, AJ Peralta and Ruby DeLaCasas, with a Certificate of Recognition on behalf of the Los Angeles City Council and Council Member Bill Rosendahl in recognition of their contributions to the local arts and culture scene over the last four years.

Then it was time to celebrate the filmmakers. This year for the first time, the OVFF awarded Abbots in a new competitive category for documentary films. The Most Excellent Short Documentary Abbot went to the World Premiere film *DOWNWINDERS: THE PEOPLE OF PAROWAN* by Jake White of Larchmont Village. The film takes an intimate look at the effects of nuclear weapons testing in many southern Utah towns. White was inspired to make the film after discovering the circumstances surrounding his father's death at age 54. Another World Premiere film won Most Excellent Feature Documentary honors -- *BEHIND THE MASK* by Shannon Keith, an animal rights attorney and filmmaker of North Hollywood, for her film highlighting the true stories and gripping undercover video of animal liberations.

In the short film category, the Audience Choice Abbot Award went to *AVAILABLE MEN* by David Dean Bottrell a native of Louisa, KY who lives in West Hollywood and is known for his reoccurring role as the creepy "Lincoln Meyer" on *BOSTON LEGAL*. The Most Excellent Abbot Award went to writer/director Luis Fernandez Reneo of Studio City for his touching film based on the true story of three siblings crossing the U.S. border from Mexico entitled *A BETTER LIFE*.

The Audience Choice Abbot Award for music video went to Silver Lake directors Jethro Rothe-Kushel and James Naish for *BRIDGE*, the debut single by up-and-coming LA hip hop collective THE LIBRA PROJECT, which made its World Premiere at the OVFF.

The Audience Choice Abbot Award for feature film went to the World Premiere of *CAKE: A WEDDING COMEDY* by actor, producer, director and writer Will Wallace, a native of Austin, TX who resides in Beverly Hills.

The Most Excellent Feature Abbot Award went to *THE RAT THING* (www.TheRatThing.com) directed by native New Yorker and 20-year Venice resident, Kevin Keresey who also wrote and stars in the film along side Michael McGee, also of Venice (by way of St. Paul, MN). The pair play two down and out friends living in Venice, CA who hatch a wild “get rich quick” scheme involving one of them being bitten by a rat in a major supermarket in hopes of winning an outrageously huge settlement. What transpires is a perfect example of “the best laid plans of mice and men” going astray in one comic turn after another until finally, depravity gives way to humanity.

A highlight of this year’s OVFF was the first live staged reading of the screenplay RIDING THE PINE– a coming-of-age comedy about a guy who fails in sports, but succeeds in life and love with humor on his side featuring **Steven Weber** of STUDIO 60 ON THE SUNSET STRIP in the leading role along with **Camryn Manheim, Chris Mulkey, Paul Johansson**, Ben Parrillo, Will Wallace, Mike Wiles, Chris Leary, Sean Fenton, Karen Landry-Mulkey, Zak Kintner, Jason Manns, Chris Bouffard, Isaiah Mustafah, Ameila Mulkey, Elizabeth Mulkey and Jessie Gilbert. OVFF also featured the one woman art show -- “**From Under My Bed**” -- an exhibition of artworks by long-time Venice local, actress and artist Karen Landry-Mulkey, which will be up through April 15 at the Electric Lodge.

More than 90 filmmakers showed their work at this year’s festival up from 75 in 2006, 40 in 2005 and 17 during the sell-out inaugural 2004 season.

Venice, CA has always been an epicenter for LA artists and filmmakers who continue to pave the way toward expanding the language of underground, alternative cinema. The Other Venice Film Festival bridges the community of Venice and that of greater Los Angeles together in a competitive, fun-filled weekend of movies and mayhem. Art direction for the 2007 Other Venice Film Festival was provided by Miyuki Takazono (www.takazono.com). Abbot Award photography was provided by Danelle Rondberg (www.danellephoto.com). For more images and information The Other Venice Film Festival and its co-founders Ruby De La Casas, Gary Ellenberg and AJ Peralta, go to www.othervenicefilmfest.com.

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