

NEWS

EERIE HORROR FEST 2008

The Warner Theater October 9-12 Erie PA

Fifth anniversary of local horror film fest poised to be more frightful than ever

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October is finally upon us and you know what that means: colder days, colorful leaves and the Eerie Horror Fest, an event Behrend sponsors each year. This year marks the fifth anniversary of the festival and planners have a lot in store for horror fans this year, so much so that the entire festival has been moved to a new location: the Warner Theatre on State Street in downtown Erie.

Last year the festival took place in two separate venues. Film screenings were held at the Erie Playhouse on West 10th Street and the festival portion was located at the Avalon Hotel across the street. This two venue system caused confusion amongst some festival attendees last year. Without a central location it was sometimes difficult to locate certain aspects of the festival. To remedy that problem, the entire festival is now being held at the Warner Theater.

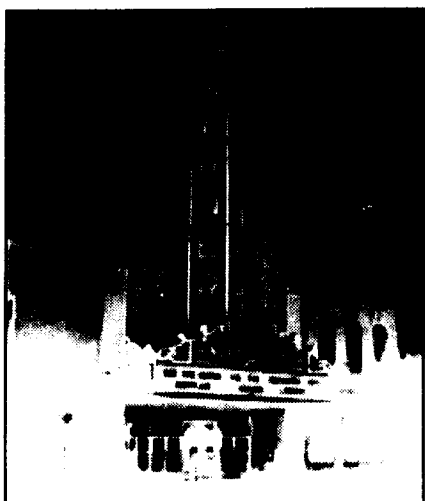
"This year is a triple header of some of horror's biggest icons."

**-Mark Steensland
Professor of
Communications**

The Warner Theater will be home to the film screenings and the expo portion of the festival. There will be tables and booths all throughout the theater, downstairs and upstairs. New rooms were even created in the back of the theater to accommodate the many different attractions the festival offers this year.

One of the biggest aspects of the fes-

tival this year is the reunion of all the living cast members from *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974) including Gunnar Hansen who portrayed Leatherface. Kane Hodder who played Jason in *Friday the 13th VII* and Tony Moran who played Michael Myers in *Halloween* will also be appearing at the festival.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Warner Theater: Horror Fest's new home.

"With Leatherface, Michael Myers and Jason Vorhees, this year is a triple header of some of horror's biggest icons," said Mark Steensland, a professor of Media Studies at Behrend, an organizer of the festival, and a filmmaker. "There are lots of other interesting guests as well."

Last year notable guests such as Jason Mewes (of Jay and Silent Bob fame), James Duval (*Donnie Darko*), and Tom Savini (*Night of the Living Dead*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Land of the Dead* etc.) made appearances at the festival, signing autographs and meeting fans.

"On a personal level, I'm excited for the screening of *Dark Night of the Scarecrow* on Saturday," said Steensland. "It's an old TV movie from the 80's, and one of my favorites. I

wanted to do a remake of it and during that process I met the film's creator. The film is not currently available on DVD, but the creator has just recently had the rights to the film returned to him. Unfortunately he did not want to part with the rights, so I won't be remaking it, but he will soon be re-mastering the film and releasing it on DVD. I presented him with an offer to screen the film at the Horror Fest, and he agreed. My film, *Peekers*, will be opening for it."

Peekers is Steensland's newest film, which was finished last year and is currently on the festival circuit. It has won four awards so far and played in a dozen film festivals.

"It's sort of the homecoming of my film, after being played in other festivals," said Steensland.

On the weekend of the Horror Fest, *Peekers* will be showing at four different film festivals.

Steensland gave out little information about *Peekers*, in order to keep suspense for the film high. "It's a twisted little tale about a guy who runs into trouble and his neighbor comes over," said Steensland. "I can't really tell you much more about it than that."

Last year, Steensland's film *Dead@17* was screened. An adaptation of the comic book of the same name, *Dead@17* tells the story of a young girl with an affinity for miniskirts, Nara Kilday, who is killed, then returned to life to fight demons with an axe.

This year's Horror Fest will be screening many movies from all over world. Running from Oct 9 through Oct 12, sixty films will be shown.

The Horror Fest always features a block of films exclusively from the local region (on Sun). Last year was the premiere of a local film, *Chasing Darkness*, directed by Jason Hull and produced by Snowdog Studios. It told the tale of a Mafioso hitman trying to leave the

organization after a failed whacking. Expectedly, his superiors were not pleased with this decision and retaliated accordingly. On top of that, he had trouble with his girlfriend and unintentionally angered a local vampire cult.

The film was featurelength and highly anticipated by the local horror film community and even garnered a large audience at last year's festival as the screening was sold out. The film garnered largely negative reviews, including a half of a star from dreadcentral.com.

"*Chasing Darkness* may not be the worst film ever made, but it almost takes itself too seriously to be taken serious," said the reviewer.

Despite criticisms, *Chasing Darkness* was a feature length film created entire-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Gunnar Hansen (*Leatherface*) will be appearing.

ly by the local community, which is noteworthy on it's own.

Screening in front of *Chasing Darkness* last year was *The Beast In Me*, another local film, directed by Jason B. McCann. The film was well-received by those in attendance and was even featured on the front page of The Meadville Tribune. *The Beast In Me* was notable

for being shot entirely on film and in black and white, a feat for most low-budget films.

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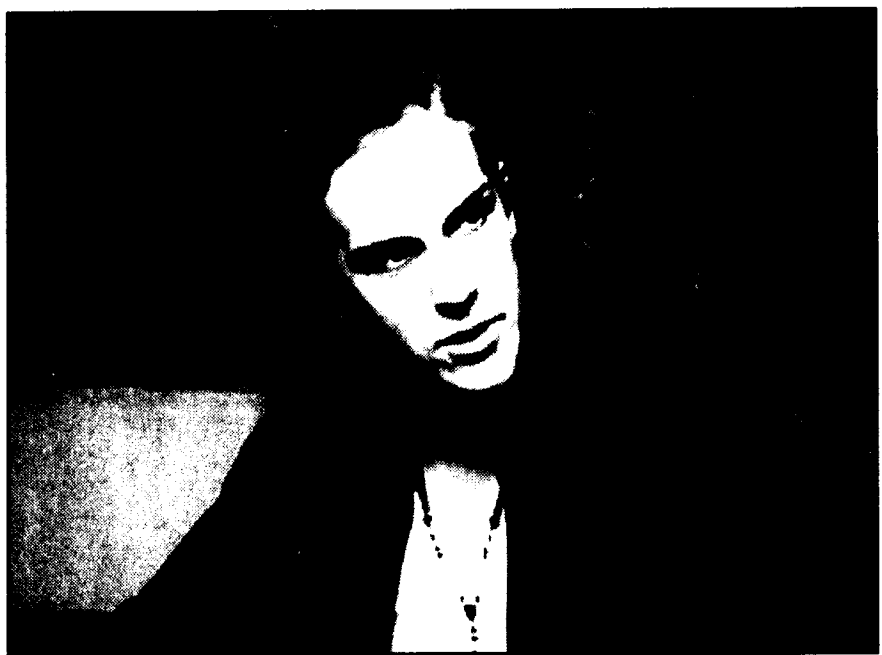
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This year, no such premieres will be occurring at the festival.

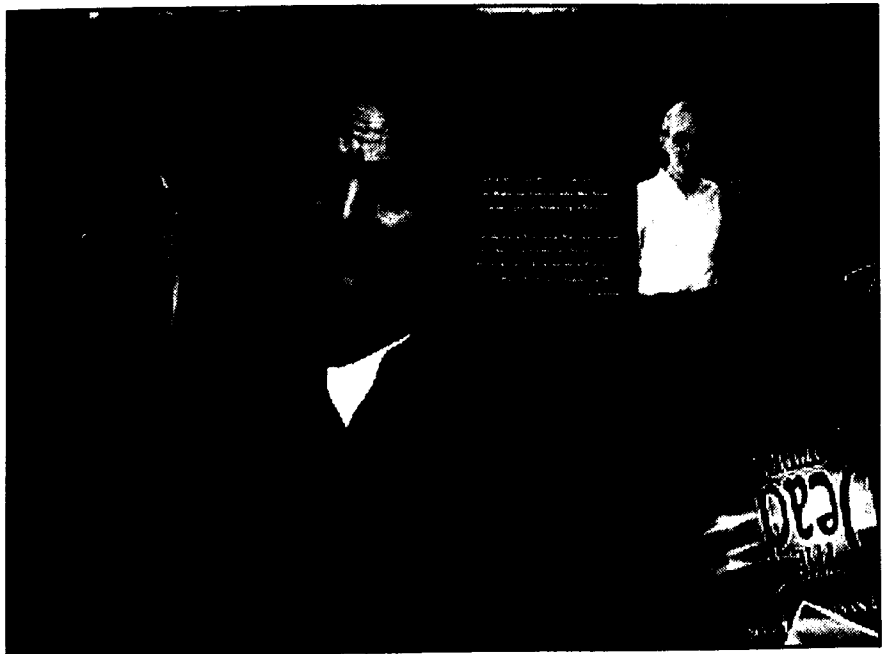
"We'll still be having the regional block on Sunday, but no major feature from a local film maker will be premiering," said Steensland. "Not a whole lot of local films were submitted this year. We had many submissions from across the country and across the world."

The first film screening of this year's Horror Fest starts at 11 a.m. on Thursday, Oct 9. Passes can be purchased online at www.eeriehorrorfest.com. For \$53.28 (this includes the processing fee), you can get an all-access pass which gives you attendance to every film screening and expo. Passes for Thu, Fri and Sun are \$22, while passes for Sat are \$27.

The Eerie Horror Fest is poised to be a horror fan's dream come true. With some very high-profile guests and four days of non-stop horror films, this year's festival is shaping up to be a memorable one. Be sure to read *The Behrend Beacon* next week for a round-up of all the actors, presenters, movies and monsters of the festival.



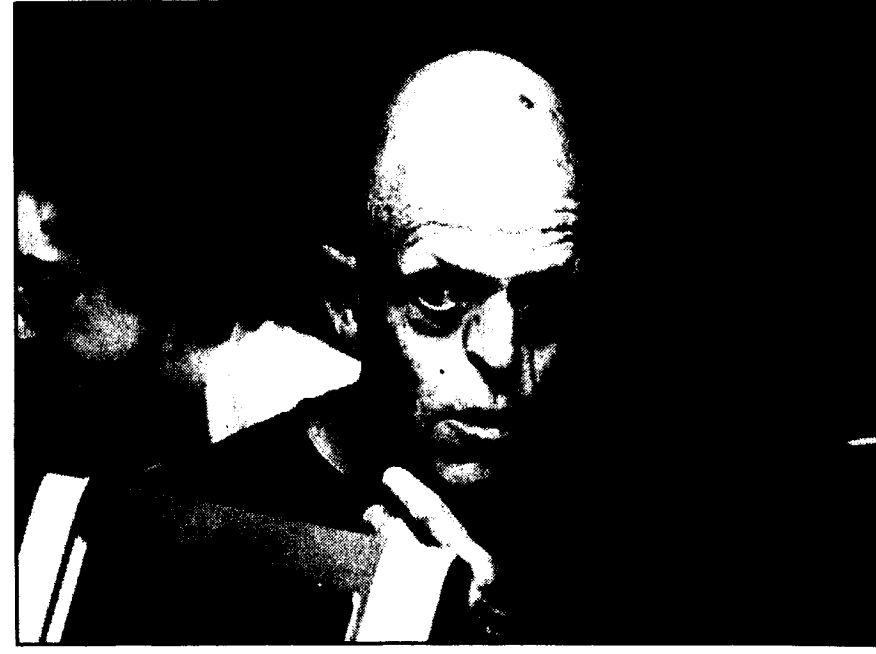
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jason Mewes appeared in 2007 for Netherbeast Incorporated.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Tom Savini of *Dead* fame met many eager fans at last year's fest.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
James Duval of *Donnie Darko* appeared in the 2007 Horror Fest.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Horror movie legend John Steadman of *The Hills Have Eyes*.

VP debates not aired on Bruno's big screen

By Emily Reichert
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Instead of projecting it onto the big screen, Bruno's had a small television set airing the Vice Presidential Debate in the back of the eatery on Thu.

Governor Sarah Palin and Senator Joe Biden, both of the Vice Presidents for the Republican and Democratic parties, discussed several political opinions during the debate, including the \$700 billion bailout plan, the war in Iraq and the country's economy, according to CNN.

Penn State Behrend students interviewed expressed great interest on the subject, even students who reported to not be old enough to vote.

"America is [not doing well] right now," said a freshman who had been near Bruno's during the debate. "If [the debate] were on I would definitely watch it."

This was the response of all the students asked about their opinion on the debate. None of them were aware that it was being aired at the back of the area. According to sophomore Cori Learn, who was working cashier that night, "[the debates] are playing on the small TV but we didn't want them on the big screen because we had to stack the chairs." She said if it had been shown on the big screen, workers would be stacking chairs until as late as midnight.