

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

ERIE HORROR FEST 2008

The Warner Theater October 9-12 Erie PA



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Midtown Tattoo is a fairly new tattoo parlor, having opened in April. Their table at the festival advertised magazines their artists had been published in and even advertised a horror fest discount for attendees of the festival who wanted to get horror-related tattoos.

Across from Midtown's table was the Erie Brewing Company, which provided the beer that was being served at the festival.

"This is our first time at the Horror Fest," said Rebecca Niemeyer, a representative of Erie Brewing Co. "We're a big sponsor of the fest, and are promoting our Railbender Ale."

Most of the vendors at the festival were impressed by the festival's new venue, the Warner Theater on State Street.

"Last year, the vendors were separated from the film festival, and were stuck all the way across the street," said a representative of Lost Classics DVD, a vendor which specializes in out-of-print films. "This is a lot better."

It wasn't just the vendors that were impressed by the new location, many of the celebrities at the event spoke highly of the theatre as well.

"I was here in 2006, and it was great then but its even better now," said Tony Moran, Mike Myers from the original *Halloween*.

Along with Moran, Gunnar Hansen who played Leatherface from the original *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, and Kane Hodder who played Jason in *Friday the 13th VII* were also at the event, which marked three of horror's biggest icons at the festival all at once.

Most of the vendors at the event were artists selling their work on prints, posters and T-shirts.

One such company, Screaming Brain Studio, did quite a bit of business at the festival. They were selling mostly T-shirts, but also had some sculptures for sale.

"We have actually sold quite a bit of merchandise," said a representative. "We're here cause we love horror, so this is the place to be."

There were many new faces at the festival this year, a clear sign of the event's growth.

"This is my first time at the horror fest," said Daniel Bird of Coffintrust.com. "It's intimate, but it's got a lot going on."

Along with the new faces were ones that have been there year in and year out.

"This is my third year at the horror fest," said John Olas, a local artist. "I love being here."

Thursday was the least crowded day of the event, as not all the celebrities had arrived yet.

"The first day is always kind of slow," said Charity Walker, a festival employee.



Matthew Schwabenbauer / The Behrend Beacon
Above: Behrend sophomore Management major Pat Bedillion poses with Kane Hodder of *Friday the 13th VII* at the Eerie Horror Fest.
Left: A table selling Eerie Horror Fest merchandise.

There will be a lot of people here this weekend to meet all the actors."

When the actors did arrive, they were equally as excited to meet the fans.

"The fest is so cool," said Edwin Neal, the Hitchhiker from the 1974 *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. "We've got to meet a lot of neat people."

Neal was attending the festival as part of a reunion of the surviving cast of the original *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. It was only the second time the entire cast had been together since the film's release. The first time was last Spring in Philadelphia.

On Friday night, there was a special screening of the film and then a Q&A with the cast. During the Q&A, the cast talked about a number of memorable scenes from the movie, such as the infamous freezer scene, the meat-hook scene, and when Leatherface cuts himself with his own chainsaw. It was even the first time some of the cast members, such as Teri, had seen the film on a big screen since its original premiere in 1974.

One of the first questions asked dealt with the 2004 remake.

"The producers of that film are cowards with no talent," Hansen responded.

The cast even discussed some surprising details of the film's production aspects.

"We originally thought the film wasn't going to be released," said Neal. "I even asked that the film never be shown, and when I knew it was I asked to have my name left off the credits."

In a one-on-one interview with

The Behrend Beacon, many of the cast members expressed gratitude that their movie has become a cult classic, and has been influential in the boom the horror industry has been experiencing for the last 10 years.

"It's a sweet dessert all these years later to know how revered our film is, and to have our famous dolly shot, the scene of me walking toward the house and the camera films me from behind, to be taught in directing classes," said McMinn. "All the time I have people saying to me, 'hey can I get that butt shot?'"

"We just wish that the young filmmakers believed in their own

"Horror films put one billion dollars into the economy last year. You put up the bucks, now you put up your voices."

-Sid Haig of *House of 1,000 Corpses*

creativity more instead of relying on CGI," said Neal. "There's nothing wrong with well-done CGI, but just to rely on it day in and day out and to use it instead of creativity, the scenes tend to feel soulless, the human emotion is missing and it becomes more mathematical."

"I'm not a big fan of the new generation of horror movies. In a lot of ways, the modern horror films got to be only about violence, but our movies got really popular," said Hansen. "With them being so popular there's more of a chance that somebody's gonna give some young guy a little bit of money to make a movie that's a complete breakthrough and that's gonna change horror movies."

It's not just actors that attended the Horror Fest, but many film makers as well.

"Our film summer school was in the festival last year and the year previous, said Ben Trandem of RCF Films. "We're trying to

get another feature off the ground, we've got a few scripts in the works.

Paul Von Stoetzel, of Killing Joke Productions, had a particularly gruesome yet truthful film screening this year. His film, *Snuff: A Documentary About Killing on Camera*, takes interviews and snippets of supposed snuff films to try prove, or dispel, the myth.

"When it came down to it, we broke it into sections of what a snuff film really is. The archaic idea is that it's a film of somebody being murdered," said Stoetzel. "We examined the idea of what a snuff film is today, with Iraq and with serial killers. With that, it's the real deal. At no point did I want to decide for people what it was and say this is this and that is that. I just wanted to play with the idea of what a snuff film is. We eventually did end up back to the original concept of what a snuff film is and ran with that also."

One of the organizers of the event is Behrend's own Mark Steensland, a professor of Media Studies and Vice President of the Horror Fest.

"The festival is going very well, especially the new venue," said Steensland. "The last time the Warner had movies was in the 70s. Its been wonderfully restored and its exciting to be here showing movies."

Each year, Steensland takes a personal role in the festival, doing his part to be hospitable to the many guests the festival brings in.

"I picked up Sid Haig (of *House of 1,000 Corpses*) first thing this morning and took him to an interview at Rocket 101," said Steensland. "Rudy Scalse, the director of development for nala films came to campus to speak in my screenwriting classes. It was a great benefit for the students and was exciting for me as an instructor to bring something like that to campus."

Steensland was particularly optimistic of the films screening this year.

"The judging committee watches all the movies that come in and decide what's worth showing," he said. "We're really getting the cream of the crop this year, this is the best stuff that's out there."

Steensland's film, *Peekers*, screened on Saturday.

Peekers told a chilling tale in which neighbors come together to deal with an unusual event, but get sucked in themselves.

Also on Saturday was a town-hall meeting by Sid Haig, of *House of 1,000 Corpses* and *The Devil Rejects*.

"How's it feel to be in the loan business?" Haig asked the spectators. "Because you all are. Whether you want to be or not, you are bailing Wall Street out of

this mess."

Haig criticized the bailout plan, and banks for giving out mortgages they knew people couldn't pay.

Haig also spoke about public schools, claiming that children are taught to be too dependent on

"We're really getting the cream of the crop this year, this is the best stuff that's out there."

-Mark Steensland, Behrend Professor of Media Studies

technology.

"If we took away all the electronics in schools, kids wouldn't be able to wipe their own butts."

The main message of Haig's town hall was that horror fans and young people in general should not be apathetic toward politics.

"Horror films put one billion dollars into the economy last year. You put up the bucks, now put up your voices."

Haig was clearly down to earth, admitting he had little chance of winning the presidency.

"Am I gonna win? No," said Haig. "But if I can make you believe you have the power to make change, then that is just as good as being president."

Haig has previous leadership work. He serves as a pastor at Universal Life Church in Modesto, California, along with Eerie Horror Fest President Gregg Ropp.

Ropp was extremely optimistic of the festival this year, as having the event at the Warner has been a goal of his for quite some time.

"The Warner is bigger, and more prestigious than our previous venues," said Ropp. "We started at the roadhouse in 2001, which had 250 seats, we went to the erie playhouse in 2006 and 2007, which had 500 seats and was a very beautiful theatre, but now were at the Warner Theatre which has always been a dream of mine. I used to see a lot of rock bands here. I grew up in this theatre basically and was even lucky enough to see a few of the movies that showed here back in the 70s before they stopped showing movies, and I kept thinking 'my god, this is such a beautiful venue.'"

Ropp believes the festival has finally found its home.

"This feels like home for the first time. We have nothing but fond memories of the Roadhouse and the Erie Playhouse, I kind of miss the playhouse, but it almost felt like a transition period. It felt like we had training wheels on. Now we're driving. It feels very different this year. It just feels right when you walk in."

Three Legged Fox drops the beat in Bruno's

By Jeff Kramer
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Last Saturday night, I was hanging out in my room, watching *Reservoir Dogs* with three friends, and feeling sick. When nine o'clock rolled around, I said, "let's call off going to Three Legged Fox, I don't feel too hot." I didn't want to get up and risk vomiting to hear what I thought was going to be just a Bob Marley cover band.

At around quarter after, I was feeling well enough to go grab some food at Bruno's. We headed down and were hit with a wall of music—good music. The band started late and they were about half way through their first song, I was surprised, impressed, and overall glad that I showed up.

Three Legged Fox played a very tight show; they had their mechanics down wonderfully. Their style is a mix of grassroots reggae and rock, in the tradition of Dispatch. The drummer was enthusiastic, the guitarist could

play pretty well, and the singer was far more into it than he should have been, seeing as he was playing at Bruno's to about 12 people. The tragedy is that they were playing at Bruno's to twelve people. Three Legged Fox deserves something better than that. They should have been playing in a much larger venue to a much larger crowd.

I was so impressed by their set that a friend and I decided to split the cost of one of their CDs. We took it back to my room, popped it in, and chilled out. The music that came out of the sound system we had set up was tragically disappointing. It was what I feared they were going to be in the first place—plain old, more of the same, singing reggae.

Three Legged Fox played a fantastic concert. I would have bought one of their t-shirts if they had any mediums in stock.

Three Legged Fox was a good live show, there's no denying that, but as I said, their sound from their studio albums didn't exactly transfer to their performance. That leaves some questions. Mainly, why? They only have one album released, and the "organic roots rock" they describe on the website only shows on two tracks, yet every track on their Live @ Grape Street album uses much more distortion and cymbals.

Even "Jah Light," arguably the most traditional reggae song on the studio album has a more rock feel when played live. This isn't an uncommon phenomenon, and it's not specific to just reggae groups, but Three Legged Fox seems like a much tighter act than one that would let some sort of error mess up their groove.

All in all, Three Legged Fox played a mean live show; it's just a shame that they had to play at Bruno's of all places.

Janet Neff Sample Center
for Manners & Civility



"We must keep our own moral compass pointed in a true direction."

Barack Obama