



# CITY OF DANBURY

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TO: Mayor Mark D. Boughton, Common Council members  
RE: Connecticut Film Festival

A whirlwind week (May 20-25) of activity is now complete.

The showcasing of the Palace Theater on Opening Night was the highlight of the event. More than 400 people filled the facility to see the first movie "Fly Boys" shown there in 13 years.

The Palace was also completely full for the screening of "Americanizing Shelly" later in the week. An industry party involving Housatonic regional arts and cultural organizations took place along with the presentation of a Lifetime Achievement Award to the film's director of photography and New Milford resident Christo Bakalov.

Overall, there were 130 films screened, 16 forums conducted along with six specialty events (opening night at the Palace, a small industry brunch and awards event at the Amber Room Colonnade, a reception at the offices of Ventura, Ribeiro & Smith, along with fundraiser receptions that benefitted Darfur and the American Cancer Society).

Restaurants certainly appeared to benefit. Nico's owner George Korres commented, "This was great. A lot of new faces in here because of the Film Festival. If we can get just a small percentage of them to come back for another meal, it will be great for our business." Essentially, a buzz about Main Street Danbury and its Film Festival took hold.

Redding resident Lucie Arnaz and actor husband Larry Luckenbill attended the Sunday screening of "The Pack" in which Arnaz was featured.

Danbury's visibility was enhanced via statewide signage, newspaper stories, radio and television interviews, billboards and a series of email promotions. Certainly, our name is now initially linked with the Connecticut Film Festival. Yet our formal evaluation for potential 2009 sponsorship must now take place. As part of this, the Northwest Connecticut Convention and Visitors Bureau did both an online survey and an in-person survey of visitors to our city. Statistics and a more comprehensive recap will be presented to you next month.

Sincerely,  
Wayne J. Shepperd

To: Wayne J. Shepperd  
From: Thomas Carruthers  
RE: Connecticut Film Festival

The Connecticut Film Festival went into high gear in the month of May. Large banners and information were displayed in high traffic, high visibility areas at Western Connecticut State University, CityCenter Danbury, the Danbury Public Library, The Palace Theater marquis and HART buses throughout the Housatonic Valley region.

In addition to leveraging Lamar's banner space on HART buses, Lamar sponsored 6 billboards throughout southern and northern Fairfield County. Six Hundred lawns signs were placed in high visibility areas throughout southern and northern Fairfield County as well as parts of Litchfield and New Haven Counties. More than 750 event posters made their way into bodegas, libraries, coffee shops and other points of sale or service and places where people congregate.

There were 10,000 Save The Date Cards distributed throughout the region. Festival planners, actors and directors appeared on more than a dozen television and radio news segments and lengthy interviews including programs on FOX 61, NBC 30, Channel 8 and Channel 3 along with FM, AM and NPR radio programs including the David Smith's Entertainment show on WICC for 1.5 hours with CT Post film reviewer Joe Meyers, Jon Voquet's WPLR program and a panel discussion with several film directors on WSHU/NPR with Erik Campano.

Approximately 200,000 programs were inserted into several newspapers including The News-Times, The Fairfield County Weekly, The New Haven Advocate and The Hartford Advocate. Hundreds of editorial column inches covered the festival in every major newspaper in Connecticut in the final 3 weeks leading up to May 20<sup>th</sup> including; The Hartford Courant, The New Haven Register, The Stamford Advocate and The Connecticut Post to name a few. The News-Times published day-to-day events highlighting many films with reviews and schedules in print and also through an online blog called "The Chainsaw Hollywood Blog".

There were: ninety one (91) screenings (with more than a 120 films), 16 Educational Panels and Workshops, 4 networking events and 4 informal receptions at local restaurants, 3 additionally planned screening receptions by sponsors or filmmakers, Opening Night Reception, VIP Reception, Saturday Night Industry Bash, Sunday Industry Awards Brunch, 3 Cause Related Fundraiser Receptions for The Promise Project, Equine Angels and The American Cancer Society. All total there were 125 events directly connected to the CTFF from May 20-25. CityCenter and The HV Cultural Alliance produced an after hours "Green Room" at the Hibernian Club to raise funds for the HV Cultural Alliance. CityCenter Danbury and The Volunteer Center

leveraged fundraising opportunities by running a concession stand at The Palace Theater and realizing 100% of the profits.

The festival operated without incident. Approximately 100 volunteers and paid staff were mobilized to insure that virtually every element ran on schedule and that the highest level of integrity be maintained.

Originally there were plans for a second box office/operations & volunteer center at the Democratic Headquarters. When the office became unavailable, CTFF shifted to a contingency backup to utilize a space in a vacant office suite owned by John Farley at the Empress Professional Building. We are indebted to Mr. Farley for the use of his space.

The content and coordination of CTFF educational events was second to none and the leaders of each panel and workshop received much praise by attendees. Attendance exceeded the festival planners expectations with an average of 20 – 25 people per event. We were initially expecting only 5-10 attendees per educational event.

As expected, attendance at early afternoon screenings was low to moderate and would vary anywhere from 5-50 people. Beginning around 4 p.m. the number greatly increased and by the 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. “early shows”, numbers were between 50 – 200 people. Attendance ramped up beginning Thursday afternoon, with the highest concentration all day Friday and Saturday. Our largest attendance, was at the most heavily publicized events, which included: opening night and Saturday evening at the Palace Theater. Both shows sold out and another 50 to 100 additional people attended the after parties.

Regards

Tom Carruthers  
Connecticut Film Festival