



EDITORIAL

Times Beacon Record, Dave Willinger,
August 10, 2007

Celluloid Heroics

The main hall at the Staller Center on Stony Brook campus boasts an impressive stage. When it comes to film, that place can handle a 35 mm print with Dolby sound that will impress even the most jaded cinema snob. But what truly impresses is turning to view those steeply rising seats in the Staller auditorium packed with area residents gathered to share a cultural experience of the likes usually only available in cities like New York, Montreal, Berlin, Venice, and yes, Cannes.

Consider those 1,000 film buffs and culture hounds who came opening night to see a French Canadian movie, in which the tough guys express their rage with curse words like "tabernacle!"

Admittedly, opening night is a hot ticket, especially when a free party follows, at which even the most pedestrian philistine can slurp local wines and bore a gracious guest actor or director with ego-centered anecdotes.

But when you see 750 persons show up on a glorious Saturday afternoon midway through the festival, come in from the summer sunshine and sit in the dark to watch a foreign flick in which Romanian- and German-speaking characters bridge their language gap with textbook French, then you begin to realize something very hip is going on at this festival. We were given a window on the wide world by filmmakers from other societies and from the less well-known strata of our own.

Over those 10 days of cool culture, the festival drew a record attendance of 16,000. We thank film festival director Alan Inkles of the Staller Center and the many persons and sponsors who helped make it a success and so much fun.