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## ***Casting Insider*** by Masha Dowell

Current technology has changed the acting game. So, when one asks about the acting season in Atlanta, it's easy to simply state that our casting season is 365 days of the year. This is certainly the perspective and outlook that Rad Harrell, Founder and Casting Director for Talent Soup had when I sat down with him for an interview.

**Masha:** When does casting season start in Georgia?

**Rad:** I would say it's certainly year around. All Atlanta talent should expect first quarter to be the slowest due to budget approvals for various clients. This will vary according to the specific project or production of course. Talent Soup works with

*con't. on pg. 6*

## ***WIFTA PSA Gets Underway***

This year's WIFTA PSA will focus on domestic violence awareness. WIFTA plans to launch the PSAs in October, just in time for Domestic Violence Month. The WIFTA PSA volunteers have already selected a concept and are in active pre-production.

*con't. on pg. 2*

## ***R you Rated*** by Luana Ring

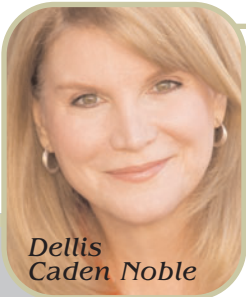
When it comes to making films, there are a lot of "little things" to do. However, one thing that many filmmakers overlook—because of lack of budget,

*con't. on pg. 4*

## ***Tax Incentives Hoopla Resolved***

Exhale! It's okay. Legislators voted on March 28, 2011 that film and television tax incentives will remain in place, at least for now. Despite this win, many leading Georgia film and television production-focused organizations are still concerned. Their fear is that, as has happened in other states

*con't. on pg. 10*



Dellis  
Caden Noble

## President's Message

Wow! This first quarter has been a whirlwind of an adventure for WIFTA. And we're hopping right in to the second quarter, leading it off a program that you will not want to miss. It's called **Digital Doyennes: Wisdom from Women Who Lead In Social Media & Digital Innovation**. Register today so you can see how you can utilize the knowledge shared in your work as a production professional! Also, a heads up to our student members: The WIFTA Student Tuition Scholarship application deadline is May 31, 2011. Visit [WIFTA.org](http://WIFTA.org).



## WIFTA Celebrates The Oscars

by Gwen Jackson

The 200+ attendees of the WIFTA Oscar Party & Networking event really got the star treatment this year. The event, which took place at Studio Movie Grill in Alpharetta, gave local celebrities and celebs-to-be the opportunity to stroll the red carpet, sample wine and network with local power players. Celebrity hosts Terri Vaughn and Roger Bobb helped added an extra element of fun as they posed mind-bending trivia questions to the audience, with the winners taking home Oscar night prizes of their own.

Pictured: WIFTA Oscar Party hosts Terri J. Vaughn (l) and Roger Bobb (r) strike a pose on the red carpet. Photo courtesy of Sean Cokes Photography

## Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!

**Special thanks** to our gracious sponsors and celebrity guests / hosts who helped to make the 2011 Annual Kickoff, The Oscar Party & Networking Mixer and The WIFTA / WIFTI Short Film Festival shine: **Celebrity actresses** Terri J. Vaughn, Rhoda Griffis and Samantha Worthen; **Production executives** Roger Bobb of Tyler Perry Studios, Will Packer, Rainforest Films, Fran Burst of Star Stream Films and Kat Phillips of Kat Scratch Films; **Renowned casting directors** Shay Bentley-Griffin of The Chez Group and Alpha Tyler (Independent, currently Tyler Perry Studios); **Talent agents** Rebecca Shrager & Brenda Pauley of People Store, Susan Williams of Houghton Talent, Joy Pervis of JPervis, Devin Davis of Talent Network Atlanta, Kathy Hardegree of Atlanta Model Talent and Sonya Lopez of True Talent Atlanta; **Industry information go-to gurus** Tim McCabe of Georgia Production Partnership and Melissa Goodman, Alison Wise & Wilbur Fitzgerald of Screen Actors Guild. ~ The 2011 WIFTA Board

## WIFTA PSA Gets Underway (con't.)

It is not too late to get involved! You can help by fundraising, donating goods, equipment or services in kind, or by joining us for our next meeting. For information e-mail Molly Brown at [MsMollyABrown@gmail.com](mailto:MsMollyABrown@gmail.com).

## Short Films Long On Entertainment



*The filmmakers showcased at the 2011 WIFTA / WIFTI Short Film Festival pose for a group picture.*

They laughed. Some jumped in surprise. Others' eyes welled up with tears. However, everyone undoubtedly walked away with a newfound or rejuvenated consciousness about social issues pecking at their minds. That, in a nutshell, was the collective experience of attendees of the 6th Annual WIFTA / WIFTI Short Film Festival. WIFTA, which was one of nine Women In Film & Television chapters hosting a film festival, showcased nine films:

- He Gave It To Me by Star Clark
- Family Bible by Bobby Huntley II
- Break That Stereotype by HaJ
- The Diary of A Girl Who Committed Suicide by Andre Jones
- Leger Probleme (Little Inconveniences) by Helene Flo Montreal
- The Sound Of Poetry by Henderson Maddox
- Picking Up Feets by Debrianna Mansini
- Space Available by Kathilynn Phillips
- Hungry For Love, Ruckus Skye

If you missed seeing any of the films, be on the look out for them. Many of the filmmakers have offers to screen at other festivals nationally and globally.

*\*Photo courtesy of Arthur Usherson*



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# Production

## **R** you Rated? (con't.)

forethought or care—is having their film rated. So, if you've got a film project in the works (or completed), here's why you should consider adding having your film rated to your "to-do" list...

Movie ratings are a means for determining whether or not film content is suitable for certain audiences. Basically, a group of parents watch films and decide how appropriate they are for various age groups. Their goal is to enable parents to make choices for their family's viewing and to alert moviegoers overall to the level of maturity of a film's subject matter. From the filmmaker's perspective, however, the ratings are a tool that is often necessary to gain distribution. Therefore, whether your film is rated or not and how it's rated, can certainly determine revenue impact and the success of your film.

Did you know that the National Association of Theater Owners (NATO) represents more than 26,000 movie screens in all 50 US states with additional theaters in more than 40 countries globally and functions in concert with the MPAA and CARA in support of this voluntary ratings system. Well, they do.

Did you know that most theaters won't show unrated movies? Well, they won't.

Do you plan on distributing online or DVD sales rather than going for a big theatrical release? Well, guess what? Many of those distribution channels require (or prefer) rated films too.

So, if you want to up your odds of gaining domestic distribution, you

must have your film rated. Now, to clarify, whether you have your film rated or not is your choice. It is possible to get distribution without being rated, but opportunities may be harder to find because of the widespread support for film rating. According to FilmBug.com, "few mainstream producers outside the pornography niche decline to submit to the rating system due to potential effects on revenues...so the system has a de facto compulsory status in the industry."

If you decide to have your film rated, take solace in knowing that, even though adding "Get film rated" to your to-do list may be a pain, the process isn't. Just download the CARA "Agreement to Submit Motion Picture for Rating." After that, follow the instructions to submit your film and pay the rating fee. The cost will be between \$2,500 and \$25,000, depending on your film's category and negative cost; for a better cost estimate, see the fee schedule included in the agreement's appendix.

By the way, if you are planning to take your film international, check with the local government for ratings requirements. Rules often vary country to country.

The *smart* way to network and to stay 'in the know' is to be a part of what's happening. So, quick, volunteer for a WIFTA committee! Just email the Director or VP you would like to work with...today!

# The Look

## **The Art Director Speaks: Bringing Vision To Life**

*by Gwen Jackson*

**Color. Texture. Genre. Mood. Style. Characters. Placement. Script. Audience.** These are important words that every good art director lives by. Because an Art Director has to consider all these things and more when working on a project, they also have to understand what the Director wants, what the talent has to achieve and what the audience wants to see.

Although an Art Director can work with print materials presented in an advertisement, they also have the unique responsibility of blending of all these things together on a film set. During pre-production, the Art Director works closely with the Director and Director of Photography to understand what the goals of the project are and how they want to inspire or inform the audience. Once the project is turned over to the Art Director, the creative of joining colors and prop placement in relation to the characters and the time period of the project takes shape.

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## Digital Doyennes:

Wisdom from the Women who Lead in  
Social Media and Digital Innovation

*Join us in celebrating the emergence of  
digital sisterhood in new media!*

Social media is more than a place to share photos with family and friends—it is a powerful and necessary business tool that can extend your brand's reach. And more specifically, for filmmakers, social media is a communications platform that can greatly increase your audience by allowing meaningful interaction while promoting your project.

Meet the panel who will share their experiences and insights,  
and inspire us all!



Gina McCauley  
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Go to [WIFTA.org](http://WIFTA.org) events page to register.

Good art direction invites the audience in and allows them to feel like they are a part of the story. "We have to remember that the audience is the most important element of any project," states G. Cameron Beasley, an experienced Art Director in Atlanta. "If we can affect the audience, then we've done our job."

Art direction does just as it is named. It directs us to where the Director wants us to go and assists us with understanding the vision and story.

# Performance

## **Casting Insider** (con't.)

corporations, nonprofits. We cast for feature films and commercials. So, it really depends on the client. However, the Atlanta market is definitely booming year around.

**Masha:** How should actors—those looking for leads and recurring roles as well as those seeking background and general extras opportunities—prepare for it? Where should they be looking to find the gigs?

**Rad:** This is dear and near to my heart. There are so many sharks in the industry. First and foremost, if you have experience, you should have representation by an agency. However, I also believe that you need to lead your career. If you are a new actor, you should know that you should never pay for casting information. When we [the Casting Director] have been contracted out to fill a need for a project, we go out and find the right person. We will advertise the opening and state our need. We will connect with talent agents and more.

As for places to look, Atlanta actors should start with online actor communities. This is a great way to be a part of an actor's community, whether online or in person. Secondly, one should check out the Web site Southern Casting Call. Talent Soup actually posts on that site from time to time. Lastly, you can go to Craig's List if you have the time to sort through the spam or potential scams on that site. A key is to look for jobs specifically under

the TV and Film jobs section. I state this because employers or Casting Agents and others are now required to pay \$25 per ad.

**Masha:** Based on your experience, what are today's clients looking for in their actors?

**Rad:** I've observed that many want to see actors that want to put themselves out there on camera. They want to see rawness in front of the camera, and that's actually something hard to come by for many of the projects that I have worked on. I've worked projects where all the client wants to see is a willingness to try to put a raw performance in front of the camera.

**Masha:** Well, thanks for your pointers for Atlanta actors. Do you have any last pointers?

**Rad:** Yes, I just read a wonderful blog post written by famed public speaker, Seth Godin. I'd like to share it with your readers:

"It's a cultural instinct to wait to get picked. To seek out the permission and authority that comes from a publisher or talk show host or even a blogger saying, "I pick you." Once you reject that impulse and realize that no one is going to select you--that Prince Charming has chosen another house--then you can actually get to work."

- Seth Godin

# Techie

## Don't Forget The D.I.T.!

While there's no mistaking that digital can't duplicate film quality, many filmmakers are switching to HD, digitally shot movies. It's partly due to the decreased cost of shooting digitally versus film and partly because of the eye-popping clarity that HD, digital recordings produce. However, that switch is causing some filmmakers on-set headaches that they didn't often have with film: Loss of footage! So, if you're planning on shooting a movie digitally, then you should be planning to add a D.I.T. to your "Essential Crew" list.

The D.I.T., which is short for Digital Imaging Technician, helps the DP to create the on-screen look from a technical aspect. Some liken the position to that of a film loader. While the parallel is accurate, it isn't all-inclusive.

The D.I.T. is the go-to person for trouble shooting data issues. She is the one who insures that the footage you're recording is indeed being collected, saved & transferred properly. Though the D.I.T. often works with the DP within the camera department, she doesn't replace any of the key positions commonly included in the camera department. you'll still need a 2nd AC and Focus Puller.

The D.I.T. position is a fairly new position in the film industry. Therefore, choose someone who is knowledgeable about digital video production, HD digital cameras and information technology overall and / or someone who has been trained specifically as a D.I.T.

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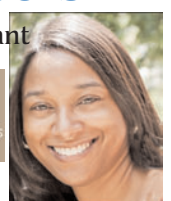


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# Women's History

## **WIFTA Salutes Off-Screen Leading Women**

*by Masha Dowell*

If you watched the Academy Awards this year, you saw many of the leading ladies of today's top blockbuster films, looking glamorous as ever. You saw the media swarming around them and their gowns like bees; you saw the hungry paparazzi snapping photos of the stars for our world's leading magazines; lastly, you saw the stars themselves, soaking up all the attention as they promoted their latest projects to the world in generating more buzz. It was quite a show, but not the whole show.

Did you notice how the media frenzy froze, almost to the point of being able to hear crickets chirping when a behind-the-scenes leading lady strolled down the red carpet—the very same red carpet as, let's say, Natalie Portman. It happens year after year, and that's sad because there are so many creative women behind-the-scenes who truly have a hand in making movies. So, if you're one of those inquisitive women who want to know who the female leading ladies behind-the-scenes are, you're in for a treat! We've found some of those women. So, sit back and enjoy this "shout out" to some of these rarely lauded leading ladies of film & television!

**Karen O'Hara, Set Designer** – Karen won a 2011 Academy award for Set Production for *Alice in Wonderland*. A Chicago native, Karen got her foot in the door within the film industry by interning. Her "big break" occurred when she acted as the Set Designer for Martin Scorsese's Chicago-filmed *The Color of Money*.

**Ava DuVernay, Film Director & Distributor** – Ava founded DVA Media and Marketing in her late 20s. From there, she transitioned into film. Her directorial debut was a documentary about Hip Hop culture in L.A. called *This Is the Life*. Currently, her film, *I Will Follow*, can be seen in major cities in the U.S. and Canada.

**Björk Gumundsdóttir, Film Composer** - Many of us know Björk by her music. However, many of us forget that she is also a noted film composer. In 1999, Björk wrote the musical score for *Dancer in the Dark*.

**Julie Taymor, Broadway Director & Costume Designer** – Julie is a film, Broadway and Opera director. Many of us will recognize her work from Broadway's *The Lion King*. She not only directed that project, she designed the original costumes as well. Plus, she earned an Academy Award nomination for best original song! Through *The Lion King*, she became the first woman to win the Tony Award for directing a musical.

**Zoe Bell, Stunt Woman & Actress** - Zoe is best known as the stunt double for actress Uma Thurman in the *Kill Bill* franchise.

**Maysie Hoy, Film Editor** – If you've seen any of Tyler Perry's projects, then you've seen Maysie's work! To date she has been the film editor of several of his films. On top of that, she was the film editor of film classic *Love Jones*.

# Member Spotlight



## **Ladies & Gentlemen, Shay Bentley-Griffin!**

How fitting. March 8, 2011 was the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day and WIFTA chose that day to honor a woman who has helped cast hundreds of television shows and movies...and hundreds more careers.

WIFTA presented Shay Bentley-Griffin with an award for her dedication to the Film / TV industry in Hollywood and here in Georgia during the 6th Annual Short Film Festival. Atlanta region SAG Executive Director Melissa Goodman, *Army Wives* actress Rhoda Griffis and Producer / Director Fran Burst sat front-row, center to help honor renowned Casting Director Shay Bentley-Griffin; each of them spoke admirably about having worked with her, eloquently describing the impact she's had on their lives.

As a Casting Director, Bentley-Griffin is responsible for wrangling the talent for over 225 productions. Her efforts in stellar casting earned her the prestigious C.S.A. Crystal Obelisk Award (1996) and not one, not two but three Emmy nominations for productions her company, The Chez Group, has cast. Perhaps you recognize a few of them...films *Revenge of the Nerds*, *We Are Marshall*, *Stomp The Yard*, *Drum Line*, *Sweet Home Alabama*, *Glory* and *Remember The Titans* and television series *In The Heat Of The Night*, *House of Payne*, *Meet The Browns* and *Blue Collar TV*.



In addition to being an award-winning Casting Director, Bentley-Griffin is also a TV / Film Production industry advocate. Bentley-Griffin, if you did not know, helped spearhead the call for legislation for the Georgia tax incentives; the ones that have enticed more production companies to shoot their projects in the state; the ones that have helped create jobs—for crew and talent—since its implementation in 2008.

Many believe that the honor was long overdue. So, though we've said it before, we will say it again on behalf of those who cannot thank you enough. "Thank you, Ms. Bentley-Griffin, for all of the hard work you've done over the years. You have positively affected our lives in ways many of us never knew and for that, we appreciate you."



*\*Photos courtesy of Arthur Usherson*



## Benefits of Membership

- FREE Admission To WIFTA Programs
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- \*Restrictions Apply*

### JOIN TODAY

1. Go to [www.WIFTA.org](http://www.WIFTA.org).
2. Click on "Membership."
3. Complete the online application.

### New Members!

Geneve Applewhite, Ashley Askew, Khia Banks, Davida Berry, Sherita Bolden, Kwajalyn Brown, Molly Brown, Dawn Byone, Latasha Cain, Takara Clark, Gregory Cook, Shauna Corbin, Shayla Cowan, Jeanette Cruz, Susan Curtis, Ann DeGuire, Nicole Doswell, Masha Dowell, Amy Fortener, Nicole George, Selena Gilbert, Deborah Gonzalez, Katrena Griggs, Jennifer Gutierrez, Loletha Hale, Rachell Halfon, Andrea Hall, Lauren Holley, Tiffani Howard, Jill Jamison, Patricia Joe, Sharon James Jordan, Terrisha Kearse, Kim Lee, Ivette Li-Sanchez, Melissa Lowe, Bill Marinella, Sharon Miller, Gabrielle Mitchell, Helena Moore, Lisa Morton, Jasmine Mosley, Susan Moss, Dionne Myers, Vanessa Narcisse & Johnquel Neal

### Camera's Rolling!

Cameras are rolling all around town. Disney's *The Odd Life of Timothy Green* will continue filming in April. Crews will be hunkering down in Dougherty and Terrell counties to get additional footage. There's also talk of the feature film *Mississippi Wild*, which is said to star Forrest Whitaker, Mickey Rourke and Dakota Fanning, coming to town. Plus, the hit Lifetime television show *Drop Dead Diva*, which is filmed in Coweta County, is ramping up for its third season. Meanwhile, projects filmed in Georgia last year such as *Fast Five*, *Footloose* (remake), *Courageous* and *X-Men: First Class* are slated to hit theatres this year. *Hall Pass* is already in theatres and *Mean Girls 2* is now available on DVD.

### Tax Incentives (con't.)

like Michigan and New Mexico, just the talk of ending the tax incentives has deterred production companies from considering Georgia as potential location for their projects. Unfortunately, only time will tell how much "damage" has been done.

### Coming Attractions: Mark Your Calendar

#### April 2011

**12: Digital Doyennes: Wisdom from the women who lead in social media and digital innovation**

(Register at [www.WIFTA.org](http://www.WIFTA.org))

**28 - May 7: Atlanta Film Festival**

(Visit [www.AtlantaFilmFestival.com](http://www.AtlantaFilmFestival.com) for tickets)

**Members: Be featured in the Member Spotlight! Share your successes in the Shining Stars section. Email [Newsletter@WIFTA.org](mailto:Newsletter@WIFTA.org) for consideration.**

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