

# ARTS & LEISURE

PAGE 22 — THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2011

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## Award-winning filmmaker aims to donate proceeds to charity

By Paul Greulich  
Staff Writer

Some people donate money or time to charity, but Mountainside native and independent film writer and director Jim Riffel is looking to donate something a little different — the worldwide rights to five feature films of his own creation.

"Each film will be offered to a different list of celebrities," Riffel explained.

The celebrities can then review the film for \$10,000 and donate the rights to a charity of their choosing, or retain the rights and instead give the money to the charity.

On Jan. 11, the first film was officially offered to the first round of potential celebrities, which includes comedians Tina Fey, Will Ferrell, Eddie Murphy and Adam Sandler.

Each celebrity will then have four or five weeks to decide if they want to get involved. If not, Riffel moves on to the next slate of candidates. No response has come in yet, but Riffel is confident that an interested party will eventually be found.

"I know these people are extremely busy," Riffel said of the various celebrities. "But I'm

hoping sooner or later somebody will come forward."

One of the films, "Black-Eyed Susan," was awarded Grand Prize for Best Feature Film at the Garden State Film Festival. This movie is a dark comedy that centers on a fatal chain of events that begins after a man robs his deceased neighbor.

Riffel attended New York University film school and completed his first film in 1988, with financing provided largely through door-to-door visits in Summit and Short Hills asking for funds.

"I sort of went off the beaten path and it worked out for me," Riffel said.

In making these movies, Riffel drew from a talent pool that included many people from New Jersey in general and Union County in particular.

Riffel, who now lives in Chatham, was inspired to embark on this project by a man named Zell Kravinsky. Kravinsky, a self-made millionaire who gave away virtually all his wealth to charity, was the subject of an earlier documentary project that unfortunately never came to fruition. While Riffel never obtained the financing to move ahead with this project, Kravinsky's story stuck with him.

While many artists may find it unthinkable to give away one's money and work in this manner, Riffel, now 49, said his priorities have changed as he has gotten older.

"I'd rather do something that's good and helps people," he said.

To complete his plan, Riffel first had to obtain the approval and signatures of his investors who had worked on the films with him. He found them open to his proposal.

"It's really a group of people who said they wanted to see the money go to good causes," he said. "I'm just the person in front of the public doing it."

One of the actors involved in the projects share his view, among them Angelica Velez, who starred in his horror film "Night of the Day of the Dawn, Part 5."

"I know that a lot of charities have been suffering with the economy the way it is," said Velez. "So I think this is a great thing to do and hopefully one of these celebrities has a little bit of time to get involved."

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Angelica Velez is an actress who starred in Mountainside native Jim Riffel's horror film 'Night of the Day of the Dawn, Part 5.'

## Union resident writes book of captivating short stories

Every short story in "Mystery Montage," the compilation book of Patricia L. Morin, a former Unionite, is a delight in every sense of the word.

Her collection of short story mysteries tends to entertain and at the same time keep a reader on the edge of his or her seat — even if this reader is somewhat unfamiliar with the idea of short stories. Full length stories in fine books apparently are this reviewer's choice, but it seems that with this book, Morin has actually awakened the senses with its literary appeal.

Perhaps the fact that the author also is a licensed psychotherapist, a doctoral candidate at the Pacific Graduate Institute of Psychology, with masters degrees in counseling and clinical social work, plus more than 30 years of experience as an individual practitioner, "Mystery Montage" becomes very special.

Morin's award-winning stories are unique due to the fact that her character's intrigue with their appealing quality, their mysterious lives, their fascinating per-

### On The Shelf

By Bea Smith



sonalities and their ability to reach out and lasso the readers into the revolving circle of their own personal and sometimes frightening realm.

And what makes this book even more affective is how the author came about visualizing these stories. All Morin needed was to absorb a real life situation, such as "an older couple sitting on a bench on the boardwalk in Atlantic City," and she created a fabled tale that endeared itself to a book enthusiast. The story was called "Under the Boardwalk." Among her variety of short stories in "Mystery Montage," many of which were published singly or in anthologies, are titled "Maasai Mara Murder," "Funeral," "Rap Sheet," "Homeless," and "Pa and the Pigeon Man."

Each story is told with such perfection that it can stand alone among its pensive readers.

"Mystery Montage" was published in 2010 by Top Publications Ltd. of Dallas, Texas.

For those readers who like their stories brief, concise and incredibly entertaining, "Mystery Montage" comes highly recommended. And for those readers, who prefer lengthy books that will keep one fascinated as page turners throughout the wee hours of the morning, reconsider and try something different; something like this wonderful book, "Mystery Montage," which is loaded with every kind of story anyone could possibly find interesting.

In fact, "Mystery Montage" has found a new home on the shelf of this reviewer's recently obtained bookcase — reserved only for the creme de la creme books containing fascinating short stories. These are the type of stories that never go stale.

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