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**FESTIVAL INFORMATION**

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## **Waterfront Film Festival 2004 Program to be its “best ever”**

SAUGATUCK, MICHIGAN – The lakefront resort town of Saugatuck, Michigan has a lot to look forward to with this summer’s Sixth Annual Waterfront Film Festival just around the corner. With the festival just a month away, the founders and volunteers associated with the event are more enthusiastic than ever about this year’s program, including nine feature films from the Sundance Film Festival, along with Midwest Premieres of an amazing sixteen more.

“The program has taken another big step up this year,” Co-Founder Hopwood DePree said proudly. “We hope Waterfront is on the way to rivaling some of the best festivals out there, and I think we’re definitely setting the bar for this part of the country.” Although some films have been invited as special engagements, the core of the program is handpicked from over 600 submissions. The complete line-up, schedule and box office will be available at [www.waterfrontfilm.org](http://www.waterfrontfilm.org) in mid-May.

Some of the highlights slated for this year are:

- **OPEN WATER:** An amazing film coming straight from this year’s Sundance Film Festival. This thrilling true story about a husband and wife team abandoned in shark-infested waters comes to the waterfront of West Michigan for its Midwest Premiere. Festival co-founder Hopwood DePree says of the film, “Everyone will have heard of it by the end of the summer.” The film’s writer/director/cinematographer and editor Chris Kentis and lead actor Daniel Travis will be in attendance and you won’t want to miss the chance to hear how they made the film’s thrilling shark sequences with absolutely no digital effects. LionsGate Films bought *Open Water* at Sundance for a reported \$2 million and plans a wide release later this year. ([www.openwatermovie.com](http://www.openwatermovie.com) and [www.lionsgatefilms.com](http://www.lionsgatefilms.com))
- **PRIMER:** At its core, Waterfront is still about the truly independent films, and this one is no exception – it also just happens to be the first film ever made by engineer turned Writer/Director Shane Carruth. Made for about “the price of a used car,” *Primer* premiered at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival, where it went on to win the most coveted award: the Grand Jury Prize. A scientific thriller of psychologically mind-bending complexity, Waterfront is thrilled to present an early look at one of the year’s most talked about independent films, accompanied by its creator Shane Carruth. ([www.primermovie.com](http://www.primermovie.com))

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**FESTIVAL FOUNDERS**

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- **RIDING GIANTS:** The Waterfront Film Festival is extremely proud to host this Special Presentation of the first documentary to ever open the Sundance Film Festival, *Riding Giants*, an amazing history of big wave surfers. Following his hit film *Dogtown and Z Boys*, skating legend Stacy Peralta has created a one-of-a-kind thriller: part history, part thrills and all man versus nature. “This was undoubtedly one of the smash hits at Sundance this year, you’ll definitely want to see this on the big screen,” said Joseph Beyer, Senior Programming Coordinator to Sundance and Program Consultant for the Waterfront Film Festival. “It doesn’t matter if you know nothing about surfing, I promise you, this is the film to see at this year’s Waterfront. It’s such a sneak peek that Sony Classics has only agreed to let us show it once. At least part of the reason we were able to get this chance was because Stacy Peralta knew that Michigan was home to all these freshwater surfers,” Writer/Director/Producer Stacy Peralta is considering an invitation to attend. ([www.sonyclassics.com](http://www.sonyclassics.com))
- **THE STORY OF A WEEPING CAMEL:** “If you loved *Winged Migration* last year, then this is the film to see,” say Waterfront programmers. *The Story of a Weeping Camel* was one of the hits at the Toronto Film Festival and was an Official Oscar Entry for Documentary Film. Set amid the vast expanses of Mongolia’s deserts, *The Story of the Weeping Camel* follows the adventures of a family of camel herders who face a crisis when one mother camel rejects her newborn following a particularly tough delivery. Invoking an ancient ritual, the family uses a musician to coax the mother to nurse. Apart from reuniting the mother and child, the ritual has miraculous side effects. The film is being released later this year by Think Film Company.
- **HAROLD & KUMAR GO TO WHITE CASTLE:** This exclusive sneak peek at the new film from the director of *Dude, Where’s My Car* comes to Waterfront in its Midwest Premiere. A hilarious comedy including, yes, the White Castle burgers, this film is set to open in theatres in late July. Starring *American Pie*’s John Cho and Kal Penn in the title roles, *Harold & Kumar* is one of those outrageous and off color comedies that will keep you laughing long after it’s over. This one’s definitely for the younger crowd - they’ll love it. NewLine Cinema isn’t releasing the movie until late July so this is a fantastic chance to see it first at Waterfront. ([www.haroldandkumar.com](http://www.haroldandkumar.com))
- **A LEAGUE OF ORDINARY GENTLEMEN:** This brilliant bowling documentary returns to its roots – much of the project was filmed in Michigan. The film follows four modern-day pro bowlers as they scramble to adjust when their aging league is suddenly bought out by a trio of wealthy Microsoft programmers. “In the struggles to justify the means, *A League of Ordinary Gentlemen* finds the perfect metaphors for the rollercoaster ride through bowling’s history,” writes Joseph Beyer. This film recently received the Audience Award Winner for Documentary at Austin’s South by Southwest Film Festival.
- **MICHIGAN STUDENT FILMMAKER SHOWCASE:** A Waterfront tradition continues with a program of films produced by Michigan’s own young talent. This year’s showcase promises to be better than ever and the two best filmmakers will each be awarded \$1,000 in Kodak film. You won’t want to miss the fresh voices and original perspectives from the next generation of artists.

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The Waterfront Film Festival is more than just great films and fabulous parties...it's also about great conversations. Waterfront is thrilled to welcome Indie consulting legend Robert Hawk back to Saugatuck for an exciting seminar that every aspiring filmmaker will want to attend:

- **FROM FIRST DRAFT TO FINAL CUT -- AND BEYOND:** Working with clients from script development to festival strategies, independent film consultant and producer Robert Hawk (*Trick, Slaughter Rule*) has been guardian angel to numerous first-time directors, as well as seasoned veterans. His advice has proven invaluable to such now recognized filmmakers as Kevin Smith (*Chasing Amy, Jersey Girl*), Ed Burns (*Brothers McMullen*), David Siegel & Scott McGehee (*Deep End*), Nathaniel Kahn (*My Architect*) and Rob Epstein (*Times of Harvey Milk, Common Threads*). Learn how to navigate through all stages of a film's life -- plus get a reality check on today's indie world. For more background: [www.filmhawk.com](http://www.filmhawk.com)

A full schedule of films will be available on the festival website at [www.waterfrontfilm.org](http://www.waterfrontfilm.org) after May 14. Everyone is encouraged to join the email subscriptions list available on the website to receive regular updates and information regarding the festival.

Also, stay tuned for other exciting announcements about new Waterfront venues and a sneak peek at who will be attending this year. More information will be announced next week regarding the Waterfront Lodge, a hangout where filmmakers and audience members can mingle for panels and networking

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MEDIA NOTE: Full press kits, photos and additional information available upon request. Please email [media@waterfrontfilm.org](mailto:media@waterfrontfilm.org).

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