

# Myrtle Beach International Film Festival

## Independent flicks on display this weekend

By STEVE PALISIN - The Sun News

"LAST STOP FOR PAUL" | Cast and crew members work together on the set of "Last Stop For Paul."

Jerry Dalton says independent films have made the turn into the professional realm.

"They're looking very mainstream, very high-quality Hollywood," said Dalton, who founded the Myrtle Beach International Film Festival as a showcase solely for projects that proceed without any help from or access to the major studios.

The third annual festival continues today and Saturday at Carmike Cinemas' Broadway 16 at Broadway at the Beach.



Dalton, owner of Dalton Pictures and Entertainment Co. of Myrtle Beach, remembered first playing with his father's Super 8 camera, a hobby that would lead to his making several movies years later.

"The neat thing about independent films," he said, "is they don't have the budgets to get special effects that carry the films. So a lot of the stories are more heartfelt and more passionate than big-budget Hollywood movies."

Gregory Orr's first fiction film, "Alone," made its Carolinas premiere Dec. 5 in Myrtle Beach.

Orr, a New Yorker who summered as a Myrtle Beach lifeguard and attended Coastal Carolina University in the mid-1970s, blended drama and surrealism for "Alone."

The story follows a man who leaves eviction notices for a living, but one person served papers makes his heart hiccup.

"He gets caught between the woman he loves and the job he can't escape," Orr said.

The idea for the movie arose from casual conversation about isolation, he said recalling, "what if the last man on Earth met the last woman on Earth?"

Seeking an abandoned look for the setting, Orr said the film was shot in 12 days at a former U.S. Coast Guard base near Manhattan.

"We really liked having our own village in the snow," Orr said.

With 12 years of making documentaries aired on cable TV outlets such as A&E, The History Channel and The Discovery Channel, Orr sees Hollywood as a place for movie distribution and where television shows are made.

The seven major studios continue churning out more big movies, Orr said, "but more and more, movies are made by independent producers.

They'll take it to a studio for distribution and maybe some financing. Studios are not developing that much in-house anymore."

Orr said predicting what audiences want has gotten tougher for studios.

"So film festivals have become more vitally important for the audience now," he said, for the producer of a film "to pick up word of mouth, attention, try out marketing ideas, before it goes worldwide."

Bill Page of Wilmington, Del., is the executive producer and main character of "All Along," shown in Myrtle Beach this afternoon for its first public showing.

Many quality films miss exposure to audiences simply because they lack a big name atop the title, Page said.

"More bad movies with stars are made than good movies without stars," he said.

A 4 1/2-year-long project to complete, "All Along" parallels Page's life story through the character Richard Harrison.

"He goes to an amusement park for his 40th birthday," Page said, "and meets his old high school girlfriend."

That triggers Harrison's fantasies about what his life could have become if he had become a rock star or pro athlete.

"It leads to some precarious situations," Page said, noting humor's not the main thrust. "It's more of a dramatic movie with comedic elements." Page said wondering "What if?" is common for people when they turn 30, 40 or 50.

"We all have those same feelings," he said, leading to his movie title. "All along, you always have what you wanted in life, and it just takes you time to realize it."

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