



# Cape May Film Festival Wins Statewide People's Choice Award— *Second Year in a Row!*

*Only Arts Group in Southern New Jersey to Win!*

For the second year in a row, the Cape May Film Festival has won Best Film Festival in all of New Jersey, according to a People's Choice Award sponsored by JerseyArts.com (a project of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and ArtPride New Jersey Foundation). There were about 75 nominees in 15 different categories, and the Film Festival was up against five of its peers. "This award means more this year because the competition was much more aggressive to get the votes," according to Gail Schmidtchen, President of the Cape May Film Festival. "Last year, we won by hundreds of votes," she recalls, "this year it was only by about 80! We actually had a last minute Facebook and email broadcast push, and that put us out in front! Thanks to everyone who voted."

The Cape May Film Festival was the only Southern New Jersey arts program to take an award this year. "An amazing feat," says Corbin Cogswell, the Film Festival's Program and Membership Chair. "It proves that we can mobilize our constituents. But this kind of award is won long before voting begins. You build relationships with people, one program at a time—and we host programs all year that help people feel like they belong to our organization. We're proud to have the award, but we even more gratified by the support we receive from our constituents. Our mission is to serve them well."

Schmidtchen, who was recently elected as President of the Film Festival, wants to emphasize the role that the Festival's educational programming has had on its success as People's Choice. She has more than 30 years of experience as an educator and school Guidance Counselor. During her time as a Board member and now President of the organization, education has been her priority. "We host programs in conjunction with the Festival but also with the students in our schools and with at risk youth in a variety of settings, as well," she says. "We partner with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Cape and Atlantic Counties, Kiwanis Club of Cape May, Lower Township Optimists, Delaware River and Bay Authority, Cape Counseling, the Noyes Museum, and several others to reach out to the youth in our region and beyond with educational programming that teaches them not only filmmaking but perseverance, working with others, and leadership skills. It's this kind of collaboration that makes us a favorite among several different populations."

This is another big year for the Film Festival. It's celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and it has a new home in the Chalfonte Hotel in Cape May, NJ. It is also changing the dates of its Festival to October 22-24, 2010. Hilary and Chuck Pritchard are the Co-

Chairs of the Festival Planning Committee, and the news of the award is, as Hilary says, "icing on the cake. We have so much to celebrate this year, a fantastic venue, great history, and better dates to attract more attendees. This news is adding to what is already going to be a great year!"

Joe Stinson, Creative Director for the Festival comments on its longevity, saying, "In the land of Film Festivals, a 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is a big deal. No kidding, many, many Festivals come and go. It's the ones that can reinvent themselves, keep themselves relevant, and consistently 'wow' the audience that get to come back each year." Stinson points out that there will be a First Annual Filmmakers Conference at Cape May hosted by the Festival in May 2010. "We are leveraging the success and longevity of the Festival," says Stinson. "That's just good business. We will bring the country's most prominent filmmaking professionals to the conference to speak on a variety of topics. It will be a must-attend conference for anyone interested in filmmaking."

This year, Cape May Film Festival is already taking its branded film catalogue and award-winning programming to other venues throughout the state. It is hosting a film program at Gallery Aferro in Newark, NJ in February and April, in addition to a program at the Noyes Museum in Atlantic County in November, with other plans to host programs in Camden and Burlington Counties as well. "This is proof that our film selections and programs are popular throughout the state," says Stefan Prosky, Curator of Films for the Festival. "Our selection process is not complicated, but it has resulted in a library of short and feature films that stand out among the indie productions being done today. We're proud of these selections, and it seems other organizations around the state want to share in our recognition of high quality filmmaking."

The Cape May Film Festival is hosted by the Cape May Film Society, and it is dedicated to hosting high quality independent films and other programs throughout the year. We are committed to the New Jersey filmmaker, selected a majority of films from those created by filmmakers here in our state. We are also committed to bringing New Jersey and World Premiere films to the state, as has been evidenced in the past decade.

**2010 Cape May Film Festival  
October 22-24  
Exclusively at the Chalfonte Hotel!**