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Film Festival Returns to Lamorinda Theatres

By Laurie Snyder



Lore will screen on Sunday November 11 at the New Rheem Theatre Photo provided

Slate Awards to Honor Connie Stevens and Dawn Wells

Connie Stevens, the 1960s head turner appearing in such films as *Eighteen* and *Anxious with Jim Backus* and *Back to the Beach* with Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon, also kept fans glued to their television screens as Cricket Blake in *Hawaiian Eye*. A co-star with the biggest names in the entertainment industry, she also recorded memorable songs, headlined in Vegas, Atlantic City and New York, and performed for four American Presidents.

Touring with Bob Hope, she became a beloved favorite with active duty service members and veterans, and has become a champion for Native Americans across the United States through *Windfeather*, her project which awards scholarships and supports summer camp programs.

Stevens will receive CAIFF's Lifetime Achievement Award at 7 p.m. on Saturday, November 10. Fans will also want to be sure to catch her earlier in the day when she dishes about her life and work in her 3 p.m. "Actors Studio" format interview.

Dawn Wells, beloved by boomers for her role as Mary Ann on *Gilligan's Island*, will receive the 2012 Diamond Award that same evening for her outstanding contribution to the entertainment industry. An actress with more than 150 film, theatre, and television roles in her own right, Wells now heads her own production company, has a new book coming out in 2012 - *A Conversation Between Mary Ann and Dawn*, and also chairs the Terry Lee Wells Foundation which has awarded more than \$7 million in grants to organizations serving the underprivileged in Nevada.

Additional special events and screenings will be held at the Orinda Theatre and at The New Rheem Theatre in Moraga from November 8 through 11. Check the CAIFF web site for profiles of each film and event, as well as times and venues: www.caiff.org.

Twitter has been buzzing for weeks regarding plans to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the California Independent Film Festival. This year's lineup includes programs for children, as well as another dazzling array of touching and thought-provoking films for adults.

The Festival begins November 8 with an opening night reception at The New Rheem Theatre from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. and the premiere of *One Small Hitch*. What will happen when Josh and Molly - friends since childhood pretend to be engaged to make a terminally ill father happy? Get a Festival pass and find out (see review on page B6).

A veteran of 13 film festivals, *Body Complete* will draw viewers into the danger and intrigue of a television journalist hunting for a woman who disappeared while trying to ensure a proper burial for her Muslim father, murdered during ethnic cleansing in Bosnia.

This year's CAIFF closer, *Lore* is a film already humming with Oscar buzz. It is the tale of a young woman who leads her siblings on a journey to their grandmother's home and hope for safety in 1945-era Germany. En route, they learn about life as they uncover what their Nazi parents have done to the world around them.

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