



Sentinel



SERVING NORTH PORTLAND AND THE COLUMBIA/WILLAMETTE CROSSROADS SINCE 2001 — VOLUME 5 ISSUE 10 OCTOBER 2005

Arts & Culture

ISLAND AUTEUR

Sauvie Island filmmaker shoots movie in his backyard

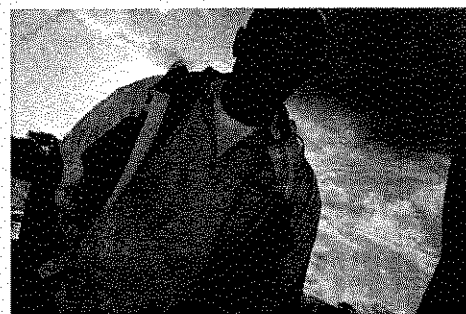
By Erick Mertz

The Portland independent movie scene sells itself as an alternative to Los Angeles, a DIY Hollywood North. But the bright lights of Sunset Boulevard fall far from the banks of our Willamette River, and even farther from the sleepy pastoral playground, Sauvie Island. 20 minutes north on Hwy. 30 from the fashionable Pearl District, the long stretches of quiet farmland feel a world apart from anything resembling the bustle of agents and film crews. Yet, of all places, Sauvie Island houses a film production company amongst its farms and wildlife designated land.

Anyone who has made a film knows that, like real estate, great work is all but

reliant on location, location, location. The Sauvie might become Hollywood North, North. That is if Aaron Kirk Douglas (yes, that's his actual name) has anything to say about it.

Douglas is an area producer who started in film after working in broadcast news and local law firms. He runs Aaron Douglas Enterprises, LLC and lives on Sauvie Island. He has taken an area he knows well and used it for the location of his new film, Freedom State, written and directed by Cullen Hoback. Hoback is an up-and-coming filmmaker in a town filled with would-be auteurs. His most recent short, Gaining Miles, won a Grand Jury Prize at the New York International



■ Filmmaker Aaron Douglas is making movies from his production companies offices on Sauvies Island.

Film Festival, among other heady accolades.

Freedom State is a simple story about a disillusioned housewife, Krystal (Megan Murphy), who voluntarily checks herself into Lost Acres Mental Health Home in hope of recharging her batteries. Once inside, she and the other occupants suddenly find

See AUTEUR / Page 15

AUTEUR

■ From page 13

themselves in charge of the asylum. Isolated from the outside world, the delusional residents begin to believe that the world is coming to an end. With no nurses to keep tabs on them, Krystal and the other residents strike out in search of other survivors of the alleged apocalypse and, in turn, push the boundaries of their own madness.

Douglas and Hoback have created a film brimming with energy. Shot masterfully over nine days by Director of Photography Shawn Sundby, the film uses location and setting as an integral character in the drama. The crew managed to use Sauvie Island to create a tight, economic film that looks and feels real while still indulging the film's fanciful

premise. Douglas and Hoback blended enough cinematic and comedic convention with their own innovation to create a well-crafted crackpot comedy.

The journey from script to big screen premiere for Freedom State is not finished. The short version of the film, a project sponsored by the Oregon Film and Video Foundation, is making rounds in the interest of gaining required funding for feature developments. Maybe Sauvie Island will someday be as well known for movie stars as it is for halloween cornmazes.

Aaron Douglas Enterprises LLC,
aaron@aaronkdouglas.com,
www.aaronkdouglas.com (503) 407-0810