

Fort Worth's Lone Star Film Festival Announces 2008 Dates

BY CHRISTOPHER KELLY - Fort Worth Star Telegram

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The show will go on: The Lone Star Film Society announced Tuesday plans for the second installment of its Lone Star Film Festival. The dates for this year's event will be November 12 to 16.

The inaugural festival took place last November and proved to be a qualified success, with appearances by such notables as Robert Rodriguez, Keith Carradine and Limp Bizkit's Fred Durst. But behind-the-scenes turmoil threatened the future of the event. It was prompted by the festival's board of directors opting not to continue artistic director Tom Huckabee's contract, at which point Huckabee's close friend and collaborator actor Bill Paxton severed his ties with the organization.

But the festival seems to have finally found its way to firmer footing. Dennis Bishop, a producer whose credits include the Showtime series *Dexter*, was named to the newly created position of festival artistic director in May. (Bishop played an advisory role in last year's festival). He says that he doesn't believe there will be any lingering resentment in the community.

"We've spent months and months going and meeting with community leaders, museums, cultural leaders," he said. "And I'm not exaggerating when I say it took about sixty seconds to get beyond the turmoil, because everyone is passionate about this festival succeeding."

Bishop adds, "This festival is bigger than one or two people. It's bigger than me. No matter who gets replaced, or quits or resigns, it's going to keep going, because there's tremendous support for it here."

Although no film titles were included in Tuesday's announcement, the festival did reveal two major components of this year's event: Local critic and television personality Bobbie Wygant has been

appointed Honorary Festival Chair for 2008. In this role, she will be interviewing visiting filmmakers and actors and moderating panels.

And actor Martin Sheen, who appeared at the inaugural edition of the festival, where he received a Lifetime Achievement Award and screened a number of his films, will return to Fort Worth to present this year's Lifetime Achievement prize. No word yet on who the recipient of that award will be, although Bishop says that Sheen will be involved in choosing the honoree.

Bishop also says that an announcement about some of the films that will be shown, as well as the identity of the festival's guest artistic director, will likely be made in the next few weeks.